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長い大学院生活の思い出

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私は2008年度に生態環境科学専攻 博士後期課程を修了しました。同期の仲間に比べ、私が博士号を獲得するまでの道のりは長く、修士課程に入学した頃は「地球環境科学研究科」だった大学院名が、私が博士号を得て卒業する頃には「環境科学院」になっていました。指導教員の原登志彦先生（現・北海道大学名誉教授）のもと、私は環境ストレスが寒冷地に生育する樹木の成長や生理的機能に与える影響を調べるため、北海道北部の雨龍研究雨林での野外調査や、結婚後、研究と子育ての両立に四苦八苦だった頃は低温科学研究所内での樹木の栽培実験を行っていました。原先生や同じコースの教員・スタッフの皆さんには、長きに渡って研究に関する知識や技術だけではなく、家族ぐるみで数多くのことを学ばせていただいたことに心から感謝をしています。

そんな人よりも長い環境科学院での学生生活を送った私ですが、学生生活で印象的な思い出は、当時の「リケジョ」ブームに乗り、理系女子を増やすために自分の母校や進学校と呼ばれる学校に出向いて研究室の仲間と出前実験をしたことです。また、出前実験だけではなく「理系女子ってこんな感じ」と女子高校生向けに講演をしたこともありました。「リケジョ」イベントに参加する前、私はそれまでに何度か低温科学研究所のオープンキャンパスや研究所見学の修学旅行生向けに、研究所で行っている研究を説明する機会がありました。来所したご年配の方々から、「すごい研究をしているのは何となくわかるけど、これが世の中の何に役立つの？」という鋭い質問をされることがありましたが、「リケジョ」のイベントに来た高校生たちは、目の前に広がる科学の世界に目を輝かせており、興味津々な様子でした。もしかしたら未来の科学者になるかもしれない高校生たちと、一生懸命に自分たちの研究の魅力を語る大学院生や現役の研究者たちの姿は素晴らしく、自分が科学の世界を目指そうと思った頃の純粋な気持ちを思い出しました。「リケジョ」イベントでの光景は、その後の自分が研究を続ける上での支えになったことは間違いありません。

さて、最近では「リケジョ」という言葉よりも「女子卒」と呼ばれる言葉を聞くことが多くなったような気がします。かつて「リケジョ」だった私も「鈴木さんってリケジョだったんだね〜。」とママ友に言われて思い出す程度です（年齢は重ねましたけど、今でも「リケジョ」ですよ。笑）。あの頃、私たちが理系を目指す女子が増えることを願って行動した活動は実を結んだのでしょうか。あくまで個人的な感想ですが、私が担当している物理系の授業では、教室内は今でも圧倒的に男子学生が多く、「あれ？自分が想像してたのとなんか違う。」と思うこともあります。思い描いていた理想にはまだ到達していないのかもしれませんが、これからも男女分け隔てなく、科学の世界に進もうとする若者が少しでも増えるよう、微力ながらも尽力したいと思っています。



[写真1 「リケジョ」イベントでの様子]
小野清美助教と一緒に。カメラ目線なのが筆者



[写真2 出前実験を行ったスタッフに配付されたグッズ]
あまりにも貴重すぎて手放すことができない

Hokkaido University: memories on the journey to become a researcher

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I have dream to study in Japan since I was in senior high school in Bandung in 1997. It was not an easy journey. My first attempt to secure MEXT scholarship in 2000 ended up with failure. For me the written test was so daunting, hence I had to admit that it was impossible with my then knowledge capacity to pass the test and I just gave up. However, in 2012 I won scholarship from Indonesian Ministry of Research and Technology to do short visit in a university abroad. This reignited my old dream about study in Japan and I choose Hokkaido University as suggested by my friend, who was working in the same research institute with me. Her story about research and daily life in Hokkaido University was captivating. Then on 2nd of August 2012, I set my foot first time in Japan. My feeling was mixed. I was ecstatic, I made it! After 15 years! Yet scared and overwhelmed. I knew nothing about living in Japan. Fortunately, my supervisor Dr. Kazuhiro Toyoda (I address him as Toyoda Sensei) was kind to fetch me from airport and helped me to settle and life became easier and enjoyable. Japan is a beautiful place to live the whole years, especially in Sapporo, cherry blossom in spring, hiking in summer, yellow Momiji in autumn, yuki matsuri in winter.

During the short visit I got a taste how it was studying and living in Japan. It fitted my imagination perfectly as I read the brochures about studying in Japan in 1997. I was able to put my hand directly on those hi-tech equipment, speak and discuss with students and scientist from different nationalities. I was part of the global community and that feeling made me proud. I wanted to be part of this. The visit sparked my courage to resit in the MEXT scholarship test, and finally I got it. I was a MEXT scholarship awardee in 2013 to pursue PhD degree in Hokkaido University in Graduate School of Environmental Science (GSES) under tutelage of Dr. Kazuhiro Toyoda.

During my first semester I need to focus on Japanese language studies and preparation for entrance exam and on 1st of October 2013 I was officially a PhD student. My research topic was uranium and thorium separation from lanthanides and their purification from simulated wastewater using solid phase extraction. I chose the topic for my future research interest in metal separation and purification and extractive metallurgy and Toyoda Lab has everything to support my research and GSES is one of leading institutes in water treatment research. PhD was one of the most important phases in my research career. I was a research assistant before, and I thought I know every trade of being a researcher. I was wrong. Thanks to Toyoda Sensei, he moulded me to become a better and an efficient researcher. Research costed a lot of funding and resources; you need to be efficient! You have to do review, due diligence, have clear expectation or at least educated guess before you do an analysis and experiment. Is this analysis or experiment would answer your problem or your question? Otherwise, you are just wild goose chasing and wasting your time and resources. This is a precious lesson I got from him. I also learned that perseverance is one of the most important features of a researcher. I had to redo the

experiments, working longer hours, dealing with rejection from editors, responding to requests posed by reviewers, all of this I found during my PhD. Luckily for me, Toyoda Sensei, my family, and my friends were always there along the way.

Toyoda Sensei gave me a surprise! He arranged my final PhD defence on 4th of August 2016, my 35th birthday. The committee decision's on granting my PhD degree was the best birthday gift I ever had, and I will always cherish and treasure the memories of that day. I have to back to Indonesia afterward, also with mixed feelings. Sad for all good memories, joyful and eager for future challenges. Sapporo and Hokkaido University will always be my second home, and I hope to have chance to be back and do research work there.



Biei, Summer 2015.



Fuyu Matsuri, Asahikawa, March 2014.



Graduation Ceremony for Japanese Language Preparation Class, Hokkaido University, 2013.



The big day. Graduation Ceremony, Hokkaido University, 26 Sept 2016.

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