



Supervisor' review of dissertation thesis by Somsuvro Basu

My contact with Somsuvro, called Šom, started in an unusual way. About 4 years ago I received an e-mail from India, kindly asking whether there was a possibility to do a PhD in our lab. As many know, P.I.s get many such e-mails, mostly from India, Pakistan, Nigeria and Iran, but this letter was different. It did not contain usual crap, super-polite sentences and less visible features, still obviating its groupmail character. It was written by someone who already worked with Leishmania and seemed to have a genuine interest.

So I got in touch with Som, he was eventually examined by our PhD committee and passed very well, and as is today more than apparent, he arrived to our lab and stayed with us until now. I hope he does not regret it. For reasons which I don't remember anymore, he is the one who took over the Fe-S cluster business after Shaojun Long (now at University of Washington) and Piya Changmai (still over there but not for long). Som was familiar with basic molecular methods and in quite a short time learned the methodology going with the topic, although it became eventually apparent to me, that he is a molecular biology type guy, not inclining to biochemistry (to the light dismay of our diehard biochemist Zdenek Verner), who keeps looking for buddies in this difficult and underpopulated field.

In our extensive analysis of the Fe-S cluster pathway in trypanosomes, in a relay Som followed up where Shao finished. But stuff that Shao left behind was not an easy one – whatever remained after the workaholic Shao was bound to be difficult. That proved pretty much to be the case, but in collaboration with the guys from Universities of Lancaster and Oxford, Som turned the Erv1 story into a nice one, published in Eukaryotic Cell, having a very narrow and strange miss at Journal of Biological Chemistry.

The other paper in Molecular Microbiology on the CIA pathway was already truly Som's work, as it was him who did and examined all the knock-downs, with the summer help of Alex Haindrich. The paper was much strengthened by the addition of yeast rescue experiments, done at the Philipps University, yet again with solid contribution by Som. There shall be a follow-up on that one, slowed down by the bureaucracy of U.K. (for details ask Priscila), but we will get there. Som also wrote with myself a rather detailed review on what is known about the entire Fe-S cluster metabolism of trypanosomes, which was is coming out in decent BBA-Mol.Cell.Res. There will be other stories



coming out in the next year or two, on which Som's name will appear, such as the analysis of chaperons in trypanosome mitochondrion and cross-rescues of tryp genes in giardia.

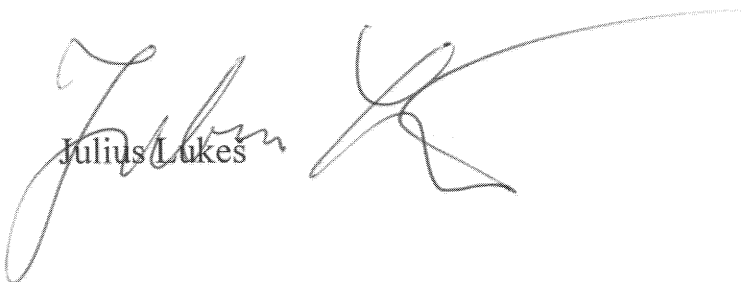
Throughout the years, Som became a key member of our lab. He was lately sitting at the computer a lot (applications for post-doc positions take time), but when he was at the bench, most of his experiments yielded publishable results and he will soon be at the bench in Marburg again. Moreover, as a senior PhD student in our lab, Som was helping other students in planning and execution of their experiments.

Som became also pretty good in selling his results. The price for best poster at the Fe-S cluster meeting in the US did not come by itself. Moreover, at least from my perspective, Som showed a pretty good capacity to retain nice and pleasant aspects of the Indian culture (invariably positive mood, civilized attitude to others, avoidance of rude words etc.), and at the same time mix them with some Central-European habits, such as occasional excessive consumption of alcohol. All in all, Som a nice guy to have around, who has the potential to be a very good teacher and researcher.

I would like to state that the presented dissertation thesis fulfils, according to my opinion, all postulations and I recommend it to be accepted as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Faculty of Sciences of the University of South Bohemia.

Thanks Som for your friendship and great work.

September 16, 2014 in České Budějovice


Julius Lukeš