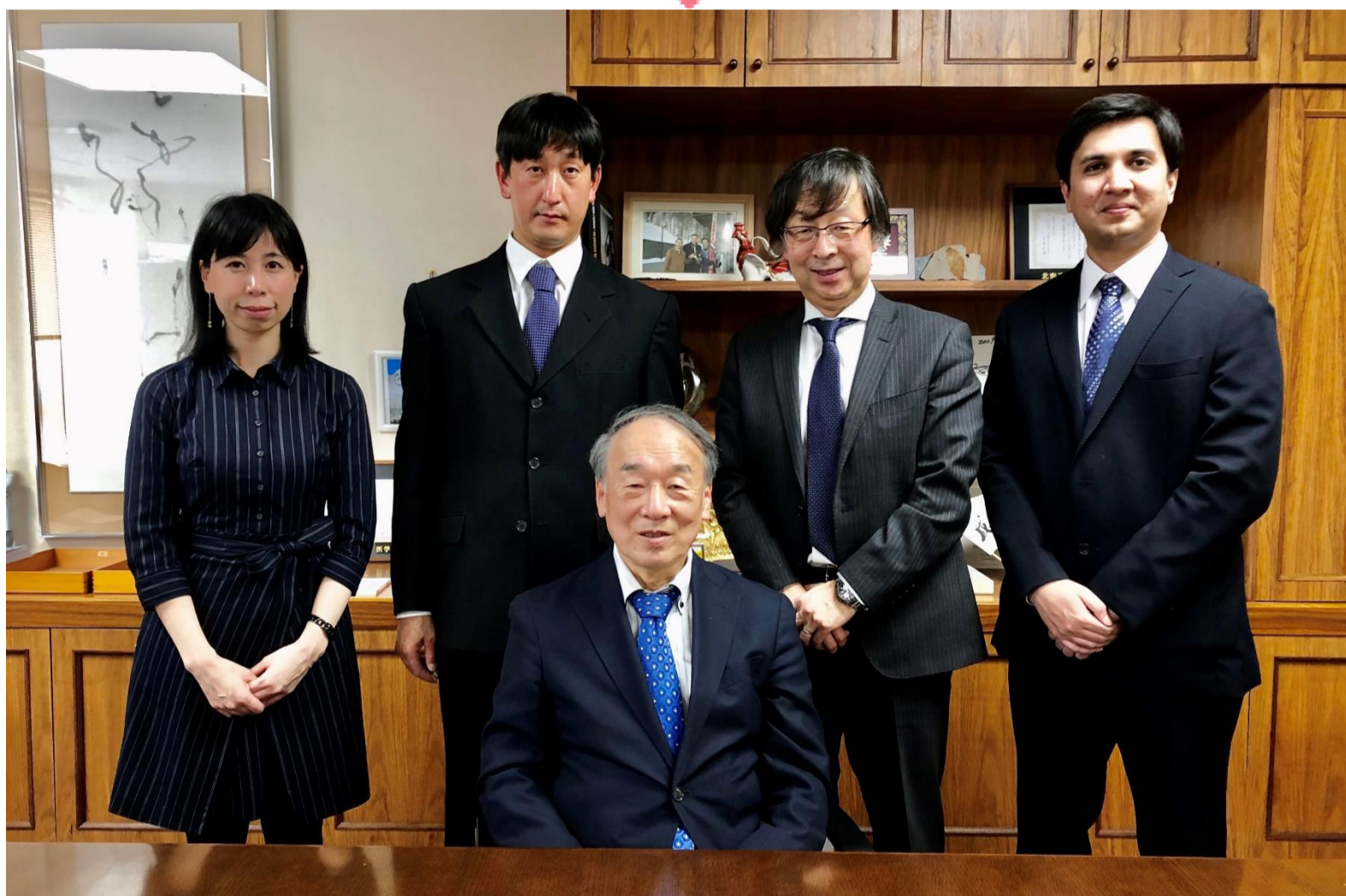


# Celebrating 5 Years of International Education & Exchange Center Successful Globalization at HSUH



## A Message from the Director

The International Exchange and Education Center (IEEC), which was launched in 2017, took over the responsibility of the global network office at the university. The IEEC plays an important role in supporting the university's efforts to promote globalization. We have been accepting international students for undergraduate and postgraduate courses in different schools of our university for a long time. This has helped both Japanese and international students to gain educational, cultural, and social experiences from each other.

