

# JSPS Quarterly

Japan Society for the Promotion of Science



## FEATURE: First Meeting of Asian Heads of Research Councils

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## First Meeting Held of Asian Heads of Research Councils

On 27-30 November, an inaugural meeting of the Asian Heads of Research Councils, or ASIAHORCs for short, was held at The Westin Miyako Hotel in Kyoto. It brought together for the first time the heads and top representatives of Asia's major science-promotion agencies under one roof.

### Background

ASIAHORCs meetings are held as a core component of the "Strategic Program for Building an Asian Science and Technology Community," which JSPS has been commissioned to implement under the Special Coordination Funds for Promoting Science and Technology operated by Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). Launched in FY 2006, this program is aimed at establishing strategic partnerships between Japan and the countries of Asia amidst rapidly advancing S&T development in the region.

### First ASIAHORCs Meeting

Participating in the first ASIAHORCs meeting were representatives of science-promotion agencies from eight Asian countries, including the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC), Korea Science and Engineering Foundation (KOSEF), Vice-Chancellors' Council of National Universities in Malaysia (VCC), Department of Science and Technology (DOST) (Philippines), Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A\*STAR) (Singapore), National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT), Vietnamese Academy of Science and Technology (VAST), and JSPS, which hosted the meeting. Observers from the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology (MoRST) (New Zealand), National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA) (Thailand), Ritsumeikan University, and other institutions also attended.

On the 28<sup>th</sup>, an opening ceremony was held. It was addressed by His Imperial Highness Prince Akishino, who spoke of how an uplifting of the spirit is found in scientific pursuit, likening the history of scientific advancement to footprints left by humankind in its quest to

satisfy our eternal yearning for the truth. He said what a wonderful thing it is that Asian nations can collaborate in tackling shared issues through a multilateral relationship of mutual trust and confidence, and how scientific advances made within the Asian community will ultimately accrue to the well-being and happiness of people around the world. Prince Akishino's remarks were followed by a congratulatory message from MEXT vice minister Mr. Masami Zeniya.

A keynote speech, entitled "21<sup>st</sup> Century Science from Asia" was given by Dr. Masatoshi Koshiha, 2002 Nobel Laureate in Physics. He delivered a powerful message on the need for Asian partners to pool both their intellectual and financial resources in building the world's loftiest research facilities so as to forge quantum advances in frontier research within the region and foster excellent young Asian researchers

ASIAHORCs meetings place special focus on strengthening the region's scientific research networks, as intra-regional collaborations on a par with those carried out in Europe and North America have yet to materialize in Asia. It was against this backdrop that JSPS decided to convene ASIAHORCs meetings to build a robust network among a cadre of leading research-funding agencies that together shoulder the impetus for advancing scientific research in the wider Asian region. Toward this end, the meetings offer the "heads of Asian research councils" an ideal venue for exchanging views and deepening mutual understanding.



Prince Akishino with Heads of Asian Research Councils



Dr. Koshiha giving keynote speech

through participation in joint research at them.

Following the keynote address, presentations were given by the heads and

representatives of each agency. Views they expressed and the ensuing discussions worked to deepen mutual understanding among the members along with a shared perception of the need for international collaboration to solve common problems within the region and to cultivate upcoming generations of researchers.



Prof. Ono delivering presentation

The program on the 29<sup>th</sup> started with a workshop featuring presentations by Dr. David Swinbanks, CEO, NPG Nature Asia-Pacific, and Dr. Shin-ichi Kurokawa, High Energy Accelerator Research Organization (KEK). Spurred

on by their messages, the members engaged each other in a spirited exchange of views on the prospects of building a vibrant pan-Asian research network. It was agreed by all to continue holding ASIAHORCs meetings, with JSPS hosting the 2008 meeting and KOSEF the 2009 one. It was also agreed to set up a working group to consider the future composition of ASIAHORCs membership and the details of future collaborative initiatives. It was decided that JSPS would serve as the secretariat for the working group.

