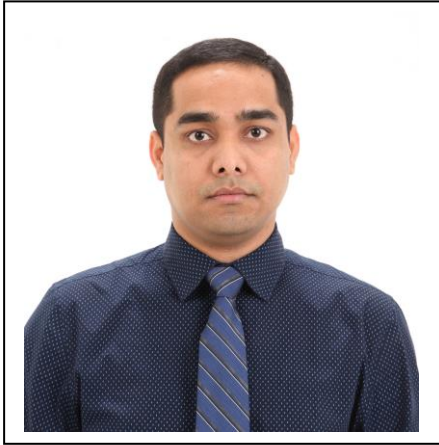


## **Dr. Delowar's MEXT Scholarship Experience**



I first heard about the MEXT scholarship when I was an undergrad student at the University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh. Many professors from my university were MEXT scholars. I heard about their research experiences in Japan. From that time, I was dreaming to study in Japan with the MEXT scholarship. I heard that it is a very prestigious and competitive scholarship in the world. I also knew that Japan is the Land of Rising Robotics. The MEXT scholarship came to my attention when I was working as a Lecturer at Dhaka International University (DIU), Dhaka. Meanwhile, I always had the dream to research on robotics from my work experience, and I knew that I wanted to specialize in Robotics. And as I started to understand the MEXT scholarship more, I discovered that this is what I want to pursue my next goal in life.

### **Applying for MEXT**

When I began thinking about applying to MEXT, I was searching for Professors who are specialized in Robotics. Finally, I found Professor Genci Capi, a former faculty of the University of Toyama, Japan. I e-mailed him and he had a positive consent to apply for MEXT scholarship under the University of Toyama, Japan. I began to prepare my MEXT application and made sure that it was as perfect as it could be. I spent a few days and consulted with my professor several times on making a research plan. I had interviewed two times during these times, firstly I was interviewed by my professor and the second time I was interviewed by a board which consisted of three specialized professors of the University of Toyama. When I had passed the interview, then I contacted with my Bachelor's and Master's thesis supervisors about the program and recommendation letters. They provided me the supportive letters of recommendation. I sent all the necessary documents to my beloved professor through the courier service. Meanwhile, my professor applied for me at his university. After the first screening, my professor knew that I was at the shortlist which was later sent to the Ministry of Education in Japan.



I was waiting for the final result around two months. The day I was informed by my professor that I was selected for the MEXT scholarship. It was as if all the stars have aligned and it was a call for me to go to Japan for the study on robotics. In that time, I was over the moon and was so glad that it was the

best memorable moment in my life.

At the President party with my professor

### **Preparation for Departure**

Immediately after I was informed of the result, I was planned for the visa application and departure plan. I also thought that I need to take clearance from my job authority and to leave my country within two months. Within a few days, I had received the scholarship award letter which was sent from my university. I went to the Embassy of Japan, Bangladesh, with all the necessary documents for the visa application. Embassy staff asked me to come after one week to pick-up my passport. In the meantime, I informed my university that I am quitting my job and going for the Ph.D. program in Japan. After receiving my passport with visa, I visited my parents because they lived in a remote village which is 200 km far from my workplace. My parents were tearful of my departure because I am the youngest son of them.

At the same time, I had planned for my life in Japan. I always got in touch with my professor and the official staffs of the University of Toyama. With living arrangements, my university had allotted me university dormitory, which was awesome since I did not have to worry about looking for a place to live.

### **Life as a MEXT Research Student**

On the day that I left for Japan, I was accompanied on the same flight with my teacher back in my BSc and MSc Class at the University of Rajshahi. Actually, he had gone for his Ph.D. program but under a different university. I was welcome and picked-up from Toyama Airport by a Bangladeshi brother who was very close to my professor. I landed at Toyama, Japan, on Sunday, September 23, 2014, so I meet with my professor the next day. I did all the university procedures with my professor. My dormitory was specialized for the International students, so I hadn't any problem with communication.

One day, we were in our weekly meeting, suddenly we were noticed that it was snowing. I never experienced snowfall before, so I was amazed by the beauty of the first snowfall of my life. But the issue raised when I was returning with my fellow mate in our dormitory. Toyama is one of the prefectures of Japan where snowfall is very common during the winter season. The dormitory was around 2.5 kilometers far, we hadn't any early preparation for snow. We were in trouble to return with our regular shoe. I found difficult to walk without boot especially in a snowy day. I was assigned to the dormitory for one year. It was very difficult to attend the Japanese Language class every morning by walking through heavy snowing.



