

Visit to Kenya

I visited Kenya in March with some professors and student of the University. This is the second time for me to visit Kenya since 2006 when I reached Kenya at the end of a half-year journey starting from Hong Kong. That journey sparked my interest in Africa and led me to start African urban study. This time, with some special knowledge of urban planning, I saw Kenya in a new light. We visited capital city of Nairobi, second largest city of Mombasa, small farm villages and fishermen's villages. And it was exciting for me to talk a lot about African cities with our professors or experts on urban planning and architecture eating and drinking.

Nairobi is like a patchwork of various residences, such as colonial European housing areas, public housing areas, low-cost housing area and slums. About half of the city's population is living in slums. Mathare slum is one of the biggest slums in East Africa and home to about 0.5 million people. We walked around the slum with the community leaders, and found services like sanitations are not enough and housing density is relatively high. But I also found the area more lively and bustling than the city center. People are relaxing and children playing in the alleys, just as people in *Shitamachi* area in Japan.

Mombasa is the coastal city with many different cultures including Portuguese, Arab and British. We saw multicultural influences in the town, architecture and food, etc.

We had a half-day trip to the traditional **fishermen's village** by car and boat. We enjoyed catching a glimpse of local daily life there and eating a fried fish with coconut rice and passion fruit juice at a local restaurant.



Photo. Mathare Slum



Photo. Mombasa



Photo. Looking at fishermen's Village from the boat