

Report on Sakura Exchange Program in Science: by Analhuda, Syazwani, Syartika, Ashyikin, Noraiza & Marshila

Spending three weeks in Tsukuba University, Japan really gave us a good experience as a postgraduate student in fact we were extremely excited to visit University of Tsukuba and having collaborative research program in one of the top university in Japan. During the first day, we felt a bit shocked because never in our life experienced the cold weather before. However, at the same time, we were so amazed with the cleanliness, beautifulness and peacefulness of Japan.

We were assigned in 3 different research labs in University of Tsukuba, few of us went into the algae research lab of Iwane Suzuki-sensei and Ishida-sensei. We were so amazed with their lab facilities and their practical in managing the lab works. We had learnt lots of new skills and techniques related to our master research in the lab with the assistance from Machida-san and Shiratori-san, postgraduate students of University of Tsukuba. We had gained a lot of knowledge regarding how to isolate microalgae with a good technique, identified algal strains by using phylogenetic analysis (PCR and electrophoresis), measured growth by monitored the optical density and chlorophyll every day.

In Zhen Ya Zhang-sensei laboratory, members assigned here got to analysed the liquid products produced from the pre-treatment of EFB and FPF by using subcritical water extraction machine. Throughout this program we were helped and support from Yingnan Yang-sensei, teaching assistant Dr. Cai Wei and Dr. Sun Hoye. We also had done checking on the pH value, TOC value, and polysaccharide determination by their guidance.

While members assigned in Laboratory for Aquatic Science was under Motoo Utsumi-sensei supervision. On the first week, Utsumi-sensei explained his laboratory's his strict regulation and rules that we should follow during our lab work. On the second week, we learnt on method of culturing bacteria sample, DNA extraction, Polymerase Chain Reaction and gel electrophoresis. While on the third week we learnt more on the procedure of conducting HPLC and we also try to run our sample by using this HPLC. Both of senpai Li-san and Lu-san were assigned to teach us. They teach us in detailed of each step of each experiment. They are very skillful and helpful and we admire their good lab work technique. Beside our experiment, we also learnt on some new regulation in Utsumi-sensei laboratory which are not practice in our laboratory back in MJIIT, UTM. This include on disposal chemical waste in selective container according to the type of chemical, wash beaker or tube ten times after usage, each equipment must be booked and recorded before use and many others.

In addition, we also grabbed a chance to visit some of famous places in Japan. Japan is a very beautiful country. Not to mention the citizens are so kind and nice. Despite the cold season, we enjoyed ourselves very much. We visited Imperial Palace garden, National Museum of Science, Ueno Park, Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), Shibuya, Asakusa, Akihabara, Harajuku, Nippori and also Tokyo Disneyland and Disney sea. Through this, we have learned some of the Japanese cultures and languages.

Last but not least, we would like to express our gratitude to University of Tsukuba and Japan Science and Technology Agency (JAIST) for supporting and allowing us to experience studying and doing our experiments in one of the prestigious university in Japan. We are looking forward to share our experiences and culture that we learnt in University of Tsukuba so that we can applied it in our Memo-Bio ikohza, MJIIT, UTM.

To be concluded, Japan is one of the countries that is exemplary in terms of their works, technology, skills, and punctuality. We hope that we have another chance to come again to visit Japan in the future and learned more knowledge from the 'Land of the Rising Sun'. Thank you

