

# IVER

Hokkaido University-Chulalongkorn University

## International Vet Exchange Program 2025

Achieving Global Standards of Excellence in Veterinary Education

Student Report from  
School of Veterinary Medicine,  
Hokkaido University

August 17th to September 15th

### Project Managers

Chulalongkorn University

Professor Nariaki NONAKA

Laboratory of Physiology, Hokkaido University

## Chulalongkorn University

### Hana AOSHIMA, 4th year

In this program, I joined a four-week clinical internship at the Small Animal Hospital of Chulalongkorn University (CU), rotating through different departments each week. Since I wanted to learn in areas that I wouldn't be able to experience at Hokkaido University, I participated in the Exotic Animal department, the Emergency Room (ER) & the CCU, the Rehabilitation, the Surgery, and the Feline Clinic. We attended and observed the actual patient consultations. Because we couldn't understand Thai, the professors and sixth-year students kindly interpreted the owners' words into English and carefully explained the examinations and treatment plans. I was especially impressed that not only the professors, but also the students, could explain fluently using technical terms in English.

At the beginning of the internship, my knowledge of veterinary English was very limited. During the first week in the Exotic Animal Department, I could not fully follow the explanations and felt quite nervous. From then on, I studied veterinary English as much as I could before and after daily training. It was not easy, but the knowledge I learned could be applied immediately in the next day's training. This helped me absorb things quickly and naturally made me more motivated to learn more. Through this experience, I realized the importance of being able to explain my specialty in English and I would like to continue developing this skill. And I strongly recommend that future participants prepare by studying veterinary terms in English beforehand.

There were two main things I hoped to learn through this program. The first was the difference between small animal practice in Thailand and in Japan. Although my comparison is limited to university hospitals, I was able to notice several differences during my stay at CU. The most significant one was that while the hospital at Hokkaido University mainly handles second-opinion cases, CU Hospital also plays the role of a primary hospital. Because of this, the number of cases per day was extremely high. All departments—from the General Medicine department, which handles vaccinations and follow-ups, to the various specialty departments—were gathered in one building, which made it possible to deal with a wide range of cases, from mild to severe.

I also felt that parasitic and infectious diseases, which are not so common in Japan, were more frequently seen in Thailand. During the training, I had chances to examine actual cases under the microscope, such as mites that caused feather loss in parrots, and fungi that cause sporotrichosis, known as a zoonotic disease. In the ER, I was impressed that in a case of severe anemia, the doctors first suspected parasitic infections. They then carried out tests such as SNAP tests for heartworm, ehrlichiosis, and Lyme disease, as well as checks for babesiosis. This diagnostic process was strikingly different from that in Japan. Through this clinical rotation, some of the diseases I had learned about in class could be observed in actual cases, which provided a very valuable learning experience.

I also discovered some similarities between Thailand and Japan. For example, the pets were cared for as if they were real members of the family, and in that respect, I felt it was similar to Japan. Many of the owners who came to the hospital seemed to wish to improve their pets' quality of life. At the same time, I also noticed some owners who let their pets become overweight because they found it cute, and some pets that could not receive adequate examinations or treatments due to financial reasons. In addition, when I visited a pet market on a weekend, I saw animals being sold at very low prices in poor conditions. In such situations, I sometimes felt uncertain about the sense of responsibility among the owners. Some illnesses and diseases partly result from inappropriate ways of keeping pets due to a lack of knowledge on the owners' side. Therefore, I observed that veterinarians sometimes provided guidance

on proper pet care.

The second thing I wanted to learn was about veterinary education in Thailand. I was often impressed by how proactive the CU students were. In Thailand, students take the national licensing exam at the end of the fifth year, so sixth-year students are already licensed veterinarians. They rotate in groups through all the departments for several months of training. In many cases, the students first carried out basic examinations such as physical examinations and fecal examinations, and then the professors confirmed their findings. The students approached each case with great responsibility. Many of them answered my questions clearly and kindly, and I realized that they were developing the ability to apply their knowledge in practice. I think this kind of hands-on education is possible thanks to CU Hospital's unique feature of handling both a large number and a wide variety of cases. Watching the students steadily gain knowledge and skills through their daily training was very inspiring for me.

