

学位論文 (要約)

**Development of chemical post-translational modification reactions  
on azoline-containing peptides expressed in a reconstituted  
cyclodehydratase-coupled translation system**

**(試験管内生合成されたアゾリン含有ペプチドの  
化学的翻訳後修飾反応の開発)**

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## Abstract (abridged)

Backbone modifications such as azoles, azolines and azolidines are often seen in bioactive peptidic natural products. Since these heterocyclic structures would provide peptides with several characteristics such as rigid global conformation, hydrogen bonding sites with fixed orientations, improved proteolytic resistance, and cell membrane permeability, they are important motifs of the bioactive peptides and the backbone modifications would be a general strategy for organisms to develop a wide variety of bioactive peptides.

Our laboratory has previously developed an *in vitro* biosynthesis system for azoline-containing peptides by integrating the Flexible *In vitro* Translation (FIT) system and a post-translational cyclodehydratase, PatD, which is involved in the biosynthesis of patellamides. In the *in vitro* biosynthesis system, referred to as FIT–PatD system, Cys/Ser/Thr residues involved in translated peptides are modified by PatD to the corresponding azoline moieties, allowing one-pot synthesis of azoline-containing peptides. We have revealed an unprecedented substrate tolerance of PatD and demonstrated that this system can be applied for diverse azoline-containing peptides.

In order to expand structural diversity, which is accessible by *in vitro* translation and subsequent post-translational modifications, in my doctoral studies, chemical methodologies were developed, which generate peptides containing a wide range of backbone modifications by the integration of enzymatic cyclodehydration by PatD and chemical modifications.

In chapter 2 and chapter 3, the development of *in vitro* synthetic method of azole-containing peptides and azole-containing peptides are described, respectively. (*For the reasons of patent applications and future publications, details are closed in the following parts.*)

In conclusion, in this research I have developed novel methods involving the post-translational enzymatic cyclodehydration by PatD and chemical modifications on ribosomally synthesized peptides to yield peptides with various backbone modifications. The post-translational modification method developed here would provide unique structural scaffolds into peptides, which possibly leads to the development of novel bioactive peptides.



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## Chapter 1 General introduction

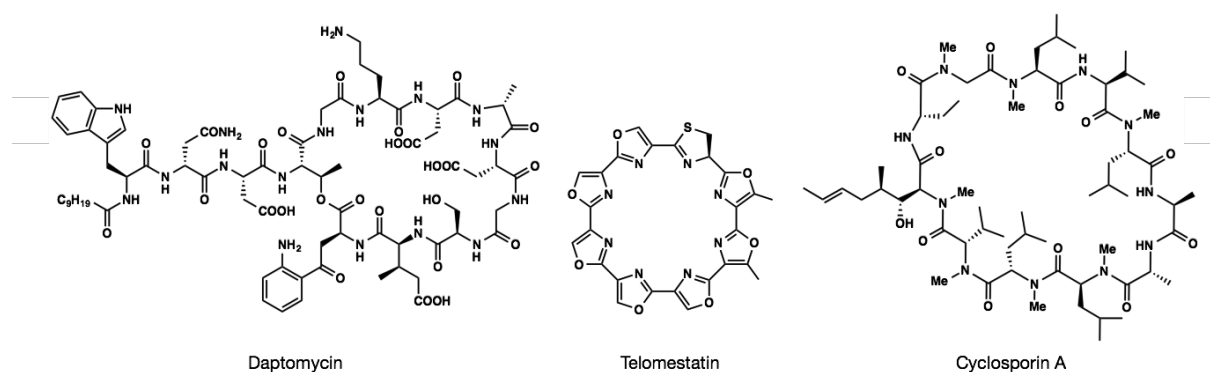
### *1.1 Non-standard peptides as drug candidates for protein–protein interactions (PPIs) and peptidic natural products as a source of non-standard peptides*

Protein–protein interactions (PPIs) have emerged as challenging targets of great importance in chemical biology and medicinal chemistry.<sup>1-7</sup> It has been argued that PPIs are difficult to be targeted by small molecules, which are mainly employed in drug discovery today<sup>8</sup> because of larger interaction surface area involved in PPIs (1500–3000Å) compared to protein-small molecule interaction surface area (300–1000Å).<sup>9</sup> In addition, though antibodies can actually modulate PPIs, they cannot target intracellular proteins of therapeutic interest because they cannot penetrate cell membrane. Although intensive studies have recently provided successful examples of targeting PPIs by small molecules,<sup>7</sup> it is still challenging to develop small molecule PPI modulators and non-standard peptides have been getting much attention as candidates of drugs and bioactive molecules for modulation of intracellular PPIs.<sup>10, 11</sup>

Since detailed mechanism of PPIs can be attributed to the interactions between peptides embedded in proteins of interest, peptides would be the most natural approach to modulate PPIs by mimicking proteins.<sup>12,13</sup> Moreover, the fact that peptidic natural products exemplified by cyclosporin A (**Figure 1.1**), which is far from the rule of thumb on bioavailability of small molecules (or Lipinski's rule of five<sup>14</sup>) can penetrate cell membrane<sup>15</sup>, encouraged the utilities of non-standard peptides as molecular scaffold for the development of novel bioactive peptides. (Note that “non-standard peptides” here denote the peptides containing “non-standard structures”, which is not found in linear peptides composed of 20 kinds of proteinogenic amino acids.) Although peptides generally can not permeate cell membrane, a number of non-standard structures in cyclosporin A such as non-proteinogenic side chains, D-amino acids, *N*-methylation, and macrocyclic structure would cooperatively contribute to the membrane permeability of cyclosporin A.

In addition to above-mentioned non-standard structures found in cyclosporin A, peptidic natural products in general exhibit huge structural diversity, which is reviewed in the following part. This structural diversity must be advantageous for the development of novel bioactive peptides,

however, alternative approaches than “natural product-based drug development” would be desired for the development of peptides against some targets of therapeutic interest. Except for antimicrobial agents, the activities of peptidic natural products would have nothing to do with human diseases and the production of such molecules would not be the selective pressure in the process of evolution. The immunosuppressant activity of cyclosporin A would be just a product of chance. Thus, for the development of novel bioactive peptides with non-standard structures, peptides, which possess natural product-like structures, but as a whole, structurally different from original natural products would be required.



