We were selected as members of the EAU-JUTA international Academic Exchange Programmes and the time we spent in Spain from 15 March 2019 was a dream come true. Below you will find an overview of our exciting trip.

Royal Palace
The day after arriving, the Japanese and Taiwanese groups went out for sightseeing at the Royal Palace and historic Madrid city centre, blessed with fine weather. It is always a good start to know the people by knowing their history. At night, we had a dinner with Prof. L. Martinez-Pileiro and his colleagues. The staff was very easy-going and we got to know each other during dinner.

On Monday 18 March, Prof. M. Alvarez Maestro kindly picked us up and took us to the Department of Urology of La Paz University Hospital, which was located in the most modern area of Madrid. During these two days, we observed two urethroplasties and a laparoscopic radical prostatectomy nicely performed by Professor Martinez-Pileiro, a PCNL by Dr. Cansino in a heavily-operated kidney, and a rapid HoLEP for a 25g prostate by Dr. Perret Carral. The latter procedure can also be seen on Youtube. The urethroplasties were performed in two stages for Lichen sclerosus, which is quite rare in Asian countries.

Barcelona’s Sagrada Familia
We were so excited to find that the accommodation was located in a fantastic place near to the Sagrada Familia and close to Fundación Puigvert.

On Wednesday 20 March, Ms. Luliia Penna took us to the Fundación Puigvert next to the Hospital de Sant Pau, which is included in the World Heritage List. Dr. Joan Peluix and Dr. Alberto Breda gave us an overview about Fundación Puigvert which is a historical hospital specialised in urology and nephrology. Then we took some photos together (Figure 2). We moved to the operating room, where we observed many kinds of operations: robotic prostatectomy with lymph node dissection; endourological surgery for unilateral anastomotic stricture; open cystectomy for advanced bladder cancer; and cadaveric donor renal transplantation. After lunch with the professors and young urologists, the professors gave us very practical lectures. The most impressive lectures were “Tips and Tricks in Prostate Cancer Surgery” by Prof. J. Peluix, and “Cryotherapy in Prostate Cancer” by Prof. Breda. We got some new thoughts on our clinical practice by discussing with the speakers.

Hospital de Sant Pau tour
At the end of the visit, we participated in the Hospital de Sant Pau guided tour which was really a wonderful experience. We were overwhelmed, not only by the symmetry and beauty of the modern design but also by the truly progressive health care principles. This complex demonstrates the best of the “form follows function” design principle in terms of patient care. We walked around in the city of Barcelona, and visited the Sagrada Familia, Park Güell and Casa Vicens.

Interesting lectures
On Thursday 21 March, we walked to the Fundacio Puigvert. We heard many interesting lectures: Endourology in UTUC by Prof. A. Breda; Analyzing data of TURP’s biopsy cancer by Prof. F. Pican; Clinical cases in partial neurectomy by Prof. A. Breda; Penile sentinel node and reconstructive surgery by Prof. J.M. Gayà; Complications in radical cystectomy: diagnose and solve by Prof. G. Rodriguez; Medical treatment in metastatic kidney cancer: where are we by Prof. P. Marcò; Active surveillance: concept, indications and results by Prof. F. Sanguedolce.

EAU Annual Congress
On Friday 22 March, the EAU Annual Congress opened and urologists from all over the world gathered in Barcelona. Until Monday 25 March, we learned many things we have not learnt in Taiwan or Japan, for example how to speak in presentations, how to answer questions; how to communicate with foreign doctors.

In various sessions we could see the cutting-edge knowledge and techniques, advances in clinical and basic research, as well as fantastic innovations in surgical skills. Because there were so many different interesting topics held at the same time, we had a lot on our plate. Fortunately, we could use webcast on Uroweb to catch every important message from the Annual Congress. These precious experiences inspired us not only in better clinical practice but also in research.

International Friendship Dinner
On Sunday 24 March, the International Friendship Dinner was held at a traditional restaurant in Barcelona. Then the chairman presented with awards of the Exchange Programme. There, we met Prof. L. Martinez-Pileiro, Prof. M. Alvarez Maestro, Prof. J. Gómez Rivas and Prof. J. Peluix again, and we expressed our thanks to them. Also, we met the president of UEA, Prof. M. Fújishawa and talked about the fantastic activities of the EAU (Figure 3).

Tuesday 19 March was the day we had to leave and go back home. We said goodbye to each other at the hotel and promised to stay in touch.

We would like to thank the EAU, JUTA and JUA, which set up such a fantastic and perfect programme, and we especially appreciate the efforts made by Prof. L. Martinez-Pileiro in La Paz University Hospital, Prof. J. Peluix in Fundación Puigvert, their colleagues and secretaries. Through this programme in Spain we learned so much that will absolutely be useful in our basic clinical skills.

Unique networking opportunity for European and Asian urologists
The La Paz University Hospital, Urology Department in Madrid (ES) had the opportunity to welcome the participants of the 2019 Japanese and Taiwanese Urological Association - EAU Exchange Programme, which consisted of a 2-day educational experience. The programme started at the urology department with a warm welcome from Dr. Martínez-Pileiro, staff members and residents.

We had the opportunity of meeting with Dr. Po-Fan Hsu,Dr. Yu Hua Fan, Dr. Po-Ming Chow, Dr. Ryuji Matsumoto and Dr. Koichiro Wada. They could listen to lectures about urological reconstruction surgical techniques and PCNL techniques given by Dr. Martínez-Pileiro and Dr. Cansino, respectively. They observed surgical urologies, including a laparoscopic radical prostatectomy, urethroplasties.

For further information on applying for the 2020 Japanese Tour please visit: www.uroweb.org/exchange-japan