

I undertook a three month short term Fellowship hosted by Prof. Yuji Hiwatashi at Miyagi University School of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences located in Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture. The aim of my visit was to develop a modified CRISPR/Cas9 system capable of live cell imaging in the grass species *Brachypodium distachyon*. By deactivating the Cas9 enzyme and incorporating a fluorescently tagged protein into the system it is possible to view large chromosomal domains and even single loci. This technique allows chromosomes to be viewed *in vivo* and can help understand their dynamics during the initial stages of meiosis to elucidate their role on crossover formation.

The faculty members at Miyagi University were all extremely friendly and helpful. I was even given the opportunity to present my project to faculty members and students. In Japan I found that many places did not allow outdoor shoes while indoors. This was even true at the University as I brought a set of indoor shoes with me to wear while working. It does seem to reduce the amount of dust and dirt that is brought into the laboratory and the office. It is worth checking with your Host to see what their specific working practices as they could have different laboratory or office procedures that you would benefit from knowing.

The Japanese people I met were all friendly and helpful, even when my grasp of the language was poor. I would suggest learning as much Japanese as you can, focusing on speaking rather than reading as the three written languages can be tricky and I found being able to speak some Japanese more beneficial than being able to read some. When going to Japan I would recommend researching the area you are going to as each prefecture seems to have its own speciality dish. Sendai is famous for its Gyūtan (Beef tongue) and its high-grade Wagyu beef, both of which I highly recommend. The Japanese have an excellent palate and their food is incredibly tasty and diverse, and the restaurant prices are quite reasonable. It is worth checking Facebook for groups of likeminded people as I was able to find International groups who hosted regular meets and gave me the opportunity to meet people and explore Sendai from a more local perspective. I thoroughly enjoyed my time in Japan and am extremely grateful to the JSPS for the funding opportunities they provide.

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