After the meeting, the participants visited Kyoto University, where they received a briefing on the university's international exchange activities within Asia from its vice president Dr. Toshio Yokoyama, who is also the director-general of its Organization for the Promotion of International Relations. Then, Prof. Norio Nakatsuji, director of the Institute for Integrated Cell-



Representatives of Asian HORCs

Material Sciences, discussed with the members the latest research results attained on embryonic stem cell research at the Institute, which had been selected for a grant under the MEXT/JSPS program World Premier International Research Center Initiative. On the 30<sup>th</sup>, some of the participants made a visit to the Nara Institute of Science and Technology, where the faculty discussed with them the institute's international exchanges and research projects and led them on a tour of its research facilities.

## Future Vista

With JSPS and KOSEF scheduled to host the next two annual meetings, ASIAHORCs promises to be a solid platform for advancing an ongoing, candid exchange of views on ways

to advance international collaboration based on a discussion of the S&T policy trends, research priorities and societal issues in each country of the Asian community.

JSPS president Prof. Motoyuki Ono chose the city of his alma mater Kyoto University as the venue to host his Asian colleagues in the first ASIAHORCs meeting. Kyoto is not only Japan's oldest and most traditional city, but is also a matrix for fostering highly creative scientists, including Nobel laureates in physics and chemistry. In this sense, it lends itself most fittingly to the Japanese-adopted Chinese philosophy of *onko-chishin*, to derive new knowledge by delving into what is old. This is

precisely what the ASIAHORCs meeting sought to accomplish: To build upon long-established bi- and multilateral milestones of collaboration to germinate new seeds of partnership in building a more holistic Asian S&T community. This Kyoto-endowed attribute combined with the November peak season for the city's famous autumn colors underscored Prof. Ono's decision on where and when to host the inaugural meeting of the Asian Heads of Research Councils.



## Presentation Ceremony Held for 2007 International Prize for Biology

On 19 November, the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual ceremony for awarding the International Prize for Biology was held in the presence of Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan at The Japan Academy, located in Ueno Park, Tokyo. The ceremony was organized by the Committee on the International Prize for Biology, chaired by Dr. Saburo Nagakura, then president of The Japan Academy.

At the ceremony, an opening message was delivered by Dr. Nagakura and a report on the selection process was provided by Dr. Motonori Hoshi, chair

of this year's Selection Committee, after which the prize and an Imperial gift were presented to this year's awardee, Dr. David Swenson Hogness, Munzer Professor of Developmental Biology and Biochemistry, Emeritus, at Stanford University School of Medicine, USA. A message was then delivered by His Majesty, followed by congratulatory remarks from the Prime Minister (read by Mr. Matushige Oono, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary) and from Mr. Kisaburo Tokai, Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). The ceremony concluded with an acceptance address from Dr. Hogness.

At the reception following the ceremony, a congenial atmosphere prevailed with Their Majesties and Dr. Hogness engaging in amicable conversation with each other and with the guests who included MEXT minister Mr. Tokai, embassy representatives and the Prize Committee members.

The International Prize for Biology Commemorative Symposium on Genetics was then held on 21-22 November at the Shiran Kaikan Conference Hall, Kyoto University.

— General Affairs Division



Dr. Hogness receives Prize in presence of Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress

## FoS Symposia Held with Germany, America and France

Frontiers of Science (FoS) Symposia are held by JSPS in cooperation with its partner agencies in participating countries. These symposia lodge 60-80 (30-40 from each side) talented young researchers from Japan and the counterpart country under one roof for a period of three days. Specializing in a wide range of research fields, the participants use this time together to engage in cross-disciplinary discussions on the leading edge of scientific pursuits. Differing from the general sym-

posium format, FoS symposia do not attempt to reach conclusions or compile results; their aim is to further enrich the young researchers' ability to think freely and creatively so as to be better equipped to challenge and expand the frontiers of science. Concurrently, these symposia are meant to develop leaders who possess broad perspectives—transcending minutely defined boundaries among research fields—and who are capable of jelling colleagues across wide spectrums of science into collabo-

rative undertakings. On the Japanese side, the symposia are attended by outstanding young researchers whose achievements have already been recognized by such awards as the JSPS Prize, prizes for science and technology awarded by Japan's Minister of Education and Science, and the IBM Japan Science Prize.