**Figure 1.1** Examples of peptidic natural products biosynthesized by non-ribosomal peptide synthetases (NRPS).



## 1.2 The development of bioactive peptides by rational design and high-throughput screening

In general, mainly two approaches can be employed for *de novo* development of bioactive peptides. First, PPI modulator can be rationally designed based on proteins of interests.<sup>12</sup> For example, based on co-crystallization structures, mimicry of peptide strands in either of proteins involved in targeted PPIs can be synthesized.<sup>7</sup> The designed peptides can interact with the targeted proteins and thus competitively inhibit the targeted PPIs. By the aid of computational analysis, which predict regions of proteins, which are critical for PPIs, constrained peptides can be also designed.<sup>16</sup> However, the potential problems of these approaches are; (i) crystal structures are required for the structure-based design, (ii) it would be generally difficult to obtain stronger affinity against a target protein than that of the native counterpart protein, (iii) it is difficult to design peptides, which bind to unexpected sites or exhibit PPI modulation in allosteric mechanism and (iv) it is difficult to design peptides based on a non-structured binding region, which is also prevalent in PPIs.<sup>17</sup>

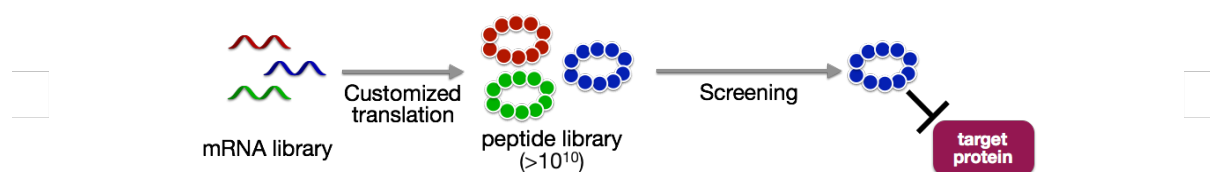
The other approach is construction of peptide library and subsequent screening of active peptides from the library (**Figure 1.2**). This method has actually isolated (i) binding peptides against target proteins, which crystal structure was not solved,<sup>18</sup> (ii) binding peptides with pM affinities,<sup>19</sup> (iii) active peptides, which bind target proteins at unexpected sites and regulate PPIs in an allosteric manner.<sup>20</sup> (iv) Additionally, since this screening approach does not mimic naturally occurring binding peptide strands, no structured binding region is required.

In *de novo* development of bioactive peptides by high-throughput screening approach, the diversity of peptide libraries is highly important. Antibodies would be a good reference of such relationship between diversity and activity. Since antibodies can strongly bind to a specific target molecules, they have been widely used in biological research and clinically.<sup>21</sup> These characteristics are the basis of fundamental molecular detection techniques such as ELISA<sup>22, 23</sup> and western blotting<sup>24-26</sup> in biological research, and therapeutic antibodies is growing modality for drug development.<sup>8</sup>

In general, therapeutic antibodies have low nM order of dissociation constants ( $K_D$ ). For example,  $K_D$  values are 2.6–3.1 nM for nivolumab<sup>27, 28</sup>, 30–550 pM for adalimumab<sup>29-31</sup>, 21 pM–9.1 nM for infliximab<sup>29, 30</sup>, 160 nM for rituximab<sup>32</sup> and 2.2–16.6 nM for bevacizumab<sup>33, 34</sup>.

On the other hand, the diversity of antibodies has been estimated<sup>35,36</sup> as  $>10^{10}$ , suggesting that highly diverse peptide library may provide active peptides which bind to target molecules of interest with strong affinity comparable to antibodies. Actually, screening approach using genetically encoded peptide library has been yielded a number of active peptides showing antibody-like activities.<sup>37</sup>

In short conclusion, construction of non-standard peptide library and a subsequent screening have great advantages for the development of bioactive peptides. In order to accomplish this approach, facile synthetic methods are required for the construction of highly diverse ( $10^{10}$ – $10^{11}$ ) non-standard peptide libraries.



**Figure 1.2** Schematic illustration of the screening for bioactive peptides. In this figure, mRNA display-mediated screening of bioactive peptides is illustrated.

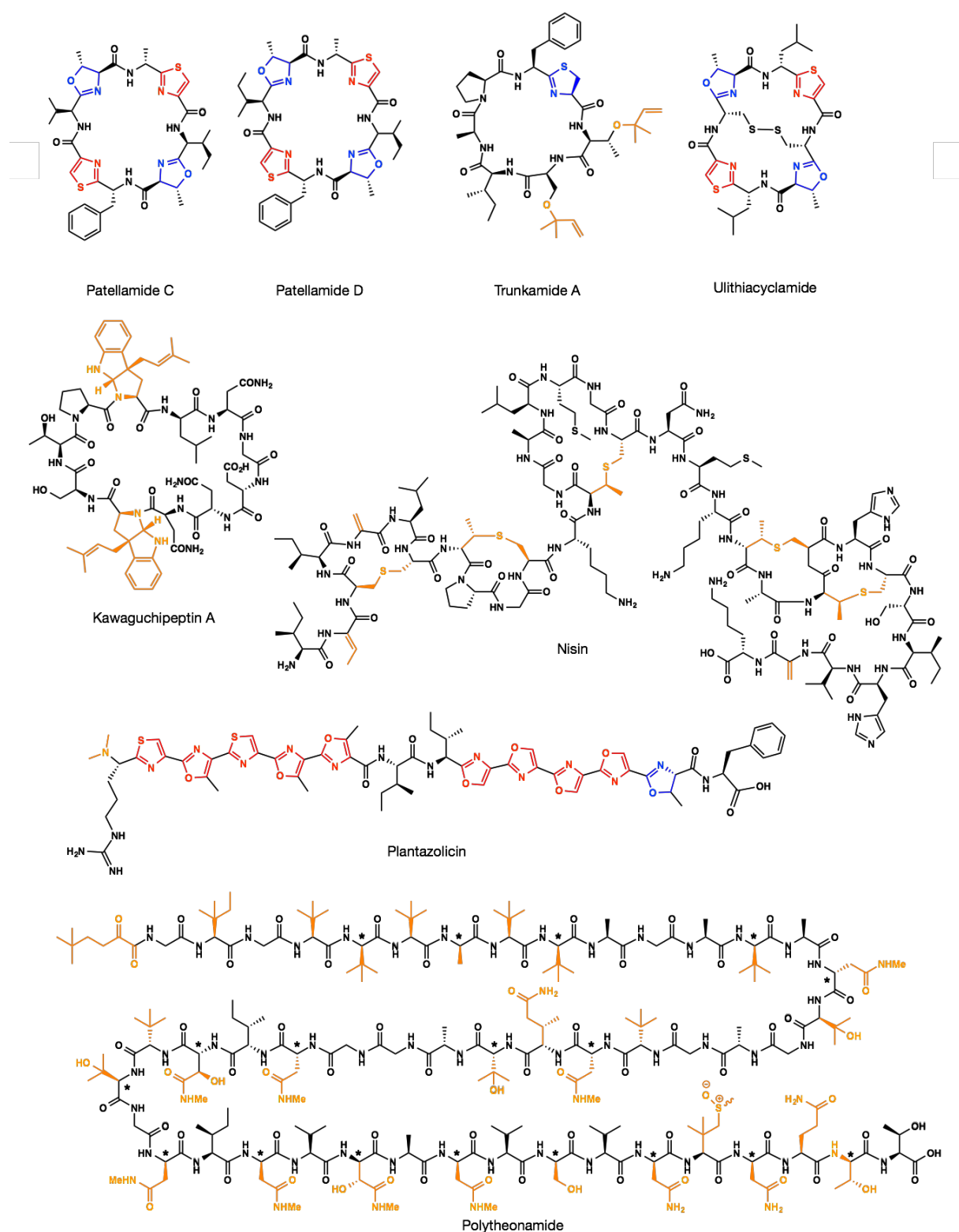
### ***1.3 Chemical synthesis and NRPS-mediated biosynthesis of non-standard peptides***

