

# IVER

Hokkaido University-Chulalongkorn University

## International Vet Exchange Program 2023

Achieving Global Standards of Excellence in Veterinary Education

Student Report from  
School of Veterinary Medicine,  
Hokkaido University

### Project Managers

Chulalongkorn University

1

Professor Nariaki NONAKA

Laboratory of Physiology, Hokkaido University



## Shiori ABE, 4th year

Unlike Hokkaido University's hospital, Chulalongkorn University's veterinary hospital is very large. The building itself consists of four wings and has as many departments as a general hospital. This is the first difference from Japanese veterinary hospitals that I noticed.

Different from previous years, this year's dispatch participants were able to choose the departments they wanted to visit. In my case, I was able to visit the departments of Exotics, Cats, and Rehabilitation. The experiences I gained in these departments were all interesting and very meaningful.

First, I would like to write about the experience I gained at the Department of Exotic Animal Medicine. What surprised me about this department is that there is only one doctor. The species of animals that come to the clinic are diverse, with a wide range of symptoms. More than 20 patients visit the clinic every day. It was amazing to see how quickly he diagnosed and treated them all by herself.

In Japan, there are not many opportunities to see exotic animals being treated, so there were many things to learn, such as how to keep them in place and how to administer medications. Of particular interest was the method of administering medication to snakes. Snakes are covered with muscle, so medication is basically administered intramuscularly. If there is a need to administer the drugs orally, it is possible to put the drugs into the body of a bait rat and feed it to the snake. It was a valuable experience for me because I could learn such methods and actual examination methods, which I could not learn in Japan.

Next, I would like to talk about the cat department. Since the cat department does not share a waiting room with other departments, the cats were able to wait in a cat-only space. This made them very relaxed and easy to handle.

Most of the cases brought in were kidney disease and infectious diseases. I had the impression that the cats with kidney disease was not so different from those in Japan. In contrast, many cats with infectious diseases, such as FeLV and FIP, which are rarely seen in Japan, came to the hospital. In addition, a fungal disease called sporotrichosis, which we have never learned about in Japan, was also prevalent. The reason for the high prevalence of infectious diseases is probably since owners prefer to let their cats roam free. Also, there were many owners who kept stray cats as pets, which made us feel a difference in the perception of pets compared to Japan. One of the interesting aspects of the study that I learned from this clinic was that some of the diseases originated from different pet-keeping practices than in Japan.



Rehabilitation using a treadmill



Sightseeing Pattaya

Finally, I will explain about the rehabilitation department. The Rehabilitation Department is a unit within the Department of Surgery, and a variety of patients came to the hospital, including those who could not undergo surgery and those who were considering whether to undergo surgery. Many patients came to the hospital because of fractures, paralysis, or osteoarthritis. Therefore, most patients initially came to the hospital unable to walk, and after two to six months of rehabilitation, they were able to walk again. Of course, paralyzed patients were unlikely to walk again, but they were rehabilitated to improve their quality of life. The patients who were able to walk were so energetic that it was hard to believe that they could not walk at first.

The treatment method was a combination of pain control and exercise. Pain management did not seem to differ much from human orthopedic surgery, such as laser and electrical stimulation. For exercise, they used underwater treadmills and balance balls. I thought there was not much to learn in rehabilitation, as the machines used were limited and the cases were often similar. However, if I wanted to make it my own, it would be so deep that I thought the week I spent participating in the consultation would not be enough time.

After practicing in all of these departments, I found that the students spent more time working independently than in Japanese veterinary clinics. For example, in the exotic animal department, students performed fecal examinations and then the doctor checked the feces. In the rehabilitation department, simple treatments such as laser and ultrasound therapy were performed by students. I was also impressed by the fact that when I asked questions to the students, in many cases they responded in a clear manner. The depth of each student's knowledge, the degree of mastery of techniques, and the sense of responsibility are probably higher than in Japan. This is probably because most of the students are interested in working at a hospital in the future. Another reason may be that fifth- and sixth-year students spend most of their time in hospital training, so they have far more experience than we do.

