



From the world to Kumamoto University

Feeling the Heart of Japan through the Custom of Hanami and Appreciation for the Seasons

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Dr. Andri Rezano from Indonesia has been studying immunology in Kumamoto University since April 2010. A lecturer at Padjadjaran University and also a medical doctor back in his country, Dr. Rezano is currently studying cancer biology particularly the mechanism of cancer undergo apoptosis (cell death), hoping to share his research to students back home.



Dr. Rezano (on the far right) enjoying hanami with Dr. Kazuhiko Kuwahara and other exchange students from Bangladesh and Thailand

While in Indonesia, I was told by my former supervisor who previously visited the medical department of Kumamoto University that Kumamoto University is advanced in the study of immunology. It was then that I decided to study abroad with a government-sponsored scholarship, and came to Kumamoto University in 2010. Currently, my research is based on a high affinity antibody molecule called “GANP*,” which is an antigen-antibody reaction of immunology. “GANP” is reported to play a role in DNA repair when cell is damaged, and by revealing its mechanism, I would like to make use of this research for potential cancer prevention and treatment.

I spend most of my time in the laboratory speaking English, but once I step out of the lab, I have a hard time communicating in Japanese. Because I am Moslem, I don't eat pork. So the first Japanese sentence I learned was “Butaniku, haitteimasuka? (Does this include pork?)” At the supermarket, this sentence comes in very handy.

What I was most surprised about in Japan is the custom of hanami (cherry blossom viewing). I was moved by the beauty of sakura cherry blossoms, which colored the bare brown trees with pale pink flowers in a matter of weeks. The Japanese wait for a year for this flower which only blooms for 1 week, and once it blooms, they enjoy it just like a festival. From this experience, I felt the perseverance of the Japanese and their affection towards the seasons.

Next March, I will return back to Indonesia. I want to build up the basis of molecular mechanism research in my country based on what I learned in Kumamoto University, and contribute to the expansion of the medical field.

*GANP: Cancer resistant molecule. Discovered at Kumamoto University.



Cell culturing can be a tough work, says Dr. Rezano. Cells are living objects. He constantly checks the temperature, growth of the cells, morphology and the presence of contamination.