Both chemical synthesis and enzymatic synthesis can be employed for the synthesis of non-standard peptides. By organic synthesis, various non-standard structures can be introduced, and structures can be controlled at atomic level. However, the diversity of peptide library is at most  $10^8$  even with combinatorial methods.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, biosynthetic machinery can also be employed for the synthesis of non-standard peptides. A number of peptidic natural products including cyclosporin A are biosynthesized by non-ribosomal peptide synthetases (NRPS) (**Figure 1.1**). In general, peptidic natural products biosynthesized by NRPS exhibit huge structural diversity and several peptides are clinically used.<sup>39</sup> For example, cyclosporin A contains a number of non-standard structures, and being an orally available immunosuppressant. *Although in vitro* reconstitution and engineering of NRPS have been investigated and made success in the synthesis of natural product analogs<sup>40,41</sup>, the property of NRPS that several huge proteins are responsible for the polymerization of amino acids as well as modification reactions<sup>42</sup> has limited the diversity of natural product analogs synthesized by engineered NRPS and thus application of NRPS in the *de novo* development of bioactive peptides.

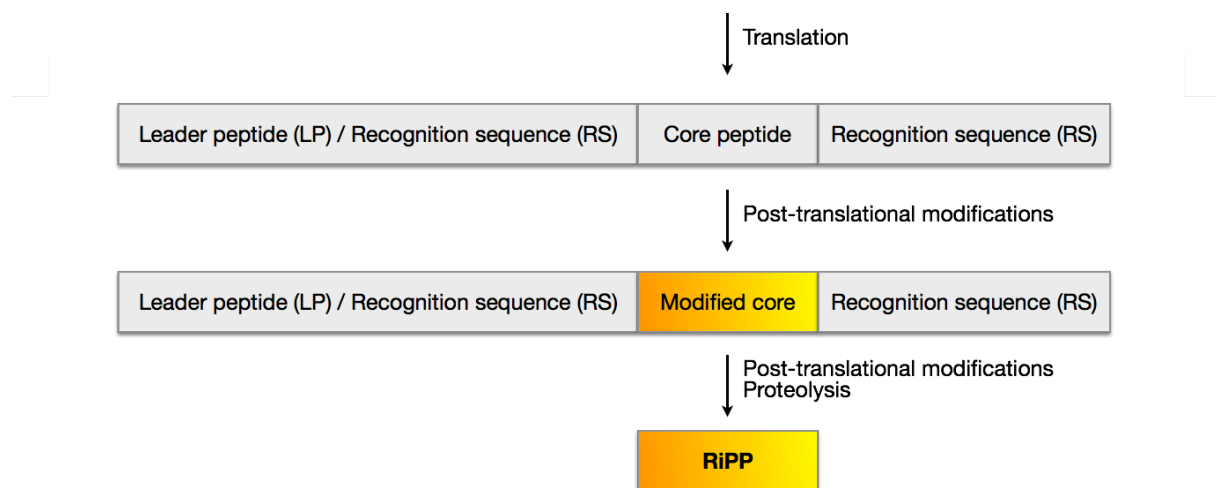
#### ***1.4 Post-ribosomal peptide synthesis (PRPS) for non-standard peptide biosynthesis***

In addition to NRPS-mediated biosynthesis, many peptidic natural products are biosynthesized via ribosomal pathway. Such peptidic natural products with ribosomal origin are called “ribosomally synthesized and post-translationally modified peptides (RiPPs)” and examples are shown in **Figure 1.3**. The biosynthetic pathways of RiPPs are called “post-ribosomal peptide synthesis (PRPS)”,<sup>43</sup> and PRPS are found in all the three domains of life, comprising universal biosynthetic pathway of peptidic natural products.<sup>43</sup>

Biosynthesis of RiPPs by PRPS literally initiates with ribosomal expression, or translation of a longer precursor peptide (**Figure 1.4**). Precursor peptides typically composed of 20–110 amino acid residues, and a region, which is processed to yield final natural product is named “core peptide”. In some cases, multiple core peptide regions are encoded in a single precursor peptide (e.g. patellamides). In most precursor peptides of RiPPs, the core peptide is flanked by a N-terminal “leader peptide”, which is usually important for the post-translational modifications and export.<sup>44</sup> In the case of biosynthetic pathway of bottromycins, the leader peptide is not at N-terminus but at C-terminus and thus called “follower peptide”. In addition, the core peptide is followed by a C-terminal “recognition sequence” in some cases, which is recognized by a protease or macrocyclase (e.g. patellamides). In the presence of the leader peptide and several other regions, core peptides are extensively modified by a series of post-translational modifications, which is the basis of the structural diversity of RiPPs.



**Figure 1.3** Examples of ribosomally synthesized and post-translationally modified peptides (RiPPs). Azolines, azoles and other non-standard structures are shown in blue, red and orange, respectively. In the structure of polytheonamide, amino acid residues with D-configuration are labeled with asterisk (\*).



**Figure 1.4** Schematic illustration of post-ribosomal peptide synthesis (PRPS): Biosynthetic pathway of ribosomally synthesized and post-translationally modified peptides (RiPPs).

## ***1.5 Structural diversity in ribosomally synthesized and post-translationally modified peptides (RiPPs)***

### ***1.5.1 Modifications at side chain of precursor peptides***

Structures found in ribosomally synthesized and post-translationally modified peptides (RiPPs) are diverse,<sup>45</sup> and they can be divided into modification of (i) side chains, (ii) main chains, and (iii) side chains and main chains. In the following text, structural diversity of post-translational modifications is reviewed.

