

VISITING JAPAN — ACADEMIA, INDUSTRY & CULTURE

CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

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Trip Participants

- Emiko Mizuki
Dr. Seferis' Assistant
- Lambros Georgoulis
Post Doc at the PCL
- Joy Wu
Graduate Student at the PCL
- Kenichi Yoshioka
Visiting Scientist at the PCL

Although I was born in Japan, it was a Japan that no longer exists. My Japanese has been compared to Shakespeare and my memories can only be found in history books. Old mixed with new, high tech and ancient temples.

My uncle protested against the Narita airport because of the valuable farm land taken to build it. I owe it to him and his neighbors for allowing only one runway that requires 60 minutes to reach your gate from the airport check-in point. The last call for boarding the airplane is 40 minutes before departure.

At first glance the Japanese expected me to be a native speaker; but when I spoke English it caused massive confusion and embarrassment for both parties while everyone looked frantically for an English speaking person. Transportation

on the subways and trains was also difficult with only Japanese characters to find a destination and the cost of my train ticket - even tried using the Braille but it didn't help.

Travel light since you are constantly climbing stairways. The horror stories about rush hour on the subway are true - your bodies are closer to a stranger's than they are to your spouse in bed.

Overall, it was a wonderful and rewarding experience. The Japanese culture and people have a wonderful sensitivity. Both cultures have much to teach and much to learn - an exchange that can enhance our efforts to compete and collaborate. Meetings included undertones of formality and protocols but there were understood, not expressed. Their motto to work hard during the day, and then to

play and relax at night is one to be remembered.

My purpose was to discuss the creation of a scholarship in memory of professor Hayashi and to prepare for the upcoming Japan seminar in Fall, 2001. I also had the opportunities to meet the people with whom I have contact and to experience Japan; visit hotels and conference centers, universities and industry in order to gather information for planning purposes. I became part of the experience in order to better assist with Dr. Seferis' work and collaboration efforts, and found that my gracious hosts and new found acquaintances made the goal that much easier to attain.

- Emiko Mizuki
Assistant to Dr. Seferis

OUR TOUR GUIDE KENICHI YOSHIOKA

Kenichi Yoshioka, being the only one in our group speaking fluent Japanese, was our tour guide. Kenichi was born in Japan and has a Masters of engineering degree in systems science. He works at the Toray Composites Laboratory and is currently at the

PCL at the University of Washington as a visiting scientist. He is known to wear his bright orange jacket (as seen on the right) so that everyone could follow him easily in the streets of Tokyo, Kyoto, and Matsuyama.



Lambros' Cultural Experience

The first feeling I had being in Japan was not being able to understand anything. Not only the language, which is something to experience in any foreign country, but also the writing and the signs in the streets. In European countries, even if one does not speak the language, the letters are common and one can at least recognize the symbols/letters that are written on signs. The fact though that we always had a Japanese "guide" with us was very helpful.

I really enjoyed the food in almost every place we visited. From sushi, to curry rice, to okonomijaki in Hiroshima or shabu-shabu Japanese cuisine was always very interesting and tasty. It was also a great experience to see Japan not as a tourist but through the actual people in everyday life when visiting a movie theatre or some bars in Matsuyama on Saturday night. I was impressed by the fact that although Japanese people are more like northern Europeans when it comes to work, are also like southern Europeans when one sees how lively the cities are at night. Finally, the day trip to Hiroshima was indeed a unique and powerful experience.

IN TOKYO AREA

The offices of Boeing Japan are in a building located nearby the moat surrounding the Imperial Palace. The President of Boeing-Japan, Mr. Rick Martin welcomed Emi Mizuki and Kenichi Yoshioka to his office, which has a great view of the Imperial Plaza. Mr. Martin expressed his interests in continuing support for the University of Washington. He also conveyed courtesy from Phil Condit, CEO of the Boeing Company.

When Emi and Kenichi visited Professor Isao Kimpara at the University of Tokyo, he was preparing for his final lecture at the university. He is retiring from the University of Tokyo in order to move to a private university. He had run his laboratory since

1957, leading the research field of composite materials in Japan. He played an irreplaceable role in establishing composite applications for ships and boats in the '60s and '70s. Elaborate ship models displayed in his lab represented his successful work in that field. He has continued to maintain a good relationship with the PCL at the University of Washington for decades and told Emi and Kenichi that it would continue even after moving to Kanazawa, where his new office would be.

The countryside surrounding Science University of Tokyo is a typical countryside landscape of the Kanto plain with rice fields and other crops. Professor Hiroshi

Fukuda was waiting for Emi and Kenichi in his office. His involvement in Dr. Phil Condit's receipt of a doctorate degree from SUT provided a close relationship between his laboratory and the University of Washington. The current work in his laboratory focuses on the mechanical analysis of composite materials where he is a key contributor in this field.



Professor Kimpara at the Univ. of Tokyo

AKIHABARA

Akihabara is a popular area in Tokyo where many shops and stores sell computer and electronic goods. One can buy parts to assemble at home a computer, a stereo system, or a security camera system. Or one can buy computer systems, laptops, and home electronics. It was an eye-opening experience for American shoppers with all kinds of laptops displayed for demo in a laptop specialized store, toilets displayed for demo in a home electronic store, and hundreds of cell phones and their accessories were on display in a cell phone specialized store. We quickly found that our buying appetite increased dramatically by only being there for five minutes!



Emi Mizuki and Joy Wu standing in front of a computer shop at Akihabara.