Over the weekends, CU students kindly took us to visit many sightseeing spots. Although Thailand is well known as a Buddhist country, I was still surprised by the sheer number of temples. We visited several famous temples, including Wat Phra Kaew, Wat Arun, and Wat Pho. At these temples, we also saw local people coming to pray. In Japan, I rarely have opportunities to think about religion, but through this stay in Thailand, I realized how strongly religion can influence people's culture and way of thinking. This experience made me reflect on how I should interact with people from different cultural and religious backgrounds.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who supported me and made this valuable experience possible. I am very thankful to the professors at CU Hospital who warmly welcomed us and generously shared their knowledge. I also feel deeply grateful to the sixth-year students I met during my stay, who helped me in many ways both inside and outside the hospital. Their friendliness and kindness meant a lot to me. I am confident that I will apply everything I have learned through this program to my future studies and career.

#### A trip to Ayutthaya with CU students



Trying laser treatment in the Rehabilitation Department



Enjoying boat noodles

## Chulalongkorn University

### Soyo OSAKO, 4th year

During this one-month program, I had an internship in small animal practice at Small Animal Teaching Hospital in Chulalongkorn University (AHCU), and deepened my learning in areas of interest, mainly on weekends. While there were a lot of experiences that were new to me and fruitful, due to space constraints, this report will focus particularly on what I learned at AHCU, along with observations made at Chatuchak Market, the National Institute of Animal Health (NIAH), and a wildlife sanctuary.

First, I will focus on what I learned at AHCU.

Here, I spent one week each in four departments - Cardiology, Nephrology, and Diabetes Clinic; Dermatology Clinic; Emergency Room and CCU; and Exotic Clinic - learning small animal clinical practice. I will briefly describe the characteristics observed in each department and then focus on one case seen in the Exotic Animal Medicine department that showed some of the characteristics of AHCU's clinical approach. In the Cardiology, Nephrology, and Diabetes Clinic, I observed the consistency of international standards for cardiac disease diagnosis, including echocardiogram interpretation, even compared to Japan. In addition, as elderly patients tend to get heart diseases, I could see a lot of cases with elderly patients in this clinic, and the large number of cases suggested the extended life expectancy resulting from changes in companion animal care practices in Bangkok. In Dermatology, I encountered many cases of infectious diseases linked to pathogens associated with multi-pet households and outdoor living arrangements. In the emergency room / CCU, witnessing animals in critical condition made me keenly aware of the importance of financial considerations in owners' decisions and the depth of their affection for their pets (Fig 1). The exotic clinic offered an opportunity to encounter cases of a diverse range of species, including those picked up from the streets, providing insight into the values surrounding exotic pet ownership in Thailand. Here, I will describe a case of rectal prolapse in a tarsier seen in the exotic clinic. Tupai is a wild animal native to Thailand. The patient brought to the hospital had fallen from a tree in a private garden in his childhood, lost his parents, and was subsequently rescued. On the day, the owner noticed the condition just hours before bringing it to the hospital. The clinic initially attempted to return the prolapsed rectum to its normal position through the anus while applying cold therapy. However, due to the animal's small size and swelling at the prolapsed site, the rectum kept re-prolapsing after reduction, necessitating transfer to the emergency room. There, multiple veterinarians collaborated to successfully reposition the rectum into the pelvic cavity and suture around the anus to prevent re-prolapse. After that, to rule out the risk of intussusception associated with rectal prolapse recovery, the patient was taken to the imaging department. There, no issues were found, and the patient was discharged home. This case provided a glimpse into the hospital's collaborative system, where veterinarians with specialized knowledge within their respective fields work together based on diagnosis and condition to treat a single patient.

Next, I will mention what I observed at other facilities.