#### ***Dehydration***

One prevalent modification found in RiPPs is dehydration of Ser and Thr residues resulting in dehydroalanine (Dha) and dehydrobutyrine (Dhb), respectively. Incorporation of Dha and Dhb can contribute to structural rigidity and protease resistance of peptides.<sup>46</sup> In addition, Dha and Dhb endow peptides with reactivity against sulfhydryl and amine groups. For example, natural product nisin<sup>47</sup> (**Figure 1.3**), which exhibit antibacterial activity has Dha and Dhb residues, suggested to be michael acceptor reactive to membrane sulfhydryl groups of bacteria.<sup>48</sup>

Dha residues can also react with intramolecular sulfhydryl groups. Michael addition between Dha residues and cysteine residues form lanthionine, which is defined as two alanine residues bridged by thioether bond. (In the case of Dhb, intramolecular Michael addition provide methyl lanthionine. Both of the thioether bridge can be seen in the structure on nisin shown in **Figure 1.3**) Another derivatization of dehydro amino acids is formal [4 + 2] cycloaddition, which is involved in biosynthesis of pyridine ring formation of thiopeptides. For example, that type of cycloaddition was biochemically demonstrated with TcIM<sup>49</sup>. Additionally, Michael addition of dehydro amino acid residues and oxidatively decarboxylated C-terminal cysteine residues forms similar thioether bridge with aminovinyl cysteine. Examples can be seen in epidermin<sup>50</sup> and cypemycin<sup>51, 52</sup>. Another variation is lysinoalanine, which is derived from dehydro amino acid residues and lysine residues exemplified by duramycin<sup>53</sup>.

## Epimerization

Another example of side chain modification is epimerization. For example, epimerization takes place in the biosynthesis of polytheonamides (**Figure 1.3**).<sup>54, 55</sup> Although epimerization itself does not provide peptides with new functional group, stereochemical conversion can contribute to protease resistance of peptides.<sup>56</sup> (Polytheonamides contain D-amino acids with non-proteinogenic side chains as well as D-Ala.)

## O-Prenylation

Trunkamide (**Figure 1.3**) is a macrocyclic peptidic natural product isolated from *Lissoclinum patella*<sup>57, 58</sup> and later, production by symbiotic *Prochloron* spp. was revealed<sup>59</sup>. Along with macrocyclic structure and a backbone thiazoline, O-prenylation of Ser and Thr residues can be found as non-standard structures. Also, O-prenylation on Tyr residue can be seen in prenylagaramides<sup>60</sup> and a number of prenylation are reported in small cyclic peptides produced by cyanobacteria, or cyanobactins.<sup>61</sup> These O-prenylation is catalyzed by prenylases, exemplified by LynF enzyme.<sup>62</sup> LynF prenylate Ser/Thr/Tyr residues in macrocyclic peptides, unlike typical post-translational modification enzymes requiring N-terminal leader peptides.

Although C-prenylation on Tyr residue was also reported as seen in aestuaramides,<sup>63</sup> C-prenylation was attributed to spontaneous Claisen rearrangement.<sup>62</sup> Another example of C-prenylation is found on Trp residue, which is discussed in the main-chain modification part.

## Disulfide formation

In general, disulfide formation between intramolecular cysteine residues can spontaneously proceed. Actually, for biosynthetic gene cluster of ulithiacyclamide<sup>59, 64</sup> (**Figure 1.3**), which is a macrocyclic peptidic natural product with disulfide bond linkage as well as backbone heterocycles, no oxidase has been reported to be involved in the disulfide formation. However, in some cases, enzymatic oxidation would be involved in biosynthesis of disulfide linkage. For example, some conotoxins are very difficult to synthesize chemically,<sup>65</sup> which suggests assistance by some mechanisms exist to correctly and efficiently fold the precursor peptide into the mature product



*in vivo*. This assumption is consistent with the report that in the case of thermophilin 9, the disruption of disulfide oxidase altered inhibitory spectrum of the producing strain<sup>66</sup> and that protein disulfide isomerases (PDIs) was major soluble proteins in *Conus* venom duct extracts<sup>67</sup>. This enzymatic assistance would be, at least in some cases, necessary for the biosynthesis of conotoxins. It would be worth noting, however, that for bioactivities of conotoxins, constrained structures rather than disulfide bonds themselves would be important based on the report that the replacement of disulfide forming cysteines by allyl glycines retained the bioactivity of leucocin, which is attributable to hydrophobic intermolecular interactions of the diallyl side chains.<sup>68</sup>

### ***1.5.2 Modifications at main chain of precursor peptides***

Probably, most prevalent main-chain modification is cleavage of leader peptide since almost all precursor peptides of RiPPs have leader peptides. It would be necessary for RiPPs producers to append leader peptides to precursor peptides in order to protect peptides/proteins from unnecessary modifications. And also in some cases, leader peptides would provide the producers with immunity since some RiPPs are inactive before the cleavage of the N-terminal leader peptides.<sup>44</sup> N to C macrocyclization is also common main-chain modification in RiPPs biosynthesis. A number of bioactive peptides have macrocyclic structures.<sup>43</sup>

### ***C-prenylation***

C-prenylation of tryptophan residue is also example of main chain modification. (*O*-prenylation is mentioned above.) Kawaguchi-peptins are macrocyclic peptidic natural products, which are isolated from *Microcystis aeruginosa* NIES-88.<sup>69, 70</sup> Kawaguchi-peptin A contains two prenylated tryptophan residues as well as a D-leucine residue<sup>69</sup> unlike kawaguchi-peptin B, which is composed of proteinogenic amino acid residues (**Figure 1.3**).<sup>70</sup> A post-translational modification enzyme, KgpF catalyzes the prenylation at  $\gamma$ -position resulting in a tricyclic structure containing newly introduced pyrrolidine ring and KgpF can modify linear peptides and macrocyclic peptides<sup>71</sup> as well as Fmoc-Trp-OH<sup>72</sup>. C-prenylation of tryptophan residue can also be seen in ComX phormone.<sup>73-75</sup> C-prenylation in ComX phormone catalyzed by ComQ and in Kawaguchi-peptin A

catalyzed by KgpF share the same scaffold with opposite stereochemistry.<sup>72</sup>

### ***Backbone heterocycles such as azolines and azoles***

Peptidic backbone heterocycles would rigidify global structure of the peptides and would endow peptides with protease resistance. Moreover, there are diverse interactions known between heterocycle-containing peptidic natural products and proteins/nucleic acids/metal ions.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, patellamide C (**Figure 1.3**), one of the macrocyclic peptidic natural products containing backbone heterocycles exhibited membrane permeability even higher than cyclosporin A, which is a clinically used and orally available peptidic natural product, by the parallel artificial membrane permeability assay (PAMPA).<sup>77</sup> PAMPA is a cell-free membrane permeability assay, which has been widely used for small molecules<sup>78</sup> and peptides<sup>15</sup> in order to evaluate passive membrane diffusion behavior of the compounds. The high membrane permeability should be attributed to backbone heterocycles as well as macrocyclic structure of patellamide C, demonstrating potential advantage of backbone heterocycles in the development of bioactive peptides.

