

Excursions

Forklift trucks at Toyota Takahama Plant in Takahama city

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Toyota Takahama Plant in Takahama city is the core of Toyota Material Handling Group (TMHG) and had a 18.8% global market of the forklift in 2010.

It was not my first time to visit a Toyota factory but it was my first visit to Toyota Takahama Plant. This visit to the Toyota L&F factory producing forklift trucks, was an opportunity to see firsthand how forklifts are diligently assembled, step by step, to high quality forklifts.

Before going to the factory, we were briefed about the production system and policy at the Takahama Plant. It was very impressive to learn how they adopted the basic concept of "jidoka" (automation) and "just in time". In the "Jidoka" concept, if there are any problems, the machine involved automatically stops and operators stop work and correct the problem immediately so that no defective products are made; and the "just in time" concepts means producing and supplying only what is needed, when it is needed, and in the amount needed by the next step in the production process. This approach reduces waste that may arise by overproduction. The Takahama Plant also puts great effort on ensuring that only high quality products are manufactured.

Although this factory employs such a high working attitude, in Takahama Plant, workers put safety first and we saw how they are trained intensively about their safety so that they understand safe and less safe situations.

We also had the opportunity to see the "dojo" or learning facility for assembly, welding, and painting for the workers before they work in the actual factory to enhance operator skills. Also, the Takahama Plant has many robots which work in harmony with workers.

This excursion study gave me and my colleagues a better understanding of an industrial manufacturing system not only at Toyota but in Japan.

I would like to thank Toyohashi University of Technology, Greater Nagoya Initiative Center and the Management of Takahama Plant for this excursion study. I am looking forward to another excursion trip for insights into the Japanese industrial system.



Toyohashi Tech students at the Toyota Takahama Plant in Takahama city.

Mt. Horaiji Climbing and Buckwheat Noodle Cooking

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On Sunday December 9th, Toyohashi Tech friends and I took part in the "Mt. Horaiji Climbing and Buckwheat Noodle Cooking" event organized by Shinshiro International Exchange Association Youth Group in Shinshiro City.

At 8:45, we gathered in front of the building of Administration office at Toyohashi Tech and got on the bus and departed at 9 o'clock. We first went to Shinshiro City Hall to pick up some other members at 10:15. Then we headed to Mt. Horaiji together.

At 11 o'clock we arrived and there was a small village near the base of a mountain where we came across a shop of ink stones. For many of us it was the first time to see one. It was amazing. There were different shapes and colors of ink stones with beautiful patterns. They were quite expensive.

After that, we began climbing Mt. Horaiji along with many other people along the route. The organizers said that there are 1245 stairs leading to the top. It was slightly tiring but a pleasant challenge and a great experience.

We eventually reached the top at one o'clock. We were all cheerful. We saw Horaiji temple and from the mountain top—the sight was spectacular and wonderful.

At 13:30 we went to a place called "Kemmin no Mori" to make buckwheat noodles, known as soba in Japanese. There were kind ladies who were professionals in making buckwheat noodles and they showed us how to make it. We then formed groups and everyone did their best. When we finished, each group took their noodles to the restaurant (Yamabiko no Oka) nearby for lunch. We were served with a lunch of delicious buckwheat noodles. We all enjoyed the experience and had great fun. The association members invited us to take part in similar events they plan to organize in the future. Everybody agreed and we left the restaurant at 16:00.

On our way back to Toyohashi Tech we saw a beautiful sunset. We finally arrived at 17:20. Overall, it was a memorable and wonderful event. For us, the day seemed too short. I would like to thank the organizers, Toyohashi University of Technology as well as all the participants.



Group photograph at the front of a temple



Group photograph in front of a shop of ink stones



Making 'soba'- buckw heat noodles



Walking to the restaurant with 'soba' noodles