

Tamanna Rob

Master of Marine Sciences Program (special Program), completed September 2007

Currently I am a Ph.D student at York University, Toronto, Canada, studying transient conformations of proteins. I commenced my Master in Marine Science Program at University of the Ryukyus, Okinawa, Japan in two years from Oct 2005 to Sept 2007 majoring in Natural Products Chemistry.

This special program is offered to Chemistry, Biology and Marine Sciences students and comprised of six courses with two years of research. Most of the courses offered by the department are well designed and relevant to the research topics that are under investigation by the different research groups at the department. The courses were



focused not only at basics but also at the current scientific findings to deepen our understanding. The professors gave us challenging assignments which improved our analytical thinking and scientific writing capability. I must admit that they made these courses interesting by making the class interactive which I found the most beneficial in exchanging my knowledge with others students who were from different academic background. I learnt to communicate with Japanese students and others despite of our language barrier and exchanged our views.

My research was focused on isolation of Natural Products from marine organisms. My supervisor walked me in every sphere in my two years. I learnt basic skills of research and had golden opportunity to use expensive modern equipments and machines. My research was challenging since I was trying to isolate few time sensitive secondary metabolites which used to demand rapid

isolation and quick analysis. This working experience is the most rewarding outcome of my career making me a better analytical person. Besides lab work, our research group used to have scientific literature review discussion session and research progresses at least for an hour once a week. These sessions were extremely beneficial in understanding the co-current scientific findings related to my research. Since the discussions were to address the difficulties that we faced in our research, after each session I found a new direction in solving my challenging problems.

During my first two semesters of Master, I took classes for of Japanese language which is an academic requirement of this program. These classes helped me to build my basics in Japanese language knowledge which was extremely important to communicate in everyday life.

The basic training of research that I gained in two years at the University of the Ryukyus is the most valuable experience in my life. My past research experiences with small molecules benefits my current research at York to understand interaction between protein and small molecule in structure based drug designing of protein conformational diseases.