Essay

◆◆◆ *Voice of Students* ◆◆◆
Experience during studying in Japan

Nattapong Kitsuwan, Dr.,
Oki Laboratory, Graduate School of Communication Engineering and Informatics, The University of Electro-Communications, Tokyo

Preface

I am pleased to have an opportunity to write this article, especially for students who are studying or consider to study in Japan. I have been studying in Japan for 8 years for my PhD at the University of Electro-Communications. I would have left Japan for a post-doc position at Trinity College Dublin, Ireland and already started the academic life there.

Why does one choose to study in Japan, while many PhD programs are available in my mother country, Thailand as well? I also had the same question for myself at first. When I had an experience of exchange program in Japan, I could find the answer to this question as follows.

Studying in Japan

A short term international exchange program was available between my university in Thailand and a Japanese university when I was a master student. There, all of classes were provided in English. I joined this program and learnt not only major subjects in the class, but also the history, culture, language and educational system of Japan. In due course, some ideas for above question have come up in my mind:

1. The fundamental strategy in Japanese education system looks different from that in Thai education system. In Japan, the creation and pioneer must be more important than building something products and selling them. This will be very important for my future career as well.

2. Generally speaking, most of PhD students need the budget to support their research activities, some Japanese Universities support the budget while the students have to support a considerable part of it by themselves. On the other hand, the Government of Japan provides the full scholarship to selected candidates.

3. As I love to know people trough traveling, this will be a good chance to open a new experience in different culture, people.

Since I got these answers, there was no doubt to delay the decision to return to Japan for my PhD. I immediately consulted my prior advisor in Japan if I can gain the Government scholarship for me to study in Japan again, for the PhD.

After I completed the short term exchange program, once I went back to Thailand and waited for the scholarship for two years. The advisor told me that there was a scholarship provided by Japanese Government, so called Monbukagakusho (MEXT) scholarship and recommended me to have the examination for this scholarship. I successfully passed the examination and returned to Japan.

Access to the Scholarship

Two procedures are available in applying for the MEXT scholarship. The first procedure is to apply via Japan Embassy in the applicant's residential country. The second procedure is to apply directly to a potential university in Japan. In the first choice, the candidate has to hold outstanding academic records and Japanese language proficiency before going to Japan. It also is required to pass the examination for the scholarship. Fortunately, I have a connection in Japan, which is my prior advisor. I applied the scholarship through the second choice. The main reason was that my advisor could recommend me with my academic records and then, the further examination was not required.

As soon as I came back to Japan, I became a regular PhD student. However, all of classes are given in Japanese. I had to work harder than Japanese students to understand both details of subjects and technical vocabularies which I did not study in any prior Japanese classes.

Academic Activities through IEICE

Adding to core subjects, the research was important as well. In the research on optical network which I selected, the main topics were to reduce the data loss in designing an optical switch and create a matching algorithm to operate the switch. In conducting any research, the basic knowledge of the research field, logical thinking to evolve the research, new idea and programming skills were needed.

Then, "how to find a research topic?". The first step was the study of the background in a wide area related to the research field that was not so popular yet at the moment. It was easier for me to propose ideas than a popular field publishing quite many papers, further the topic did not conflict with the other research topics. The second step was to find more interesting problem of the topic area. It became easier through gaining relevant knowledge and experience.

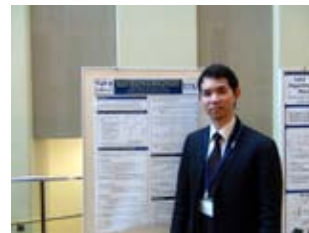Fig.1 With colleagues of Oki Laboratory, UEC

Fig.2 At the Poster Session of COIN2012 sponsored by IEICE

Staying in Japan, I could be devoted to a lot of research activities, covering lab seminars, presentation in international conferences, assistant works as Research Assistant and Teaching Assistant in the university. Above all, the presentation in conferences encouraged myself. Since the chance of presentation promotes myself to systematize my own strategy of research, exchange opinions and share my ideas with the participants in the same special field. In addition to my paper publication, the experience of journal / conference paper reviewers and session chairs in IEICE activities and international conferences were very valuable for me. Further, in 2012, one of my papers fortunately received the Outstanding Paper Award in an IEEE conference. I will join IEICE Bangkok Section which has affected young scholars, after my return, extend my academic activities and further contribute to fostering next generation of scholars.

I would like to thank my advisor and many leading people for their kind support to my PhD works and academic life in Japan. I will join it and after my return as well. I wish my experience would stimulate younger people who want to study in Japan, with a question "Why do I want to do this?".

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
Note by IEICE-TFIPP (Kenzo Takahashi, Prof.)
The author has experienced quite a lot of academic activities while he studied as a scholar in Japan. He also published 14 journal papers, 25 international conference papers and 15 domestic papers in IEICE Technical Reports on Photonic Network. His information will be useful for young potential scholars.

Hot Topics

The Success of IWSEC2012 and Invitation to IWSEC2013

Kanta Matsuura, Assc Prof., Dr.,
Institute of Industrial Science,
The University of Tokyo,
General Co-chair of IWSEC2012,
IEICE Engineering Sciences Society

What is IWSEC?

