



Riga → Arvidsjaur

Vow to enhance basic performance.

The European leg of the Drive Project had encountered rain and cloudy weather so far—the typical heavy gray European skies in winter. This day, however, the sun was shining down in bright rays for a change. The team was headed from Latvia's capital of Riga to Estonia's capital of Tallinn. The many potholes seen after crossing the border disappeared, and road conditions markedly improved. As a distant land,

these countries are summed up as the Baltic States, but upon closer inspection they are not so easily lumped together. Okuda-san of the Vehicle Engineering Development Division made the following vow.

"We used studded tires from today, which are noisier, but I still feel that we have to enhance our basic performance so that vibration and noise do not bother users regardless of what tires they have or the road conditions."

These countries are richly diverse, and it seemed as if Okuda was making

a vow to himself to create a new standard for them.

"We have to make more



opportunities to collaborate with the members from the EU whom we've met through this project. I am determined to create the foundation for this after I return home."

Learning from each other.

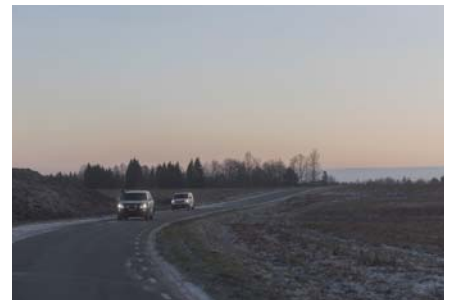
The team took a ferry for about two hours to cross over into Helsinki. They finally encountered wet, heavy, thick falling snow on the city streets. Now the real winter leg of the drive would begin. Ikeuchi-san of the Corporate Strategy Division and Jean-Paul Heine of TME made a good pair. As the local leader of 5C Winter Drive Group Three, JP would use the CB radio to relay detailed instructions to the other cars. Ikeuchi would then perfectly translate the instructions into Japanese. *"One thing I can contribute to the team is my language skills. In return, I want to learn a lot about the expertise I need out in the world, like driving skills."*

The next day, the team drove from

Tampere, Finland, to Umeå, Sweden. The snow had stopped falling and the national highway had been plowed, making for good driving conditions. While he was driving, Kajikawa-san of the Advanced Technical Skills Institute noticed that the gentle curves in the road were banked. He had honed his powers of perception to where he could detect the feel of the road, which serves him in building "ever-better cars." His job involves development support to ensure handling stability for every vehicle model. He had worked overseas on assignment before, and he often knew what to expect on this European leg. Nevertheless, this was his first work-related driving in the snow. *"I heard that studded tires allow you to grip the road like when it's dry, but you still slip from time to time,"* he mentioned. He was gaining various insights from genchi genbutsu—going out and seeing for himself. The 5 Continents Drive Project was an opportunity for people of all experience levels to learn new things.

Kajikawa also watched out for the team members who were not used to driving as part of their job. The road from Umeå to Arjeplog was covered in snow, and the temperature dropped down to minus 15°C. The road was one lane in each direction, and the snow readily created whiteout conditions with zero visibility when an oncoming vehicle passed by. This made driving a serious challenge. Uraguchi-san of the MS Body Design Division, who was riding with Kajikawa on this day, made this comment after they finished driving.

"Kajikawa was sitting in the passenger seat, and he told me that





the vibration from the road would give me information about driving conditions. Ruts form in places that cars frequently drive over in the snow, and the ruts make a different sound. Up until now I had only thought of vibration sounds as noise, so this was a revelation for me. I learned that in addition to visibility, I can get a lot of information from my other senses too."

Team members riding in the same car and driving on the same roads use their expertise and teach each other things while driving. The 5 Continents Drive Project is a team endeavor. It is an endeavor like no other that allows the members to make discoveries not possible in their regular jobs.

The power of working together to push forward.

The team visited the Bosch winter test center in Arjeplog. Yamahara-san of the Vehicle Engineering Development Division was looking forward to this visit.

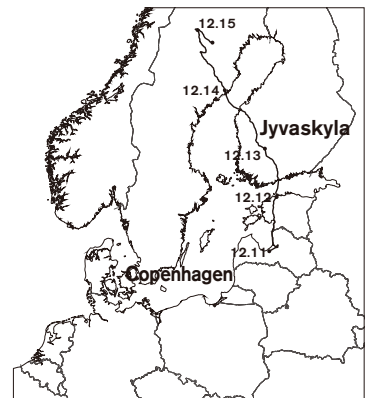
"I imagined that the center would

be more advanced than facilities in Japan, but they aren't really that different. I'm relieved to know that the tests we do in Japan are of world standard."

After getting a glimpse of the outside world, he is able to take pride and confidence in the work he is engaged in on a daily basis. The Drive Project not only shows the team members what they need to improve—it also gives them these kinds of insights.

Each week, members from the EU take turns participating in the European leg. Even in five short days, the seeds of friendship are sown through driving. This is entirely thanks to the team members' shared vision of building "ever-better cars." At the meeting that wrapped up the week of driving, Captain Yada expressed his appreciation to all the members for working together and overcoming the challenging road conditions. It was a moment that drove home to the team the importance of working together to push forward, and the power derived from it.

Reporter○Toshiya Muraoka



Distance: 1,464km
 Duration: December.11-
 December.15,2017
 Days: 5days
 Vehicles: C-HR HV,Yaris HV,Prius PHV,
 Land Cruiser 200,PROACE,
 Corolla,RAV4 HV