We began accepting International PhD students in 2010. Currently, we have about 50 undergraduate and 20 international PhD students mainly in the dental school. Those PhD students come from mainly Asian countries including Taiwan, South Korea, Bangladesh, Mongolia, China, Nepal, Indonesia and Thailand. They have contributed to the globalization of our university and motivated faculty members.

In addition, we have developed some special exchange programs, such as the Dual Ph.D. program (a system in which doctoral degrees can be obtained from both universities at the same time) with the Taipei Medical University.

The globalization in our university is important for developing international-minded medical professionals. The international-minded medical professionals should understand other citizens with diverse values in other countries. Understanding diverse value of others is very important for all medical professionals because it is similar to understanding the diverse value of each patient. The educations designed for the international-minded medical professionals can be linked to the educations for all medical professionals.

Most of the international PhD students are excellent and highly motivated to do research. They have greatly motivated our faculty members. The supervisors feel lucky to look after excellent PhD students, and feel somewhat pressure thinking about provision of quality education. Young faculty members and Japanese PhD students are motivated by their high research activities.

More than 20 PhD students got their PhD and most of them got academic positions in their home or other countries. In this letter I am pleased to see the current successful messages from some of the PhD alumni.



# Former International Students Comments

## I was the first overseas doctoral student in the university

**Ali Akbor Polan (Bangladesh)**



I came to Japan in year 2010 at the starting of May. The planning of coming was initiated during the Dhaka visit of my honorable professor Takashi Saito. Inspiration of Professor Takashi Saito boost up my thoughts to come Japan. I studied and stayed in Japan for four years as a doctoral student in Health sciences university of Hokkaido. I was the first overseas doctoral student at my department as well as in the university. My life in Japan is divided into two parts. Mostly I spent my time studying and research works at the department of clinical cariology and oral rehabilitation and daily hood life at Tobetsu town. On the other side; during weekends, holidays and free time. I did different things related to social life, especially in Sapporo city with different overseas communities. Below are some of the things that described how my life in Japan was.



Due to coming to Japan, I got the opportunity of learning the history of Japan especially during World War II and post-war reconstruction of the country. I was trying to join in different cultural, political, social, religion and community activities to know the Japanese nation from the root. Some festivals especially suran matsury, bonenkai, obon, funeral, mikoshi and many others influence me to enjoy Japanese culture. Also, it was a great experience for me to visit different shrines in Japan and know about Japanese religion Shintoism. I enjoyed different performances during the festival. Even though I belonged in different religion, I appreciate the different practices of Japanese religion and I learned a lot from it.



Something that surprised me is how Japan developed economically at a high level. This helped the country to recover from the destruction of the war. The success story of Japanese economic development could be a good lesson for all countries that are still struggling with war recovery.

Life in Hokkaido was really enjoyable by smelling the four seasons in Hokkaido. Spring & autumn are very comfortable but quite short, summer is warm but much less humid than on the mainland, and winter is long. The temperatures vary much depending on the elevation, distance to the sea, and time of the day/night. The Sapporo Snow Festival (Sapporo Yuki Matsuri) is held during one week every February in Hokkaido's capital Sapporo. It is one of Japan's most popular winter events. The Sapporo Snow Festival was started in 1950, when high school students built a few snow statues in Odori Park. It has since developed into a large commercialized event, featuring spectacular snow and ice sculptures and attracting more than two million visitors from Japan and across the world.

Except Sapporo, I also visited Otaru, Hakodate, Niseko, Asahikawa, Kushiro and other places of Hokkaido. Surprisingly every place possess its own uniqueness with many enjoyable features like cherry blossoms. During my staying I also visited different city of Japan include capital city of Japan (Tokyo), Kobe, Hiroshima and Osaka.



