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京都大学
"Don't Worry If Your Chickens Don't Hatch in Japan": A Message to Fellow "Foreign" Students

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Dept. of Materials Science

When I was a college student in Japan, I found in "TIME" magazine an interesting article depicting most American students' three dreams: (1) to have a Japanese wife; (2) to eat Chinese food at home; and (3) to live in an American house. (Japanese husbands may not appreciate that having a Japanese wife is the American first dream.) The first two dreams are not difficult to attain—especially for the Japanese. In my case—I was fortunate enough to find my Japanese wife shortly after reading the article. Of course—she answered affirmatively to the question, "can you cook Chinese food?"

My motivation to go to the United States after graduation was simply to test the third dream. Immediately after I finished my graduate course at Kyoto University approximately 25 years ago—I hopped onto an airplane headed for Los Angeles with my wife of two-weeks. My American life started as a post-doctoral fellow at the University of California, Los Angeles, making it difficult to pursue my third dream; the only way was by getting a permanent job. However, I was confronted with the most difficult "chicken or egg" problem. The Vietnam war had just ended and the unemployment rate in the U.S.A. had risen. The American immigration office limited the number of labor certificates (necessary for permanent jobs) for foreigners and issued them only to those who had permanent visas. To obtain a permanent visa, a labor certificate was mandatory. Which comes first, a permanent visa or a labor certificate? Fortunately, the IBM T.J. Watson Research Center in New York assisted me in solving this complex chicken or egg problem, allowing me to recognize for the first time that, compared to the Japanese, Americans have much more open minds.

I am quite sure that you came to Japan to pursue a certain (part of) your dream. Recently, I have been hearing many complaints from foreign students concerning the large gap between their dreams and reality. I admit that Japan has more restrictions for foreigners than countries such as the U.S.A., and I understand that you must face real difficulties.

But perhaps the best advice is, don't worry if your dream does not come true while you are in Japan. It was only after my return to Japan that I realized I had gained many more precious things in the U.S.A. than my three small dreams. Firstly, as an outgrowth of having daily interactions with Americans as well as cosmopolitan discussions with many internationals, I had come to view "Japan" more objectively than before. Secondly, I was able to develop a bi-cultural home environment. Moreover, my American-born daughters now enjoy international "border-free" lifestyles.

My message to you is that if your dream does not come true in Japan, you should realize that you are sitting on eggs filled with much bigger future dreams. Although you should not count your chickens before they hatch, most of your eggs (some now, some later) will hatch.
Culture Shock

David Mulati
Ph. D. Student
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My field of research is solar-cell technology. Photovoltaic technology can surely be considered critical for overcoming global environmental and energy problems such as the greenhouse effect and acid rain, which are caused primarily by massive consumption of fossil fuels such as coal and oil. The key to solving these problems obviously lies in the development of clean energy such as that supplied by solar cells which convert sunlight directly into electricity through the voltaic effect of semiconductors. Also, supplies of traditional energy resources such as oil are fast being exhausted so there is a pressing need to find viable alternatives. I myself come from a tropical zone where we have a plentiful supply of this natural energy but we are not using it to the fullest. This is the major reason for my studies at Kyoto University.

I am indeed grateful to the Japanese government for having granted me a chance to join the Kyoto community in October last year. Before coming here I of course expected to find differences in a country socially and geographically so unlike my own. Nonetheless I have still been very surprised by some things and I would like to share some of my impressions. On arrival I was immediately struck by the high standards of cleanliness and punctuality of public transport. The Haruka express train that brought me from Kansai Airport operates so reliably on schedule that travellers need not worry about arriving in time for flights, and when I used it I felt immediately more oriented by the announcements and visual displays of the names of the various stations we passed through on our way from Osaka to Kyoto. This to me was quite unique and impressive.

The next impression I’d like to tell you about was not
so favourable—indeed, to me, it was horrifying. This was of my first winter in Kyoto. A long and cold winter season started in December and lasted until April. It was the first time in my life that I had undergone such an experience—thank God for the heaters in almost every room! However, I found that I was able to ride a bicycle even in deep snow and I enjoyed seeing people displaying their skiing skills during this rough season. Due to technology—it has become possible for ordinary life—work and study to continue without disruption by bad weather. Since I come from a tropical zone in Africa this is an experience I will always remember. Indeed—I now think that the value of students studying abroad is not only in the new intellectual and cultural environment—but also the new physical environment. I admit that some aspects of this last surprised me very much. One extraordinary thing was the way some women—particularly young girls—would wear very short skirts or shorts during the coldest weather! Academically—I have discovered that one reason for the wonderful technological achievements of this country is the long hours people devote to their work. The graduate students here sometimes even sleep in their laboratories—something I have yet to see in my country! I have also been struck by what happens at the time the results of the entrance examination are announced. Candidates come with their parents to check the results and later to attend the entrance ceremony. For me—it shows the closeness of the family, although we are perhaps used to thinking that when a student enters university he is meant to be an adult and do such things without parents' involvement. In the university itself I have found something like this family closeness. The student-teacher relationship is so strong that even after graduation this relationship is maintained, with positive long-term results especially for the employment prospects of graduands. I feel indeed fortunate to be included in Kyoto University's "family" of students.