In 2007, the fourth annual Japanese-German Frontiers of Science (JGFoS) Symposium was held on 2-4 November

and the tenth Japanese-American Frontiers of Science (JAFoS) Symposium on 1-3 December. Both were venues at Shonan Village Center in Kanagawa, Japan. On 25-27 January 2008, the second Japanese-French Frontiers of Science (JFFoS) Symposium was held in Roscoff in the north of France.

Selected from among the previous year's participants, members of the planning group for each of these FoS symposia spent a year designing the sessions and chose cutting-edge topics of high interest that overarch a wide span of fields. At the symposia, presentations were given on the attraction and potential of each of these topics, followed by discussions among the participants. They allowed the young researchers to take a step across the lines dividing their various specializations in exploring and elucidating the topics' interdisciplinary possibilities. These discussions proved to be so engrossing as to often carry over into lunch breaks or evening free time.

Many of the participants praised the symposium for having brought them together with researchers from other fields whom they wouldn't ordinarily have a chance to meet and engage in discussion. This, they said, gave them a more holistic view of frontier research, which they can apply to expanding the parameters of their own research activities.

#### Fourth Japanese-German Frontiers of Science (JGFoS) Symposium

The JGFoS symposium series was es-



tablished as part of an agreement to strengthen bilateral scientific exchange, particularly among young researchers, made at a summit held in August 2003 between the Japanese and German heads of state. Launched in 2004, this program is implemented in cooperation with Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (AvH).

#### Tenth Japanese-American Frontiers of Science (JAFoS) Symposium

This symposium series has its origins in an August 1996 discussion between Mr. Hidenao Nakagawa, then-Minister of the Science and Technology Agency of Japan, and Dr. Bruce M. Alberts, then-President of the National Academy of Sciences. JAFoS symposia are carried out in partnership with the National Academy of Sciences. This year's marked the tenth anniversary of



the FoS collaborative program. Its framework provides the basis for JSPS's overall Frontiers of Science Program.

#### Second Japanese-French Frontiers of Science (JFFoS) Symposium

The JFFoS program was established based on an agreement "to create a framework conducive to the development of exchanges" between the Japanese and French heads of state at their summit in March 2005. Celebrating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Franco-Japanese exchange, this year's symposium was carried out in cooperation with the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, French Ministry of Higher Education and Research, and Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS).



For list of JGFoS presentations, see: [http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-jgfos/2007\\_01.html](http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-jgfos/2007_01.html)

For list of JAFoS presentations, see: [http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-jafos/2007\\_01.html](http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-jafos/2007_01.html)

For list of JFFoS presentations, see: [http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-jffos/2007\\_01.html](http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-jffos/2007_01.html)

— Research Cooperation Division II

## Fifth A-HORCs Meeting Held in China

On 5-8 November, the fifth meeting of the Heads of Research Councils in Asia (A-HORCs) was held in Sanya, China. Convened each year, these meetings bring together heads of major research funding agencies—namely, the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC), Korea Science and Engineering Foundation (KOSEF) and JSPS—in China, Korea and Japan in an exchange of views on issues related to their countries' respective science and

technology policies with an ultimate objective of strengthening trilateral scientific collaboration. This year's meeting was attended by JSPS president Prof. Motoyuki Ono, NSFC vice president Prof. Jie Wang, KOSEF chairman & CEO Dr. Seok-Sik Choi, and their delegations.

In the meeting's first session, presentations were given by the representatives on their country's system of



Front row: Dr. Choi, Prof. Wang and Prof. Ono

funding management. In the following Q&A period, a spirited discussion ensued on the S&T policies of each

country. In the second session, JSPS international program director Ms. Mami Ohyama delivered a presentation on JSPS's strategy for building an "Asian Science and Technology Community." It paved the way to a discussion about two of the new program's components: ASIAHORCs meetings and

HOPE Meetings.

