

Reflection on the 5th East Asia Junior Workshop, 2013

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Unforgettable Memories in Kyoto

The East Asia Junior Workshop in 2013 is the second one for me. I have joined the workshop held in Taipei, Taiwan 2012. So actually I was not so nervous this year. When I applied for this, I prepared independent research. In last year, almost all presentations by undergraduate student were term papers or researches for assignment. It was pointed out in the last year's wrap up discussion. For this reason, I began my project on developing new measurement of social mobility. One month was required for research, and two days for making presentation file. As my research heavily contained mathematical formulas and numbers, I should study mathematics and even computer science as much as sociology. But this process was very interesting and pleasant itself. I could not have been any happier when I discovered that the relation between previous social position effect and mobility rate index could be represented sine graph, which I was stuck on for 7 days.

The visit to Japan was first for me. I had not known even the distance between Osaka and Kyoto. The most interesting scene of Japanese cities was small houses in traditional Japanese style. In Korea, traditional Korean architectural style is very rare. Two-stored Houses made by wood and having steep roof and two stair could be seen everywhere in Osaka and Kyoto. In fact, city of Mokpo in Korea where I lived 15 years ago has some Japanese style building because Mokpo was major port in colonial Korea functioning as a pathway in which Korean rice and grain were exported to Japan and many Japanese people lived there. The field trip was mainly composed of two parts: historical places and local communities. I think the core is on the local community part because that was exclusive experience for workshop participants. We were told about traditional outcast system, Zainichis and social welfare. Those were all helpful and useful. But one thing was consistently attracting my attention. I watched much land of Kyoto was used less intensively. Some land was used for no purpose. To explain why Kyoto's land was inefficiently used, I suppose that there must be an answer in Japanese national legal system or Kyoto's municipal regulation.

The true purpose of this workshop, the presentation, was held for 2 days. 22 researches were presented. The subjects were surprisingly diverse. It showed sociological students' diverse interest. I could be informed about local sports team, social network service, Taiwanese cinemas, social movements, prostitution, and public health service on allergy. I was impressed at the similarities among three East Asian societies.

There is one issue I should talk in this writing: the ignorance and fear at nuclear power and radioactivity. In fact, there are severe fears for radioactivity in Korea and almost all have no scientific evidence. In Korea I was said "Japanese people are slowly dying" "any measurement of radioactivity

by civilian is illegal in Japan” “Japanese economy will be destroyed recently” “intelligent people already escaped from Japan” “you should not drink any water in Japan” Of course, all are just rumor and I knew that. But I realized even Japanese people were suffering from unfounded rumors and unscientific fear. In the workshop there were three special lectures on nuclear power plant. In the last one, an immunologist gave a lecture. Her conclusion was simple: low-intensity radioactivity is not so dangerous as people imagine and can be avoided by some caution. That lecture was perfectly true. I know about this well because my secondary major is biology. But the atmosphere on the floor was not amicable. She had difficulty answering many hostile questions by those who had no base on science. I think governmental welfare or compensation to victims of the accident and social discrimination against the Fukushima refugees are important sociological subject but sociologists who do not have expertise on science should not tell about the effect of radioactivity. I hope Japanese people to quickly recover from the disaster.