The heterocyclic structures such as azolines and azoles are post-translationally introduced into peptidic backbone by cyclodehydratases and dehydrogenases, respectively. The cyclodehydratases introduce thiazoline, oxazoline, and methyloxazoline from Cys, Ser and Thr, respectively. The cyclodehydratases are YcaO domain-containing proteins and the cyclodehydration is dependent on ATP and magnesium ion<sup>79</sup> with two proposed intermediates for the mechanism of backbone amide activation, phosphorylated hemiorthoamide<sup>80, 81</sup>.

The resulting azolines sometimes further derivatized by flavin mononucleotide (FMN)-dependent dehydrogenase to form thiazole, oxazole, and methyloxazole from thiazoline, oxazoline and methyloxazoline, respectively.<sup>79</sup> In some cases these heterocycle-related post-translational modification enzymes cooperatively catalyze the reaction exemplified by the case of microcin B17 biosynthesis, where three proteins, the cyclodehydratase McbB, oxidase McbC, and putative docking protein McbD were required for the oxidation as well as cyclodehydration.<sup>82</sup>

### 1.6 Biosynthetic pathway of patellamides, as an example of PRPS-mediated biosynthesis

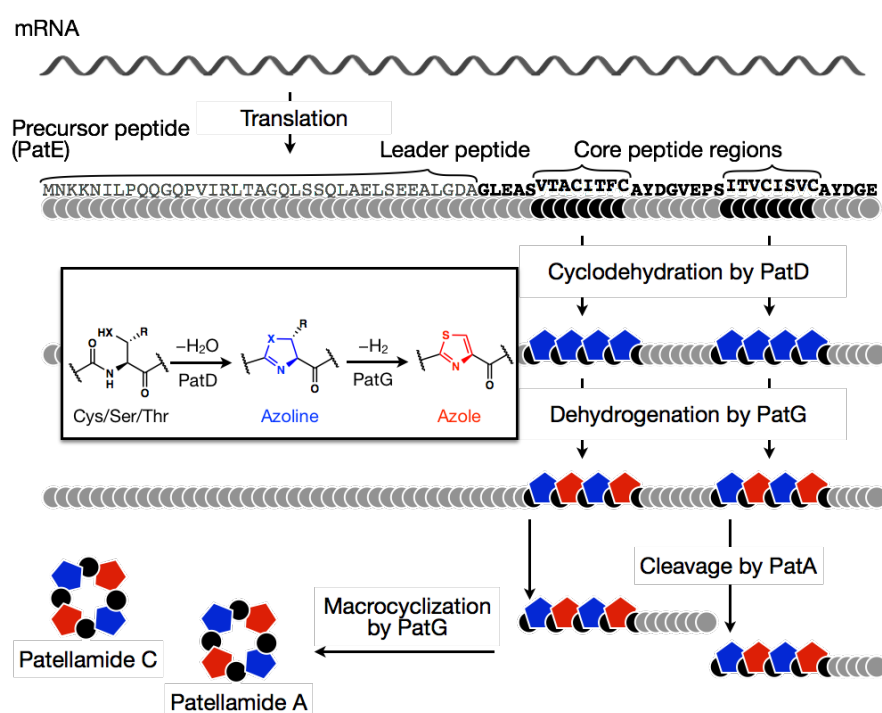
From the technical point of view, the major advantage of the synthesis of non-standard peptides in a post-translational manner would be its compatibility with high-throughput screening system such as mRNA display system as long as post-translational modification enzymes have enough wide substrate scope, or promiscuity. In this context, we focused on post-translational introduction of backbone heterocycles because of (i) the abovementioned properties of heterocycles, which would be advantageous for the development of bioactive peptides and (ii) difficulties in direct incorporation of backbone heterocycles into translated peptides.

Based on such assumption, we have previously focused on the biosynthetic pathway of patellamides. Patellamides were isolated from *Lissoclinum patella*.<sup>83</sup> and later structures were revised<sup>84-87</sup>. They were revealed to be RiPPs, produced by *Prochloron spp.*, which is cyanobacterial symbionts.<sup>88</sup> As for patellamide D, anti-multi drug resistance activity was reported.<sup>89</sup> In addition, patellamide C had high membrane permeability.<sup>15</sup>

Biosynthetic genes of patellamides are composed of patA–patG<sup>88</sup>, of which patA, patD, patE, and patG were denoted as essential<sup>90</sup> (with a citation<sup>88</sup>). patE encodes precursor peptide, which is composed of N-terminal leader peptide (LP), core peptides (CP) flanked by upstream and downstream recognition sequences (uRS and dRS), aligned as LP-uRS-CP-dRS/uRS-CP-dRS, where the sequences of two CPs are not exactly the same, corresponding to the two different patellamides as final products (**Figure 1.5**).

PatA is a protease, which cleaves amide bonds at the N-terminal side of the core peptides (CPs) with recognition sequences G(L/V)E(A/P)S. Protease domain of PatA was fully active similar to the full-length PatA and more stable than the full-length PatA.<sup>91</sup>

PatD is a YcaO domain-containing cyclodehydratase,<sup>79</sup> which modify Cys, Thr and Ser residues into thiazoline, oxazoline and methyloxazoline respectively. The X-ray crystal structure of PatD itself has not been reported, but structure of TruD, a homolog of PatD was reported.<sup>81</sup> TruD activates amide bond to be modified by adenylation using ATP.<sup>81</sup> In addition, ATP binding residues conserved among YcaO domains were revealed on the basis of X-ray crystal structure and biochemical studies,<sup>92</sup> but catalytic mechanism of the cyclodehydration is still elusive.



**Figure 1.5** Biosynthetic pathway of patellamides.

PatG is composed of three domains, an N-terminal dehydrogenase domain, a central domain with unknown function, and a C-terminal protease (macro cyclization) domain. The macrocyclization reaction between N-terminal amine and C-terminal residues, which have downstream sequences, AYDG(E/V) was reconstituted *in vitro* and the synthesis of a wide variety of macrocyclic peptides was demonstrated.<sup>93,94</sup> X-ray crystal structure of the macrocyclase domain of PatG was solved and structural basis for the macrocyclization was proposed.<sup>95</sup>