At Hokkaido University, there are many people who go on to careers other than clinical practice, such as research or public service. So, it would be difficult to swing to clinical practice like Chulalongkorn University. However, I think it is necessary to imitate the students' attitude toward veterinary medicine.

In addition, I sensed a difference in English proficiency between the Thai students and the Thai students. They were fluent in veterinary English, partly because the tests in some subjects, such as anatomy, were given in English. The percentage of students who could speak English was also much higher than in Japan. I think these differences were related to the education system before university, but it was a difference that made me feel my own lack of ability.

In this training program, I chose subjects and so on, thinking that I would learn mainly what I could not learn in Japan. And we were able to actually learn about the differences in diagnostic methods from Japan, which was a valuable experience for us. I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who supported our training. Thanks to the teachers who led us, the local teachers who were in charge, and the students who were kind to me coming from a foreign country, we were able to have a meaningful training program. Last but not least, I would like to express my gratitude to all of you. Thank you very much.



Taking a photo with teachers after the presentation



## Shizuku TERASHIMA, 4th year

This report details my three-week clinical internship at the Chulalongkorn University Small Animal Hospital. The hospital has multiple departments that work together to provide comprehensive care for animals. I chose three departments that interested me and spent a week observing each one. Additionally, I observed two orthopedic surgeries as I am interested in surgery. This report will discuss what I learned and experienced in each department, as well as my impressions of life in Thailand.

In the first week, I observed the Feline Clinic. This clinic specializes in cats and treats a wide range of conditions, including skin, respiratory, and urinary tract diseases. I was surprised by the number of cases of sporotrichosis, a zoonotic fungal infection that causes skin lesions. In recent years, this disease is increasing in Thailand and is now the most common fungal infection in cats. I was surprised to see so many cases of this disease that I had never heard of before. And I realized again that different countries have different infectious diseases that are prevalent and problematic. I also felt a sense of crisis that I had not known anything about the infectious diseases that are prevalent in Thailand, even though it is an Asian country like Japan. From this experience, I felt that it is important to be aware of the infectious disease situation in other countries as well as our own, and to be prepared to respond if the same infectious diseases become prevalent in Japan in the future.

In the second week, I observed the Cardiology department. In addition to observing medical examination, I participated in a class for sixth-year Chulalongkorn University students. I learned about the basic diagnostic techniques for cardiovascular diseases, such as ECG and echocardiography. This week gave me a deeper understanding of cardiovascular diseases and allowed me to learn many English terms related to the field. In the class, I was impressed by the students' active participation and their fluent English communication in veterinary discussions.



Elephant ride at Ayutthaya

Stray cat in Wat Pho

In the third week, I observed the Exotic Animal Clinic. I was surprised to see a variety of animals, not only rabbits and small parrots, but also sugar gliders, guinea pigs, snakes, and ducks. I was also impressed that one veterinarian handled all the cases despite the large variation in animal species. While observing exotic animal medical examination, I realized that simply understanding the diseases of each species is not enough. It goes without saying that if we do not understand the anatomical and physiological characteristics of each animal species, we will not be able to perform physical examinations to diagnose their diseases or know how to administer medication for treatment. When I study animal diseases, I often focus on the symptoms and medications of the diseases. However, I realized that in order to utilize this information clinically, it is necessary to have a deep understanding of the animals themselves.

I was also impressed by how actively the students participated in the surgeries, especially in the induction and maintenance of anesthesia. This demonstrated their knowledge, skills, and confidence.