At Chatuchak Market, I witnessed firsthand scenes that could be described as the “dark side” of Thailand's animal industry, such as a wide variety of animal species being traded at very low prices in extremely high-density housing conditions. At NIAH, I was provided with explanations historical ties between Thailand and Japan, as well as the efforts of public institutions to control animal infectious diseases while taking a tour of the facility (Fig 3). On the other hand, I also learned that the current situation regarding the market and the trade in antibiotics is difficult to resolve through public institution intervention alone. At the wildlife sanctuary, we saw animals that have lived within

Thailand's complex society, where “wild animals” and “industrial animals” intersect. These included coconut monkeys kept as livestock, and animals illegally bred not only for the pet trade but also for tourism and export to other countries.

Next, I will briefly express what I felt based on these considerations. As mentioned above, the situation regarding animals in Thailand is complex, and the issues that could be considered as problems are not easily resolved. However, I also observed that individuals involved in the economy related to animals, including university hospital faculty, staff, and students, as well as pet owners, have a deep affection for animals. Personally, while I am still contemplating my future, I have developed a certain sense of attachment and trust through this stay. Therefore, if given the opportunity, I would certainly like to cooperate in solving issues based on shared values. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have supported me in this program. In particular, I would like to extend special thanks to the people from Hokkaido University and Chulalongkorn University who provided me with this opportunity, the doctors and staff from the clinical department at the Chulalongkorn University Animal Hospital who took care of me, and the students and staff of NIAH who welcomed me.



Fig 1. Commemorative photo (at ER/CCU)



Fig 3. Commemorative picture after the visit (at NIAH)

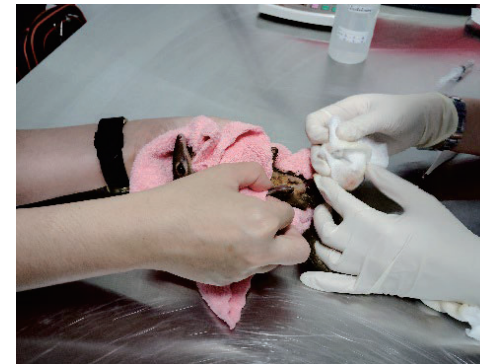


Fig 2. Tupai being examined (at exotic clinic)

## Chulalongkorn University

### Hinana KADOWAKI, 4th year

I participated in a four-week internship focused on small animal clinical practice at the Animal Hospital at Chulalongkorn University (CU) in Thailand. The hospital is subdivided into numerous departments, including surgery, internal medicine, exotic clinic, feline center, and dermatology. Its main building is ten stories tall, making it larger in scale than Hokkaido University's facility. From among the many departments, I selected Feline Center, Exotic Clinic, the Pathology Unit, Rehabilitation/Surgery, completing a one-week rotation each. All exchange students from Hokkaido University chose different departments each week, so I was the only Japanese person every single week, which made me quite anxious at first. Additionally, the English spoken by Thai people differed in accent and other aspects from the English I was used to hearing in Japanese classes, leading to the problem of not being able to understand words I should have known. However, the teachers patiently explained things until I understood, and the CU students I rotated with also taught me in easy-to-understand English. Furthermore, my ears gradually became accustomed to the English spoken by Thai people. I began to understand the cases and their treatments, and the moments I found enjoyable increased. In this report, I will describe one memorable case from each of the four departments I visited.

During the first week at the feline center, I encountered numerous cases of sporotrichosis, a disease characteristic of tropical regions. This is a zoonosis caused by fungi that inhabit soil and plants. The infection primarily enters through skin wounds, causing nodules to form on the skin. As the infection spreads, swollen lymph nodes may also develop. While rarely seen in Japan, the number of cats diagnosed with this case has been increasing in Thailand in recent years. However, I learned that this increase is not due to a rise in sporotrichosis cases themselves, but rather because many cases previously misdiagnosed as cryptococcosis were later identified as sporotrichosis. Following the professor's explanation, I learned that fungal and parasitic infections are common in Thailand, making the first moment I truly felt the difference from Japan. CU students have detailed knowledge of the causes, symptoms, and treatments for this condition. I realized that the content we learn differs depending on the prevalence of cases in different regions, and I also felt I should learn more about diseases commonly seen outside Japan.