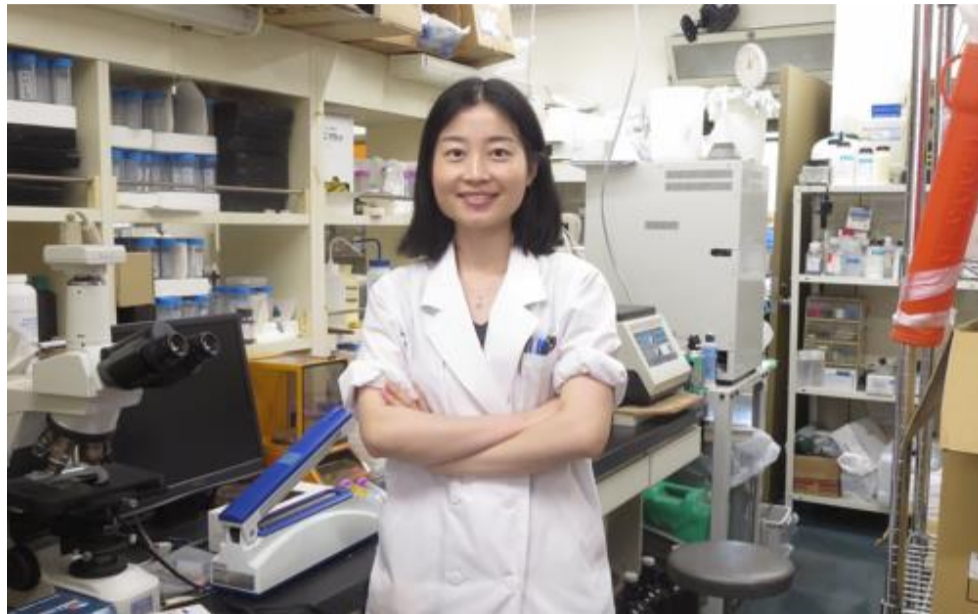
Finally, I want to talk few words about Tobetsu town. Most of the students of Health Sciences university of Hokkaido live at this town. This is a small town but the scenic beauty of this town and its adjacent area is amazing. Snow fall make Tubetsu town different from other seasons with diversified scenic white beauty. Fishing in iced Lake and enjoying onsen (hot spring) are really interesting in every aspect. The native citizens are very polite, cooperative and helpful. I really enjoy the life of Tubetsu town a lot. Actually memories of this town make nostalgic.

In conclusion, friendly atmosphere of the university and learned faculties made easy of educational journey. On the other hand, very polite Japanese peoples and mind blowing weather of Tobetsu area made life easy in japan. So, Japan especially Health Sciences university of Hokkaido can be a good choice of destination for overseas post-graduation education. I hope, all the great success of my beloved university campus.

## Greetings to newly enrolled or potential international students in HSUH



### Jia Tang (China)



I am Jia Tang, currently working as a Post-Doc researcher in School of Stomatology, Tongji University (Shanghai, China). I came to HSUH in April, 2011 to pursue my PhD study (Research topic: dentin regeneration stimulated by extracellular matrix proteins or its functional fragments) and obtained the PhD degree there in March, 2015. After that, I worked as a Post-Doc researcher (2015.4-2017.3) and an assistant professor (2017.7-2020.3) in HSUH for another four years. I spent nine and four months in Hokkaido pursuing my academic career. During my stay in Hokkaido, I harvested not only a PhD degree and over ten academic publications, but also my own

family and a lovely daughter. Reflecting back on my experience, I believe undoubtedly that being given the opportunity to study in Japan was a precious gift and blessing. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to my PhD advisor: Professor Takashi Saito, who has always been supportive and farsighted as an excellent researcher. Besides, He has endeavored to improve the international level of HSUH. When being Dean of the School of Dentistry, he helped to establish a sisterhood relationship between School of Dentistry in HSUH with other dental schools in China and all over the world. Without him, the talented foreign students cannot realize their dreams in learning advanced techniques and pursuing an academic degree in Japan, a country which have over twenty Nobel Prize laureates. Hokkaido is a famous place for sightseeing. During my stay in Hokkaido, I traveled in different cities and places and were amazed at the magnificent scale of its landscape and beautiful natural views. At the same time, the teachers and students in HSUH were very hospitable and helpful to foreign students. Whenever I had any questions or problems regarding experiments or even daily life,



they were always ready to help me to solve the problems. I really appreciate their kindness and patience. Living in such a beautiful land and working with a group of talented and kind people made my nine years stay in Hokkaido a very fruitful experience and unforgettable memory.



