
My three years in JAERI:an impressive, deep experience

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For the last three years I have the great opportunity to work as a JAERI research fellow in the Advanced Science Research Center (ASRC) in JAERI Tokai. Now, almost at the end of this period I'm trying to put my thoughts together and review what I have learned, not only in the area I worked in, but also about the Japanese way of life. This is not an easy task. The way the research is organized in ASRC, with specialized research groups put me in a direct work contact with three other groups. Besides, I worked also in a broad collaboration with research groups literally across Japan. This is, of course, a challenge to learn important specific investigation techniques, but probably you have to be a foreigner in order to fully appreciate what means to be able to be connected at once, from the beginning, not only to your group but with a significant and large research network. This is especially important and very helpful for your work when there are difficult cultural and language barriers to overcome, as it was in my case.

I will not even attempt to summarize here what I have seen and learn from the Japanese lifestyle and Japan itself. There are far to many beautiful and amazing things, but, at least, I can say that the usual tourist-like cliches are terribly limited. Now, limiting myself to what I found different in JAERI from my home country institute (which, at smaller proportions, shares somehow the same organizational basis), I was impressed by the team life of my colleague researchers. This does not only concern the work itself, which is normal, thought in Japan this seems to be taken with an additional

sense of personal responsibility, but also covers much of the free time. And extends from young Ph.D. students to professors and group leaders. As a matter of fact, I found as a very good policy the idea to bring to work in such a prestigious institute also Ph.D. students. That way helps the students allowing them to be directly involved in research fields and at facilities which are more difficult to have in an university and also determines the researchers to share their knowledge in a more didactic way. This is a system which needed more appreciation in my home institute.

For myself, I was able to expand my research field on Strongly Correlated Electron Systems with investigations on U-based compounds, which was a marvelous opportunity due to the fact that only few institutions in Europe are able to assure the safety conditions necessary to work with radioactive materials. I have also had the great privilege to learn directly from the experience of valuable well known specialists like Professor Onuki, my group leader, or Professor Yasuoka, the ASRC director. It was also a great privilege to work with high level researchers as are all my colleagues here. In fact I knew that the JAERI standards are generally very high and the ASRC are in particular even higher, and now I am very proud to be their co-worker.

Finally I must mention that, due to the help of my colleagues, and especially of Dr. Haga, I was able to overcome very easily all the administrative and organizational troubles and I am very grateful for their help and patience with me, most of the time lost in a flow of puzzling kanji.