

# Interview with Alumni in Thailand

– MY student life at Nagoya University –

## • Academia

Prof. Dr. Apinun Suprasert

Dean, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Kasetsart University

Prof. Dr. Apinun Suprasert completed his master's and PhD degrees at the Graduate School of Bioagricultural Sciences at Nagoya University. He then moved back to Thailand to become a faculty member in the Department of Anatomy, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at Kasetsart University, Thailand. He claims that one's personal experiences and networking are of great value to one's studies and research at a university. He has currently been the Dean of Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at Kasetsart University and the Chairperson of the Thailand Branch of Nagoya University Alumni Association.



Why did you decide on studying at Nagoya University for your master's and PhD degrees?

When I was a young staff member at Kasetsart University, I wanted to assume the challenge of taking the next step to become an academic staff. I was required to earn a PhD, and to do that, a senior member of the faculty advised me to study abroad at Nagoya University. To be honest, I was not familiar with Nagoya University at that time, and had no plans to live in Japan at all. I was rather more excited to have unknown experiences than to be afraid.

Once you arrived in Japan, how did you find about the culture?

I was impressed that the people and the cities or the transportation systems in Japan were punctual and well-organized. Also, Japanese history and culture were really interesting. I remember especially Japanese food culture made me even happy: every day, I put my dinner time special to meet my friends. I loved fish-fry and miso or tofu made from soy beans that were served by the canteen of Nagoya University on weekdays, and I used to go out on weekends to Imaike to have "chicken hanwari (a combination of rice and fried chicken)", the taste and the sensation of flavor of which I can remember even now!

As language is a part of culture, how did you study Japanese?

As a non-Japanese student in Japan, I was required to know the Japanese language to communicate with Japanese people. In fact, through some fun events with Japanese friends, such as visiting sightseeing places that exposed me to Japanese scenery, culture, and history, I picked up Japanese language skills that were enough to communicate with them. At the same time, I noticed that I got many ideas for my research through these activities, inspired by knowing Japanese culture inclusive of innovative ideas. I found that languages are important and advantageous tools if you know English and more, in addition to your mother tongue.

What experiences did you have in your student life at Nagoya University?

As my purpose for living in Japan was clearly to obtain a PhD, so I mostly stayed at the laboratory. However, by participating in academic activities through conferences, I had many opportunities to meet professors and researchers not only in the laboratory but also all over the world. One great experience was, by winning a fellowship, to visit California during my PhD program at Nagoya University. I can say from my experience that we cannot study alone. Those networks

that I created are now a treasure of mine to carry out current and the future works.

As you emphasize one's own experiences and networking are of great value to study and research at a university, what exactly should academic researchers do?

While academic researchers have a responsibility to become experts in their field, we should be aware of being a voice in the society. We need to ask society about its needs and hear its responses to move on to the next stage. For example, in the subject of veterinary medicine, volunteering experiences in the farms are significant. Through such work, we can exchange our views with farmers to apply them to our research based on their needs. From an educational point of view, I would like to inspire young people, giving them more chances to think of how their volunteering experiences and leaderships can be engaged in society.



Prof. Dr. Apinun Suprasert, with Nagoya University members, at Kasetsart University

## • Industry

Mr. Atsushi Uozumi

Partner, PricewaterhouseCoopers Legal & Tax Consultants Ltd.

Mr. Atsushi Uozumi graduated from the School of Economics at Nagoya University. He became a certified public accountant (CPA) in Japan and worked as an auditor at Chuo Audit Corporation. In 1995, he transferred to Coopers & Lybrand (present PwC Thailand) in Thailand. Since then, also following the experiences of Asian financial crisis in 1997, he has supported Japanese companies in Thailand, by consulting on M&A, on the restructuring of businesses, and on international tax affairs, financial audits, and so on.

What was your purpose to study at Nagoya University?

When I was a high school student, my dream was to become a medical doctor. However, only after I took the common first-stage exam to enter Japan's university, I realized what I wanted to do was not to become particularly a medical doctor but to do as a specialist. I did not know what kind of specialist exactly at that time, except that I was simply interested in economics. When I took advantage of a chance to enroll in the



School of Economics at Nagoya University, my purpose for studying at the university was then getting clearer.

During your student days at Nagoya University, how were you leading a way to your future?

For the first two years of my university experience, I did a lot of different kinds of jobs out of curiosity, as well as the usual studying. I thought I could broaden my potentiality to the future through the experiences such as working as a private tutor for young students, a ball boy at baseball stadium, a seasonal employee at a department store, a physical laborer on the transportation service, and so on.

In my junior year, I was a student in Prof. Takashi Saito's seminar and was strongly inspired by him and my colleagues to become an accountant. I had no idea how

to strive for that goal at first, although we, the seminar members, worked together cohesively and received helpful advice from the graduate members.

*I can imagine that you enjoyed constantly challenging one another during your university days.*

We built good friendships and shared any information we had, to the goal of becoming an accountant. Prof. Saito also directed us to participate in the academic discussion held at a conference. We gained much motivation for the goal here again, by exchanging opinions with other university members.

*Finally, how did you reach your goal to become an accountant?*

I took an exam to become an accountant for my first time when I was a senior student. However, the result was failure. I then made an extremely tough decision, and I intentionally failed a credit to stay another year at the university to focus on studying for the exam. After the graduation, I passed the exam, and becoming an accountant, I started working at accounting firm.

I appreciate the great support Prof. Saito and my friends in the seminar could give me. I feel I completed my university training so that I could actively step forward to work in the real world and even overseas.

*You moved to Thailand to work as a partner at PwC Thailand. What things are important for your work?*

Especially being in Thailand, I have faced cultural differences that have provided me with more chances than I expected. Although I obtained a professional license of accounting in Japan, the license itself is only available in Japan and not in Thailand. It is even impossible for me to take the exam for the Thai license because only those people of Thai nationality are eligible. However, because I worked in auditing for companies in Japan under the Japanese license and I cultivated professional knowledge of financial statements in Japan, I can now work specifically to support Japanese companies in Thailand.

I believe that every experience will take me well into the future. Those university days helped me think about my career plans, and made me more confident about setting a clear personal goal. I would like to say that university days can be a key to open your brilliant future.