Snowfall in Toyama



Going to Class in Snowfall



Yokohama Port City

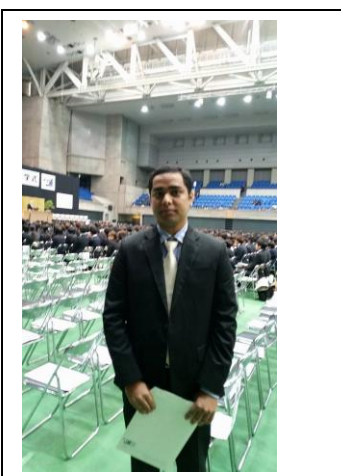
## What Classes took and like?

I took the Japanese Language class in the first six months of my MEXT scholarship. My Japanese language professors were very nice. They helped me a lot to learn the Japanese Language. At the meantime, after finishing my classes at 12 pm, I always used to stay at the laboratory until 7 or 8 pm for researching on robotics. Those six months was a very hard time because I was attending the Japanese Language class and laboratory work simultaneously. My advisor also assigned a tutor for me. I used to meet with him once a week because I had received different types of notification from post-office, dormitory, electric company, the cellphone company, and gas company. All notifications were written in Japanese language, so my tutor helped me to translate it in English.

During the classes, I had also prepared for the Ph.D. entrance examination. I had submitted my application for the entrance examination. I discussed many times with my professor and prepared myself for the examination. Although I had a lot of encouragement from my professor Genci Capi, it was still a stressful experience as I never had the presentation in such a big platform in front of the four renowned professors. I had to take the entrance exam. It was a one-hour long examination. I felt fairly confident coming out from the presentation- I did not get any surprising questions and I thought I had answered all the questions well. However, at the same time, I was very stressed while I waited for the examination result. If I did not succeed, I would have to wait for the next round of recruitment which was six months away. After waiting a few days that seemed like forever, I had received the result. When I saw my name on the exam passed list, it seemed that my dream is becoming true. I was officially accepted to the Ph.D. program at Graduate School of Science and Engineering for Education, University of Toyama in April 2015!



PhD Entrance Presentation



PhD Entrance Ceremony



PhD Entrance Ceremony

## Life as a Graduate Student in Japan

On the first week of April 2015, officially, I began my life as a Ph.D. fellow on Robotics. I started with the official opening ceremony at Toyama City Gymnasium, Toyama, followed by an orientation.

Then, my official research started on the next day. Firstly, it was pretty difficult because I didn't have experience in Robotics. I studied very hard to explore in the robotics field. Day-by-day, I acquired knowledge with the proper guidance of my beloved professor. He encouraged me a lot. Besides the research, I also needed to attend some course works as a part of the Ph.D. program. In the first year of the Ph.D. program, everything was going well. At the end of January 2016, suddenly I heard that my professor is moving to Hosei University, Tokyo. This news came to me like a thunderstorm. I was totally out of mind what to do. I discussed with my professor. At the first meeting, he asked us (3 students were enrolled to my professor at the same session with me (one student from China and another student from Albania), and one student he was going to enter Ph.D. program on April 2016) about our intention. I immediately decided to follow my professor to continue my research on the same topics. But the problem started when the dean of our faculty was not agreed with my decision. Then I communicated with the top official of the university. In the end, they were agreed but I cannot move entirely. That means I will belong to the University of Toyama official. All kinds of activities such as Ph.D. presentation, certificate, etc., will be under the University of Toyama, but I was eligible to do research at Hosei University. There was another problem who will pay for me at Hosei University. Because MEXT scholarship paid for me at the University of Toyama. In such a situation, my professor Genci Capi had several meetings with both universities. In the end, Hosei University agreed to use their research lab as free of cost. This is one of the examples of the greatness of Japanese universities. Not only the university but also people in Japan are very kind, helpful, gentle, humble and great. Anyway, I needed my official supervisor. Then Professor Mitsuru Jindai, Control Systems Engineering Laboratory was assigned for me, but I continued my research work with Professor Genci Capi who became my co-supervisor.

