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With the support from JSPS, I had the opportunity to carry out research in RIKEN Center for Sustainable Resource Science (CSRS), in Kanagawa for three months. I was hosted by Professor Ken Shirasu and Dr Yasuhiro Kadota during my stay. My research was involved in a genetic screening to identify mutant plants that are insensitive to nematodes. The goal is to understand the mechanism of which plants recognise nematodes to trigger an immune response. Parasitic nematodes feed on plants for nutrient uptake and cause severe crop losses. Hence, understanding the molecular mechanism of plant immunity against parasitic nematodes will contribute to the development of novel control methods.

I was introduced to efficient screening systems and cutting-edge technology that facilitates research. It was challenging to adapt to a new system in the beginning, but also fascinating at the same time. During my stay at RIKEN I was given excellent support from my hosts and all the lab members. I have made friends inside and outside of the lab and the whole experience was great.

My recommendation to future JSPS fellows is to be open-minded and make as much connections as possible. I am grateful to have received help and suggestions from people who have stayed in Japan for many years. It might also help to learn a bit of basic Japanese before starting your fellowship.

I would like to thank JSPS again for the funding and opportunity.

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