During my second week at the exotic clinic, I was able to examine not only common pets like hamsters and rabbits, but also a wide variety of animals such as sugar gliders, hedgehogs, and reptiles. What was particularly striking here was the case of Proventricular Dilatation Disease (PDD) of avians. Multiple cases were observed during this training session. While the cause was previously unknown, it was identified in 2009 as being caused by Avian Borna Virus. It infects the central and peripheral nervous systems, causing digestive and neurological symptoms. A characteristic feature is the distension of the glandular stomach, where ingested food becomes trapped and cannot be digested. The degree of glandular stomach expansion is classified into three levels: normal, moderate, and severe. The X-ray photograph of the avian shown in Figure 1 is considered to be at a moderate level based on the degree of glandular stomach dilatation.

During my visit to the pathology unit in the third week, a case of canine pythium disease was particularly memorable. This is a zoonosis caused by an oomycete called *Pythium insidiosum*. It is characteristic of tropical and subtropical regions, with only about three confirmed cases in Japan, including humans. Although difficult to treat, it has been found in recent years that antimicrobial agents are effective. In cats, lesions form in various sites such as

the oral cavity, perianal region, digestive tract, and nasal cavity. In dogs, however, gastrointestinal pythium disease, which forms tumors in the digestive tract, is common. In this canine case, numerous tumors formed in the intestines, obstructing passage of contents. Additionally, necropsy revealed water accumulation in the stomach, suggesting the dog ingested the oomycetes with water from an outdoor source. Beyond this case, in the pathology unit, I performed necropsies almost every morning. It was an excellent experience to be able to perform necropsies not only on dogs, cats, and rabbits, but also on a sea turtle and a tortoise.

During the fourth week, I completed clinical rotations in rehabilitation and surgery. Since I only spent one day in surgery, I want to focus on the rehabilitation unit. Here, there were various machines such as water treadmill, laser, ultrasound, and shockwave therapy. Additionally, many of the patients were small dogs, such as Pomeranians and Chihuahuas. The most common condition in these small dogs is patellar luxation. This is classified into four grades based on the ease of dislocation and the degree of reduction of the patella, with Grade 1 being the mildest and Grade 4 being the most severe. During this internship, I was able to examine cases of patellar luxation of various grades. To relieve pain, we performed ultrasound therapy and laser therapy, and for exercise, we administered treatment using a water treadmill. I was able to actually perform ultrasound therapy and laser therapy, which was a valuable experience.

Not only were the university internships fulfilling, but daily life was also incredibly enriching. On weekdays, I would go to the market near the university with students I met during my rotations to buy lunch, or I'd attend a freshman welcome party that happened to be going on, allowing me to experience local university life firsthand. Additionally, during my days off, I was taken by CU students who will be studying at Hokkaido University next spring to Ayutthaya, the floating market, and the zoo, allowing me to experience Thai history and culture. What I gained over this past month extends far beyond improved English skills and knowledge of veterinary medicine in Thailand. The encounters with so many people and animals, the experience of living in a foreign land, the challenges of conveying my thoughts to those with different backgrounds, and the joy when they were understood—these too are irreplaceable treasures to me. I would like to express my gratitude to the professors and friends at Hokkaido University and CU who supported me in gaining this invaluable experience.

Khob khun ka!

Figure 2 : Tortoise Necropsy



Figure 3 : Ultrasound Therapy Session

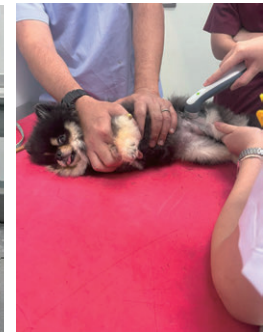


Figure 1 : PDD Avian X-ray

## Chulalongkorn University

### Ami WAKABAYASHI, 4<sup>th</sup> year

I participated in an exchange program at Chulalongkorn University in Thailand from August 17 to September 14. During this four-week program, I completed clinical rotations through four departments: Dermatology unit, Imaging Center, Exotic Animal unit, and Emergency Room, spending one week in each department. This report provides an overview of my experiences and observations during this valuable international veterinary education opportunity.