Finally, I would like to congratulate on your enrollment in the PhD course in HSUH. Importantly, I sincerely wish that life in Hokkaido will enrich your horizon, and the study in HSUH will be a potential treasure to your future career development.

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# I was the first Mongolian student of HSUH



## Sugarbaatar Urangoo (Mongolia)

My name is Sugarbaatar Urangoo. I studied for a Ph.D at the Division of Endodontology and Periodontology, Department of Oral Rehabilitation of Graduate School of Dentistry between 2017-2021. I was the first Mongolian student of HSUH. By following years a collaboration between Mongolian National University of Medical Science (MNUMS) and Health Sciences University of Hokkaido (HSUH) became stronger, so that the new Mongolian students started their Ph.D journey in HSUH after me. While an international collaboration of our university is expanding year by year, the number of international students is increasing.

Four years in Ph.D give us an opportunity to gain huge scientific knowledge and experiences, because we study under the supervision of skilled and experienced professors and instructors in the full equipped laboratories.



New international students no need to worry, even if you don't know anything. International Education and Exchange Center always helps us. They take care of everything related to international students such as helping for the settlement, to get new phone number, and create a bank account etc., even if small things they consider well. I always feel thanks to their very kind help since I was new until I graduate.

All international students become members of International Student Association of Health Sciences University of Hokkaido (HSUH-ISA). I was elected as a Social Welfare and Public Relation Officer 2018-2019 in the Executive Committee of HSUH-ISA.

Tobetsu town, and organize welcome party for new international students every year. It is good opportunity to share our different unique cultures to each other and Japanese via these activities. Unfortunately, due to the new corona virus pandemic situation all activities have stopped during this time. I hope HSUH-ISA can continue the regular activities soon.

We also enjoy beautiful nature of Tobetsu town. It is the most peaceful and comfortable place and the living expenditure is quite low compare to the big cities. During the summer or spring time we enjoy barbeque at the park under the gorgeous Sakura tree or beach which is near to the Tobetsu town.

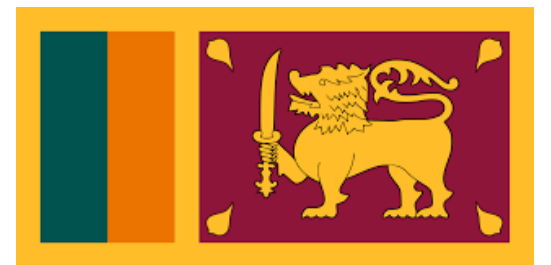
I will never forget such priceless moments I spent in HSUH with all my colleagues, international friends, professors, and teachers. I believe you will have great time if you are joining our university.



