

## **Self-introduction: Mr. Kong Sothea**

My name is Kong Sothea, and I am from Cambodia. Currently, I am in charge of academic affairs at the Division of Academic Affairs. I also serve as a lecturer on food preservation at the Faculty of Agro-Industry, Royal University of Agriculture, Cambodia. I earned my master's degree from the Kyushu University, Japan, in 2015. Ever since my return to Cambodia, I contributed toward my country and workplace with my knowledge and experience.

For instance, I worked with many farmers, helping them enhance their knowledge of post-harvest food management and food safety through many field-school training programs in the Kampot province. I also engaged with non-governmental organizations as part of collaborative projects dedicated to the betterment of farmers' livelihood who are primarily occupied in the agricultural sector. Despite time constraints, I never stopped providing special lectures on food sciences to second-year students as part of the faculty mentioned above. These students will eventually assist in the nation's development as researchers, trainers, and technicians. Through my experiences, I clearly realized the urgent needs and gaps our country and workplace are dealing with. One major issue is the lack of labels on foods. Not only many fermented foods, but also other locally-processed foods are not labeled properly in terms of the specific description of functional foods and food ingredients. Another issue is foodborne diseases, especially unclear food additive applications that are a big concern for food consumers. Chemical additives used for food preservation have unknown sources and are not permitted in foods. Such prevailing issues motivated me to apply for a three-year Doctoral Program of the Nagoya University Scholarship to conduct evidence-based research in fermented foods in Cambodia. Therefore, I expect my study to contribute toward solving food issues and make essential food reports available in the country.

After completing this course, I will be able to provide sustainable solutions to the displacement issues related to Cambodia's food sector. First, I can contribute with my knowledge about food safety and standard to many food producers, especially traditional fermented food producers through the Association of Cambodian Food Chemistry at the Faculty of Agro-Industry. Presently, this association lacks highly professional expertise to share such knowledge despite being successfully established. I hope to assist them efficiently with the skills I gain from my doctoral study. Second, as part of the faculty, I will be in a proper position to contribute to human capital development and to the students studying at the Faculty of Agro-Industry in the field of food sciences, thereby turning them into outstanding and high-flying students as well as transformational leaders of the future. Finally, I can jointly engage in projects with other researchers in preparing food policies and boosting livelihood of farmers and food producers, greatly improving my networking, teamwork, intercultural competence, and language skills.

I am grateful to my supervisor Dr. Kasumi ITO and the Nagoya University Scholarship for providing me with an excellent opportunity to fortify and upgrade my conceptual, analytical, and research capabilities necessary to tackle Cambodia's existing issues in the food sector and help me earn the reputation of being a highly qualified, professional expert in my field.