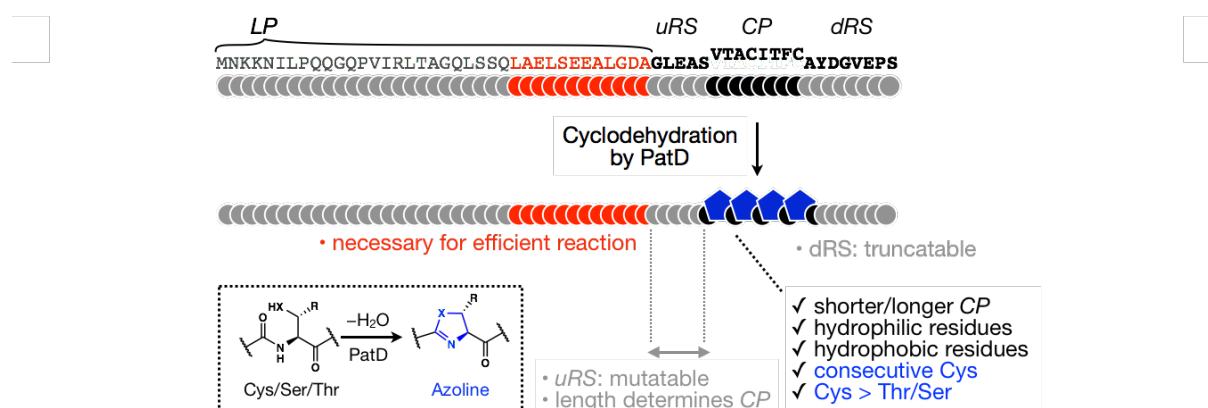
PatF was predicted as a prenylase and required for the production of patellamides,<sup>90</sup> But there is no prenyl group in known patellamides, and thus mysterious protein. The lack of prenyl group in patellamides was rationalized by mutations in catalytic residues in PatF.<sup>96</sup> Involvement of PatF as well as PatB and C in patellamide biosynthesis is unclear at this point, because to the best of my knowledge, reconstitution or heterologous expression of total biosynthetic pathway of patellamides has not been clearly demonstrated.

Collectively, proposed biosynthetic pathway is depicted in **Figure 1.5**. First, the precursor peptide PatE is ribosomally expressed. In the presence of N-terminal leader peptide, the cyclodehydratase PatD and the dehydrogenase domain of PatG install thiazole and (methyl)oxazoline. PatA liberate  $\alpha$ -amino group at the N-terminal end of the core peptides, which is subsequently macrocyclized by the macrocyclase domain of PatG. Note that the cognate substrate of PatG oxidase is still elusive and oxidation of thiazolines into thiazoles after macrocyclization is also possible.

### ***1.7 FIT–PatD system; integration of a customized cell-free translation system and a post-translational cyclodehydratase PatD***

\*This section is based on the publication from our laboratory; “One-pot synthesis of azoline-containing peptides in a cell-free translation system integrated with a posttranslational cyclodehydratase”, Yuki Goto, Yumi Ito, Yasuharu Kato, Shotaro Tsunoda, Hiroaki Suga, *Chem. Biol.*, **2014**, 21, 766-774.

We have previously devised an *in vitro* biosynthetic system for azoline-containing peptides<sup>97</sup> by integrating the post-translational cyclodehydratase PatD, which is involved in patellamide biosynthesis<sup>88</sup> and a reconstituted cell-free translation system<sup>98</sup>. The *in vitro* biosynthetic system enabled one-pot synthesis of a wide variety of azoline-containing peptides in a template DNA dependent manner. In addition, the *in vitro* biosynthetic system enabled extensive mutagenesis studies, unveiling recognition determinants by which modification reaction is governed and unexpectedly high substrate tolerance of the cyclodehydratase PatD (**Figure 1.6**). In brief, (i) dRS can be truncated. (ii) uRS tolerates mutations and the length from leader peptide dictates core peptide region. (iii) The C-terminal region of the leader peptide (26L–37A) is necessary for the efficient cyclodehydration and peptides bearing that region at N-terminus can be efficiently modified by PatD. (iv) Precursor peptides without leader peptides were modified to some extent in the presence of a separate leader peptide. This “*in trans* modification” suggested “PatD-activation” mechanism by the leader peptide. In addition, (a) PatD can heterocyclize all of the Cys/Thr/Ser residues, with higher modification efficiency in this order. (b) PatD can accept various artificial core peptide sequences with (b-1) various amino acid length, (b-2) various amino acid compositions including hydrophilic residues and (b-3) consecutive cysteine residues to be modified, which are all rare in naturally-occurring core peptide sequences. Collectively, unprecedented substrate tolerance of post-translational cyclodehydratase PatD was demonstrated and these observations were the basis of the present studies, which are described in the following chapters.



**Figure 1.6** Summary of the mutagenesis experiments in our previous study, which is related to the experimental design in the present thesis.

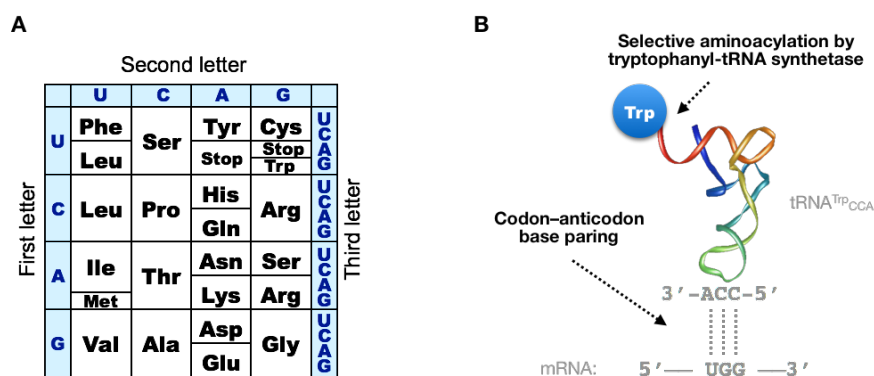
## **1.8 Technological backgrounds**

### **1.8.1 Translation reaction as peptide synthetic method and its molecular mechanism**

Translation is a biosynthetic reaction of proteins, in which ribosome<sup>99</sup> polymerize amino acids in a mRNA template dependent manner. Since peptide synthesis by translation reaction proceeds rapidly (12–22 amino acids/sec)<sup>100, 101</sup> and precisely (error rate  $\sim 1/1000$ )<sup>102</sup>, translation is a powerful tool as peptide synthetic method. Relationship between the sequence of peptides and the sequence of template mRNAs (nucleotides) is governed by codons, sequences of three nucleotides.<sup>103</sup> For example, the codon UUU is corresponding to phenylalanine, and thus poly U sequence direct the synthesis of poly phenylalanine sequence.<sup>104</sup> In principle there are 64 kinds of codons ( $= 4^3$ ), and the relationship between codons and amino acids are summarized as the genetic code.<sup>105</sup>

As above mentioned, relationship between codons and amino acids are strictly controlled. In molecular level, this control can be attributed to the adapter molecule, tRNA, and the relationship can be rationalized from two points (**Figure 1.7**), (i) paring between codons and tRNAs and (ii) paring between tRNAs and amino acids. (i) First, every tRNA has the sequence called anticodon, which is a complementary sequence to the corresponding codon, and thus base paring between codons and anticodons can link codons and tRNAs properly. (ii) Aminoacylation reactions of amino acids on tRNAs are catalyzed by aminoacyl tRNA synthetases (ARSs), which selectively catalyze the reaction using corresponding tRNAs and amino acids. For example, Trptophanyl aminoacyl tRNA synthetase (TrpRS) catalyze aminoacylation of tRNA<sup>Trp</sup><sub>CCA</sub> by tryptophan selectively, and the substrate specificities of ARSs can link tRNAs and amino acids properly. Note that tRNA<sup>Trp</sup><sub>CCA</sub> denotes that the tRNA is corresponding to tryptophan and its anticodon sequence is 5'-CCA-3', which is complementary to tryptophan codon 5'-UGG-3'.





