

Your Name: Dongyu Zhang

Host Lab in Japan: Suzuki Lab, Kyoto University, iCeMS

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

The Nakatani RIES Fellowship Program was incredibly meaningful for me. Not only was I able to conduct research and learn from some of the best researchers in their field, but I was also able to immerse myself in an amazing culture and meet so many people. For this reason, the program allowed me to experience an unforgettable summer full of learning and connecting with others.

**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 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?

Over summer, I worked in Suzuki-Sensei's lab at Kyoto University, where I conducted research into exploring the mechanism for osteoclast fusion. Over the course of the summer, I worked on plasmid construction, proteins synthesis, and conditions testing. At Georgia Tech, I have only had experience working in dry labs looking into modeling research, so having the ability to finally conduct research in a wet lab and learn related skills greatly appealed to me. There are certainly challenges pertaining to working in an international lab, such as the communication barrier. However, having learned how to deal and resolve these issues will prove really useful for the future. This unique research experience has taught me not only a new field of research but also how to better work with others from a different background, allowing me to prepare myself for future academic and research endeavors.

**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?

Quite different from my lab at Georgia Tech, each lab member in the Suzuki Group had their own research topic and project. Nevertheless, there was visibly still a greater sense of community. Everyone was welcome to ask questions and seek out help from other members, and everyone was incredibly supportive and sincere within our weekly progress meetings. In my lab in Japan, everyone was also incredibly hard working.

**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.

The experience I have had in the daily life of living in Japan is definitely one of the highlights of the trip for me. One of my favorite activities was exploring the local cuisine by frequenting different restaurants each week. Personally, I wish I had more time to practice speaking and reading Japanese and interacting with the locals. I loved the apartment complex where I stayed at, which is not only near the university and city center but also is not too noisy.

***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?

Perhaps what taught me the most about Japanese culture is my traveling. In my time in Japan, I went on weekend trips to Fukuoka, Hiroshima, and Nikko. These trips have been some of my favorite memories, and I learned so much about Japan from the shrines and festivals I have attended. Additionally, I learned a lot about culture and daily life in Japan from my lab members. We would frequently spend time together outside of work, and I learned much of what I know about Japanese life and culture from them! These experiences taught me the importance of diversity and perspective and to be open to new experiences!