

TO: Nakatani Foundation

Nakatani RIES GE 2019 Report

Your Name: Nils Chapin

Your University: Heidelberg University

Host Lab in Japan: Laboratory of Single-Molecule Cell Biology, Prof. Watanabe

Meaning of Nakatani RIES Fellowship: How would you describe the meaning/impact of the Nakatani RIES Fellowship?

The fellowship provides an incredible value for the recipient. For me, it meant that I could visit a country that I have always wanted to visit, in the best possible way. Living and working in a country enables one to feel integrated into the everyday life of the people and coming in contact with the culture in a completely different way than by just traveling. Therefore I would consider the impact culturally as significant. However academically the impact could have been improved for most participants by extending the internships. Even though I got particularly lucky with my project and was able to conduct meaningful research with excellent supervision, I could not finish my project due to time restrictions.

Complete the following sentences with the intended audience for these responses being potential applicants to the Nakatani RIES Fellowship.

- My favorite experience in Japan was...
 - hiking mount Atago and afterward swimming in the river in the valley below. The view was breathtaking and I even got invited for a barbecue by some locals.
- Before I left for Japan, I wish I had...
 - ordered a vegetarian meal for the flight.
- While I was in Japan, I wish I had...
 - cooked more often, and walked the Kumano Kodo.

Research Internship Overview: Provide a description of your research project and experience during your research internship. How did your project relate to your current or future academic interests? What was the experience of working in an international research setting like? What will you take away from your research experience this summer and what impact do you think this has had or will have on your future academic career or research interests?

During my internship, I conducted research by single-molecule imaging of actin and membrane proteins under fluid shear stress, to later track the motion of these molecules and calculate their displacement. For my masters I have to do 5 internships, one of those being in the field of biophysical chemistry. Therefore, the internship was very convenient, as I could get credit for it at my University. As research in Germany is already highly

international research in Japan was not majorly different. However, it gave me the opportunity to form friendships with people from this completely different cultural background. This helped me to understand the Japanese way of life and broadened my horizon. The research topic was also well picked as it connected to the topic I investigated during my bachelor thesis. Even though in the future I don't intend to continue researching in this direction I have learned important skills in cell culture, microfluidics, microscopy, molecule tracking, and bioinformatics.

Lab Environment Overview: Provide an overview of what the personal environment of the lab was like. Describe the personality and working style of your research group? What was it like working with your research mentor/s and the overall group dynamic in the lab?

My experience in the group of professor Watanabe was awesome. Everybody including the Professor, my PI, the secretary, and my colleagues were incredibly friendly and very supportive. The supervision was great, the professor personally took his time to discuss the results of my experiments with me, as well as to share his views and knowledge about many interesting topics. I learned a lot even during the short time of my stay, as my supervisor perfectly balanced teaching me new skills and letting me work independently.

Daily Life in Japan: Provide an overview of what your daily life was like in Japan. This could include the people you interacted with outside the lab on a day-to-day basis, food, your housing/living experience, your travels around Japan and the challenges you faced and the rewarding experiences you encountered over the course of the summer.

A regular weekday would start quite late as I was expected in the lab at around 10 am. Sometimes there was even time to visit some temples or walk around the city before work. I can strongly recommend this as there are only very few tourists around that early. After working until 6 or 7, I would come back to my apartment and take my bike to the nearest park to train calisthenics. After which I would meet up with other Nakatani fellows to either go out for food in nearby restaurants or to cook together. The free weekends where there were no events planned by the foundation I used to explore Kyoto by hiking in the nearby mountains, sightseeing, or going out to party. I also traveled to Tokyo by Shinkansen for a long weekend.

Experiences with Japanese Culture: Provide an overview of your most meaningful experiences with Japanese culture. This could be program activities or interactions you had with your lab or within your daily life in Japan that you think best exemplify aspects of Japanese culture or values. What did the experience/s teach you about Japan? What did they teach you about yourself?

For me, the most meaningful experiences with Japanese culture happened in the laboratory I worked in. The people were incredibly friendly and really a pleasure to talk to. We would often have social events in the lab where we would all go out to eat together or celebrate the birthday of lab members. During these events, I had the opportunity to informally connected with my colleagues and supervisors and learn much about their experiences and way of life. I think the greatest achievement of the internship is that I can now consider these people my friends.