

OSA Summer Session

When I saw the Beijing Olympic Games, I truly believed that just the best athletes of the world were able to go there, and I don't know why, but China became in the depth of my mind something like a challenge.

One day, when I was checking my e-mail, I came across the news, that this year, an event organized by the OSA was going to take place in China. I became really curious about it, not only because of the place, but also about the topic: "Lasers and their applications". I am not an expert in lasers, but I have always been interested in the subject. Some time went by, and I couldn't really forget about it. Two weeks after I got another e-mail, and I began to look for the way to make possible to go there. It was not easy: I had to talk to my advisor, to tell my classmates, get money, present a decent poster, get the Chinese Visa, etc. And at the end, take the plane and be sure that even though I didn't know a word in Chinese, I was going to do fine just by myself.

My first impression of China was of immensity and of a place crowded. When I reached Beijing, I was astonished by the size and amount of buildings. They had a very particular Chinese style, and it was amazing to see all these people walking on the streets like ants. With the little time that I had, I could only see the great wall, the Tianamen square, and the Forbidden City, and this was an unforgettable experience. It was great to feel the devotion of the Chinese people for Chairman Mao Tse Tung, and to see in the Forbidden City that every next building was as impressive as the one before. The food, the smells and the flavors were something very different in comparison to what I had experienced in this side of the world. The impossibility to talk and read made my senses to be very much aware of my surroundings.



Changchun is a "small city" in the Chinese province of Jilin. It has about 8 million inhabitants. It is not as international as Beijing. It is an agricultural and industrial city, but it is very strategic because it is the cradle of lasers and of the automotive industry in China. To see the people of CIOMP at the airport was really nice. To realize that behind an e-mail there are real people, and that they are really friendly, is very comfortable. The place of the summer school is a very important research center, and the Chinese students and the other international students were really interested in meeting new people. They asked me many questions about my country and about the institute where I study. It was very nice to attend the talks and to talk individually to the invited speakers. They really prepared well their presentations, and they were always willing to answer questions. They had a lot of contact with students. The vision of the scope of my research was enriched. I was able to learn from the other posters, and to find my place in what I have done and what I still have to do. I got new ideas. It was great to look in the map to find countries that I didn't know where they were. That was, thanks to someone that was wearing a very different style of clothes in comparison to what I am used to see, and he was not going to any custom party.



It was great to hear about faraway places in China, and to realize, that four days could pass without remembering the names of my new friends, because my mind was so full with technical and cultural

information. It was very interesting to go out with people from India, the Arabic countries, Americans, Russians, etc., and to laugh together, because many things were as strange for them as they were for me. I was very proud to represent my country in such an event. It is weird that you are recognized as "the Mexican", and your name comes to a second plane. I felt very comfortable due to the people of the CIOMP, and without the support of the people of the OSA, this wonderful experience would never have taken place.



It was very nice to see the high academic level that the Chinese students have, also of all the other students that were there. Everyone that presented a poster was trying really hard to do the best, and to win the contest. Attending the talks was a great opportunity to learn. I was really happy to make new friends. It was nice to be around so many intelligent people, who work so hard to achieve a place in the scientific community, and it was just wonderful to be part of this project.

I have to say from my particular point of view, that I felt that I was around some of the best experts in laser technology in the world. I was so happy at the end, that I don't envy the athletes that went to the Beijing Olympic Games. My best reward was to break the political, religious, cultural and language barriers, and to let optics bring together a bunch of people at a certain space and time that would have been very difficult to find otherwise.

The main thing about being a student is that you still have the freedom to be the way you are, and to have the illusion to accomplish a dream, so to be together with other students that have the same dreams is just very profitable.

Thanks to the OSA for organizing these meetings and for helping all the people who want to learn and work hard to become a scientist, to have such a great experience. Thanks for all the support.

Maybe in the near future you will be the next to take part in one of these programs. I guarantee that you will learn a lot and that you will have so much fun, like the one you can have in very few occasions, and maybe you will make friends that will last a lifetime..

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