

My Short Stay at Cavendish Laboratory

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Under the chilly atmosphere, I was studying a spectroscopic technique in the central library located near the big shopping place. The elder lady sat just beside me asked with her gentle voice, “what are you studying?” The book about basic quantum mechanics that I brought from Japan attracted her interest. I talked with her for just a quarter of an hour. The city of Cambridge is a city of students, a city of academic research, and a city of kind people who encourage all academics. The most surprising thing was her first question “which is the Schrödinger equation?” She is not a scientist but just a citizen there. Nevertheless, the citizen knew not only the physicist’s name but also what he tells, even a couple of his famous equations. Can we meet such a situation in our hometowns in Japan? According to her, most people living in Cambridge know his name. In fact, they have many bookshops that display a lot of physics on a table with facile access. The whole town encourages their academic works.

I spent almost a month in the laboratory of Microelectronics group led by Prof. H. Sirringhaus in Cambridge University. It is one of the top-rank universities in the world. I found some reasons and differences compared to those in Japan (of course, only based on my tiny experience and what I heard from my friends. I believe there are some exceptions).

First, they provide many opportunities quite naturally



The replica of the electron tube invented by J. J. Thomson.



Small “museum” at upstairs.

to feel and touch the

contents related to science. Such contents lie silently but are fully integrated in their daily lives. For example, the buildings in the campus are called with the names of famous scientists. Besides, I noticed that there is a small museum space in the upstairs when I walked around the building. The exhibitions mainly focused on famous scientists in Cambridge University – J. J. Thomson, J. C. Maxwell, etc. These are small things and we cannot observe their effects, but I believe they play important roles, especially on education for undergraduate students, to spark their interests and

recall pure memories of their childhoods. In addition, Cambridge University provides the system of college. When the students enter the college, they spend their whole lives there. They study science, play football, enjoy dinner, and sleep with their colleagues inside the college. The system also encourages them through community activities. I worked mostly on the conductivity measurement of organic semiconductors in Cavendish laboratory. They have proper and adequate equipment for optical/electrical measurements. Technicians and maintenance people (even cleaning staffs!) fully supported our daily experiments and provided so comfortable working space that we could easily concentrate on science.

UK is full of gratitude. My community was full of smile. I found an interesting positive chain there. Indeed, you will get a few tens of “thank you” in a day with nice smile☺. Whenever you keep the door open, give a seat, pass something, you will meet him. This small but distinct phrase seems to motivate them to be more attentive, even gives small happiness. All such actions are, of course, based on their thoughtful



One of the colleges in the city of Cambridge.

consideration for others but perhaps they also expect and are satisfied with the positive feedback



The view from my seat. The colleague loves and celebrates Christmas.

unconsciously. I feel that they cherish and take care of their individual lives much more than Japanese. If we want to make others happy, we can achieve it not only by making others happy directly but also by making ourselves happy. Such habit seems to an integral part of their daily lives. It's simple and easy, but it is quite surprising considering the fact that a lot of people are coming from different countries with their own backgrounds. It has a

huge influence on their lives. As long as we live, we need to keep learning how to live.

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