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Recently I have been involved in submitting two proposals regarding the HORIZON 2020 Call "Science with and for Society" of the European Commission. One proposal addresses the initiative "Open schooling and collaboration on science education" (SwafS-01-2020), the other one "Science education outside the classroom" (SwafS-24-2020). The proposals focus on different strategies for open education outside the classroom and I was involved as a professor, scientist and researcher. However, being involved as an adult student returns to 20 years ago. I myself got the chance to experience 'Open Education Outside the Classroom and even outside the School by Professor Satoshi Higuchi' in 2001. It was in Japan and Higuchi sensei was one of the greatest private 'teachers' as well as mentors I ever had, and he guided me to the "Open Education" world, both officially and privately.

In 2001 I landed to Japan to work as guest professor at Department of Learning Science, Faculty of Education, Hiroshima University. The one-year- stay in Japan was blessed with many aspects, but some of the luckiest things were the facts that I got Higuchi sensei as one of my mentors AND that my office at Hiroshima University was located to the next to his office. I often visited his office and we talked and discussed a variety of topics. Professor Higuchi's wide knowledge and deep insights into various themes were impressive and talking with him was a real pleasure to me. The talks with him especially deepened my knowledge about Japan and opened my eyes towards new wisdom. It was a real "Learning Experience Outside Classroom" – of course, it happened technically in the university building, though!

Not only at university, but also "Outside School", we shared much time together, and I also got a chance to get closer to his family. Higuchi sensei was very kind to take me to several places and every occasion offered by him was, without exceptions, great "Learning Opportunities" to me. In Hagi I learned about the roots of Japanese modern history. At Mt. Daisen I learned about nature and skiing. In Matsue Japanese art was focused. In Matsue I learned not only about art, but also how to wear Yukata correctly and smart. I am wearing a Yukata every day and since then, when I put it on or tighten the obi, I think of Professor Higuchi – that means every day I think of him! Higuchi sensei invited me to his home several times. It was also great opportunities to learn new things, for instance about how to hold and to handle a guitar or to select a piano for home education. Do you know the relationship between the 1000 Yen note and Aizu Wakamatsu? These and many other places were all authentic opportunities for "Open Education Outside of School" and Higuchi sensei as well as his family were excellent educators for me!

I still remember my first encounter with Professor Higuchi and his colleagues at Higashi-Hiroshima Shinkansen station in 2001. He welcomed me with nice, kind smile. His smile tells his warm, sincere personality. For the last 20 years, we have been meeting each other time to time, either in Japan or in Austria and his nice smile has never changed. That is, he is always very kind and sincere. I appreciate very much to the luck to get to know such a person like Higuchi sensei and keep the wonderful friendship with him.

It is a great pleasure and honour for me to be invited to give some words to the memoir for Professor Higuchi's retirement. With all my best wishes, I would like cordially to congratulate on his 65. birthday and the start of a new chapter in his life!!

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