

## 留学生紹介

## Rediscovering the roots of my family and learning from this beautiful dream

硬組織形態学分野 Kiyoko Nelida Suzuki Barrera

My name is Kiyoko Suzuki Barrera, I am Chilean-Nikkei (Japanese descendent) third generation. My grandfather and grandmother were Japanese, and I born and grew up in Valparaíso, Chile. Since I was a little girl I had the dream to visit Japan but I never thought that I could study and live here.

I studied Dentistry, then Pediatric Dentistry in two-year residency program (Specialty), and Master degree in Neuroscience in my home city Valparaíso, during that time I realized that my passion was clinical practice and also research. With the inspiration and guidance of my Professor in Chile, I pursued to continue my studies, and I thought that it was the perfect time to unite my love for research and my dream as a child of coming to Japan. JICA scholarship program for development of leadership of Nikkei has given me the chance to follow my dream and now I am in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of PhD in the Anatomy and Cell Biology of Hard Tissue Department of Dental School at Niigata University.

During these almost two years, I have really enjoyed the incredible landscapes, food and culture of Japan. Last year I was able to climb and reach the top of Mount Fuji, participate in the Niigata summer fes-

tival dance, see the wonderful fireworks in Nagaoka, enjoy the fun Okinawa, and observe and appreciate the amazing sakura during spring. Also I am learning more about Japanese culture through visiting temples, museums and castles, attending to tea ceremony, learning to wear a kimono, and joining Ikebana classes.



I am very grateful for everything I have learned in the faculty, from all the people with whom I have crossed my path, Professor Dr. Hayato Ohshima and Dr. Hiroko Ida who generously allowed me to be part of the lab, teaching me new techniques and skills, supporting me every day and encourage me to be better; all the lab members for their kindness and support, especially for my laboratory partner and great friend Sanako who has been very important to me since I arrived in Japan and we have enjoyed beautiful and unforgettable moments; and all my international friends who

are always willing to give me good advices and love.

This time in Japan has been beautiful, I feel very blessed to be able to share this experience with my husband and to be living this adventure together, we have grown through the happy moments and the adversity that being away from our family implies. This experience has strengthened us and made us reaffirm how important it is to give love to those around us and appreciate with gratitude the people and moments that we live every day.



# From uncut rocks to shiny gems: my experience at Niigata University

う蝕学分野 Razi Saifullah Ibn Belal

The title might sound a bit strange, but this is my impression of the student life at Niigata University. My name is Md Razi Saifullah Ibn Belal. It's a long traditional name and difficult to get. So, I am called 'Razi' by my acquaintances. I come from Bangladesh. I finished my graduation in dentistry from Pioneer Dental College under Dhaka University in 2010 and completed my internship in 2011. In 2013 I went to Hamburg, Germany, for post-graduation. I studied part-time, travelled around Europe and completed my MPH course in 2017.

During my study in Germany, I often missed the clinical practice where we get the chance to treat and cure someone directly. So, with the advice and recommendation of my Bangladeshi professor, I contacted the division of Cariology, Operative Dentistry and Endodontics for an opportunity to study and research.

I started my doctoral course in the last week of September 2018. Although I have been living abroad since 2013, I needed to adapt to the culture and etiquettes in Japan. From my previous experience in Germany, I was focused on learning the language in my early days. I went to Cross-pal Niigata for extra lessons and, it became easier to communicate with my teachers and fellows. I realized that if you shy away from talking and afraid of making mistakes, you will not be able to learn a new language

well.

Japan is famous for dental research, and everyone is hardworking, focused on the perfection of the job in hand. In my first few weeks, I learned basic laboratory procedures and protocols. Then with the kind guidance and patience of my supervisor, I was able to learn new protocols related to my research. I also read a lot of research papers for a better understanding of my research and to refine research protocols.

Within the next few months, I got data from my analysis and arranged them to make a poster. I went to Taipei, Taiwan, with my supervisor and presented my poster in a bilateral dental symposium. I have enjoyed my time in a new country and learned new aspects of dentistry. From my interest to learn new things, I also took part in different experiments of my teachers and seniors. Also, being a part of a clinical department, I have learnt clinical procedures in the university hospital from my teachers.

Japan is a land of natural beauty with lots of places to visit in different seasons. These seasons come with various festivals and ever-changing nature. As an international student, it is very interesting and enjoyable at the same time. I have visited a few scenic locations of Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, Yamagata and within the Niigata pre-

fecture. Each time I was mesmerized by the beauty of those places. Another unique aspect of living in Japan is the variety of local cuisine available in different regions. The efforts put into creating those cuisines make them very palatable and appealing to the eaters.

All in all, in my opinion, if anybody is willing to work hard and learn a lot, Niigata University is the right place for them. The

university provides a sound platform and right tools for an uncut rock like aspiring foreign graduates to become a shiny, successful gem. With the right focus and motivation, one can certainly attain the knowledge and qualities necessary to become a successful individual in future. I hope I can successfully complete my study here and return to my country with expertise which will benefit me to achieve my goals.

