

## The Opening of the Life Sciences Silk Road: SABPA 3rd Annual Pacific Forum

Reported by Zhu Shen and Charles Lo

Nearly two weeks after San Diego's devastating fires paralyzed most of the county, the smoke and skies finally cleared just in time for a momentous day with the 2007 flagship event organized by the Sino American Biomedical & Pharmaceutical Professional Association (SABPA), the 3rd Annual Pacific Forum: The Opening of the Life Sciences Silk Road.

A "dream team" of 27 outstanding speakers from cross-Pacific regions, 22 corporate sponsors, 11 event partners, five media outlets, and about 300 attendees participated at the most successful Pacific Forum organized by SABPA to date. The unprecedented level of enthusiasm and participation from the speakers, sponsors, and event partners indicates the significant interest and market demand for cross-Pacific alliances.

The spread of the open market economy has impacted many industries and nations worldwide, especially Asian Pacific nations, and most notably China. Furthermore, the Chinese biotech/pharmaceutical industry has seen tremendous growth over the last several years as some of the world's largest pharmaceutical companies pour billions of dollars into the nation to compete to be the leading multinational company (MNC) and to tap into the vast scientific talent pool.



The phenomenal IPO of WuXi Pharmatech on the NYSE in August '07 signaled the coming of age of China's robust and increasingly sophisticated CRO service industry. The growth of this sector has been fueled by the tremendous demand from the Western biopharmaceutical industry looking to cut R&D costs without compromising quality. In the meantime, we are seeing the emergence of an exciting new cross-Pacific partnership exemplified by the recent landmark Hutchison MediPharma and Eli Lilly deal focused on jointly developing novel compounds in oncology and inflammation.



The biotech/pharmaceutical industry in China will continue to witness revolutionary changes. As an increasing number of MNCs establish residence there, the Chinese government is trying to clean up its act about recent safety recalls and to rid itself of internal scandals that have plagued the State Food and Drug Administration. Many questions immediately arise about the stability and sustainability of this young market. For instance, how will China contribute to the global economy and how will it in turn be affected by these market forces? What are the trends in trans-Pacific R&D outsourcing, licensing & partnering? How can one's IP be protected in the life sciences market? What types of investment and career opportunities are emerging as the biotech/pharmaceutical industry develops? The Pacific Forum speakers provided their thoughts and insight on these issues.



The morning session started with CONNECT's CEO Duane Roth and BIOCUM Asia Task Force co-chair Jack Florio recounting how the contributions of the local community helped San Diego develop and flourish into one of the hottest hi-tech/biotech regions in the world. As a result, San Diego's community consists of many technically trained, advanced degree professionals. Randy Allen from the Johnson Graduate School of Management at Cornell University took the opportunity to stress the necessity of acquiring soft business skills, i.e. leadership and networking abilities, to scientists transitioning from the bench to the executive suite. Adam Lenain of Foley & Lardner LLP led a discussion with seasoned executives and their experiences about the practical and legal strategies for successful trans-Pacific licensing and manufacturing deals. Paul DeRidder, a SABPA Board member, led the discussion about cross-Pacific investments, financing and exit strategies. A company's ability to establish multiple strategic locations worldwide in order to capitalize on lower tax rates was the theme that dominated much of the morning's session.

Lunch was not only a time to enjoy good food with great company, but also an occasion to network. Forum participants had the chance to visit and learn from more than 19 sponsor booths that were setup. Old friends caught up with each other, while business cards and contact information were exchanged as strangers from either side of the Pacific established new collaborations. Not everyone was able to relax as the media, San Diego Union Tribune, Asia Media, The Melody Show, and World Journal conducted interviews with speakers and panel members. Lots of activities transpired during the intermission, but it also recharged everyone for the rest of the forum.

The afternoon session was as packed with content as the morning session. Dr. Weiguo Su of Hutchison MediPharma started the afternoon session and explained how Hutchison grew into a powerhouse organization capped off by recently entering into a strategic partnership with Eli Lilly and Company. Dr. Zhu Shen led the discussion about trends in trans-Pacific partnering and licensing opportunities with projections from leaders of all spectrums of the industry, including biotech companies, academic centers and legal establishments. Dr. Hui Li, SABPA's President, took it one step further by soliciting real life examples from a panel of company representatives directly and currently involved in trans-Pacific outsourcing. The last panel featuring Jim Audet of Russell Reynolds and Doug Walker of Aha Performance examined the criteria, rigorous training, soft business skills and humility that companies look for when recruiting and retaining talent in today's competitive global marketplace.



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