

JSPS Invitation Fellowship Experience

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It was a great experience doing research in Japan. After 60 days of my fellowship I was able to complete the research work that I planned. First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to researchers and staff at Shibasaki & Sekimoto Lab, University of Tokyo for their warm welcome and support. Special thanks to everyone who was part of the research team that contributed significantly to the project, namely Dr Teerayut Horanont, Dr Apichon Witayangkurn, Ms Raktida Siri, Dr Yoshihide Sekimoto, and Prof Ryosuke Shibasaki. The project's aim was to develop a framework that capitalizes on large-scale opportunistic mobile sensing approach in tourist behavior analysis. We used massive mobile phone GPS locations records to study tourist travel behavior i.e., amount of trips made, time spent at destinations, and mode of transportation used. Moreover, this study examined the relationship between personal mobility and tourist travel behavior and offered a number of interesting insights that are useful for tourism such as tourist flows, top tourist destinations/origins, top destination types, top modes of transportation in terms of time spent and distance travelled, and how personal mobility information can be used to estimate the likelihood in tourist travel behavior i.e., amount of trips, time spent at destinations, and trip distance. Furthermore, we developed an application based on the analysis in this study that allows the user to observe and analyze commuting, touristic, and non-touristic trips along with home and workplace locations as well as tourist flows, which can be useful for urban planners, transportation management, and tourist authorities. The project was successfully completed. The results and findings generated from the project will be submitted for a journal publication. The interdisciplinary nature of the project brought together researchers from different backgrounds; computer science, geographic information systems, and tourism management, to develop new usable knowledge and applications. Apart from conducting a research, I found living in Tokyo was pleasant. Although my Japanese speaking skill was very limited, I was able to carry on with my daily activities with little problems. Most of Japanese people did not speak much English but they were very friendly and helpful, which made my stay very pleasant. I enjoyed learning Japanese culture and traditions, as well as visiting temples and shrines. Many restaurants made it easier for foreigners to order food as they provided pictures of serving dishes and kiosk for placing order (or printing out tickets/coupons for food). My tips for future JSPS fellows are firstly to bring presents for your host institute when you arrive on your first day – it is a Japanese tradition. Secondly, prepare to take off your shoes when enter your flat, someone's house, research lab, and even fitting room at department store. Lastly, do not eat while walking – it is considered impolite in Japan. Hope you will enjoy your visit in Japan as much as I did.

