

留学生紹介

From Thailand to Japan: Onward the Next Level

摂食嚥下リハビリテーション学分野 Titi Chotirungsan



Hello! My name is Titi Chotirungsan, you can call me “Ice”. I was born and raised in Thailand. After graduating with an undergraduate degree in 2015, I’ve then decided to work as an instructor in the Faculty of Dentistry of Thailand’s Naresuan University.

From my experience working over the past four years, I’ve found that Thailand’s elderly population has been growing rapidly, and dysphagia is one of their most common problems.

So, what led me here? Japan is a beautiful country with equally beautiful and friendly people. I found myself applying and eventually getting into a doctoral degree in the

Division of Dysphagia Rehabilitation, Niigata University Graduate School of Medical and Dental Sciences, which also happens to be well-recognized internationally and ranked as one of the top universities in Asia-Pacific. I sincerely hope to gain knowledge and experience in both clinical and research practices in this high-standard, world-caliber organization.

Unfortunately, although my doctoral course started in October 2020, I arrived in Niigata late because of COVID-19 circumstances. All travelers are being requested to self-quarantine for 14 days upon entering Japan. Even though this is a difficult time to enter Japan, Niigata University has been very supportive, and they made my whole

onboarding journey smooth and easy. I am really grateful and appreciated for that help.

When I finally got into Niigata in January 2021, there were many things that I needed to adapt to, such as the weather, culture, language, etc. My first weeks were the winter season, and there were heavy snowfall and strong winds that we never really experience in Thailand. The following season, which was Spring, was very impressive to me! It's truly special as I am a plant and flower lover. In Spring, animals wake up from winter sleep, trees are green again and flowers bloom beautifully. So, in my free time, I usually go out to capture these unforgettable moments through my camera and I get even more inspired living in Japan.

My life in Dysphagia Rehabilitation Divi-

sion has been very productive so far, all of our members are friendly and hardworking. Professor Dr. Makoto Inoue is a great teacher. He is very supportive, warm, accessible, enthusiastic, and caring. In my time, I've learned clinical practice for dysphagic patients and many techniques in the research field, especially surgical techniques in the animal model.

After pursuing Ph.D., I will go back and work at Naresuan University. I will apply the knowledge and experience that I've achieved from Niigata University in my research and academic environment, as well as community services to help improve the quality of life of Thai people and assist in solving the shortage of specialists in the field of Dysphagia Rehabilitation. I also aim to pass on my knowledge from Japan to future students and researchers of Thailand.



A Light Dawns on My Life in Niigata

組織再建口腔外科学分野 Nyein Nyein Chan

I am Nyein Nyein Chan from Myanmar, which is one of the Southeast Asia countries bordering India, Laos, Thailand, Bangladesh and China.

I graduated from University of Dental Medicine, Mandalay (UDMM) and I have served as a teaching staff at the department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (UDMM) from 2014. Consequently, I noticed that the number of oral cancer patients in Myanmar has been increasing due to betel quid chewing, a well-known carcinogenic factor of oral cancer. During treatment, some of the patients had good results but some were not although their clinical conditions were seemed to be the same. I thought that the underlying molecular mechanism might be one of the reasons for different responses. However, the research facility has not been supported enough for molecular study in my university so far. Therefore, I was eager to study the molecular mechanism of oral cancer in other developed countries.

In early 2019, I applied to study in Niigata University. With the endeavor and great support of Ishida sensei, Kobayashi sensei kindly accepted me as a PhD student in his department, Reconstructive Surgery for Oral and Maxillofacial region. Finally, I became a PhD student of Niigata University in October 2019. My professor, all the teachers and the seniors warmly welcomed me. According to my research enthusiasm, Kobayashi sensei introduced me to Tanuma sensei, the head of Oral Pathology depart-

ment. Tanuma sensei kindly invited me to join his lab. Then, I moved to Oral Pathology department to begin my research journey.

