

EAA Yamanakako Field Trip (2023/12/9-12/10)

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The field trip to Yamanakako during the weekend of 12/9-12/10 has been a fun opportunity for us to interact with PKU students and discuss our academic interests together in this beautiful natural environment. It was very nice to travel there by the bus organized by EAA and stay in the Yamanakaryo, which is part of the UTokyo property.

After having a relaxing lunch in a nice restaurant next to Yamanakako, we walked along the lake to check in the Yamanakaryo. To be honest, I was really surprised by how spacious and cozy the rooms are. I also really enjoyed the shared areas with comfortable sofas and a fireplace. The program started with a walk with staff from the research institute over there (富士癒しの森散策). Their main job is to manage the forest and the visits to the land and accommodation. The term “manage” presents quite a new concept to me as the forest is created and managed by men for multiple purposes, such as scientific experiments, forest therapy, etc.

There is an experimental forest (実証林) specifically where researchers can conduct research related to wood, but the whole forest area is designed for multipurpose, which means the property is relevant to many different faculties of the university. This area belongs to the Faculty of Agriculture, so their students visit from time to time. However, students from the Faculty of Medicine also come to investigate the relationship between therapy (stress release) and forest. Moreover, some students from the Faculty of Engineering also conduct experiments here. The venue is also used for some university sports clubs' summer gakushu (合宿) and local activities (e.g. summer concerts, etc.).

As an Environmental Sciences student, the information we were given during the walk about the natural environment and humans was especially relevant to me. I did not expect to have such experience relevant to my own major on a field trip with EAA, and it really inspired me in many aspects.

To conclude the day, I went on a cycling trip around Yamanakako with two PKU friends and it turned out to be the highlight of the field trip. We saw the entirety of Fujisan during sunset time – it was such a relaxing, calming, peaceful moment. Afterwards, we enjoyed a well-prepared Japanese-style dinner followed by watching the documentary on Mishima Yukio (Mishima: The Last Debate) with the whole

group. This documentary was an interesting introduction to a famous Japanese figure that I was not originally very familiar with.

The first day of the field trip was full of enjoyable, novel, intriguing, and informative content. Compared to that, the arrangement of the second day was less packed. The main activity was to experience making Houtou ourselves, which is a local food similar to udon in Yamanashi prefecture. It was very fun to make the dough, stretch the noodles, and cut them up with everyone else. We headed back to Tokyo from Kawaguchiko station by public buses at different times, since it gives us more flexibility in touring around the area.

This field trip has become an unforgettable memory of the year, and I really appreciate the opportunity that EAA has provided us to immerse ourselves in academics, friendship, and beautiful nature.

