

DAAD



DAAD Scholarship Report

Project name: Strategic partnerships for joint
innovations-KIT in the Jiangsu and
the Shanghai Metropolitan Region

Participating schools: Tongji University & Karlsruhe
Institute of Technology

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My name is Chang Yuan, studying now automotive engineering in KIT (Karlsruhe Institute of Technology). Two years ago I finished my undergraduate courses and decided to study further in automotive field. At that time coming to Germany became a good choice, because on one side Germany is well known all over the world for its automotive industry and there are also here many good universities strong in mechanics. On the other hand my university – Tongji University in Shanghai, has a long cooperating history with German universities and companies, which provides kinds of different ways for further learning and researching in Germany. Then I made my mind to attend Sino-German College in Tongji to proceed my master degree. And fortunately I had the luck one year later to get access to the double master program between Tongji and KIT. As honored as I was, I got the scholarship from DAAD, as a support of studying and living here in Karlsruhe. For me it is acknowledge for all my endeavor in the past, as well as encourage for more achievements in the future.

But starting a new life in a new country is always difficult. It began already when we were still in China and prepared all the papers and documents, as we didn't have much time and our papers sent out were delayed. That time we also needed to apply for a student dormitory but paying the rent was a problem because we didn't have bank accounts in Germany. At begin all things went slowly and inefficiently. But thanks to the staffs from KIT international office, who were all very nice and patient, even though we could only communicate via e-mail, they still gave us very useful advices and indications. When we were in Germany they also helped us tackling problems and made our enrollment went smoothly.

With expectation and curiosity we finally began our study in KIT. The biggest problem, I think may be for every Chinese student, was the language. We could not totally understand what the professor says in the class. The language we've learned is too inflexible and not enough, as native speakers the Germans speak quite fast and flexibly. It really bothered me at first. Then in the advice from upperclassman I found a way, previewing all contents of the next class so I got familiar with them and it helped a lot to understand next time I went for the class. Of course the ultimate way was to improve the German skill by talking and using it more in daily life, and also by listening news and watching videos in German. I thought it was only a matter of time when I was willing to talk and listen more. So far my German is much better and good enough to understand in the class, but I think I should keep on learning and improving it.

Besides loneliness is also a problem for maybe every foreign student. Because I with other friends all live separately and alone, we don't have many chances to see each

other after class. The most important thing one should learn here would be learning how to get along with yourself and loneliness. It's not only about lonely emotion and homesick but also planning your own time efficiently and meaningfully. To be honest I felt always lonely, especially when I was reviewing all the courses and preparing for the final exams in July because I didn't need to go out for class so I had hardly chance to meet classmates and friends. So I decided to go jogging. It was a good way to make myself clear and calm and eliminate negative emotions. My life was then substantial as I learned a lot and also did exercise regularly, instead of wasting it on TV-Show or computer games. In my opinion what I've learned best in Germany so far is how to arrange my own time and use it reasonably and efficiently.

I am really grateful and appreciate the double master program between Tongji and KIT. It gives me a quick and convenient way to get access to my dreaming university. The DAAD project provides me a financial supporting, which eases the burden of my parents and makes me more independent. And acknowledge of credits between both universities makes our study diverse, so that we can experience two different education systems and benefit from both. For this I still have some suggestions. Firstly I hope this double master program may contain internship part, so we can get more practical experience and I think it's also beneficial to quickly get used to live in Germany and improve both oral and hearing ability. The project would also be more profound and attractive. Besides in my perspective there could be more blocked courses while we were in China. Before I came to Germany, I took three blocked courses and all of them were interesting and profound and showed us in different ways the newest research and technology in Germany. These courses not only widen our horizon, are also good for our German and make us as early as possible to get used to teaching way in Germany. Finally I think there could be more forms of cooperation between both universities, for example like sending students to each other to do research together, this makes a team international and brings different thinking ways in it. And more off-line activities like a theme day or culture experience are also good for students from both sides to know each other and a different culture.

In the end I sincerely wish the double master program and the DAAD scholarship project to become more and more professional and profound, and more and more students can benefit from them and make their contribution to the communication of German and Chinese culture.