



A business trip to India

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I went to Trivandrum, Kerala, India, in the middle of January. I had several business meetings there with an IT company that has provided us with software development services for the past decade. I visit Trivandrum in this “Kerala’s winter” every year, reviewing our development activities from the previous year and discussing development plans for the forthcoming year. Although I say “winter,” it is a warm season. The minimum daily temperature is around 20 to 25°C. January is dry and comfortable, especially in the evening through to the following morning. People say it is the best season in Kerala.



A fine day in January

The Rigaku team of the IT company in Trivandrum consists of 20 to 30 members. Normally, specification documents are prepared in Rigaku Headquarters, and the specifications are sent to the Rigaku team by onsite engineers. Then, tasks such as requirement analysis, implementation, and testing are performed at the offshore development center in Trivandrum. All of the IT team members are not developing the same software, but are instead working separately on several projects.

The team in Kerala is mild-natured and very diligent. They always listen attentively to us and develop software in faithful accordance with the specification document that we prepare. This cooperation and attention to detail extends to implementation, preparation of test specifications by their experts and execution of these tests. Since developed software is delivered to us after the bugs/problems are identified and fixed, high-quality software can be produced.



The IT company has implemented several plugins of SmartLab Studio II.

The advantage of working with the IT company is not limited to just implementation and testing. Many engineers work at the Trivandrum office, and they introduce me to the latest software technologies every time I visit them. One of our primary missions is to learn new XRD analysis techniques at scientific conferences or workshops and apply them to our products. Additionally, acquiring cutting-edge software technologies enables us to develop industry-leading software. It is a big advantage for us to absorb a variety of the latest technologies—IoT, machine/deep learning, AR/VR, mobile apps—all of which will be needed in our business field.

During this visit, I went on a weekend outing with all the members of the Rigaku team. We went to a resort facility by bus, and there we enjoyed sports, games, and lunch together. I personally think that it is not only a perfect specification document or superior technology that yields excellent software. I believe this kind of interaction creates a close relationship that ultimately enhances the quality and performance of the software.



With the team members at the green tsavorite farm.

Lastly, I'd like to introduce a little about Kerala. Kerala state is located near the tip of the Indian peninsula, facing the Indian Ocean. The area of Kerala is about one-tenth of that of Japan, and more than 34 million people live there. June through September is the rainy season, so hot and humid days occur during those months. It is recommended to visit Kerala from December through February. Last August, Kerala was hit and heavily damaged by a worst-ever flood. I want to offer my deepest sympathy for the numerous affected people.

Trivandrum, the capital of Kerala, is officially called Thiruvananthapuram. There are many IT companies there. Recently, more than a few Japanese people take the same flight whenever I travel to Trivandrum. Probably the number of companies that collaborate with IT companies in Kerala is increasing.

I'm sorry—this is my personal opinion—but the meals in Kerala are so delicious! I always miss Kerala food very much when I come back from my business trips there. Curry and *naan* (bread) are the most popular “Indian foods” in Japan; however, in Kerala, rice or something made from rice is very popular instead of *naan*. Kerala rice (large grains) with fish curry or

basmati rice (good smell) with chicken masala is a standard combination there. People in Kerala often eat *dosa* and *appam* made from rice powder for breakfast. *Sambar* and *Kerala stew*, which people eat with *dosa* and *appam*, are amazing. *Sadya* is a special meal of Kerala, which is usually served at celebrations like wedding ceremonies. Various dishes are arranged with Kerala rice on a banana leaf, and you should eat them by mixing with your right hand. There is a restaurant where you can eat *sadya* in Trivandrum. Please try *sadya* at this restaurant if you have a chance to visit Trivandrum.



Masala omelette, chai, appam with Kerala stew for breakfast.