

Birmingham → Crawley

Human analyzer.

Nakanishi-san of the Vehicle Engineering Development Division has a habit of making observations and taking notes and photos. In addition to researching European cars and road conditions, he's taken it upon himself to survey crosswalk conditions and the height of curbs and guardrails. Whether in Japan or Europe, he makes a point of looking for new insights and things that are different. Currently, he's in charge of managing the new test track in Shimoyama, Japan. *"This has reminded me how we need to make cars in*

Japan that do everything that Europeans need. Toyota makes cars by performing simulations and driving cars on test tracks. By adding what I've experienced on the European drive project to our car testing, we can make even better cars. Human experience and perception are amazing. Machines cannot beat humans as analyzers."

The team drove from Birmingham, around Lake Windermere in North West England, and over Hardknott Pass. Then they took a ferry to Belfast in Northern Ireland. Kudo-san, who is involved in crash testing at the Vehicle Engineering Development Division, says that

European roads have defied his expectations. *"There's a surprising amount of stop and go at roundabouts in cities. You often have to come to a full stop. I thought the flow of traffic would be smoother."* When asked about scary moments driving in Europe, he grimaces and says, *"I don't like cars coming into my lane from my blind spot."* Cars would almost always be accelerating while coming into his lane, and more than once he was startled by a car suddenly appearing very close behind him. He recalled several times he came upon the scene of a car accident. *"What we*





can do is make Toyota Safety Sense even more precise than it is now. There are many other things too, like restraint devices, prevention safety, and making user-friendly vehicle frames. But it seems like people are more aware of car, pedestrian, and bicycle safety than in Japan.” Drivers look for others on the road before making a move. Bicyclists make sure to signal using hand signals when riding on the road. If Toyota combines its pursuit

of safety with the safety awareness established in Europe, the presence of vehicles on the road will move closer to the ideal level of safety and security.

Making cars with a driving “core.”

The team drove from Belfast to Dublin, the capital of Ireland. Driving on narrow country roads, they encountered

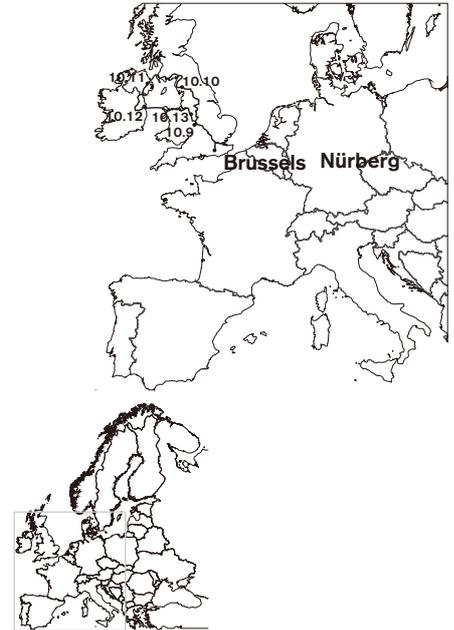
large tractors that took up the entire road. This is a rare experience in Japan. Nevertheless, Nakamura-san of the Vehicle Engineering Development Division said with a laugh, “I was almost convinced that we were driving in Japan.” He continued, “The urban areas are controlled by traffic lights, and there are few times where you have to exercise your own judgment like in Germany. It’s not much different than Japan.”

Nakamura has a habit of looking at things from a structural perspective, perhaps stemming from his work in the Advance Vehicle Evaluation Testing Section No. 1. When the team met the editor of a European car magazine, he was bothered when the editor said that Toyota made good cars. *“I wanted to hear criticisms of our cars. He hasn’t told us his true feelings. There must be some aspects of performance that don’t live up to his expectations.”* Nakamura says that he can feel the “core” of Audis, VWs, and Mercedes when he drives them. *“I feel a core from their cars. Toyota outperforms them in individual aspects like suspension, steering, and braking. And we have earned a reputation for making cars that don’t break down. But there needs to be a core that runs through all of these things. Especially when it comes to driving straight, I don’t think we’ve made drivers feel like they can completely trust our cars. We will not be able to stand out from other automakers if we don’t have this core.”* Nakamura has made a major discovery and found a theme on the European leg. What

kinds of cars are at the end of the long and steep road ahead of him?

The team stopped by TMUK on the way from Dublin to Stoke-on-Trent. Takahashi-san of the Production Control Division sensed the same atmosphere at the faraway UK plant as at plants in Japan, commenting, *“There’s the same high energy here as in our Japanese plants.”* He continued, *“Production control is not really directly related to development. But if I can think of how to build cars more efficiently, we can devote more of our budget to development and putting high-grade parts into cars, which would create ever-better cars.”* Takahashi would like to contribute to making cars through cost reductions. *“European cars definitely add something to their driving, stopping, and turning performance. Speed limits are strict and change at a dizzying pace. I always have to be thinking and making decisions to avoid danger. This is all the more reason why cars need maneuverability. Maybe this is why Europeans demand a high level of performance from their cars.”*

Reporter○Toshiya Muraoka



Distance: 1,750km
 Duration: October.9-
 October.13,2017
 Days: 5days
 Vehicles: C-HR HV,Yaris HV,Prius PHV,
 Auris HV,GT86,PROACE

