

TO: Nakatani Foundation

Nakatani RIES GE 2019 Report

Your Name: Marie Blickling

Your University: Heidelberg University

Host Lab in Japan: Prof. Kamei Lab

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

It enables young scientists to network with scientists from Japan. It enables to get to know the research in Japan and lays groundwork for future collaborations between Germany and Japan. It also is a great opportunity to experience the everyday life in Japan.

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...
 - Everything. From being in the lab to enjoying the food to meeting new people. Also traveling around Japan was very interesting.
- Before I left for Japan, I wish I had...
 - Known a little bit of Japanese, known that it is really hard to be a vegetarian in Japan
- While I was in Japan, I wish I had...
 - More time to explore the country

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?

I worked on a new Intestine-on-Chip design together with an engineering student from a different lab. He designed and produced the chips and I was responsible for culturing cells inside the chip and performing assays with the cells cultured inside of the chip. I learned a lot of new techniques in the lab that are very important also for my future academic career. To work in Japan is very different from Germany in a lot of ways. In my opinion it is great to experience the different style of work as it helps to understand the Japanese culture and mindset and thereby enables a better and more efficient way of collaborating in the future.

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?

Everyone in the lab was very welcoming and kind to me and everyone was always helpful whenever I had a question. We had a Welcome Dinner and also a Farewell Dinner where I got to know more about Japanese tradition and cuisine. My mentor showed me everything and answered all of my questions. Instead of only watching other lab members I could do everything by myself which enabled me to try a lot of new techniques and maximize my learning experience. I really enjoyed my stay at the Kamei Lab and would recommend the Lab to everyone!

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.

We all had our own small flats close to the campus. Every morning I walked to the Lab together with other exchange students that had to be at the Lab around the same time. As we had our own small kitchen, we often cooked together with other exchange students. Sometimes we also went out for dinner to one of the many little restaurants close to our apartments. We tried to see and experience as much of Japan as possible, so we traveled on the weekends to different cities, which was very exciting but also very exhausting after a few weeks.

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?

Talking to people in the lab and interacting with people outside of the lab taught me most about the Japanese culture and about Japanese values. But going to a restaurant with my lab was probably my favorite experience because I got to experience Japanese culture and tradition, as food is a very important part of the daily life and it is so different to German food. Because I went to the restaurant together with locals, I tried food that I would have never tried being on my own and the others could explain all kinds of rituals to me.