## My Ph. D Journey

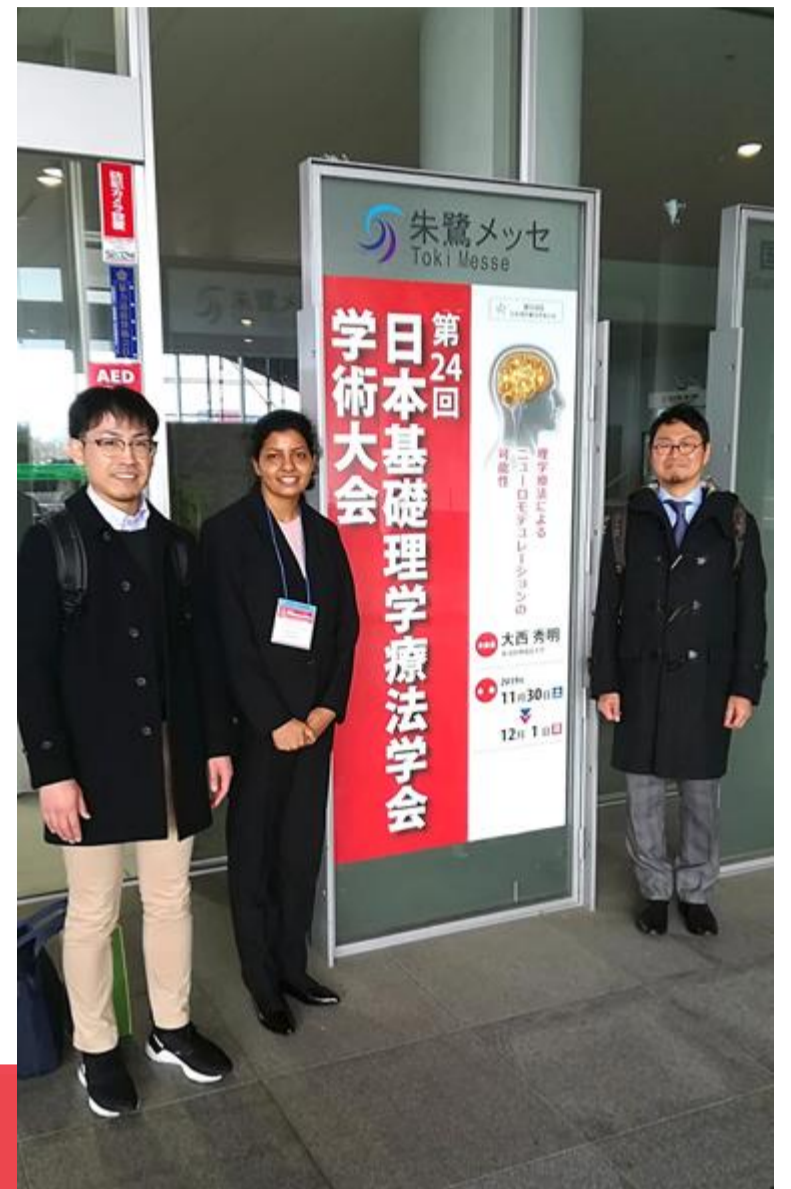
(I was the first international student in the school of rehabilitation sciences)

### Pramudika Kariyawasam (Sri Lanka)



I'm Pramudika Kariyawasam, an international student from Sri Lanka. After completing my Bachelor's degree in Nursing and then I did my Masters in the field of rehabilitation. It was my dream to do higher education in a foreign country. I was searching for universities and keep applying. As my masters study was related to stroke rehabilitation I was enthusiastic about learning new technologies to improve the quality of life of patients with stroke. In Sri Lanka this research area is novel and a developing field. Therefore, I thought it would be an advantage for me if I study further in the stroke rehabilitation field. I applied to universities in Japan.

I received a feedback from the Health Sciences University of Hokkaido. After processing all the required documents, I had to face an online entrance exam. Then I was informed that I have been selected to do the PhD in Health Sciences University of Hokkaido. I was counting days to start my studies in Japan. Before entering the university International education and exchange center of the university guided during application process and explain the life style and background of the university. It was the very first time to travel alone to a country which is far away. Not only me, were all my family members also nervous about that. But, international education and exchange center arranged everything smoothly. After arriving Japan it was a very warm welcome from everyone. At the beginning because of the guidance of the international education center and all other international students it was easy for me to adjust and adopt the new environment easily. Dr. Md Riasat Hasan and his wife Dr. Akashlynn Badruddoza Dithi and Ms. Sachie Tonaya helped and guided me to adapt to the new life. I started studies under the supervision of Professor Susumu Yoshida and he guided me and encouraged me to learn about and to get familiar with technical equipments in the neurology lab. Assistant professor Shinya Suzuki also helped me to start and carry out experiments.



As I was the first international student in the school of rehabilitation sciences everyone in the school welcomed warmly.

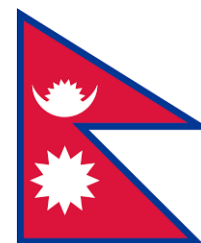
I should mention the Tobetsu town where we lived. It is a very peaceful city with beautiful sceneries. During summer we all enjoyed outside cycling. I was so excited to see the first snow fall in my life. Winter in Tobetsu is too long, but I was able to adopt and live with the cold weather. All the international students supported and encouraged each other during my stay in Japan. I was able to do my studies smoothly because of the support from everyone. International students' association of HSUH organised

welcome parties, farewell parties and many other events. All of us were able to enjoy our life during our stay in Japan.