**Figure 1.7** The genetic code and molecular mechanism of sequence dependency of translation.

### 1.8.2 Ribosomal synthesis of non-standard peptides by mis-acylated tRNAs

The mechanism for fidelity control in translation reaction is consistent with the fact that ribosome must tolerate 20 kinds of proteinogenic amino acids as the building blocks for peptide synthesis. Although translation system, as a whole, can only synthesize canonical peptides, the property that ribosome does not recognize side chains of amino acids charged onto tRNAs is the basis of the engineering of translation system discussed in the following text.

Based on the background, synthetic methods of misacylated tRNA with non-proteinogenic amino acids have been investigated. Early examples are, albeit not non-proteinogenic, the replacement of cysteine by alanine upon the Raney-nickel mediated desulfurization on Cys-tRNA<sup>Cys</sup>,<sup>106</sup> being an early indication of the successful incorporation of a wide variety of non-proteinogenic amino acids by the “misacylation strategy“. For the synthetic methods of misacylated tRNAs, semi-enzymatic synthesis, in which a chemically synthesized aminoacyl-dinucleotide and tRNA body are ligated by T4 RNA ligase<sup>107, 108</sup> and artificially evolved aminoacyl tRNA synthetase<sup>109</sup> have been mainly used, but these methods limit the variety of non-proteinogenic amino acids, which may be tested for the ribosomal incorporation and subsequent biological or chemical events.

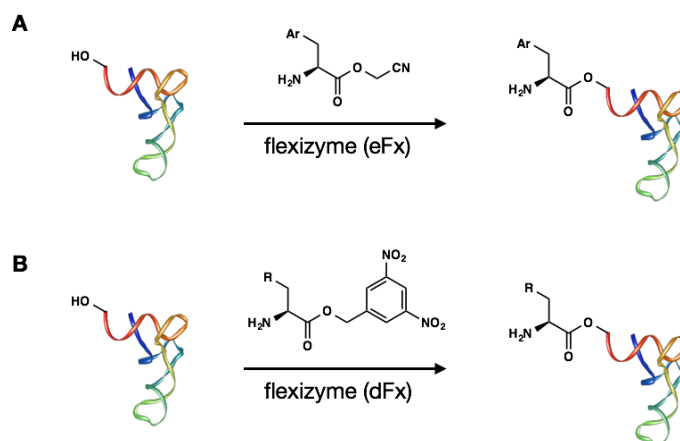
Promiscuity of the aminoacyl tRNA synthetases, though they were basically specific enzymes, can also be utilized for the introduction on non-proteinogenic amino acids.<sup>110</sup> ARS can

aminoacylate tRNA with non-proteinogenic amino acids structurally-relevant to the original proteinogenic amino acid. Although this method requires only a cell free translation system depleted with a specific amino acid and addition of the corresponding non-proteinogenic amino acid, the major limitation is the structural variety of non-proteinogenic amino acids are limited to the original proteinogenic amino acid-like structures. In addition, since ARS recognize tRNA species, it is hard to “reassign” a proteinogenic amino acid into codons different from the original codon. For example, assignment of cysteine at tryptophan codon (UGG), which is the key technological manipulation in the chapter 2, would be difficult with such approaches.

### ***1.8.3 Potential of flexizymes for preparations of mis-acylated tRNAs.***

Flexizymes, an artificially evolved ribozyme, which have previously developed in our laboratory<sup>111, 112</sup>, enabled facile aminoacylation of tRNAs with non-proteinogenic amino acids (**Figure 1.8**). Several flexizymes have been developed, which catalyze aminoacylation of tRNA bearing 3' CCA end by aminoacyl substrates activated with leaving groups with different substrate selectivity for each flexizyme. The flexizyme, eFx recognize aromatic moieties in side chain of amino acid derivatives activated with cyanomethyl ester, whereas the flexizyme dFx recognize aromatic dinitrobenzyl group in the leaving group itself. Combined with other variants, virtually any amino acids can be acylated onto tRNAs.

The versatility of the flexizyme-mediated aminoacylation reaction enabled the utilization of a wide variety of non-proteinogenic amino acids, including ones with reactive moieties for post-translational chemical modification reactions. Such non-proteinogenic amino acids include D-amino acids<sup>113-115</sup>,  $\beta$ -aminoacids<sup>116</sup>, *N*-methyl/*N*-substituted amino acids<sup>117, 118</sup> and  $\alpha$ -hydroxy acids<sup>119, 120</sup>, and amino acids containing chloroacetyl group<sup>121, 122</sup>, which is reactive with intramolecular thiol, azido-/alkyne- containing amino acids<sup>123</sup>, and 5-hydroxy tryptophan/benzyl amine-containing amino acids<sup>124</sup>.



**Figure 1.8** Aminoacylation of tRNAs by activated amino acids catalyzed by flexizymes.

#### 1.8.4 Orthogonal tRNA for customized cell-free translation of non-standard peptides

Another important aspect in the customized translation system is orthogonality of tRNAs against aminoacyl tRNA synthetases since undesired aminoacylation by one of the 20 aminoacyl tRNA synthetases of liberated tRNAs originally charged with non-proteinogenic amino acids would cause contamination at the specific codon to be reprogrammed. To circumvent such undesired aminoacylation, *in vitro* transcribed tRNA<sup>AsnE2</sup>, which was previously developed in our laboratory<sup>119</sup> was utilized for the flexizyme-mediated aminoacylation reactions in the present study.



## **Chapter 2 Development of *in vitro* synthetic method of azole-containing peptides (abridged)**

Parts of this chapter were published in: “Attempts at in Vitro Reconstitution of a Post-translational Dehydrogenase toward Synthesis of Azole-containing Peptides”, Yasuharu Kato, Yuki Goto, Hiroaki Suga, *Peptide Science* 2014, **2015**, 137-138. and “Laser-induced oxidation of a peptide-embedded thiazoline by an assistance of adjacent thiazoline”, Yasuharu Kato, Yuki Goto, Hiroaki Suga, *Peptide Science* 2015, **2016**, 27-28

*(For the reasons of patent applications and future publications, details are closed in the following parts.)*

### **Chapter 3 Development of *in vitro* synthetic method of $\Psi[\text{CH}_2\text{NH}]$ -containing peptides (abridged)**

*(For the reasons of patent applications and future publications, details are closed in the following parts.)*

## Chapter 4 General conclusion (abridged)

In conclusion, I have developed novel methods involving the posttranslational enzymatic cyclodehydration by PatD and chemical modifications such as oxidation and reduction on *in vitro* expressed peptides to synthesize backbone-modified peptides inspired by naturally-occurring structural diversity in peptidic natural products, which were reviewed in chapter 1.