This program also provided me with many opportunities to experience Thai culture. I enjoyed trying various Thai foods, such as spicy rice dishes, many kinds of noodle dishes, and coconut desserts. I also appreciated the Thai custom of sharing food and eating together. Another notable aspect of Thai culture is Buddhism. I saw many temples and monks and felt that Buddhism is an important part of people's lives. I also had the opportunity to visit different parts of Thailand outside of Bangkok, which gave me a deeper understanding of Thai culture.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the professors, veterinarians, and staff for providing me with this valuable opportunity. I also appreciate the help I received from the students. Thank you very much.



At hospital's entrance



## Ryo SHIMBO, 4th year

The three-week study abroad program at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Chulalongkorn University was very exciting and gave me a lot of experience. Chulalongkorn University provides primary care and we were able to see many more cases than at Hokkaido University. We spent one week in each of the different departments during the three-week stay, and observed the consultations.

The first week was in the pathology department. The pathology department performed several necropsies every day and sometimes received not only cats and dogs but also rabbits, birds, cows, and fish. There were fish specialists and exotic specialists, so we called them if we had any questions. Discussions on cytology and histology were held almost every day, and I could see about 10 cases each per day. Unlike Hokkaido University, the number of cases was large, so the time spent was short, but I felt that they did not miss any lesion and valued the gross pathology. Cytology and histology were basically performed by a single clinician, and everyone watched and learned from her slides. I was able to learn about cases that would not be seen in Japan, such as chromatophoroma, a tumor of fish, and sporotrichosis, an infectious disease of cats. On Friday morning, there was a seminar with graduate students and professors, where we heard about a case of feline tuberculosis.

The second week was at the exotic clinic, which provides general care for exotic animals, with a variety of cases such as amputation of squirrel teeth, heart murmur in a rabbit, and egg binding in a love bird. One of the most impressive cases I saw was a chinchilla with bone fracture. I also observed the echocardiography of hedgehogs and sugar gliders. I noticed that the students were taking the initiative in examining the patients. What surprised me was that when an owner who had left the room once came to ask how to use a medicine, the students taught him how to use it in detail because there was no doctor there. I thought that the students already had a lot of clinical knowledge and would be able to work immediately.

In the third week, I was in the dermatology clinic. There were many atopic cases, follow-ups and secondary fungal and bacterial infections. The students performed skin stamps and hair tests, looking for Malassezia, cocci, and bacilli. In addition, blood samples from the saphenous vein were taken by the students. The endocrinologist also examined patients in the dermatology department, and cases without skin disease also came to the department. The same week, 6th year students in infectious course also visited the dermatology clinic. They cultured fungi in the laboratory, and I also cultured fungi myself.

On Thursday of the second week, I participated in the practical training at the Khao Kheow Zoo with the 5th-year students. We first saw the treatment of a deer. Many staff members worked together to perform punch biopsy, semen collection, and anesthesia maintenance at the same time, and the procedure was done quickly. After a short visit to the zoo, we saw a crocodile necropsy in the afternoon. Because the crocodile had been bitten by another crocodile, I thought it had no lesions other than trauma, but there were lesions on the kidneys and stomach.



Pathology Unit

What I felt through the practical training in Chulalongkorn was the kindness of the Thai people. Because all the examinations were conducted in Thai, I could not understand what they were saying, but the students often translated them into English and taught me in English, which was very helpful. On the other hand, when students didn't participate, the teachers taught me in English, but they were busy with examinations, so I could not understand everything that was actually said through the examination. Therefore, what I felt I needed to do was to participate actively. All students and teachers are very kind, and they will answer even basic questions. I had to ask them to write down my questions because I could not understand them due to their strong English accents. If there were other practical training programs besides hospital training that I wanted to participate in, I could often participate in them by consulting with the teachers. I heard about zoo training from a student and talked to the teacher in charge and was allowed to participate.

This year, by participating for one week at a time, I was able to see more cases and deepen my understanding of diseases. In the dermatology department, I could learn how to formulate a treatment plan and what to look for by looking at atopic cases continuously, to the extent that I thought I could actually treat the patients by myself. Also, spending a week with the same students was very useful for me as I could talk with them about various topics.

