

STEPS Students Report

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First of all I would like to express appreciation to my host Professor Yokomama-sensei and all his lab's members for a warm welcome and helpfulness during my visit. Professor is very communicative and engaging person thereby there is a pleasant working and friendly environment in the lab. Special thanks to the STEPS office and Tomoko Shibatsuji for help with preparation of my visit and daily support with organizational questions.

I was lucky to participate in STEPS just before my Master thesis defence because I could have got a new useful data for my current research and incredible experience connected with work and survival in absolutely unknown scientific area.

My general field of study include the usual geological and sedimentological methods of material research but main focus of Professor Yokoyama's laboratory is a many types of geochemical methods. That's why my first task was to understand which kind of data would be both useful for my Master thesis and interesting for Japanese colleagues.

Significant step was presentation of my inquiry object during one of weekly lunch meeting. It was great opportunity to introduce myself and to get an attention to my research. A study of rare-earth elements in my rock samples by mass-spectrometry in inductive coupled plasma method has been chosen as a result of joint discussion. The epoch of my mental and cognitive torment has begun by this decision for I had to find methodology of chemical sample preparation prior to start an experiment. I was limited in time in a total new knowledge area. It was hard work but all the more I enjoy the results.

With the approval of Yokoyama-sensei I've collected more data than I expected. The part I'd be able to interpret will inject a new life into my paper. Then I hope regional palaeo-reconstruction for the Southern Urals will be clarified with more complete data. Moreover Professor Yokoyama and I have decided to write one or two articles on this materials foundation with perspective of further cooperation between our laboratories.

Besides scientific adventure STEPS give me like all other participants chance to take inside look at the culture and life of Japanese people. It's completely different from a touristic perception and more interesting. I was shocked after first lab's party when we all went to a restaurant together to celebrate members achievements. Every lunch meeting begins with introduction of some place (country, city, region etc.) which was visited by any lab's member. How would you introduce region? Just tell a short story about local famous food and... spread it among listeners! Pretty way, isn't it?



1: New Year Party 2018, all lab's members

During whole program period I lived in the guest house in the campus area. So I had an access to bicycles for free which was very helpful sometimes. The campus with AORI building is located in Kashiwa - cute and quiet city not far from Tokyo. There are all necessary things such us, sure, all kind of stores including big shopping center in the nearest railway station area, the beautiful park with a pond and many paths for running or walking, the stadium, tennis-courts, a lot of different coffee shops, restaurants. and even museums. Because of intensive work and lack time for some travel I always had opportunity to have a nice rest near the accommodation place.

Despite of huge volume of work I couldn't refuse myself to go to Kyoto. Thus one of my Japanese wish has done.

In the end I must note my happiness to see one of the most famous symbols of Japan. It wasn't any building or food or something else. I mean cherry blossom - the most subtle and the most deeply impressive event.

