

The 19th EMBL International Ph.D. Symposium “Bridging the Gaps – Interdisciplinary Approaches in Life Sciences –”

October 19 (Thu) – 21 (Sat), 2017

EMBL, Heidelberg

Five PhD students from SOKENDAI/NIBB were funded by NIBB to participate in the 19th EMBL International Ph.D. Symposium “Bridging the Gaps – Interdisciplinary Approaches in Life Sciences –” (held on 19-21 October). Our students had the chance to give poster presentations at the symposium to introduce their current research. They also attended EMBL’s laboratories to exchange experimental information and discuss their research with PhD students, post-docs and PIs.

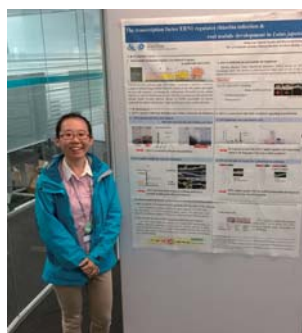
Comments from Students (excerpts)

• Liu Meng

I got some nice advice from my host lab and had an impressive experience in the following symposium.

My host PI, Dr. Rainer Pepperkok and his team members introduced their research to me, and discussed my current studies as well, during the one-day-stay in their lab. My research is generally genetic analysis while Dr. Pepperkok’s team is good at cell biology, specifically on ER vesicle traffic. They helped me in making a clear picture of what I can possibly do for the next step and also gave me some detailed advice like what kind of marker might be suitable for me; they literally guided me to build a bridge between my genetic studies and further cellular level analysis. The discussion on their seminar impressed me so much. They are very open to giving and accepting advice from others. At some points the discussion turned heated and they were never afraid of speaking their minds. This was my first time joining a western style discussion and it was really like a brainstorm for me.

For the next three days we attended the PhD symposium with other EMBL students. Besides all those fantastic eye-opening lectures and talks, I want to talk about our exciting experience at the party on the last day of conference. In Asia we never had this type of party. Seeing all other western students singing and dancing, we debated for a while of whether we would join them or not. Eventually we jumped into the crowd when we realized just standing there was worse than dancing in front of a bunch of people and we fit in right away. We kept drinking and dancing with other EMBL students, enjoying the rare opportunity for relaxing.



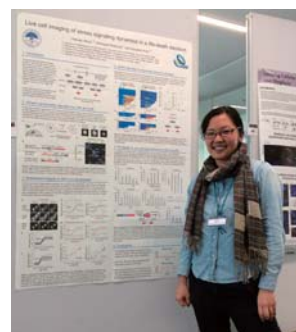
Though it was a small step for me, it was an interesting starter to attempt to integrate into western culture.

The four-day trip was short but its effect on me was significant. Besides the useful advice and tips I got from the lab tour and conference, I love my research more than ever before. I’m more com-

fortable to learn new things in my studies and am not caring so much about loneliness anymore. I hope this trip is a good starter for my two years deferment study here.

• Haruko Miura

The symposium was entirely organized by 2nd year EMBL PhD students, who did a really great job in compiling a fantastic meeting. About 100 PhD students from all over the world and 15 invited speakers participated in the symposium. Many students came from Finland



and Australia, since EMBL has partnerships and sites in those countries as well. Surprisingly, there were only a few German students, which might reflect the very international character of EMBL. This year’s theme was “Bridging the Gaps - Interdisciplinary Approaches in Life Sciences”, so speakers from interdisciplinary fields gave lectures, e.g. synthetic biology, systems biology, tissue engineering, microfluidic technology, and state-of-art fluorescence imaging. Furthermore, there were interesting ‘Science and Society’ talks and a plenary discussion on topics like talking to journalists, women in science, and career paths. I had the chance to present my research in a poster presentation and short talk to a broad audience and got positive feedback from many fellow students. Inspired by the lectures, I want to apply 3D tissue culture, microfluidics, and new fluorescent tools in my future research. The meeting was not only a good opportunity to network with peers from various countries, but also to connect with the other NIBB students.

On the last day, I visited the Schultz group, who work on the development of chemical tools for live cell imaging and manipulating cellular signaling. Since our fields of study were related, we had lively scientific discussions and they gave me valuable advice for my research. All in all, I had the impression that EMBL is a great place for postdoc studies, due to the cutting edge research, excellent core-facilities with superb technical support, and high internationality. Finally, I want to thank all the involved EMBL and NIBB members for making these valuable experiences possible which will definitely help me in my future research and career.