In chapter 2 and chapter 3, the development of *in vitro* synthetic method of azole-containing peptides and azole-containing peptides are described, respectively. *(For the reasons of patent applications and future publications, details are closed in the following parts.)*

In conclusion, in this research I have developed novel methods involving the post-translational enzymatic cyclodehydration by PatD and chemical modifications on ribosomally synthesized peptides to yield peptides with various backbone modifications. The post-translational modification method developed here would provide unique structural scaffolds into peptides, which possibly leads to the development of novel bioactive peptides.

# List of accomplishments

## 【Publications】

1. “Laser-induced oxidation of a peptide-embedded thiazoline by an assistance of adjacent thiazoline”, Yasuharu Kato, Yuki Goto, Hiroaki Suga, *Peptide Science* 2015, **2016**, 27-28
2. “One-pot synthesis of azoline-containing peptides in a cell-free translation system integrated with a posttranslational cyclodehydratase”, Yuki Goto, Yumi Ito, Yasuharu Kato, Shotaro Tsunoda, Hiroaki Suga, *Chem. Biol.*, **2014**, 21, 766-774.
3. “Attempts at *in Vitro* Reconstitution of a Post-translational Dehydrogenase toward Synthesis of Azole-containing Peptides.”, Yasuharu Kato, Yuki Goto, Hiroaki Suga, *Peptide Science* 2014, **2015**, 137-138

## 【Oral presentations】

4. “翻訳後修飾による複素環含有ペプチドの *in vitro* 生合成法の開発”, 加藤保治, 後藤佑樹, 菅裕明, サントリー生物有機科学研究所報告会, 大阪, 2015 年 3 月
5. “Development of post-translational modification reactions toward *in vitro* synthesis of peptides with heterocyclic backbones”, Yasuharu Kato, Yuki Goto, Hiroaki Suga, 日本化学会第 95 春季年会, 千葉, 2015 年 3 月
6. “Oxidation of azolines assisted by an adjacent azoline moiety toward *in vitro* synthesis of azole-containing peptides”, Yasuharu Kato, Yuki Goto, Hiroaki Suga, 第 52 回ペプチド討論会, 平塚, 2015 年 11 月
7. “*In vitro* biosynthesis of backbone-modified peptides by post-translational modification reactions”, Yasuharu Kato, Yuki Goto, Hiroaki Suga, 日本化学会第 96 春季年会, 京都, 2016 年 3 月, (年会ハイライト講演)
8. “アズリン含有ペプチドの *in vitro* 合成法の確立とその応用”, 加藤保治, 伊藤悠美、角田翔太郎、後藤 佑樹, 菅裕明, 日本薬学会第 136 年会, 横浜, 2016 年 3 月, (大学院生シンポジウム招待講演)
9. “翻訳後修飾による主鎖骨格修飾ペプチド合成法の開発”, 加藤保治, 後藤佑樹, 菅裕明, 第 10 回バイオ関連化学シンポジウム, 金沢, 2016 年 9 月
10. “Combination of enzymatic and chemical post-translational modifications for synthesis of various backbone-modified peptides”, Yasuharu Kato, Yuki Goto, Hiroaki Suga, 日本化学会第 97 春季年会, 横浜, 2017 年 3 月
11. “翻訳後修飾による主鎖修飾ペプチド合成法の開発とその応用”, 加藤保治, 後藤佑樹, 菅裕明, 日本薬学会第 137 年会, 仙台, 2016 年 3 月, (大学院生シンポジウム招待講演)



### 【Poster presentations】

12. “翻訳後修飾によるアゾール含有ペプチド合成法の開発”, 加藤保治, 後藤佑樹, 菅裕明, 第 14 回東京大学生命科学シンポジウム, 東京, 2014 年 4 月
13. “主鎖骨格にアゾールを有するペプチドの翻訳合成法の開発” 加藤保治, 後藤佑樹, 菅裕明, 日本ケミカルバイオロジー学会第 9 回年会, 大阪, 2014 年 6 月
14. “翻訳後修飾によるアゾール含有ペプチド人工生合成法の開発”, 加藤保治, 後藤佑樹, 菅裕明, 新規素材探索研究会第 13 回セミナー, 横浜, 2014 年 6 月
15. “翻訳後修飾によるアゾール含有ペプチド合成法の開発”, 加藤保治, 後藤佑樹, 菅裕明, 第 2 回バイオ関連化学シンポジウム若手フォーラム, 岡山, 2014 年 9 月
16. “翻訳後修飾によるアゾール含有ペプチド合成法の開発”, 加藤保治, 後藤佑樹, 菅裕明, 第 8 回バイオ関連化学シンポジウム, 岡山, 2014 年 9 月
17. “Artificial post-translational modifications toward synthesis of azole-containing peptides”, 加藤保治, 後藤佑樹, 菅裕明, 第 51 回ペプチド討論会, 徳島, 2014 年 10 月
18. “Development of post-translational modification reactions for the synthesis of  $\Psi(\text{CH}_2\text{NH})$ -containing peptides”, Yasuharu Kato, Yuki Goto, Hiroaki Suga, The 21st ZESTY Network Seminar, 東京, 2015 年 7 月
19. “ヘテロ環骨格含有ペプチドの合成にむけた新規翻訳後修飾反応の開発”, 加藤保治, 後藤佑樹, 菅裕明, 日本化学会第 95 春季年会アドバンスト・テクノロジー・プログラム, 千葉, 2015 年 3 月
20. “In vitro synthesis of azoline-containing peptides and its applications for various backbone-modified peptides”, Yasuharu Kato, Yuki Goto, Hiroaki Suga, The 15th Tateshina Conference on organic Chemistry, 長野, 2015 年 11 月
21. Development of post-translational modification reactions for the synthesis of peptides with  $\Psi(\text{CH}_2\text{NH})$  structures, Yasuharu Kato, Yuki Goto, Hiroaki Suga, The 2015 International Chemical Congress of Pacific Basin Societies (Pacficchem 2015), Hawaii, 2015 年 12 月
22. “Development of post-translational modifications toward novel bioactive peptides”, Yasuharu Kato, Yuki Goto, Hiroaki Suga, 日本化学会第 96 春季年会アドバンスト・テクノロジー・プログラム, 京都, 2016 年 3 月
23. “In vitro synthesis of various backbone-modified peptides by post-translational modification reactions”, Yasuharu Kato, Yuki Goto, Hiroaki Suga, 日本化学会第 97 春季年会アドバンスト・テクノロジー・プログラム, 横浜, 2017 年 3 月

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