

Studying and Working in Japan– Sharing Experience

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Biography in Brief

- 1973: Born in Vietnam
- 1995: Graduated from Thai Nguyen University of Agro-Forestry, specialized in crop science
- 1998: Started studying in Japan
- 2004: Obtained Ph.D of Agriculture in Kagoshima University
- 2004-2006: Postdoc, Japan Society of Promotion Sciences
- 2006-2012: Assistant Professor, University of the Ryukyus
- 2012-present: Associate Professor, Hiroshima University
- Vice-President of Vietnamese Intellectual Association in Japan
- Supervised >20 Ph.D students and > 60 Master students from more than 12 countries in Asia and Africa (30% are from Vietnam)
- Prizes: Kusunoki from Miyazaki Prefecture (2010), Phoenix Outstanding Researcher Awards (2017, 2018)
- Published more than 200 scientific papers and books in agricultural sciences and biotechnology.

When arriving Japan in April 1998

- Vietnam GDP in 1998 was 27.2 billion USD, now in 2020 increased to 271.2 billion USD.
- Only one direct fly to Japan from Hochiminh City
- One year, very few students (mostly from MEXT Scholarship) can come Japan to study, no private student.
- Most of high building areas in Hanoi now were rice field. Neither public phone nor mobile phone (only several very rich Vietnamese had mobile phone).
- No chance to learn Japanese before arriving Japan, thus Japanese language was the most difficult problem.
- Many culture shocks (did not know how to use washing machine, electronic cook ect).

How to learn Japanese

- Concentrate Japanese as much as possible in the first 1 year in Japan.
- Have as much as possible friendship with Japanese, especially old Japanese people to learn Japanese and culture. Join many cultural activities, festival, and international student associations.
- Learn Kanji by reading newspapers everyday (can remember 1800-2000 Kanji in 1 year). Listened to TV everyday and recorded.
- Is it able to achieve the level 3 in the first 6 months, 2 level after 1 year, and the 1 level after 2 years.
- Make presentations in Laboratory seminar in Japanese, not English (the first seminar costed 3 months to prepare).
- Communication with Lab members in Japanese⁴.

Laboratory activity and research

- Always go to Lab earlier than Professors (7.30 am) and returned late (after 8.00) pm, went to Lab again from 10.00 pm until 2-3 a.m.
- Learn experience of how to do experiments from senior students.
- Keep good relations with Japanese and foreign students, consider about Laboratory culture.
- Communication with Lab members in Japanese.
- Urge Professors for help in experiments and writing papers.
- Actively join every Laboratory activity.
- Keep contact with senior students and Professors even after graduate.

Prepare for work in Japan

- In Japan, the **recommendation culture** is important, meaning that if you are recommended by your Professors, or seniors, it will be one of the most crucial points.
- **Try as much as possible to obtain excellent achievements in study. Master course: 4 papers in SCI journals, Ph.D course: 20 papers (11 papers with first name, all papers are in SCI journals).**
- After obtaining Ph.D, become JSPS postdoc for almost 2 years.
- Assistant Professor in the University of the Ryukyus: learn how to work in Japan, how to manage laboratory and students, how to find fund for research.

Work in Japan University (Associate Professor)

- Understand well Japanese is very important and helpful for work in Japan.
- Learn how to manage a Laboratory and students, build Laboratory rules and culture.
- How to find excellent students and good staff for Laboratory.
- Learn the educational and management system of Japan University and Society to serve for University work.
- How to obtain funds for Laboratory, how to contribute for development of Department, Faculty and University.
- Try to contribute for Japan society, and other countries: Vietnam, Southeast Asia, Asia, Africa, ect.

Future Plans

- **Find breakthrough inventions that are unique and contribute for development of the world.**
- Successfully educate human resources (Ph.D and Master students) for developing countries.
- Obtain further achievements in research (>200 scientific papers and book chapters), and patents.
- Extend international relations in research and exchanged activities, find scholarships for foreign students.
- **Enjoy the life and research in Japan with foreign students: play soccer, jogging, karate, golf..., Japanese and international foods.**



Thank you