#### **Hospital Overview and Learning Environment**

The CU Small Animal Teaching Hospital is a comprehensive facility comprising over 10 specialized departments, including feline medicine, ophthalmology, oncology, and others, housed in a 10 floors main building with two additional buildings. Compared with Hokkaido University, Chulalongkorn University manages a diverse caseload ranging from primary to tertiary care, with substantial daily patient volumes creating an active learning environment. Clinical activities typically operated from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, and I followed this schedule, observing examinations and procedures alongside attending veterinarians. Since consultations between veterinarians and pet owners were conducted in Thai, I focused on observing and inferring the reason for each patient's visit and the type of examination being conducted. During intervals between appointments, I actively engaged by asking questions in English and reading English portions of medical records to enhance my comprehension of cases and treatment protocols. Initially, I encountered significant challenges understanding specialized English veterinary technical terms during discussions. However, teachers and students at CU demonstrated exceptional hospitality and patience, consistently rephrasing complex explanations in simpler terms and writing unfamiliar technical terms on paper to facilitate my understanding. Although veterinary lessons at CU are taught in Thai, all educational materials and handouts are provided in English. This educational system results in students possessing excellent command of English veterinary terminology, clearly demonstrating the high academic standards and international orientation of CU's veterinary education program.

#### **Clinical Rotation Experiences**

##### **Dermatology Unit**

During my dermatology unit rotation, I observed diverse skin conditions including Malassezia dermatitis, atopic dermatitis, and alopecia secondary to hyperadrenocorticism (Cushing's syndrome). I participated in diagnostic procedures by performing cytological staining of smears collected from inflamed skin areas and conducted microscopic grading of bacterial and Malassezia infections. These hands-on experiences provided valuable practical skills in dermatological diagnostic techniques and reinforced theoretical knowledge of common skin pathologies in dogs and cats.

##### **Imaging Center**

The Imaging Center operated as a diagnostic support department, receiving requests from faculty in other departments within the university to perform ultrasound examinations, radiography, CT, and MRI studies, and then writing diagnostic reports based on image interpretation. I was particularly impressed by their efficient workflow organization, where veterinary students and animal nurses managed imaging procedures while veterinarians concentrated exclusively on image interpretation and report generation. Through radiographic cases, I observed conditions including pyometra and heartworm disease, while ultrasound examinations revealed pathologies such as hydronephrosis and PLE. Notably, due to pharmaceutical approval differences between countries, they utilized dexmedetomidine rather than medetomidine for anesthesia protocols during CT and MRI procedures, highlighting interesting international variations in veterinary pharmaceutical practices.

##### **Exotic Animal unit**

The exotic animal unit provided exposure to diverse species and unique pathological conditions, including hamsters with Demodex infections, a rabbit suspected of having Encephalitozoon's, and baby parrots presenting with splay legs. I gained valuable hands-on experience through various clinical procedures including cardiac auscultation of guinea pigs with pulmonary hypertension, holding a hedgehog still during ultrasound examinations, and microscopic examination of avian crop samples for Candida organism identification. This rotation significantly expanded my knowledge of specialized diagnostic approaches for exotic animals.

##### **Emergency Room**

The emergency room operated 24 hours a day, seven days a week, treating serious cases such as feline arterial thromboembolism, severe trauma from train accidents, and acute vaccine-induced allergic reactions. One particularly challenging case involved a stray kitten presenting with severe unilateral traumatic wounds. Due to the financial problem and poor long-term prognosis with likely permanent disability, euthanasia was performed. While

witnessing such emotionally difficult situations was challenging, this experience reinforced the fundamental importance of providing optimal medical care within realistic circumstances while considering both animal welfare and client limitations.

#### **Cultural Experience and Daily Life**

Daily life in Thailand provided constant opportunities for cultural learning and personal growth. I frequently enjoyed meals at the university cafeteria like food hub and, where nutritious and flavorful dishes cost approximately 300 baht, offering affordability Thai cuisine. The tropical climate in Thailand from August to September was slightly more humid than Japanese summers but remained comfortable. Rain consistently fell during the evening and nighttime hours, so I was able to avoid getting soaked by sudden downpours.