The very first memory in Oral Pathology department is the kindness and supportive teachers and seniors. Moreover, I am impressed with their hard work and motivation on research. For me, although I came here for only a reason: to know more about the nature of cancer cells, I have poor knowledge in pathology and biological research. Everything was different from my previous experiences. Fortunately, my supervisor guided me to find my way. Cell culture, immortalized cell lines which I have never dreamed about. But it is very fascinating to study them. Although all are oral cancer cell lines, they have different potentials and nature like human beings. In every step, they gave me new information which attracted me to study more and keep on further step. Of course, my research journey has not been a smooth road. But I love each and every rock on my way and still going on.

Outside the university, the other respectable culture of Japanese people is loving plants and nature. At the end of winter, I can see many people both adults and young, grow plants not only flowers but also vegetables at their homes. Since growing plants and the smell of flowers always make me fresh, I am obliged to those who cultivate the plants and flowers. Moreover, I have been to Yahiko park in autumn

to enjoy the maple leaves and Hakusan park in spring for cherry blossom. Apart from the great beauty of maple leaves and cherry, what actually touch my mind is the protection and appreciation of Japanese people to nature and environment.

All in all, I can learn not only for the university knowledge but also for my life in Niigata. It is not enough for me to mention the positive impacts by having a chance to come to Japan.



Echigo Hillside Park Rose festival, 2021

The Precious Moments in My Life

歯周診断・再建学分野 Hnin Yu Lwin

My name is Hnin Yu Lwin. I came from Myanmar and we, Myanmar citizens, have no "Family name". We use only given name. Let me introduce about my country first. Myanmar, was known abroad as Burma, is located around 2717 miles away from Japan. It has a largely tropical climate with three seasons: Summer, Rainy and Winter Seasons. Although temperatures in Myanmar can vary from place to place, the climate is generally hot throughout the year. I haven't experienced snow in Myanmar. Thus, the climate and cultures are totally different from Japan. I was really worried whether I could adapt or not with new challenges in everything when I decided to study abroad in Japan.

But, these worries flew away since the first day of arrival to Niigata. The person I have first met in Japan is my Professor. He picked me up at the Niigata airport. That made me feel warmly welcomed. When I visited to my department, everyone I met greeted me with the warmest smiles. They all are really kind, helpful and generous. I also had a great dinner on the same day of arrival with my senior, tutor and Professor. That's why I felt secure, comfortable and kind-hearted since I have arrived to Niigata.

Japan is one of the leading nations in scientific research fields. The excellent accessibility, high quality of life standard and safety attracted me a great interest to study in Japan. Thus, I applied Japanese Government Monbukagakusho: MEXT Scholarship Program. When I was accept-

ed, I have chosen Periodontology which is my field of interest.

I have started to learn the protocols and laboratory procedures related with my doctoral research since October, 2019. Although everything was new for me, I had passed the difficulties under the kindly guidance and supervision of my tutor and supervisor. They create a supportive and stimulating environment which helps me believe in myself and focus on learning and improving my skills. I would like to express my special gratitude to Professor, supervisor, tutor and other members from our office for their encouragement, patience and support.

There was no COVID-19 crisis in my first few months in Japan, thus, I had a chance to visit to "Yahiko Park". I had enjoyed "Mojigari", the picturesque view of seasonal change that I haven't seen in Myanmar. Although there are usually many festivals according to seasons in Japan, I could not join these festivals since January, 2020. Because almost all of the festivals are canceled due to the effects of the corona virus pandemic. And also, I think we should refrain from travelling without important reasons and avoid the crowded areas for preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Thus, I could not travel around the Japan to enjoy beautiful nature and cultures of Japan in 2020. However, I have experienced and felt secure and impressive the great effort of Niigata University to prevent spread of infection with relevant notifica-

tions and guidelines regarding the control measures against COVID-19.

But, this year, 2021, I had enjoyed “Sakura Blossom” at Hakusan Park near Asahimachi Campus, Niigata University. It is the scenic and attracting view. I really would like to visit around the Japan after COVID-19 crisis. I hope I will be able to enjoy the na-

ture and cultures of Japan before I go back to Myanmar.

However, I will memorize every moment during the stay in Niigata because of great support of my department and Niigata University. And also, these moments are precious time in my life.



The first experience of the autumn scenery at Yahiko Park



The beautiful Sakura blossom at Hakusan Park in Niigata