On 5-9 December, the ninth North-eastern Asian Symposium was held in Beijing on the theme "Advanced Materials," which was selected in the previous year's A-HORCs meeting. Gathering together some 45 researchers from

China, Korea and Japan, who gave presentations and engaged in discussions, the symposium provided a matrix for initiating future joint research activities among the participants.

— Asian Program Division

## Eleventh India-Japan Science Council Held in New Delhi

On 29-31 January, the eleventh meeting of the India-Japan Science Council was held in New Delhi, India.

Functioning to promote scientific exchange between Japan and India, the Council meets once every year. This year's meeting was presided over by the Indian chair, Prof. C.N.R. Rao, honorary president, JNCASR Bangalore, and attended by seven Indian members including Dr. T. Ramasami, secretary to the Government of India, Department of Science and Technology. On the



Japanese side, seven Council members attended, along with JSPS executive director Mr. Naoki Murata.

They reviewed the implementation of the FY2007 bilateral programs and

selected new proposals for FY2008 joint research projects and seminars, while engaging in an active exchange of views on the latest research topics in a variety of fields. They decided to increase the frequency of Asian Science Seminars, holding them once a year in Japan and India alternately. Given the new projects and expanded program, confident expectation was expressed in growing scientific cooperation between the two countries.

— Asian Program Division

## Science Dialogue Demonstration Held at Science Agora

The expression "science communication" enjoys vogue in Japan. It denotes two-way communication between scientists and interested members of the public in which interesting aspects of science and issues related to science and technology are taken up and discussed. The ultimate objective is to elevate scientific awareness and understanding among a large number of people.

In this context, the Science Agora is Japan's flagship event. (Agora is a classical Greek word for "meeting place.") It brings together scientists and researchers with people from all walks of society. The first Science Agora was held in 2006. This second event was held for three days from 23-25 November at the National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation (*Mirai-kan*) and Tokyo International Exchange Center in Odaiba, Tokyo. Participating in it were people involved in all levels of science from corporations, public agencies, university labs

and nonprofit organizations to individuals conducting research and others engaged in voluntary activities. Through numerous events including a symposium, workshops and displays, some 2,200 people were able to enjoy and experience fascinating aspects of science and technology and to contemplate related issues.

In support of the Science Agora, under the slogan "Interlinking the World through Science," JSPS put on a demonstration of its Science Dialogue Program in which JSPS postdoctoral fellows from other countries give lectures at Japanese high schools. The lecturer for this demonstration was Dr. Michele Guarnieri, who hails from Italy and is currently doing robotic research at Tokyo Institute of Technology. In his lecture, he introduced his native country; and using his own robot "Helios 8" along with many photographs and animations, he explained the significance of robotic research in developing



Dr. Guarnieri demonstrating his robot



Student looking up words while listening to lecture

technology that supports people's lives. The recipients of the lecture were students from Chiba Prefectural Kashiwa High School, who helped Dr. Guarnieri set up the mock classroom. Prof. Shigeo Hirose, also from Tokyo Tech, assisted

with the lecture by providing commentary in Japanese. The standing-room-only audience, which included TV crews, appeared captivated by this presentation on cutting-edge scientific

research given amidst an internationally charged atmosphere.

JSPS continually recruits postdoctoral fellows who wish to volunteer to give

lectures in the Science Dialogue Program. For more detailed information, please see our website at <http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-plaza/e-sdialogue/>

— Overseas Fellowship Division

## JSPS Beijing Office Launches Seminar Series

From last April, the JSPS Beijing Office started to implement a menu of events to promote exchange between Japanese and Chinese universities. One is a seminar series cosponsored by the universities and JSPS.