During weekend excursions, I visited numerous cultural and educational attractions throughout Bangkok and surrounding areas. Particularly memorable destinations included the renowned Snake Farm with its extensive collection of venomous species, the fascinating Siriraj Medical Museum famous for its comprehensive anatomical specimen collections, and Khao Kheow Open Zoo, which gained international attention for housing the pygmy hippopotamus "Moo Deng", the pygmy hippopotamus that became a global social media sensation.

#### **What I Gained and Learned from This Program**

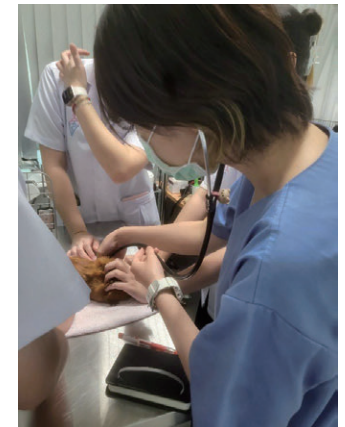
The primary purpose of this study abroad program was to learn about small animal clinical practice in Thailand, particularly exotic animal medicine. I aspire to become a small animal veterinarian who can treat exotic animals, but I had concerns about pursuing this path due to the mental and physical burdens of small animal practice. Through this program, I hoped to gain clarity about my future career direction. Observing Chulalongkorn University's small animal clinic firsthand, I realized that the challenges—examining animals and explaining treatments to owners—are similar to those in Japan. Despite their busy schedules, witnessing the faculty's dedication to animals and their owners inspired me strongly to join the field of small animal practice in the future. In the exotic animal unit, every case was fascinating, and I encountered a lot of diseases not covered in my university courses, which deepened my motivation to study further. Seeing veterinary practice in Thailand reinforced my awareness that dedicated veterinarians work around the world, which was deeply reassuring and will be a source of encouragement as I pursue my career as a veterinarian. This realization was profoundly meaningful to me. I now feel committed to maintaining connections with veterinarians around the world throughout my future career as a small animal clinician.

#### **Acknowledgments**

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the program coordinators who made this experience possible: Professor Nonaka, Professor Aoshima, and Professor Sasaoka, the faculty members in charge of this program; Ms. Kawashima, the IVEP coordinator; Professor Horiuchi, who accompanied us to Thailand; Ms. Navapon from Chulalongkorn University who facilitated our integration; dedicated faculty members from Chulalongkorn University veterinary hospitals; and the Chulalongkorn University students who welcomed us warmly and supported our learning throughout this wonderful educational experience. This program significantly enhanced my veterinary knowledge, cultural awareness, and professional development in ways that will benefit my future career in veterinary medicine. Thank you very much.



Picture 1 : In the dermatology unit



Picture 2 : Auscultation of a Guinea Pig

# IVEP

Hokkaido University-Chulalongkorn University

## International Vet Exchange Program 2025

Achieving Global Standards of Excellence in Veterinary Education



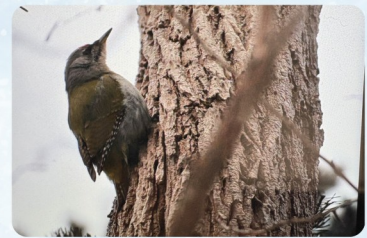
Marsh Tit  
ハシブトガラ



Eurasian Siskin  
マヒワ



Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker  
コゲラ



Japanese Cormorant  
ウミウ



Red-breasted Merganser  
ウミアイサ



Harlequin Duck  
シノリガモ



Pelagic Cormorant  
ヒメウ



Common Pochard  
ホシハジロ



Eurasian Wigeon  
ヒドリガモ

Student Report from Chulalongkorn University

March 2nd to 29th 2026

## From Chulalongkorn University

### KOTENATE Nerajit (Nera), 6th year

Study abroad used to be my dream when I was younger. From that point of view, it seemed impossible for me because I did not know how to reach this point. However, the International Vet Exchange Program (IVEP) gave me very valuable experiences. These experiences that cannot be measured by money.

