

Natural beauty and environmental pollution of Kamikōchi

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The field trip organized by FOLENS program to Kamikōchi in Nagano prefecture was my first visit outside of Fuchu, Tokyo. I have gained lots of knowledge regarding natural beauty of that place and environmental pollution happening there. Before going to this place I thought there might be snow fall because the temperature was -4°C at last night of our starting day. I have never faced such kind of weather so, I was little bit worried but fortunately we did not find any snow fall and we could visit several places without any problem. We started our journey at 7:00 am on October 29, 2011 from our campus and reached at Kamikōchi at around 11:30 am. During our journey one of our sensei (Ozaki sensei)



were describing the scenario we were passing through. I was observing agricultural field at the road side and thinking about the differences between agriculture in my country (Bangladesh) and in Japan. I found all agricultural farms in Japan are equipped with modern agricultural tools and technologies and some farms have greenhouse and shade house which we do not have in our country. In Bangladesh, we are still

using conventional agricultural tools and technologies. After arriving at Kamikōchi, Furuichi sensei gave his speech about the landscape of that place. Kamikōchi is located in the Hida Mountains, the northern part of the Japan Alps. Kamikōchi is bordered on its northern end by Mount Hotaka, and on its southern end by Mount Yakedake, an active volcano. He said, Yakedake is one of the 100 famous Japanese Mountains, reaching 2,455 m (8,054 ft) at the highest peak. In 1911, 22 minor eruptions were recorded. In 1915, during the Taishō period, however, there was a major eruption. The flow of the lava blocked the Asuza River, which caused the



river to form a lake that was named Lake Taishō. In 1962, there was an eruption that killed two people staying at a small hut near the mouth of the volcano. This mountain becomes active in every 10000 years. I saw some smoke at the top of the mountain coming from the inside. The water of Taishō Lake was as clean as I could see the soil under the water. Furuichi sensei talked about some other mountain how these

mountains formed. One million years ago these places were under 2000m of water and now the mountain become 1800m high from the ground. So, it was take long time to form a mountain and still now its height increasing day by day. I saw some birds swimming over the lake water and they came as closer to me as I can touch. After Furuichi sensei's speech Ozaki sensei described us how this place were getting polluted. He said maximum pollution was made by human (tourists) and vehicles. Chemical emission from the automobiles created air pollution. Temperature is raising day by day which affecting natural ecosystem in this location. Some animals and birds of this area cannot move freely for the tourists. Soil pollution was occurred for the garbage left by the tourists. After having my lunch I met a tourist guide who was voluntarily guiding tourists for the long time. He showed us the natural beauty of different places. He was talking about the ancient silkworm farmer who would keep silkworm eggs inside the mountain and bring out when needed. Once there were so many silkworm



farmers but now they have been disappeared. The soil of this area was made of Granite which is so compact and strong. When soil comes in contact of water and airs it swell and broken into small particle. Some natural disasters destroyed trees of that area and after that people again planted seedling and thus some artificial forest were created. I saw differences between artificial forest and natural forest. Natural trees

were green and trees of manmade forest were yellow in color. I saw Tashiro Pond, Weston Monument, Kappabashi (Kappa Bridge) and Myojin Pond. Kappabashi is a suspension bridge over Azusa River in the center of Kamikochi. When I was walking over the bridge it was shaking and I felt like earthquake happening there. At night I enjoyed cooking and cultural program. We made fire to keep us worm. All of our sensei including us sang song in our own languages. We made lots of funs, ate different kind of foods and drinks. I really enjoyed cultural events with different students came from different countries and sensei.



After the cultural program at 9:30pm I went to the rest house for sleeping. That was the story of all day long I will never forget.