

Kamikouchi field work

Chihiro Yamaguchi

2nd year, International Environmental and Agricultural Science, TUAT

Kamikouchi is known as one of most famous sightseeing place in Japan. Although I have been to Kamikouchi once, I was so child and had only memory which there was very cool and beautiful. Now I have studied about agriculture, environmental issue, regional development and so on after entrance of undergraduate and graduate school. Then I could place Kamikouchi and Daiou wasabi farm in various perspectives.

Kamikouchi conserves beautiful landscapes, and is popular as eco-tourism and green-tourism. The number of visitor in Kamikouchi has been increasing explosively since 1985, and now there are more than 1.5 million visitors per one year. And yet, that causes one of damages to nature in Kamikouchi. If human activity increases too much, plants ravages, the trash increases and the eco-system of the land will be damaged. In fact, eutrophication and contamination is confirmed in Taisho-ike. Heavy metal concentration in soil and dust by too many cars is pointed out. In addition, Genji-Hotaru inhabited ever in Kamikouchi turned out to be must live in the Western Japan actually as a result of the genetic analysis, and many people are apprehensive that this Genji-Hotaru was brought in that place artificially. Against these situation, Kamikouchi side established a group called "Kamikouchi Preservation" (上高地を美しくする会) by local community to clean there, and pay attention to keeping clean for visitors. People there want to invite visitors, but don't want to damage to its nature. I thought that the tourist business and the conservation of the nature contradict each other.



Fig. 1 Explanation of the environment in Kamikouchi

Second day, we visited Daiou wasabi farm. Nagano prefecture is famous as a major source of wasabi, and it is essential for Japanese food as a spice. Wasabi, however, made our foreign students declining their appetite. Cultivation of wasabi needs very clear water and is limited in Japan. Also, its scientific name is *Wasabi Japonica* because origin of wasabi is Japan. This time I could talk with a shop staff about Daiou wasabi farm. According to her talking, it takes two years to grow up from seeding to harvesting here, and Daiou wasabi farm keeps the cycle adjusted seeding period to harvest through one year. This wasabi farm was established by one farmer named Yuichi Fukazawa in 1917, and today makes good business sense. This farm's area is 15ha. This size is as large as the field which our university possesses in Fuchu campus. I was surprised at not only cultivating wasabi but also

being nice eco-tourism as sightseeing. While TPP is trouble in Japan, this good model should be imitated by a lot of farmers.

In this field work, we could feel nature and find out the problem lurking there. A foreign student said to me, “Japan is so wonderful not to forget to conserve nature, while developing.” That word made me so happy. This field work is an important chance which both Japanese and foreign students could understand Japanese culture and nature.



Fig. 2 Cultivation of wasabi in Daiou wasabi farm