The first in the series was a symposium held on 2 November. Celebrating Keio University's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it was titled "Future Direction of the Chinese Economy—A Comparison between Japan and China" and co-organized by Renmin University of China (RUC), whose campus it was held on, Keio University and JSPS. Heading the panel were Keio University president Prof. Yuichiro Anzai, vice president Prof. Tatsuya Sakamoto and Faculty of Economics dean Prof. Shuhei Shiozawa, RUC School of Finance dean Prof. Qingwang Guo, and another 11 highly authoritative Chinese and Japanese professors on the titled subject. Their dialogue, which delved from various perspectives into the possibility of a bubble economy in China, evoked an enthusiastic response from the floor.

On 4 December, a seminar, cosponsored by Hiroshima University and JSPS on the theme "Progress of Clinical Care on Metabolic Syndrome in Japan," was held at the International Culture Center of Capital Normal University in Beijing. Following introductory remarks by Hiroshima University's Bei-



Seminar at Capital Normal University

jing Research Center director Prof. Toshiyuki Sato and a keynote speech by Faculty of Medicine dean Prof. Nobuoki Kohno, a discussion, prodded on by questions from the university students, was advanced on the latest developments related to "metabolic syndrome," the combination of medical disorders causing increased risk for heart disease and diabetes.

Then on 12 January, a seminar celebrating Tohoku University's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, titled "A New Era of Information and Communication Technology," was held at the Nano Center of Tsinghua University in Beijing. Heading it up were Tohoku University vice presidents Prof. Osamu Hashimoto and Prof. Hitoshi Ohnishi, Graduate School of Information Sciences dean Prof. Komei Sasaki and five more professors from Tohoku University, Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications, and the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Institute of Computing Technology. They introduced the latest re-

search results achieved in Japan and China in such areas as high-speed optical networks, web access, character and image recognition, and Internet security. In their discussion with the speakers, the attending researchers and practitioners expressed strong desire for collaboration between the two countries, particularly in light of the rapid advances being made in China's info-communications sector. Afterwards, a reception was hosted by the members of Tohoku University Alumni Association in China who had participated in the seminar. Held at Jinchunyuan Hotel on the campus of Tsinghua University, some 100 attendees used the get-together as an opportunity to renew old friendships and make new ones.



Alumni Association reception

These were the seminars organized under the Office's FY2007 program. In the coming fiscal year, several more will be held across a range of research fields in cooperation with universities and research institutes in China and Japan.

— JSPS Beijing Office

## Symposium, "Globalization and Japan—Challenges from Social Changes"

On 16 November, the US JSPS Fellows Alumni Association co-sponsored a symposium with the JSPS Washington Office and American University entitled "Globalization and Japan—Challenges from Social Changes." It was held

on the university's campus in Washington, D.C.

The symposium was organized by Dr. Dajin Peng, University of South Florida, Mr. Louis Edgar Esparza, Stony

Brook University, Prof. Quansheng Zhao, American University, and Dr. Akira Masaïke, JSPS Washington Office. Dr. Peng and Mr. Esparza are both US JSPS Fellows Alumni Association members. It was addressed by five

researchers from Japan, one from the United Kingdom, and eight from the United States, who spoke on various theme-related topics on the cutting-edge of research in the social sciences. Some 100 people attended the event.

The symposium opened with welcome remarks from Prof. Louis Goodman, dean of the School of International Service, American University; Mr. Hisashi Kato, head of the Overseas Fellowship Division, JSPS; Dr. Arup Neogi, chair of the US JSPS Alumni Association; and Dr. Peng, member of the Symposium Organizing Committee.

The first panel of the symposium was chaired by Prof. Zhao. Its title was "Japanese Foreign Policy in the Context of Global and Regional Dynamics." Six speakers presented and discussed current topics of germane to Japanese policy and security.

Over lunch, keynote speeches were delivered by Dr. Kent Calder, professor, The Johns Hopkins University, and Mr. Masafumi Ishii, minister, Japanese Embassy. Dr. Calder addressed Japan's place within the Asian community, while Mr. Ishii elaborated on Japan's major trends and initiatives within East Asia. Enjoyed by the audience, their speeches were both engaging and informative.

