

Entering the sub-zero world.

The winter part of the European leg started in Ivalo in Lapland, northern Finland. Located within the Arctic Circle at the 69th parallel north, sunrise on the day the team arrived came at 10:11 a.m., and sunset at 1:39 p.m. The temperature was minus 20 ° Celsius (−4 ° F). The next day, the team would start two days

of drive training at Test World, where the world's automakers come to test their vehicles in winter conditions. First, the team receives a briefing on the fundamental rules of the road in Europe. The fact that traffic rules vary from country to country and what to watch out for when driving on the right (as opposed to the left) may be basic information, but the team must learn these both intellectually and then physically with their bodies if they are to

uphold the principle of Safety First. At the end of the briefing, Ide-san of TME, who is supervising the European leg of the 5 Continents Drive Project, told the team members, *"Laughing is important."* While team members took turns practicing their driving skills, I asked him what he meant.

"Driving in winter, you're expecting bad road conditions, and the days are short. So you'd expect driving on the roads to be tough. But I don't want

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them to just think of the driving as being difficult. Europe is made up of a lot of countries, each with their own culture. It's a diverse region. I want them to experience the cultural differences through driving. I hope the Japanese members don't just stick together. Instead talk to the European members when they're in the cars, look at the other car brands on the streets, and see how the locals

live their lives when they are on a break. If they relax and have fun on the Drive, they'll be able to naturally take in these kinds of things."

The drive training was a mix of hopes and fears.

The first day of the drive training took place on two courses within Test

World. Under the direction of the TME instructors, the team members practiced hard braking, driving on a slalom course, split-second turns, and driving around a circuit. After they finished all the drills, Iwamiya-san of the Research Division had this to say.

"This is the first time I've driven with studded tires, but I was surprised at how much you still slip. The conditions are completely

opposite of dry road conditions, which made me a little apprehensive. It was easy to understand the directions from the TME instructor s, and I learned a lot about how to read information from the road.”

She seems excited to learn driving skills from the technical members over these two weeks.

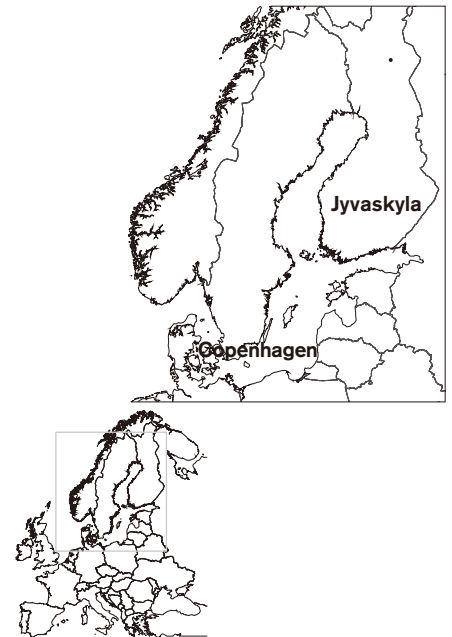
The next day, the team set out on public roads. It was not snowing but the rise in temperature was expected to create more treacherous driving conditions than the day before. Drive training on the first day focused on having the members experience what the limits were. Today’s training was about learning more nuanced driving skills so that these limits would not have to be reached. Kondo-san of the MS Stamping Production Engineering Division seemed a little apprehensive as he was driving.

“There was snow on the roads, so it was really hard to see where the center line was. Even though I knew what to do in my head, making

split-second decisions was quite hard. Sometimes there were whiteout conditions with oncoming cars as well.”

When he was riding in the back seat, Kondo noticed that the cargo cover was vibrating and making a strange noise. He says that this is probably due to the car body shrinking in the cold weather. Driving in extreme cold is not a common experience for him, nor is sitting in the back seat. These two days of practicing winter weather driving skills were designed so that the team members could get this kind of information—information that cannot be acquired except out in the actual conditions. That’s genchi genbutsu. The driving conditions were a little disconcerting, but the anticipation of discovering new things was greater. Kondo was looking forward to starting the drive next week.

Reporter○Toshiya Muraoka



Distance: 0km
Duration: November.24-
November.25,2017
Days: 2days

