外国人客員所員を経験して

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Shortly after my arrival in Japan at the end of August, the 2020 summer Olympic games were granted to Tokyo. It was thanks to Christel Takigawa's speech in the run-up to this event that I became aware of おもてなし, an idea which would come to define my stay here. Before listing some of my experiences of おもてなし from the last three months, however, a little bit of background on how I ended up in Kashiwa.

When not in Japan, I work as an instrument scientist at the Institut Laue-Langevin (ILL), a neutron scattering facility in Grenoble, France. My tasks there involve running and maintaining a neutron spectrometer called D7, as well as taking care of the scientists who come from all over the world to use it. The neutron source at the ILL was shut down for a year of maintenance in August, leaving me free to go on sabbatical for some of that time. The ISSP was a natural choice of destination given my past here; starting in 2011, I spent just over a year as a postdoc in Hiroi Zenji-sensei's laboratory. That time was both a great adventure and exceptionally productive, and when it came to an end, I regretted I could not stay a little longer. This visiting professorship finally gave me the possibility to do just that.

Arriving in Kashiwa after a long flight on a hot August day, it was a relief to be taken directly to my accommodation by the ever-helpful Kameda Akiko-san and Seki Chihiro-san from the International Liaison Office. In the following couple of days, they helped me open a bank account, organize a residence permit, and buy various supplies for the apartment. This now (as then) strikes me as an excellent example of おもてなし.

Later on in my stay, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to make several trips around Japan, both for work and for pleasure. Although I visited many beautiful places on these journeys, the most rewarding part was always making contact with the local people. Some examples of this include being invited by for a home-cooked meal by complete strangers in a small village on Shikoku, and enjoying local shochu with an inn owner in Kyushu.

Closer to home, I also found myself welcomed by both friends and strangers. Yamauchi Touru-san not only invited me to participate in lunch-time soccer in Kashiwanoha park, but also to his home for a great dinner party. I was able to take part in a great Joukyo gathering thanks to Miyake Atsushi-san, a fellow (former) Grenoblois. Finally, Miyata Seiichi-san at the Yoshida House Museum in Kashiwa (much recommended, incidentally) gave me a personal guided tour and delicious persimmons from the garden.

It was an excellent 3 months. Thank you for the 350 t, and hope to see you again.