The second panel entitled "Globalization, Regionalization and the Japanese Economy" was chaired by Dr. Peng. In it, six speakers presented and discussed economic and business networks formed between Japan, other Asian countries, and the United States. Chaired by Mr. Esparza, the third panel of the day, entitled "Globalization and Social Changes," featured five speakers on topics related to human rights, migration, and networks of minorities.



The participants had a good opportunity to discuss these topics in greater detail at the following reception. Many new contacts were made and the beginnings of future collaborations formed.

For further information, please visit the Washington Office's website: [http://www.jspsusa.org/Alumni\\_association/newsletter/NewsletterJSPSVol5final.pdf](http://www.jspsusa.org/Alumni_association/newsletter/NewsletterJSPSVol5final.pdf)

On the following day, the alumni members held their annual general assembly.

— JSPS Washington Office

## Sixth JSPS Forum Held in France

On 23 November, the JSPS Strasbourg Office held its sixth JSPS Forum, this time on the theme "Chemical and Physical Nanobiology for Medicine." Its venue was the Institut de Science et d'Ingénierie Supramoléculaires (ISIS) at University Louis Pasteur (ULP) in Strasbourg. It was cosponsored by ULP and the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research. Held as a pre-event to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Franco-Japanese exchange, the forum was attended by the Consulate-General of Japan in Strasbourg.

In recent years, amazing R&D advances have been made in the domain of nanoscience. The application of nanotechnology to medicine holds in store an abundance of benefits span-

ning wide areas of diagnostics, treatment and prevention. Quite recently in Japan, medical application of chemical biology has excited considerable attention. Concurrently, the French government has made medical application of nanotechnology a priority area within its medicine and bioscience research policy. It is against this backdrop that the theme "Chemical and Physical Nanobiology for Medicine" was chosen for this forum.



At it, lectures were given by ten Japanese and French researchers who have achieved excellent results in the subject field. The more than 250 people who attended the event participated in active exchanges of views and information. In parallel with the forum, a 31-exhibit poster session was held by young Japanese and French researchers. In addition to their research results, information was displayed on Japanese universities represented at the forum.

As in past years, real-time transmission of the forum's proceedings was routed over the Internet via Canal-U. (The footage is archived on the following website: <http://www.canalc2.tv/>)

— JSPS Strasbourg Office

## Joint Workshop Held between Nuclear Engineering Departments of UC Berkeley and University of Tokyo

On 6-9 January, a joint international workshop, entitled "Nuclear Technology and Society—Needs for Next Genera-

tion," was held between Department of Nuclear Engineering, University of California, Berkeley (UCBNE) and De-

partment of Nuclear Engineering and Management, the University of Tokyo. Its venue was the Faculty Club on the

campus of the University of California, Berkeley, California. The JSPS San Francisco Office lent its support to the workshop, as it was organized under the project "Nuclear Education and Research Initiative," funded with a grant from the JSPS Global COE Program.

Since the Three Mile Island nuclear plant accident in 1979, no new nuclear reactors have been built in the US. However, as nuclear power generation is free of carbon emissions, the construction of these plants is being reconsidered as a next-generation source of energy conducive to mitigating global warming. Given this trend, the workshop was both timely and meaningful as it sought bilateral cooperation in such areas as nuclear technologies and society, international nuclear education and cooperation, environmental safety and nuclear security, while having as its underlining objective the fostering of human resources who will shoulder future advances in nuclear technology development.

On the first day of the workshop, a reception was led off by messages from UCBNE chair Prof. Jasmina Vujic and Global COE Project principal investigator Prof. Yoshiaki Oka, followed by remarks from Prof. S. Shankar Sastry, dean of College of Engineering, UCB; Mr. Yasumasa Nagamine, Consul General of Japan in San Francisco; and Prof. Seishi Takeda, director of JSPS

San Francisco Office.

