

Through Rich Experiences in a Foreign Land—Study, Marriage, Childbirth Dreaming of Teaching in My Home Country Someday

Asep, Saepuloh

Doctoral Course in New Frontier Sciences, Graduate School of Science and Technology

Bayu, Alamsari

Doctoral Course in Advanced Technology, Graduate School of Science and Technology

It is not unusual to find students holding babies on university campuses in the US, China, or in many other countries around the world, since many students choose to marry while still studying. We also have an international student couple in Kumamoto University. We have interviewed this couple, Mr. Asep Saeploh and Ms. Bayu Alamsari, who are currently graduate students and raising their child away from their home country.



For Mr. Asep and Ms. Bayu, research and childcare are both important aspects of life. When their daughter was running a fever, Mr. Asep would take time off of research to take care of her. Mr. Asep and Ms. Bayu are supporting each other to fulfill their dreams.

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Saving the Water Environment of Vietnam with Technology Studied at Kumamoto University!

Lai, Quan Minh and Do, Khanh Phuong

Doctoral Course in New Frontier Sciences, Graduate School of Science and Technology

The goal for Mr. Lai Quan Minh and Ms. Do Khanh Phuong, doctoral students majoring in New Frontier Sciences at the Graduate School of Science and Technology, is to improve the water environment in their home country, Vietnam. In Kumamoto, a place well known for high quality natural water, Lai and Do are committed to the advanced study of sewage treatment technology.



Ms. Do Khanh Phuong (left) and Mr. Lai Quan Minh (right) during an experiment with anammox bacteria.

■ Aiming for their graduate degrees together

Asep and his wife, Bayu, are from Indonesia. Asep came to Kumamoto before his wife as a Japanese Government Scholarship Student in 2005. He began his days of study as a research student of New Frontier Sciences in the Graduate School of Science and Technology. He is researching volcanoes, and struggles every day with large amounts of data. He analyzes the data to study the history and mechanisms of volcanoes. Asep was unable to speak Japanese when he first arrived in Japan, but has become fluent enough in his time here to share his thoughts on life in Kumamoto: "Kumamoto is a very beautiful place. There are many volcanoes, which reminds me of my homeland. My laboratory is located on the 9th floor, and I always gaze out the window to look at Kumamoto Castle and Mt. Aso. I also enjoy the change of seasons, which we don't have in our country."

Bayu completed her master's degree in 2007, and subsequently moved to Kumamoto to start a new life with Asep. She has since been conducting theoretical analysis for finding the best conditions for steel refinement. At the time they both began working together at the laboratory, Bayu was pregnant.

■ University supported childcare

In June 2008, Bayu gave birth to the couple's first daughter. Three months later, Bayu was back in the laboratory.

"I was very anxious because my family was not with me. I wasn't able to go to the laboratory because I couldn't find anyone to take care of my baby." Despite this, Bayu continued her research

at the laboratory for even just two hours a day. By making arrangements with Asep to take care of the child together, she was able to juggle study and childcare.

Asep and Bayu are both aspiring to work as university professors when they return to Indonesia. They hope to share their knowledge from their research in Kumamoto with many people in Indonesia.

Their daughter is now 14 months old. "We are very thankful to our professors and friends who encouraged us to come to the laboratory, even with our child. Thanks to the support of so many people, we were able to engage in our research even while raising our child." They will never forget the kindness they received.

Excerpted from "Kumadai Tsushin" Vol. 34, 2009 Autumn
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熊本散歩

A Walk In Kumamoto
information of Kumamoto

Mt. Aso

A renowned volcano in Japan, Mt. Aso is famous for having one of the world's largest calderas. Visitors are able to get right up to the crater, which continues to emit smoke even now. Along with sights such as the most vast and majestic grassland in Japan, Mt. Aso makes Kumamoto a leading tourism destination that never stops enchanting visitors.



■ We want to study at Kumamoto University, the research frontrunner

Kumamoto University is well known in Japan and abroad for the research that makes use of anammox bacteria, which was discovered twelve years ago. Lai and Do learned of its research back when they were each studying at the Hanoi University of Civil Engineering and Vietnam National University in Hanoi, respectively, and decided to study at Kumamoto University.

"We don't have sewage treatment facilities in Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam. Sewage is dumped into rivers, which is causing environmental pollution," says Do. In the rapidly-developing Vietnam, infrastructure is being improved through construction of expressways and railways, but this development is also causing air and water pollution and other environmental issues which have become very serious. Nitrogen contained in high concentrations in runoff is difficult to eliminate by general sewage treatment technology and causes "eutrophication" of the sea and rivers, which leads to the death of marine animals and other environmental damage. Moreover, as drinking water is sourced from the groundwater in Hanoi, infiltration of nitrogen-polluted water into the soil also causes serious effects to drinking water.

Lai and Do focused on the method of eliminating nitrogen with anammox. "Anammox inexpensively and safely promotes the nitrogen cycle by exploiting the power of bacteria. It could be the savior for the water environment of Vietnam," says Lai.

■ Presentation of their studies back home

In December last year, 26 students from Kumamoto

University attended "The 8th Kumamoto University Forum, Hanoi, Vietnam," an academic exchange event held in Hanoi by Kumamoto University. There were presentations in English on six themes, including sewage treatment and medical radiology education.

Lai also made a presentation on sewage treatment technology using anammox, which is his own research theme. "I was happy I could make a presentation on the innovative sewage treatment technology to the researchers and students of my home country," Lai said with a smile. Do, who made a poster presentation, says "I received a lot of questions about my research and felt the awareness for the environment has increased."

"I hope to launch an academic field of water quality management and engineering and be engaged in research and education at a university in the future," says Lai. Do also talks about her goal; "I want to teach water environment preservation and also be involved in environmental businesses."

In May, their professor is hosting the First International Anammox Symposium 2011 at Kumamoto University. Lai and Do have been busy preparing for the symposium and summarizing their research results. "We have a lot to learn every day. But we are enjoying it thanks to the support from the professors and friends," they said in chorus.

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