Studying in Japan and completing my PhD in HSUH, Hokkaido, Japan added a value to my life and it was a great exposure to develop my career pathway. Therefore, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Yoshida Susumu and all the teachers in School of Rehabilitation Sciences for their support complete my PhD successfully. Also, I would like to acknowledge Professor Yoshihiro Abiko, Director of the international education and exchange center, Assistant professor Dr. Md Riasat Hasan, Professor Sato, Miss Sachie Tonaya and all the staff members of international education and exchange center for their immense support to complete my PhD successfully.

# My journey from PhD student to postdoctoral fellow

**Puja Neopane (Nepal)**



'Never give up your dream', with this hope, I always try my best to do it in any circumstances. After my master degree, I was so passionate about research that I started seeking an opportunity in Hokkaido, Japan. With my continued effort I finally got an opportunity for a PhD in Health Sciences University of Hokkaido. It was a great day and challenging too. Getting an opportunity for a PhD is a great thing but having a great supervisor is even greater. I was a student of Professor Yoshihiro Abiko, who is always energetic, kind and motivate his students in every aspect. I always feel so fortunate to have a professor like him. I was equally supported and motivated by our dean Prof. Saito. My life as a PhD student was not so easy. I was the mother of a 6 years old daughter when I started my studies. It was not easy to bear responsibilities as a student and a mother. I never gave up my dream even when I had a hard time. I always got support from good people and my professor. I was financially supported from my university as my tuition fee was waived. Further, I got HIECC scholarship in my first year, Monbukagakusho scholarship in second year and research assistant support in third and fourth year. We have an international student association of Health Sciences University of Hokkaido. Our association was always there to help me for any situation. Dr. Md Riasat Hasan who was president of International Students Association, used to support us if we had any problem. So, living in Japan was very comfortable. Beside these, I



got many opportunities to learn molecular techniques such as real time PCR, DNA methylation including next generation sequencing from my mentor Dr. Yoshida, Dr. Uehara and other sensei from our department. I got depth knowledge on oral cancer, its relation with antimicrobial peptides from Prof. Abiko and Dr. Kurashige. Later, I did my thesis on the 'Role of RNase 7 in oral cancer'. Finally, I graduated with a doctorate degree and published my PhD work. During those four years, I got many beautiful moments to explore the beauty and culture of Japan.

With all those skills I learned in Health sciences university of Hokkaido, I

got an opportunity for a postdoctoral fellow in one of the molecular diagnostic laboratories in Indiana, USA. Today, I 'm still involved in research related to infectious disease and I am always hopeful to make my dream come true. At last not the least, Health Sciences University of Hokkaido is one of the best universities, which warmly welcome foreign students who have a strong desire to do research and make their career.



# My Life in JAPAN

## Youjing Qiu (China)



I still remember the excitement when I received the acceptance letter for joining a PhD course in Health Sciences University of Hokkaido. Five years ago, when I first joined this university as a PhD student, I was deeply attracted by the tranquility and beauty of this small town – Tobetsu. I did not have any difficulty in living or studying here, because every person I met was very kind and helpful.

At this moment, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor professor Takashi Saito for his continuous support of my PhD study and related research and for his patience, encouragement, and immense knowledge. It has been a great honor to be his PhD student. I also feel extremely lucky because my mentor Dr. Jia Tang is Chinese, who offered me great help in basic experimental techniques at the very beginning of my PhD study. I appreciate all their contribution of time, ideas, and funding to make my graduate experience productive and stimulating. Without their guidance, I could never get my PhD degree within 3 years.



After graduate from dental school, I joined the same department as a post-doctoral fellow. With the help with professors Takashi Saito and Yoshihiro Abiko, I got a two-year grant from Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. With the support of this grant, I was able to carry out my research freely and fully. And also, I became a mentor for teaching basic experimental techniques of two PhD student. I enjoyed this two year as a research fellow, it has been an invaluable experience for my future research and career. Besides, I want to thank every professor and lecturer who offered a great help in my five years of research life in Health Sciences University of Hokkaido.