In the morning of the second day, a plenary session was held on "Experiences and Future Directions of Nuclear Technologies." It was preceded by a briefing on the workshop objectives from UCB professor Dr. Joonhong Ahn. The afternoon brought a session on "Progress and Challenges in Nuclear Technologies." In both sessions, presentations were given by researchers from the University of Tokyo, UC Berkeley, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and U.S. Department of Energy, while discussions on the topics were vigorously advanced. In addition to such technical aspects of nuclear energy, discussed also was a reconceived relationship between nuclear energy use and society from an historical perspective and future prospects and challenges related to nuclear energy utilization.

The third day saw sessions on three themes: "Risk Management and Radiolysis," "Design and Analysis for Nuclear Reactor," and "Advanced Materials." Twenty-one graduate students from the University of Tokyo and UC Berkeley gave oral presentations on related topics and engaged each other in lively discussions. In the panel discussion with senior researchers, which followed at the end of the day, the Japanese students appeared tense at the start but, getting into the swing of things, asked the panelists many questions while

energetically expressing their own views on aspects of the discussion. This flourishing give-and-take only stopped when cut off by the time expiring.

On the last day of the conference, the students from the two universities divided up into groups according to their respective fields and interests and exchanged views on research topics of mutual interest while strengthening collegial ties.

This 4-day international workshop, which enlisted the participation of graduate students who will go on to advance the field of nuclear engineering in both Japan and the US, overarched technology in building wider bridges for strong partnership between the two countries. Its success testifies to how the Global COE Project on Nuclear Education and Research Initiative is not only serving to train graduate students to become world-leading nuclear engineers but also to foster talented young researchers who will play leading roles in the international scientific community.

— JSPS San Francisco Office



## Multiple Events Held under JUNBA 2008

JUNBA 2008 was held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Santa Clara, California, over the 2-day period of 10-11 January. Organized by the Japanese University Network in the Bay Area (JUNBA), it was implemented in cooperation with the JSPS San Francisco Office, the Consulate-General of Japan

in San Francisco, and the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) San Francisco. Entitled "International Collaboration between Universities, Industry and Government," the program featured three events: a JUNBA Summit, JUNBA Symposium, and JUNBA Technology Fair.

The JUNBA Summit kicked off the first day with messages of greeting by Dr. Chikaosa Tanimoto, president of JUNBA, Prof. Motoyuki Ono, president of JSPS, and Mr. Yuji Muranaga, executive director of JETRO San Francisco. They were followed by six repre-

sentatives of JUNBA-member Japanese universities, who spoke on the overall international strategies of their respective universities and responded in lively discussions to questions from the audience. After the Summit, the JUNBA Symposium was opened by introductory remarks from Dr. Tanimoto and Mr. Yasumasa Nagamine, Consul General of Japan in San Francisco, followed by a keynote speech from Dr. Ayao Tsuge, president of Shibaura Institute of Technology and former executive member of Council for Science & Technology Policy, Cabinet of Japan. Lectures were given by five



opinion leaders in the subject field of trisectoral international collaboration. Their interesting messages spurred a raising of hands throughout the room, with the question volleys yielding a wide exchange of opinions.

The second day saw the holding of the JUNBA Technology Fair, in which 15 universities gave presentations on their

knowledge assets and technologies and operated exhibit booths. Besides the some 80 people doing exhibits, another 100 participated in the event from Japanese companies with offices in the US, American corporations and venture businesses, among others.

Over its two days, JUNBA 2008 assembled some 200 participants, who

after each event could be seen still engaged in spirited exchanges of views with the speakers and one another.

For more detailed information on the programs and contents of the three events, please see the following webpage: <http://www.jspsusa-sf.org/junba/junbasummit-e.html>

— JSPS San Francisco Office

## First Roundtable Meeting Held with DFG

On 16-18 January, the JSPS Bonn Office and its longtime partner German Research Foundation (DFG) held the first “JSPS-DFG Roundtable” on the theme “Climate System Research—Status and Perspective.” Venued at the Max Planck Institute for Meteorology (MPI-M) in Hamburg, the meeting brought together 30 excellent young researchers from Germany and Japan.