I felt that life in Thailand is surprisingly the same as in Japan, but be careful about the toilets. I flushed the toilet for less than 3 weeks because I did not know that I had to throw the paper into the trash because the water pressure was not enough and I could not flush it. Also, when I tried to pay for the dormitory with a credit card after I arrived, I forgot the PIN number and had to ask my parents in Japan to call the company. If you are a drinker, be careful not to drink in the school facilities or near the school (it is illegal).

On weekends, we spent a lot of time for sightseeing by ourselves and for the students to show us around Ayutthaya. We also had opportunities to hang out with Thai students on weekdays and heard many interesting stories.

Although it was a longer program than other programs (a little over three weeks), I was able to complete the program successfully thanks to the support of various people. I am very grateful to Dr. Navapon and Dr. Nonaka for organizing the program. I would like to thank all the teachers, students, and administrative staff who were involved in the training at the hospital. Thank you very much.



Khao Kheow Zoo

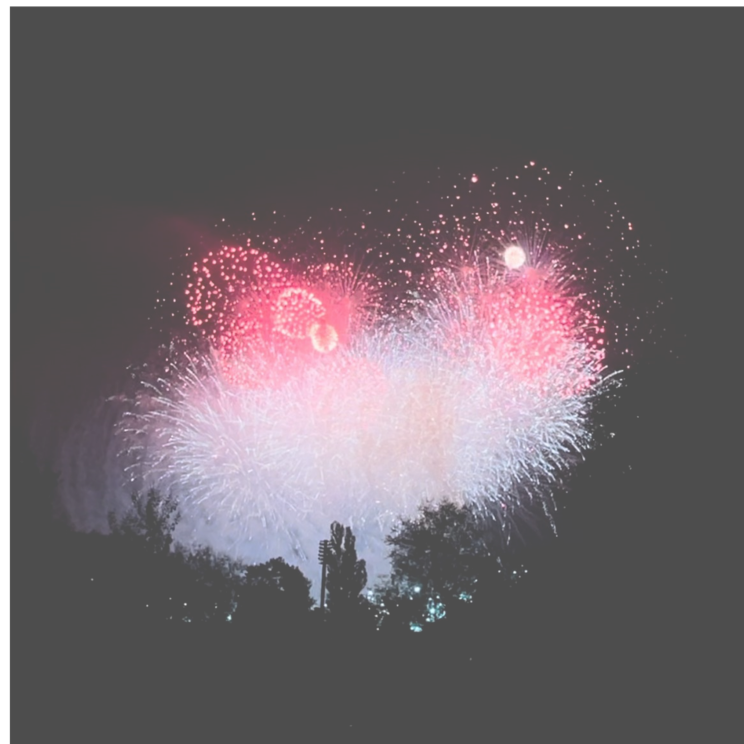


Wat Chai Wattanaram



# IVEP

## Hokkaido University-Chulalongkorn University International Vet Exchange Program 2023 Achieving Global Standards of Excellence in Veterinary Education



### Student Report from Chulalongkorn University Jul 3th to Jul 28th

## From Chulalongkorn University to Hokkaido Uni

### Phakrumpa Panitkosol (Jeans), 5th year

I had participated in the International Veterinary Exchange Program (IVEP) in July 2023 for 1 month. During that time, it made a lot of meaningful memories and learning experiences for me. I learned not only veterinary knowledge but also Japanese cultures. I observed hospital systems that differ from my faculty's, practiced how to make diagnosis and treatment plans, and learned how to collect blood for this hospital. Moreover, I experienced many Japanese foods, traveled to famous places, and participated in seasonal festivals. I had a very memorable time there and I am glad to share my positive impressions with all of you who are reading this magazine. My time in Japan was truly educational and allowed me to gain a new perspective.