Thank you for allowing me to describe my short experience of Kyoto.

* 

留学三年目にして思うこと

尹 恵林
建築学専攻修士課程 2年

ついこの間まではよく留学の動機や抱負を語らされまし
た。3年経った今はほとんど研究の成果や帰国後の計画を
聞くまれます。来日当時のフレッシュな気分を持ち続けてい
るつもりの私は、周りを攻められているような気がして、
内心寂しささえ感じます。しかし、そろそろこの3年間を
改めて振り返り、その答えを見つけるべきではないのは確
かなようです。

留学に来た以上、言葉の壁を超え、その国の人と付き合
い、文化に親することも大事だと思いますが、興味をもつ
研究分野を見つけ、努めることが最初の目的で最終の成果
だと私なんかは考えています。その研究が、留学からこ
そ接することの出来たものであれば、留学にきた甲斐が
一層増すかかも知れません。そう考えれば、今私が話す日本
語がまだ片言であっても、知り合いの日本人が研究室の人
に限られていたとしても、もう答えの一つは求めたと言
えそうです。

私の専門は建築環境で、主に建築照明について研究し
ています。おそらく、わざわざ留学したくても研究で
きる分野ではありません。しかし、建築照明の研究に対する
大いに違う見方や、その基を成している照明認識視空間と
いう概念に大変興味が引かれた。その見方とは、従来
の建築照明研究のよいま照明光そのものの特性や知覚でな
く、光によってどのような視覚情報が運ばれ、それを基に
人間がその空間をどのように認識するかということです。

照明認識視空間とは、私たちは照明された空間に対して形
成する照明に関わる空間の認識のことで、今は退官された
池田光男教授によって提案されました。手法としては人間
を被験者とした心理物理実験を用います。

慣れない実験で戸惑いながらの2年半、考えて見ると、
今やっていることやこれから目指していることに対し、周
りの人に首を傾げられたときもしばしばありました。留学生
のなかに同じ経験を持つ人もいると言われます。しかし、
生意気なようですが、私たち留学生が今やっている研究は
どこでも誰でも出来るものだとは決して思いません。最初
冒険とも思った今の研究に動むことが出来たのには、このこ
こでだけ可能な研究環境に恵まれ、知識だけでなく研究姿
勢を教わり、その上自分の研究に対して信念を持つように
なったからです。留学の目的や動機は留学に来る前に立て
るものではなく、来てから築き上げるものだと思います。そ
こから研究の成果に対する喜びを見つける、新たな成果へ
と導かれることと思います。そして私は、最近間ってもらえな
くなった留学の動機や抱負を、来日3年目でこれからでも
自分自身に問い合わせたいと思っています。
Honorary Degree Conferred on Professor Robert Bird

Morio OKAZAKI
Professor
Dept. of Chemical Engineering

The honorary degree of Doctor of Engineering was conferred on Dr. Robert Byron Bird, Professor Emeritus of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, on the 8th of January, 1996. He is the third person from the Faculty of Engineering and the seventh from the whole of Kyoto University to be honored in this way. The ceremony was presided over by President Hiroo Imura.

Professor Bird was one of the first researchers to show how to estimate transport properties, such as viscosity, thermal conductivity, and diffusivity for gases and liquids, by using non-equilibrium statistical mechanics along with a realistic intermolecular force law. He also made major contributions to the field of non-Newtonian fluid dynamics, particularly in connection with the development of nonlinear constitutive equations for describing the rheological properties of polymers and for solving flow problems. More recently he has made important contributions to the field of material science by the use of statistical mechanics to explain the rheological and other properties of polymer melts and solutions by using realistic molecular models for these industrially important fluids.

He has emphasized that the descriptions of the transport of mass, momentum, and energy are mathematically similar, and that it is advantageous to teach all three transport phenomena simultaneously. He has thus created a new academic discipline, “Transport Phenomena”, which has exerted great influence not only on chemical engineering but also on other branches of engineering. His scholarly work has been the basis for several textbooks and monographs, and these have been translated into various foreign languages, thereby influencing scientists and engineers throughout the world.

After the first visit of Professor Bird to Kyoto University in November of 1961, he taught for six months at our university as a Fulbright exchange professor in 1962. During that period he collaborated with professors of the Faculty of Engineering in various aspects of education and research. His course “Transport Phenomena” made an important contribution by emphasizing the importance of engineering science in chemical engineering research, and by influencing research on non-Newtonian fluid dynamics. Subsequently he has made four visits to Kyoto University, giving lectures and seminars and interacting with faculty and graduate students in their research projects. In addition he has been active in arranging for professors and research students to visit the University of Wisconsin, so in this way too influencing the research activities of the Faculty of Engineering at Kyoto University. Being an enthusiastic Japanophile, Professor Bird commands spoken and written Japanese. His speech at the banquet and the memorial lecture was delivered entirely in Japanese, impressing and delighting his audience immensely.