International Workshop on Security is an annual international conference co-organized by ISEC (a technical committee on Information Security in Engineering Sciences Society of IEICE) and CSEC (a special interest group on Computer Security of Information Processing Society of Japan). The first edition of IWSEC (IWSEC2006) was held in Kyoto between October 23 and 24, 2006. Its proceedings were published as an LNCS (Lecture Notes in Computer Science) volume from Springer. The welcome address of IWSEC2006 included the following statement: "The complex structure of networks, middleware, agents, P2P applications and ubiquitous computing for commercial, personal, communal and public use, brought forth the advent of information society in the cyberspace. However, the system poses new and diverse threats to the world. It is imperative for the security researchers to look into the issues from an interdisciplinary perspective. The aim of IWSEC2006 is to contribute to security research and development addressing the topics from traditional theory and tools on security to up-to-date issues." Since then, with keeping this aim, IWSEC has been held in Japan every year and the proceedings were published as LNCS volume every time.

Success of IWSEC2012

The Seventh International Workshop on Security (IWSEC2012) was successfully held in Fukuoka, Japan, between November 7 and 9, 2012. First of all, as a General Co-chair of IWSEC2012, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all the sponsors, authors, participants, and committee members. In fact, the conference got bigger than the previous year's edition. 117 people participated there from nine countries. The acceptance rate of regular papers is 31%, and the 16 accepted regular papers are contained in the volume 7631 of the LNCS series. Their topics are ranging from theoretical ones to practical ones such as implementation issues. The speakers, including the winner of Best Paper Award and the winner of Best Student Paper Award, enjoyed and benefited from active discussions in the sessions. In addition to the regular papers, the success of IWSEC2012 was based on the following three programs.

First, we had four outstanding invited talks: "Ron was wrong, Whit is right" by Mr. James Hughes, "The Insider Problem, Inside Out" by Prof. Matt Bishop, "Recent Topics on Functional Encryption" by Dr. Katsuyuki Takashima, and "Challenges for Making Scalable Security Management for Information and Communication Infrastructure" by Prof. Suguru Yamaguchi. This divergence of the topics follows the purpose of IWSEC.

Second, IWSEC2012 had a poster session to enhance contributions by young researchers. The poster deadline was just one week before the conference so that many works-in-progresses can be submitted. As a result, 31 posters were presented and four of them won Best Poster Award.

Third, IWSEC2012 had a malware-analysis competition (IWSEC Cup 2012). Four teams from three countries competed in two stages. The first stage is the analysis of malware-related data provided by the Cup organizer. The participating teams tried to give as many correct answers as possible to the questions about the data. The second stage is called the presentation session where each team talked about how they successfully analyzed the data or struggled with them. Four judges evaluated the presentations. The scoring system is based on two components: the technical component and the artistic component. The latter is a unique feature of this event; even if the technical answers are wrong, they can obtain high score in this component when the failure is presented in an instructive manner. Fig.1 is a group photo of the participating teams and the organizers. They did not only compete but also made the international friendship stronger.

Fig.3 Conference organizers and some of team members in the International Workshop IWSEC2012

Invitation to IWSEC2013

The next edition of IWSEC (IWSEC2013) will be held in Okinawa, Japan, between November 18 and 20, 2013. The submission deadline of regular papers is planned to be at the beginning of May. Okinawa is a fantastic island in the southern part of Japan. If you are interested in information security, I would recommend you to keep in touch with the Web page of IWSEC (*http://www.iwsec.org/index.html*) and join IWSEC2013. Okinawa's tropical hospitality will surely welcome you.

~~~~~~

Upcoming International Conferences

COOL Chips XVI -IEICE Electronics Soc., IEEE, IPSJ, in Yokohama, Japan, on April 17-19, 2013, *http://www.coolchips.org/*
PEDS 2013- IEICE Kyushu Section, IEEE, IEEJ, in Kitakyushu, Japan, on April 22-25, 2013, *http://www.peds2013.org/tutorial.html*
Kaleidoscope2013 - IEICE, ITU, Kyoto University, et al, in Kyoto, Japan, on April 22-24, 2013, *http://www.itu.int/ITU-T/uni/ kaleidoscope/2013/*
EMTS2013- IEICE Electronics Soc., URSI Commission B, technical sponsorship by IEICE Communications Soc., in Hiroshima, Japan, on May 20-24, 2013, *http://ursi-emts2013.org/*
ICTF2013- IEICE Europe Section, technically co-sponsored by IEICE Communications Soc., in Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina, on May 29-31, 2013, *http://www.ieice-europe.org/ictf/*
CLEO Pacific Rim 2013- IEICE Communications Soc. and IEICE Electronics Soc., in Kyoto, Japan, on June 30-July 4, 2013, *http://www.cleopr-oecc-ps2013.org*
OECC/PS2013- IEICE Communications Soc. and IEICE Electronics Soc., in Kyoto, Japan, on July 1-5, 2013, *http://www.cleopr-oecc-ps2013.org*
APSAR 2013-IEICE Electronics Soc., IEEE, in Tsukuba, Japan,on September 23-27,2013,*http://www.apsar2013.org/sponsors.html*
MWP 2013 - IEICE Electronics Soc., IEEE, in Virginia, USA, on October 28-31, 2-13, *http://www.mwp2013.org/*
IWSEC2013- IEICE Engineering Soc., in Okinawa, Japan, on November 18-20, 2013, http://www.iwsec.org/2013/
EMC'14/Tokyo- IEICE Communications Soc., in Tokyo, Japan, on May 13-16, 2014, *http://www.ieice.org/~emc14/*

~~~~~~

Message from TFIPP Secretariat

This issue is delivered also by a free mail magazine "IEICE Global Plaza on Line" with updated news of interest for you. Please contact Prof. Takahashi, TFIPP (Task Force for International Policy and Planning) at *global@ieice.org*, if you need. Back numbers are available in archives at: *http://www.ieice.org/eng/global_plaza/index.html*