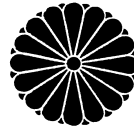


# Scholar Update

Featuring our current and past scholars

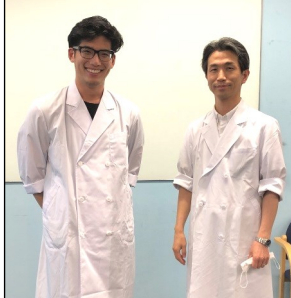


## Crown Prince Akihito Scholarship Foundation

Summer 2020 Edition

### Dissertation Defense and a New Position at Keio

**Robert Oda** (2018-2020) writes: This marks my final update as a Crown Prince Akihito Scholar. This whole experience was, quite literally, life changing. I moved to Japan two-years ago as a graduate student, and I am happy to write to you now as Dr. Robert Oda.



Robby with his new boss, Dr. Mutsuo Nuriya

I successfully defended my dissertation in April on Zoom. While defending my dissertation remotely in the middle of a pandemic was an odd experience, it was so nice to see so many people who I've met throughout my time as a University of Hawaii and University of Tokyo student attend my remote defense. With the power of technology, many people from across the globe were able to tune into the live defense (including Allen Uyeda and Reyna Kaneko!).

After successfully defending, my days were quite limited as Tokyo was under lockdown from the Coronavirus. However, during this time, I was able to catch up on a lot of reading, TV, and movies that I had postponed while I was getting ready for the final defense. I even managed to sneak a few sessions of video games in the middle. But most of my time was spent getting ready for my new position at Keio University.

The new lab that I was about to join does an entirely different branch of research than what I did during my graduate studies, so I took the time to brush up on some of my neuroscience and physics.

So that brings us to now. I have completed my first month in my new position as Assistant Professor at Keio University School of Medicine. I will be continuing

my research in Raman spectroscopy and imaging of diseases, but I will be extending my work to include brain diseases such as Alzheimer's and ALS.

None of this would have been possible without the generous support of the CPASF. Throughout the past two years, the foundation has been so helpful with everything.

This whole Japan experience (including meeting the Emperor Emeritus and Empress Emerita!) would not have been possible without their support and guidance. I will never forget this entire experience and I am excited to continue my journey in Japan. CPASF turned out to be a gateway to a brand new beginning and I am excited to see what the future holds for me!

### Chair's Message

During this current climate, there has been so much discussion about the barriers that separate people- different ideals, experiences, assumptions...and perhaps it can be easy to focus on these differences.

I hope it is encouraging to recognize the effort CPASF has taken to help build connections between people from two very different cultures. While the students all work hard academically, it is equally important that they are also taking time to experience life in a foreign country and create networks.

It is wonderful that CPASF supports the students for this well rounded experience. I'm thankful for the professors in both countries who have supported the students and helped them through these trying times.

With all the uncertainties and turmoil we have been experiencing, I would also like to thank the Executive Committee, Denis Isono, Vice Chair, Stan Sawai, Treasurer and Larry Kumabe, Secretary for their guidance and leadership. Their advice and counsel has been invaluable.

*Allen B Uyeda*

### Visiting the National Diet Library Means

#### Winning the Lottery These Days

**Francesca Pizarro** (2019-2020) writes, after three long months, I have resumed my trips to Tokyo to conduct my archival work!



The Museum of Modern Japanese Literature reopened its reading room to the public this July and I recently visited to continue looking through their collection

of girls' magazines from the 1920s and 1930s that I analyze in my research. Wearing a mask is of course a given in any public space, but the museum also requires that visitors use their hand sanitizer upon entry as an

extra precaution. Another addition to their entry procedures was filling out and submitting a brief questionnaire that asked if one were currently experiencing a fever or other symptoms of the virus. Inside their reading room, there were fewer chairs and tables, which were spaced out two meters apart from each other.



I also managed to visit the National Diet Library again, which is no small feat these days. A research library of a much larger scale than the Modern Literature Museum, the NDL's conditions for reopening to the

public involves an online lottery system that selects only 200 applicants to enter the library per day.

I've requested admission for all the weekdays in July, but so far I've only been selected to enter on July 2. Besides wearing a mask and requiring the use of hand sanitizers, entry procedures in this library included checking my name on their reservation list and checking my temperature with a futuristic looking forehead scanning device. Once inside, the library operated as usual, except for having more spaced out computer stations and plastic sheeting hanging over the librarian counters.

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## New Opportunities Due to COVID-19 Pandemic

**Hiroko Saito** (2019-2021) writes: About a month ago, I finished my first academic year at UH Manoa. The classes during the last three months of the Spring semester were conducted online because of COVID-19, but thanks to my professors' arrangements, the online classes were still valuable experiences.

Some professors took the time to have private online-meetings with me and helped me to develop the ideas for my final papers. Also, my academic advisor contacted me often via email to check how my life was going under this stressful situation. The quarantine produced a lot of difficulty, but it made me realize how supportive the professors and other people of the department really were.

I am even more grateful for the environment at UH Manoa and the support than I was before. With advice from my professors, I am now being productive with rewriting my paper and making a book-list. Though the coursework in the first two years of the PhD program is mainly for acquiring basic knowledge of the field, it enabled me to clarify the theme I am really interested in as well as to broaden the scope of my research. The first year at UHM was a wonderful embarkment of my academic journey as a PhD student.

My friends and family were also very supportive, and I'm especially grateful to my little nieces who cheered me up in many ways. They often call me via video-chat and send me letters to encourage me. One of them drew a beautiful picture of me and her family and it made me so happy that I put it on the wall to look at any time while I'm



studying. Studying in a foreign country, especially during today's COVID-19 situation, is not easy. However, the connection I have with my friends and family in Japan helps me to keep working hard to accomplish my goal in Hawaii.

Since the beginning of the Summer break, I've done many things which I

could not do during the semester because I was too busy. I took a long walk at a beach, thoroughly cleaned up my room, and read Japanese books and comics. These activities make me



healthier and feel more refreshed both physically and mentally so that I can concentrate on studying even better.

While the quarantine has restricted our activities, it has also given me a lot of opportunities to attend online classes and events in Japan. I'm attending some online classes of my former professor in Japan and I plan to attend a symposium being held in Japan which relates to my research topic. Also, there are many online talks by my favorite writers which I enjoy very much.

I wouldn't have had these opportunities without today's situation *and* also people's effort to maintain our daily lives. I would like to enjoy this unusual Summer as much as I possible.

## Winning the Lottery

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At both these libraries, photocopy services are operating as before and I've resumed gathering the materials I need for my research in the two days of library visiting. Despite the circumstances, I'm really grateful to a return to pre-COVID-19 productivity. I just hope I luck-out with more opportunities for library visits in July and August!

I'm set to return to the States on September 1st, so I'm trying to make the most of this summer before I leave Japan.

With the nationwide shutdown ended and Tokyo entering the final stages of their reopening measures, I also hope to do some sightseeing before I leave. There is much to squeeze into my last two months in Japan, so I'm trying to make the most of my time.

The CPASF *Scholar Update* is published on a quarterly basis. Please email updates and photos to: [myokomichi@jashawaii.org](mailto:myokomichi@jashawaii.org) for possible inclusion in a future edition.

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