I moved to Tokyo after one and a half years of arrival in Japan. It was one of the most challenging situations in my life. It affected my research as well. But by the mercy of Allah and help from my professor, I overcome all difficulties.

I was asked to apply for Ph.D. pre-defense to evaluate my work by four renowned professors. It was 120 minutes of presentation and questionnaires. After a few days later, I have received my examination result. After one month later, I had the final defense. This time, it was an open presentation, anyone can join the presentation and ask the question. Alhamdulillah in February, I had received the notification from the university that my thesis was approved and in March 2018, officially I got my Ph.D. degree from the University of Toyama. During my Ph.D. program, I attended many conferences in Japan and overseas countries and also published papers in several scientific journals.



PhD Graduation Ceremony with My Wife Sirajum Monira



Graduation Ceremony



Like any three years in a person's life, there were good times and bad times, but all the hardships that occupied during my Ph.D. program melted away when I submitted my thesis paper, 120 pages were written entirely in a scientific way. I felt honored when I walked across that stage to receive my graduation.

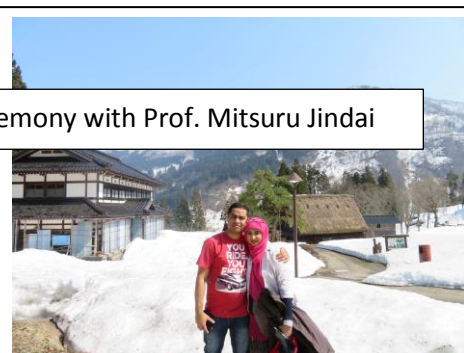
I traveled many places in Japan (such as Osaka, Kyoto, Nara, Kobe, Ibaraki, Chiba, Ishikawa, Fukui, Yamanashi, Aichi, Mie, Wakayama, Yamagata, Kanagawa) with my friends as well with my wife. My wife is a Canadian citizen when she visits me in Japan, we travel a lot and enjoy Japanese food. I climbed at the top of the Mount Fuji, it was an amazing experience in my life.



Cherry Festival at Meguro River, Tokyo



Cherry Festival at Shinjuku Park, Tokyo



Ceremony with Prof. Mitsuru Jindai

Sightseeing at Gokayama, Toyama

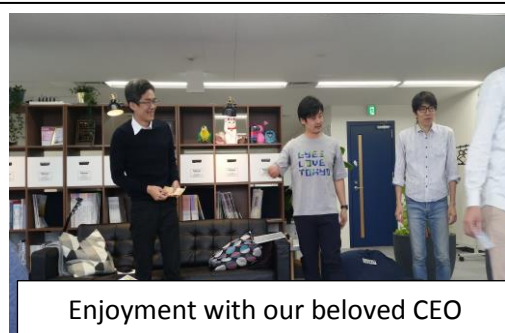
### Life after MEXT

I was not only proud of my achievement as a MEXT scholar but also, I feel that I have benefitted from my experience after graduation. The methodology that I had invented during my thesis research is still valuable learning that is useful in my career.

After the Ph.D. program, I found employment as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Hosei International Fund Foreign Scholars Fellowship, Hosei University, Koganei Campus, Tokyo, Japan. By impressing with my research, many companies were interested in me. After carefully considering my things and discussed with my professor, I am now working as a Scientist, Research and Development Division, Fairy Devices Inc., Bunkyo-Ku, Tokyo, Japan. I heard lots of things about Japanese companies. I heard that working in companies is very hard and stressful. But my company is completely different. People, especially my CEO and head of R&D Division, are very kind, gentle, humble and free-minded. In our company, we are worked like a family with fun, and enjoyment. I am enjoying my life very much in Japan.



Meeting at my office



Enjoyment with our beloved CEO



Fun with Colleagues

### **Advice You May have for Future Applicants**

There have two types of MEXT scholarship: Embassy recommended and the University recommended scholarship. If you are looking to apply for MEXT scholarship, be confident and go for it! If you take one thing away from this, it is that MEXT is a lot of work, but it is worth every minute! It is truly a wonderful program if you are interested in pursuing academic research in your life's plan. You don't need to be fluent in Japanese or already have significant research experience in your field, you just need to be excited about the opportunity to study at a Japanese University. It's the opportunity of a lifetime!

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