The exchange program allowed me to expand my understanding of veterinary practices outside of my home country. Spending a month observing the day-to-day operations of a veterinary hospital in Hokkaido gave me valuable insights into their processes and culture. For example, I was surprised by some of the differences in diagnostic equipment and procedures compared to what I was used to. They also had different protocols for things like pharmacy controls and surgical preparations. However, I also noticed many similarities in how veterinarians assess patients and develop treatment plans. For surgical preparation procedures, the basic flow of prepping and draping the patient was very similar. Both places took patient safety and sterility very seriously during surgeries. In many other aspects of patient care, the similarities were more prominent than the differences. Taking patient histories, performing physical exams, interpreting diagnostic test results, formulating diagnoses and treatment plans. These critical components of the medical decision-making process seemed to be approached comparably. It was reassuring to know the veterinary fundamentals remained consistent regardless of practice setting.

In addition to the professional learning experiences, I thoroughly enjoyed experiencing Japanese culture through the local cuisine, trips, and festivals. Some of my fondest memories involve tasting new foods in cafes and traditional restaurants. Visiting famous temples and shrines was also memorable, especially those located in beautiful natural settings. The serene atmosphere inside provided a sense of calm and spiritual reflection. It was fascinating to learn about the histories and cultural significance of different places of worship. Wandering through bustling streets filled with shops, vendors, and people was a great way to experience the lively energy of various locations. Seeing what foods were popular locally and sampling unfamiliar dishes helped me understand the culture better. The sounds, smells, and tastes all combined to create lasting impressions and a deeper appreciation for other cultures. Memorable trips abroad really help us gain perspective on the world and open our minds to new ideas and experiences.





## From Chulalongkorn University to Hokkaido Uni

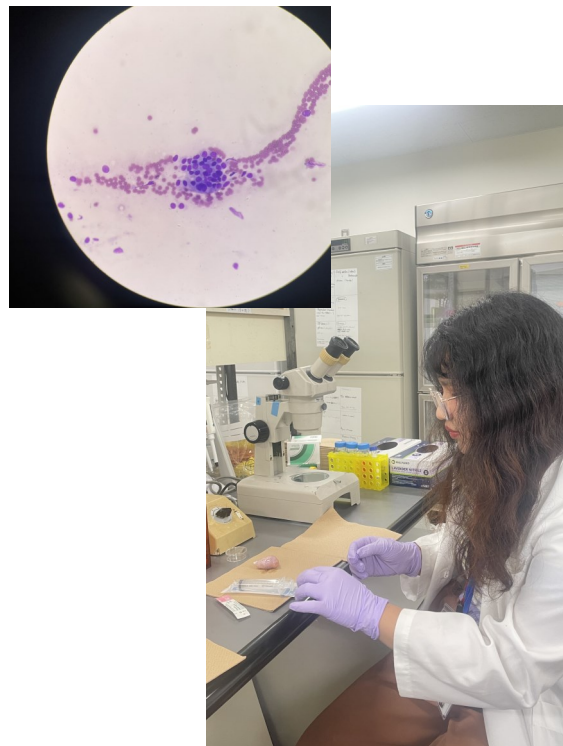
### Kuerboon Chairit (Praewa), 6th year

In July 2023, I participated in the International Vet Exchange Program (IVEP) at Hokkaido University. It was a great opportunity for me because experiencing the work of the veterinary industry in a different environment helped me broaden my perspective about the career. I have spent two weeks practicing in the internal medicine department and two weeks practicing in the surgery department. I also have visited a lot of laboratories in the faculty and had a field trip at Maruyama zoo. Everything is new for me and so interesting.