At the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at Hokkaido University, the education system is very well structured. Every student looks professional and smart. The learning environment is my favorite part of this place. The professors and staff are very friendly and willing to teach us. This makes me want to pass on this experience to junior students in my country. In terms of technology, the teaching hospital has very advanced equipment that impressed me, such as a radiotherapy machine and ultrasound machines. The echocardiography images were very clear, with minimal noise and grain. The MRI and CT scan machines are also very modern. The most impressive part for me was the observation room for surgery. We had a chance to observe a mitral valvuloplasty (MVP) for the correction of mitral valve insufficiency, which I had never seen before.

One of the biggest differences between my home university and Hokkaido University is the intensity of students' involvement in laboratory work. At Hokkaido University, students are highly engaged in both laboratory practice and research, while at my home university, this aspect is less emphasized. This makes me feel how strongly Hokkaido University supports research. I believe this is a key factor for long-term development and improves the quality of education.

For the non-academic part, I had the opportunity to explore many places around Hokkaido, such as Otaru, Asari, Asahiyama, Shirahige Waterfall, and Rusutsu Ski Resort. Through these experiences, I was able to appreciate both the natural beauty and the urban lifestyle of the region. More importantly, this experience was not only about traveling, but also about learning how to live as part of the local community rather than just being a tourist. I learned to adapt to the local culture, including understanding daily life and practicing basic Japanese for communication. This helped me feel more connected to the people and the environment around me. I was also deeply impressed by the kindness of the people here. They were very welcoming and friendly, which made my experience even more meaningful. This place has become one of my most favorite destinations. In addition, I built many valuable friendships during my time here. My friends were very supportive and helped me in many ways, and I truly appreciate all of them.



Pic 1. Memory with Our Supportive Staff, Seniors, and Friends.



Pic 2. My Favorite Group Photo at the Lecture Building.

## From Chulalongkorn University

### CHAYUT Boonekarat (Sun), 6th year

My internship in Hokkaido University in March 2026 (2-19 Mar) was a valuable time for me. I gained many experiences in veterinary fields such as internal medicine, surgery, and laboratory rotations. In addition, I had the opportunity to experience life in Japan, travel, and learn more about its culture.

Since most of the cases here were referred from private hospitals, which is different from Chulalongkorn University, I had the opportunity to encounter more complex cases. I also gained experience with diagnostic techniques that are less commonly performed in Thailand, such as CT scan and MRI, which were used quite frequently here. Furthermore, participating in morning rounds and discussing cases with professors and clinicians provided me with valuable new insights. For instance, I learned more about PIMA and the application of ultrasonography in diagnosing portosystemic shunts (PSS). I also learned practical techniques in ultrasonography and echocardiography from a Thai PhD senior. One of the most impressive aspects was the ability of each clinician to take full responsibility for their cases throughout the entire process.

In the surgery department, I was especially excited to observe an open-heart surgical technique for repairing mitral regurgitation. This is a highly specialized procedure at this university and something I had never encountered in Thailand before. Additionally, the workflow in the operating room here is also different from our hospital. During consultation days, I also had the chance to observe the radiation therapy unit and learn its fundamental principles, which are not yet available at my home institution.

The laboratory rotation was the most impressive part of my experience. I had the opportunity to learn about various research projects at Hokkaido University across different laboratories. I visited a total of 16 laboratories. As part of this experience, I also toured the animal facility and the necropsy unit in another building. Furthermore, I had the opportunity to practice paraffin block trimming using the Japanese technique, which differs from the approach used in Thailand. The advanced research environment here greatly inspired me and motivated me to pursue further studies in the future.