Last but not least, I want to express my special acknowledgement to director Yoshihiro Abiko, Dr. Md Riasat Hasan, and program officer Sachie Toneya in the International Education and Exchange Center for their continuous help and support for my study and living in Japan, and also thank them for arranging presentations, welcome and farewell parties in the past years. Their intimate arrangement has added countless wonderful memories to my study abroad career. I will always miss the nice persons, delicious foods, and beautiful scenery here.



# Experiences in Hokkaido

## Hsinyu Tsai (Taiwan)



I am a girl who come from the country side of Taiwan. When I graduated from the College of Somatology of Shanghai Jiaotong University in China in 2015, I was finding ways to improving my skills as a dentist. As I was searching for any possibilities, Health Sciences University of Hokkaido had come into my mind. Many of you might have questioned “Why did you choose Hokkaido? It is cold, and it snows a lot, and the weather is completely opposite from Taiwan.” However, I had traveled to Hokkaido for summer vacation in 2013, and I was immediately fallen in love with the beautiful view that I had saw. Furthermore, I was very interested in the field of prosthodontics and the operative dentistry at the time. When I heard that these two fields were well developed in Japan, and that just gave me more reasons to come to Hokkaido. I was enrolled as a fourth-year transfer student in the spring of 2016. Even though I could speak a little Japanese, I still had difficulties to start a new life in Hokkaido.



However, I was welcomed by heart-warming staffs from the International Education and Exchange Center (IEEC) for the first time I arrived at school, and they had helped me a lot with the enrollment procedures as well as the processes of resident status at the immigrant office. It was very helpful for someone like me who was the first time in Japan. When the school started I had some struggles because I wasn't sure if I would be able to fully understand the lectures and the practical training classes, and was worried that I wouldn't be able to communicate with professors nor the following classmates. Very soon, I had found out that those worries were not needed because my following classmates were very friendly and couple of them who could speak English and were willing to help me to get used to this new environment. With their friendliness, I was able to made friends quickly, and was glad to be part of this class. In addition, the professors and the instructors for the practical training classes were very nice and patience. They were willing to spend

extra times explaining every steps just to make sure that I understood, fixing the grammar errors in my lab reports, and helping me to practice medical history taking with mock patients. Entering the fifth year which was the practical training year, I was worried that I won't be able to communicate to the patients due to the various forms of Japanese. Then I was proven wrong again because the doctors I met in the university clinic were very caring and forbearing. When they knew that I was worried about being impolite to the patients, they would explain to the patients that I was not fluent in Japanese and ask for their forgiveness. Taking the patient's medical chart was quite a challenge at first, but with the clinical instructors' helps I was able to pick it quickly. I enjoyed very much this year because finding the differences between the clinical treatments I learned in Shanghai and the ones I learned in Japan. Also, it was very interesting to see that each clinical instructor had their own individual preferences in terms of used materials or



instruments. Fifth-year was a year which students could get a taste of what it is like to be a dentist. It was also a very fulfilling year because seeing a patient's problem being solved and happily leave the clinic was very accomplish for me, and could not wait to become a real dentist. Entering the senior year, everyone including me was very tense toward the graduation exams and the national dental board exam. The professors had held many review lectures, and the school also hired instructors from prep school to help us prepare for the dental board exam, as well as held a few mock exams to help us get used to the board exam. I was very glad to be part of a study group, and was very thankful that the school provided study areas for us seniors. I would stay in the school to study after the day was over. Studying with friends was very helpful for me because I was able to ask for help where I could not understand, and was able to realize the subjects that I should put in more effort. As a result, I was able to graduate with the class, and received a Japanese dentist license. I was very fortunate and blessed that I received so many helps and cares from everyone. With the helps from the International Education and Exchange Center, I was able to settle down and start my new path in Hokkaido. Due to the caring and devoted professors, I was able to rise smoothly from forth-year to senior year, and to graduate with a dentist license. I was glad that everyone in my class was willing to take me in, and the memories I had with them were colorfully painted and irreplaceable within my heart. Lastly, I am very thankful for everyone who I had met during these three years because I could not imagine what I would be without each one of them.