My first rotation is in the department of internal medicine. Unlike Chulalongkorn university veterinary teaching hospital, it is a referral hospital, so there are few cases per day compared to my university, but I think it is very suitable for studying. Because it allows veterinarians and students to spend the time on each case. I had the chance to observe neurological cases for the first time. It was challenging but so interesting at the same time. I have never seen an MRI before and this is the first time too. It was a very good opportunity for me because it makes me understand the initial interpretation of MRI. In addition to MRI, I have seen the use of various diagnostic tools such as x-rays, fluoroscopy, CT scan, ultrasonography, and echocardiogram. I was so grateful that everyone always explained to me in English and it made me more understanding about the image results.

After the first two weeks, I moved to the surgery department. I had the opportunity to observe several cases of surgery, such as sample collection from the liver and kidneys, femoral head and neck excision, and peritoneopericardial diaphragmatic hernia. The most exciting procedure for me is laparoscopic ovariohysterectomy because I had never seen any procedure with laparoscopy before. I also participated in surgical consultation. It was very useful to know how the doctor did the decision making for the surgical plan or other alternative treatments. I visited 16 laboratories in the Graduate school of veterinary medicine. I am not familiar with the research that much because my faculty focus more on the clinical rotation, but I found it was very interesting here. Professors in each laboratory told us about the current project and in some laboratories, I have an activity to do. In the Theriogenology laboratory, I collected the oocyte from the ovary for the first time and it was so fun.

I feel really thankful for everyone that is always kind to me and my friends. It made every single moment in Hokkaido very precious. Even though the internship period was only one month, the good memories and experiences I got from here will stay with me for a long time.



## From Chulalongkorn University to Hokkaido Uni

### Nachanok Srivihok (Fawn), 6th year

After a month of participating in the International Vet Exchange Program (IVEP) at Veterinary Teaching Hospital of Hokkaido University, I gained plenty of veterinary and life experience. And it suddenly became one of the best and most unforgettable experiences I have had thus far in my life. In this program, I had a chance to participate in an internal medicine clinic, a surgery clinic, a laboratory rotation, a field trip to Maruyama Zoo, and other extracurricular activities with Japanese friends.

In an internal medicine clinic, there are various interesting cases, most of which are referred from other hospitals and difficult to diagnose. It is a very good chance for me to learn the process of interpreting each case from our professional HUVTH supervisors. They always gave their best to explain and teach me and my friends to evaluate our problem-solving and critical thinking skills. Also, there are abundant, up-to-date facilities and diagnostic and therapeutic tools that veterinarians can access and use easily. I am specifically interested in those diagnostic imaging such as x-ray, fluoroscopy, ultrasonography, echocardiography, CT, and MRI. While in a surgery clinic, I had a chance to observe both the surgery clinic consult and the operation room. Our supervisors gave us a chance to join many surgical operations, for example, laparoscopic ovariohysterectomy and liver biopsy, which are barely performed in my country; femoral head ostectomy; and resection of gastrointestinal stromal tumor (GIST) at the cecum. Medical oncology is also a part of this clinic and has rooms for chemotherapy and radiotherapy, which is so interesting. Exploring the differences in hospital systems between HUVTH and my home country makes me able to see the pros and cons of each one and gives me a wider perspective on veterinary medicine. We also got the opportunity to visit each laboratory, such as the anatomy, physiology, wildlife and biology, radiation biology, veterinary hygiene, infectious diseases, and parasitology laboratories. I am very impressed with everyone's dedication to their research work. We also had a chance to visit Maruyama Zoo to see the animal care and management and system of the zoo's hospital. The orangutang museum was under construction at the time we visited, so we got the chance to learn about the construction that imitates nature to ensure the best life for orangutans.

This program provides me with not only just academic opportunities but also beautiful friendships and connections. Honestly, I always felt kindness and warmth while staying in Hokkaido. Japanese teachers, seniors, and friends helped me in every way possible and also recommended me to so many wonderful places. I had an incredible time exploring those locations and eventually fell in love with the city. It seems that this program completely fulfills what I was looking for. And I hope wholeheartedly to have an opportunity to revisit the Veterinary Teaching Hospital of Hokkaido University again in the future.