Life outside the university was another aspect I was really looking forward to, as Hokkaido is well known for its beautiful natural environment. In particular, I was excited about birdwatching and able to see and photograph several species, such as the Long-tailed Tit (シマエナガ), Black Woodpecker (クマガラ), and White-tailed Eagle (オジロワシ). I was also very grateful to my Japanese friends, who kindly drove us to explore many beautiful places, such as Asahiyama Zoo, Shirahige Waterfall, the Lonely Christmas Tree in Biei, Hitsujigaoka Observation Hill, Makomanai Takino

Field trip at Asahiyama zoo with Lin, Moe (IVEP 2024) and Fawn (Thai PhD student)



Dinner at Soup Curry COCORO with Linana, Soyo, Hana, Ami (IVEP 2025)



Morning round in the internal medicine department



Cemetery, and Mount Moiwa. I also had the chance to visit Hokkaido Jingu Shrine, Otaru, Lake Utonai, and Mukawa. I also tried skiing for the first time at Rusutsu Ski Resort. All of these experiences will remain unforgettable for me.

## From Chulalongkorn University

### Rapee Luangyawee (Chin), 6th year

My IVEP program took place from March 1 to March 19, 2026. Over the course of these three weeks, the experiences I gained far exceeded my expectations and have become truly meaningful memories that I will cherish for the rest of my life.

During my time at Hokkaido University, I learned a great deal, which I can summarize into three main areas: 1. Clinical practice in Internal Medicine, 2. Clinical practice in Surgery, and 3. Laboratory tours and research discussions. For the first two areas, which involve clinical practice, I had the opportunity to observe a highly standardized hospital system accredited by European standards. The hospital environment was excellent, thoughtfully designed with the well-being of animals in mind. I was also able to witness procedures that are not commonly seen in Thailand, along with advanced medical equipment and rare clinical cases, such as PIMA. Studying here has greatly broadened my perspective as a future veterinarian. It allowed me to observe how professionals work in another country, their communication styles, and most importantly, the strong sense of teamwork within the veterinary hospital. In terms of surgery, this was my first time observing a procedure to correct mitral valve regurgitation. I was deeply impressed by how every staff member in the operating room worked together as a cohesive team, each with clearly defined roles, collaborating to ensure the success of the procedure. It was truly a remarkable opportunity for me. I was also particularly impressed by the operating rooms, which were spacious, exceptionally clean, and designed with a well-organized, contamination-controlled workflow. For the laboratory tours and research discussions, I had the opportunity to visit 16 laboratories, spending one hour in each. What impressed me most from the very beginning was the people—professors and staff members who warmly welcomed us into their classes. They prepared the materials thoroughly and shared their knowledge generously. Each laboratory provided valuable insights and reflected the faculty's strong dedication to advancing research. This experience also helped me better understand the areas in which Hokkaido University excels in research.



One clear difference I observed between Hokkaido University and Chulalongkorn University was the number of cases handled per day at the veterinary hospital. As a referral center, all cases must be referred from other hospitals with proper documentation beforehand. This system helps regulate the number of cases and allows clinicians to anticipate the type of cases they will manage each day, enabling better and more focused preparation. Additionally, the diagnostic approach here is very thorough, often pursued to its fullest extent to identify the root cause. Advanced diagnostic imaging is performed daily, and efforts are made to reach a definitive diagnosis within the same day of admission. Another notable difference is the educational system. Students here are required to choose a laboratory based on their interests and are assigned to their own lab, which fosters diverse academic passions among students. The design and layout of the operating rooms also differ from those at Chulalongkorn University.

What made this program especially meaningful for international students was the people we encountered throughout the program. Everyone was incredibly kind, approachable, and always willing to help. We felt a strong sense of warmth every time we were on campus. The professors were supportive and caring, always eager to teach and guide us. The IVEP staff consistently checked in on us, organized activities, helped us learn Japanese, and patiently assisted with all necessary documentation. The seniors and friends we met here also took great care of us. Even though many of us had only just met, we quickly formed close bonds, thanks to everyone's kindness and friendliness.

Lastly, this is a program that I would wholeheartedly recommend to all my peers and juniors at Chulalongkorn University. I truly hope they will have the opportunity to experience the same enriching academic environment, the warmth of the community, and the fascinating culture of Japan—a country that never ceases to captivate, no matter how long one stays.

