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Hello! I am Devin from Indonesia. April 2022 commemorates my 10<sup>th</sup> year in Japan. Currently, I am working as a research engineer in the Kajima Technical Research Institute (KATRI) of Kajima Corporation (Kajima). I would like to express my gratitude to the JSCE Concrete Committee for giving me the opportunity to share my experiences on living and working in Japan.

I came to Japan in April 2013, joining the MEXT Program for undergraduate study. After spending a year studying Japanese language, in April 2014, I entered Tokyo Institute of Technology (TokyoTech) in the Civil and Environmental Engineering major.

In the final year of my undergraduate study and another 2 years of graduate study, I joined the Niwa Lab, a research laboratory that specialized in concrete structures, under the supervision of Professor Junichiro Niwa. I gained a lot of knowledge and interest regarding concrete structures through my research, as the experimental works consisted of designing, manufacturing, and loading tests of RC and PC beams.

Through the experiences I had in Niwa Lab, I was determined to pursue a career in Japan, in the construction field where I can utilize the things I have learned. After several selections, In April 2020, I joined Kajima, one of the leading general contractors in Japan, and started my career as a research engineer at KATRI.

In KATRI, I am taking part in the development of new construction methods of concrete structures, and the study of structural properties of structures using new materials such as FRP. These jobs include experimental and analytical investigation, which are similar to my research work in Niwa Lab, but are bigger in scale, and involve more people, sometimes even customers. These jobs require me to improve my skills in precise planning and management, quick and accurate decision makings, and are accompanied with great responsibility for the executions. On the other hand, development of new methods requires me to have a flexible mindset, broad interest, creativity, and persistence. These jobs involve daily communication with colleagues, managers, partner companies and workers. The communication is all in Japanese (so far), and it must be brief and clear, which sometimes quite challenging for a foreigner like me. All of these would not be possible, without the support and guidance of senior employees of Kajima, which I am very grateful to.

Living and working alongside with Japanese people, I noticed that they tend to prefer the

conventional manual methods over the new and automated ones. Sometimes they are very cautious, that a change would take time for implementation. However, I also noticed that they are experts in finding the most efficient and effective solutions, which is one of many things that I admire from my senior employees.

My colleagues back in university and in my current job are very friendly and welcoming. Although the first-time meetings can be complicated, since both of us are worried whether we can communicate well or not, usually it improves after a few conversations. Although it became rare since Covid-19, I also enjoy having a casual 飲み会(nomikai—or in my words, a nice dinner with drinks) after a long working day, where I get to know my friends, colleagues, and the working culture better.

Japan is very systematic and convenient. After 2 years working in Kajima, and 9 years of living in Japan, I can say that although it comes with some challenges, I cherish living and working here, with the company of my Japanese friends and colleagues. New workstyles such as telework (work from home) allow more flexibility, and companies are trying new systems to improve the work productivity, and to provide better work-life-balance for their workers. I am looking forward to my future experiences in Japan.

Thank you for reading!



Photo-1 Civil Structures Group (KATRI)



Photo-2 Niwa Laboratory (TokyoTech)



Photo-3 Structural experiment room of KATRI