

## Academic Exchange Visit to Rajarata University, Sri Lanka March-April 2024

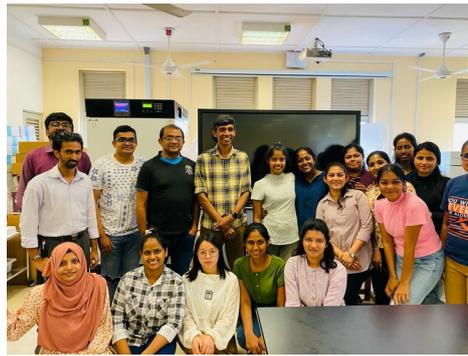
Supported by the Tropical Microbiology Research Foundation (TMRF), I visited the Department of Bioprocess Technology at Rajarata University, Sri Lanka, from 4th March to 3rd April, 2024. As a master's student from the School of Science, Chiang Mai University, Thailand. My research focuses on cave fungal diversity using polyphasic approaches. This month-long exchange provided an invaluable platform for international collaborations.

During the visit, I conducted an interactive seminar on molecular phylogenetic analysis for research assistants and undergraduate students, focusing on multi-gene tree construction methods. Beyond the formal presentation, I regularly engaged with lab members to discuss practical aspects and troubleshoot specific challenges in phylogenetic tree construction. The visit proved highly productive, laboratory work included plant endophyte isolation and cultivation, accompanied by technical exchanges on different approaches to DNA extraction and PCR amplification. I also completed and submitted a manuscript to MycoKeys during the visit.

I am especially grateful to Ms. Madhara K. Wimalasena for her invaluable assistance with fieldwork and laboratory experiments, as well as for introducing me to Sri Lanka culture and cuisine. I am deeply grateful to my co-advisor, Prof. Nalin N. Wijayawardene, for facilitating this valuable exchange opportunity. I also extend my sincere thanks to Prof. Chathuranga Bamunuarachchige, Dr. Ajith Rathnayake, Dr. H.K.S. de Zoysa, and all research assistants for their warm hospitality and collaborative spirit. This experience has significantly enriched my research perspective and strengthened international academic connections in tropical mycology.



[Photo 1: Seminar presentation]



[Photo 2: Group photo]



[Photo 3: Laboratory work with Ms. Madhara]

[Photo 4: Plant sampling for endophyte isolation]