IN THE KYOTO AREA

Transportation from Tokyo to Kyoto via Shinkansen was an extraordinary experience for first-time travelers. The train moved with grace and speed and arrived on time. It was even more amazing on the day we traveled because of snow. We never realized how fast the train was traveling until the snow flew by the train in a split second. The scenery also was a change from Tokyo's downtown high-rises. The country side is rich with small vegetable gardens, tea farms, and mountains with industrial factories occasionally noted.

Kyoto is one of the oldest cities and a former capital city of Japan. Many old buildings, temples, and shrines coexist side by side with new buildings giving a very different look than Tokyo. How-

ever, the new Kyoto train station is so modern that the city seems to be under siege by modern architecture.

Buses are the best transportation option in Kyoto city and to visit Kyoto University. Kyoto University is one of the best universities in Japan with a strong emphasis in the scientific field. Students at Kyoto University are very

proud of the fact that their alumni include the most Nobel Prize winners in the science area.

Professor Hojo is a famous researcher in the composites field at Kyoto University. Unfortunately we were unable to visit him but instead, visited the Architecture Department, guided by Jenny Wu who is a student there.



At Kyoto, Jenny Wu, who was our tour guide, is standing on the right next to Joy Wu, Kenichi Yoshioka, and Emi Mizuki.

THE TEMPLES

Kyoto is famous for its temples, both in number and in quality. We had an opportunity to visit some of the representatives. Kiyomizudera is among the temples founded around the time when Kyoto was the capital, in 794 A.D. It is famous for its main hall, which is referred to as "The Stage". When

the team visited the main hall, it started snowing again and the view of downtown from the "Stage" was somewhat obstructed by a snowy curtain.

Rokuonji is commonly called "Kinkakuji" due to the extraordinarily famous building called Kinkaku, which means "gold tower". Kinkaku

was originally built in 1397. In 1950, a lunatic priest burned himself to death together with it.



Kinkaku in Rokuonji

Joy's Cultural Experience

Being a Taiwanese is difficult to appreciate Japanese culture sometimes. Taiwan was a colony of Japan for over fifty years. What I saw and felt in Japan were not merely beautiful or ugly or strange or wonderful, but they were connected to my life. The emotional feelings were especially strong when we visited Kyoto and Hiroshima. Many temples that we visited in Kyoto have similarities from Chinese architecture. On the other hand, the gods/goddesses and ceremonies are not. When we visited Kyoto University, I saw similarities to universities in Taiwan because Japanese built the education foundation in Taiwan, except, of course, the "taking the shoes off" part.

When we visited the World War II Atomic Bomb Memorial in Hiroshima, I was sorry for all human losses during the war. I hope mass human massacre would never occur again!

Lambros' Industry Experience

Working at Research Laboratory of the Ehime plant for two weeks was also an important experience. First of all the work performed there by the various research groups is extremely interesting and diverse. However, communication was often a problem, since a lot of the researchers do not speak good English and we do not speak any Japanese. The overall feeling i had there, was more of a university campus than a factory. People stay very long hours at work, many, especially young workers and researchers live inside the plant at the dormitories and there are traffic regulations inside the plant that are different from the city around it. I was also impressed by the fact that within the plant one feels extremely safe and part of a big "family". Finally I liked how very clean, organized and quiet (maybe too quiet some times) the working environment was.

The current Kinkaku was rebuilt five years after the incident.

It is said that the rock garden of Ryoanji is probably one of the masterpieces of Japanese art. Its mysterious and hyper-simplified design, with fifteen rocks scattered on sand, has prompted several interpretations. Each visitor tried to find his or her own solution for the insoluble question posed by the designer in the sacred en-

vironment. However, the orange jacket of the

guide was obviously out of place.



Rock garden of Ryoanji

IN MATSUYAMA

With a population of 470,000, Matsuyama is the biggest city on Japan's Shikoku Island. A castle built by a local feudal lord looks down

on the city. We were met at Matsuyama airport by people from Toray Industries, but unfortunately did not

have time to enjoy the famous old hot spring, Dogo, in the city during our visit.

TORAY COMPOSITES LABORATORY

Joy Wu and Lambros Georgoulis spent two weeks at the Toray Composites Laboratory in Ehime. It was an exchange allowing PCL to visit Toray and for researchers at Toray to meet other cultures. Everyone at Toray was impressed by Lambros' ability to use chopsticks. In return, Joy and Lambros have experienced the Japanese working culture by living in Toray's dormitory and going to work with others everyday. We learned that Toray Composites is only a small part of the

overall Toray Industries. Unlike most research centers in the U.S., current projects at the Toray Composites Laboratory are not aerospace-

focused. Instead, a wide range of projects from transportation to construction to sports are found.



Joy Wu and Lambros Georgoulis enjoying dinner with people from the Toray Composites Laboratory.

University of Washington
Polymeric Composites Laboratory

Trip Schedule

DATE	EVENTS
March 1, 2001 (Thursday)	Arriving Tokyo
March 2— 9, 2001	Boeing Japan Tokyo office University of Tokyo, Dr. Kimpara Science University of Tokyo Cultural visits
March 9, 2001 (Friday)	Travel to Kyoto
March 9—11, 2001	Kyoto University Cultural visits
March 11, 2001 (Sunday)	Travel to Matsuyama
March 11—24, 2001	Toray Composites Research Laboratory in Ehime Cultural visits
March 24, 2001	Leaving Japan

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
POLYMERIC COMPOSITES
LABORATORY (PCL)

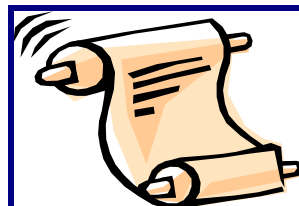
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