

Final report~unforgettable experience in Takahata fieldwork

Shinnosuke Miura

I have been to Takahata, Yamagata as fieldwork, which made me notice of importance of agriculture and rural areas. Urban area give us full of convenience with little difficulties. There are lot of convenience store and they are open 24hours 7days. Even if we don't have vehicle, we can use public transportation to visit anyplace in metropolitan region. However the experience of Takahata fieldwork taught me that urban area is sustained by rural area and city cannot exist by itself.



(Photo by professor)

Agriculture

Most people who grown up in rural areas think agriculture is something saggy, duty and hardworking. Actually, I was also the one of those had not good images about agriculture. I visited Takahata junior high school on the first day. Some of students in agriculture club taught us how to cultivate. Although cultivating seemed not so difficult while lecture (maybe because junior high school students can do it easily), It requires appropriate operation and it was so hard for us. I was so surprised at difficulties and the skill of students. According to chief student, almost all of them are familiar with agriculture from the early days because their husbands are farmers. They said they are planning to be farmers like their husband. I felt they worth respecting because even most our university students have not yet decided about future.



(Photo by me)



(Photo by professor)

Next day, I participated agricultural lecture by Arae-san in grape farm. After short explanations, I started to cut unnecessary leaves and small grapes which prevent sweet grapes from growing. In order to make good grapes for wine, only two grapes is needed per one stem. Although we felt it was “mottainai” , it was mandatory because large portions of low quality grapes cannot be profitable. So Arae-san told us that those who are greedy cannot be farmer, we need to be humble, and it is ‘More haste, less speed’.



(Photo by Alice)

In addition, what I surprised was his consideration for nature. He makes sure that there are no material which cannot back to soil in their farm. So he chosen the paper which back to the earth to wrap grapes. When he harvest, he just take grapes and leave the paper on the ground. It looks a little bit messy. However, these papers can be resolved easily by micro organism and become nutrition for the next crops. He said that just plastics will remain without resolution. I noticed the demand of material other than plastic for sustainable agriculture.



(Photo by me)

Importance of rural area

Arae-san not only taught us the importance of agriculture, but also helped us think that there are need for anyone to have feeling of home. Actually, no one out of us are from Takahata, but we can feel like in warm, quiet, beautiful home regardless of nationalities. The wife of Arae-san cooked lunch for us. That was traditional Japanese dish made from fresh ingredient which is rare or so expensive in metropolitan area.



(Photo by me)



(Photo by Luna)

Takahata has a lot of beautiful nature. Because of that, they could change the direction after failure while high economic growth. The culture which appreciates nature is growing. Although we often eat products without any thinking, we must think that rural communities give us healthy good foods and express our gratitude.



(Photos by me)