

## **Introduction**

I am **Dr. Mohammad Shahid Ullah**, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, Department of Arts and Sciences, Ahsanullah University of Sciences and Technology (AUST), Dhaka. I completed my Bachelor and MS in chemistry from Department of Chemistry, University of Dhaka in 2010. After enjoying five years teaching experience as a faculty member of AUST, in 2015 I moved to Toyohashi University of Technology (TUT), Japan for Ph.D. study and successfully completed my highest academic degree in September, 2018. It's a great pleasure for me and also my family.

## **Why you chose to apply?**

When I was a third year undergraduate student of the department of Chemistry at University of Dhaka, I was informed about MEXT scholarship for higher studies. One of my professors also advised me to apply for MEXT scholarship. Moreover, many of my university teachers who completed their higher studies from Japan under MEXT scholarship. As I know research in pure chemistry in Japan is highly dynamic and very much richer. For this reason, it seemed to me that the MEXT scholarship is the perfect opportunity to do my higher studies in chemistry. I will be always so grateful to my professors who provided me support and advice in finding the right supervisor and perfecting my application.

## **Information on your current regard to what Interview/tests were like**

After sending all necessary academic documents to the university office and also my supervisor, I was so pleased when I got an email from the university office that I was selected as an applicant for an interview. The interview has been taken by my supervisor over the phone that time he was in outside of Japan but there was no problem. As I was very much poor in Japanese language, I was so worried about talking to my sensei, but when I talked my professor in English then I felt so relaxed. Moreover, my professor is very much helpful and a nice person. Since I was applying to study doctoral course as a regular student under international English program, I did not feel any kind of major problem in the case of research related discussion and also others.

## **Moving to Japan**

After completing all interviews and academic documentation process, I was eagerly waiting for the final acceptance letter from the MEXT and the university. At the end of June, I received an email from the university office that I was preliminary selected for an MEXT applicant for PhD studies in TUT, Japan. That time was the most exciting time for me and also my family. And finally, when I found out I was selected for MEXT scholarship as a PhD student in TUT, I felt so happy and excitement of going to a new country and then wait, and wait... and wait. At the end of August, 2015 I confirmed my air ticket and I left Bangladesh on 28<sup>th</sup> September-2015.

## Life as a university student in Japan



Actually, my program was a three years program for the doctoral course student. I had planned to just spend the three years as a PhD research student and then return to my home country. Finally, I completed my expected degree in due time. But I was having so much fun and good memories. My lab is an international lab. We are seven international students in our lab and many Japanese students. Japanese lab mates were very much cooperative and gentle. I learned so many things about my research and also Japanese daily life, culture, history from my lab mates. I had a Japanese tutor named **Mr. Yuta Endu**, who is very much gentle and helpful. I am very much grateful to him. His support was so impressive. My research was so fruitful because of my supervisor **Prof. Dr. Shinichi Itsuno**, he is very much supportive and gentle person. He is so much kind about my research and Japan life.



Specially, after a terrible accident on 2<sup>nd</sup> week of January 2018, my supervisor's support was so much important. For this reason, I am very much grateful to my PhD mentor. I was so pleased about the fantastic hospital health service. I stayed in hospital for almost one month after a very complex operation on my right leg. I was so lucky that my operation was successful and I recovered myself after four months. In hospital, the doctor and nurses were so kind, helpful and amiable.

For the MEXT scholar, there are three types of health insurance that covered all medical expenses for the whole treatment. It was a great support for me as an international student. I think this insurance support is very much important for any international student. I really grateful to Japanese govt. and university authority.



During living in Japan I visited many places, especially I went Shizuoka many times for the visiting of *Fuji Mountain*. It is so charming and beautiful. I just impressed to visit this mountain. And I went *Chiba, Fukuoka, Kyoto and Hamamatsu* for attending conferences and visiting. Moreover, I attended many Japanese parties and gathered Japanese cultures. I like many Japanese foods, especially *Onigiri, Sushi*. Both foods are so delicious and I like this very much. I have so many good memories with the Japanese peoples. I had been living in one Japanese apartment for two years with many Japanese and international students and I learned many things from other students. It's a great experience for my life. The owner of my apartment was one gentle lady. She is so nice guy and she helped me a lot in many cases. I am also very much grateful to her. Japanese life in private apartment was so peaceful and enjoyable.

### **What classes were like**

One of the reasons that I applied to MEXT was because I wanted to get the good chemistry research opportunities that available in Japan, and in that regard my program at Toyohashi University of Technology provided me the appropriate opportunities to do my PhD research. Graduate school at TUT involved taking a lot of graduate courses to fill up credits, I did not feel any problem to do study all theoretical and lab courses. My lab seminar and presentations were held in English and also, Japanese but I did not face any problem to do this.

## Graduation and life after MEXT



In the month of September 2018, after passing a very hectic three years, I submitted my final thesis and presented my final PhD presentation successfully. In my three years life there were good times and there were some bad, but I have many good memories that I can't forget. I was so happy and relax when I walked across that stage to receive my highest academic degree from the President of my university on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2018 at morning. It was the best time in my academic life.

My last month in Japan was full of busyness, and while it was hard to leave and to say goodbye for this time. Besides, returning to Bangladesh, I was eagerly waiting to go home and get back to work on my university. But I want to go Japan again, I think Japan is one of the secured and gentle country in this world and it is totally unique from other countries.

### Advice you may have for applicants

I think if anyone wants to continue higher studies in Japan in any kind of field, he or she must try to get a MEXT scholarship. And while I applied to chemistry, I knew many other MEXT scholars in fields such as physics, biology, mathematics, pharmacy, microbiology, biochemistry, all engineering subjects, medical sciences, law, economics, and even astronomy. He or she does not need to be fluent in Japanese or already have significant research experience in own field, just need to be excited about the opportunity to study at a Japanese university. Finally, I would like to say MEXT is the best academic scholarship among many other scholarships for higher studies.