The idea of holding such roundtable meetings was initially proposed by DFG president Prof. Matthias Kleiner. Concurrently, the JSPS Bonn Office had already held four colloquia for young Japanese and German researchers on inclusive themes with an eye to promoting bilateral scientific cooperation. Being, therefore, well-positioned to implement this proposal jointly with DFG, the JSPS-DFG Roundtable was launched.

The theme “Climate System Research” was chosen in consultation with DFG



as well-suited for the first Roundtable. Both climate change and global warming are feared to exert serious impact of people's lives in coming decades. Their purely technical study entails a multiplicity of scientific systems. To achieve, therefore, correct understanding of these phenomena and accurate prediction of their impacts will require much more and wider basic research. Accordingly, this field was selected as the theme because expanding knowledge exchange and joint research will be instrumental to advancing it.

In planning the meeting, participant selection and program design was carried out by the Japanese and German organizers: Prof. Akimasa Sumi, Integrated Research System for Sustainability Science (IR3S), The University of Tokyo, and Prof. Martin Claussen, MPI-M. They were assisted in these tasks by the co-organizers: Prof. Toshio Yamagata, Graduate School of Science, The University of Tokyo; Prof. Shoshiro Minobe, Graduate School of Science, Hokkaido University; and Prof. Jochem Marotzke, MPI-M. Altogether, their effort yielded an attractive program for the young participants.

The Roundtable opened with a congratulatory message from the patriarch of the German academic community

Prof. Reimar Lüst, former president of both the Max Planck Society (MPG) and Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (AvH), who was followed by remarks from JSPS executive director Mr. Naoki Murata. Each of the participating researchers reported on their activities and engaged in active discussions over the two days of sessions. After the first day of the meeting, Prof. Kleiner spoke at a DFG-hosted dinner about the importance of scientific collaboration between Germany and Japan, and Mr. Seiji Morimoto, Minister, Japanese Embassy in Germany, offered a congratulatory message. In the evening of the second day, a reception, sponsored by Dr. Jörg Dräger, Senator for Science and Research, State of Hamburg, was held. Attended also by Prof. Monika Auweter-Kurtz, President, University of Hamburg, it served to raise interest in academic exchange between the state and Japan.

After the event, a questionnaire survey was taken of the participants. Among the 63% who responded, half said that the Roundtable clearly stimulated them to diversify the direction of their research, while over 60% replied that they wanted to maintain contact with colleagues they met at the meeting. All in all, highly satisfactory results were achieved.

— JSPS Bonn Office

### Recruitments

For FY 2008

JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowship (Short-term) for North American and European Researchers

For 4<sup>th</sup> recruitment, application deadline from host institution: 7-11 April 2008

For 5<sup>th</sup> recruitment, application deadline from host institution: 7-9 May 2008

JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowship for Foreign Researchers (Standard)

JSPS Invitation Fellowship for Research in Japan (Short-term)

Application deadline from host institution to JSPS: 1-9 May 2008

For details, ask a prospective host researcher or visit our website.



## 先輩からのメッセージ

### Message from Former JSPS Fellow (10)

#### My Short But Very Fruitful Visit to Japan

Having received a short-term JSPS invitational fellowship, I visited Prof. Satoshi Kawata's group in the Laboratory for Scientific Instrumentation and Engineering (LaSIE) at Osaka University. The visit took place from 26 October to 24 December, 2007. The purpose was primarily to apply the advanced imaging and Raman spectroscopy techniques developed at LaSIE in studies of protein amyloid fibrils and nanomaterials. These were research projects being carried out through international collaborations involving my lab at NTNU and other research groups primarily in Norway, Sweden and France. Working with Prof. Kawata's excellent research staff, especially Dr. Yuika Saito and Assoc. Prof. Katsumasa Fujita and their students, we were able to achieve promising preliminary results, which are currently being followed up in extended collaborative projects.

While in Japan, I also engaged in the JSPS Science Dialogue program and participated in a high school science camp at Takasaki on 10-11 November. Moreover, I took part in a nanotechnology workshop in Senri-Chuo, Osaka, arranged by NTNU, Norway's SINTEF and Japan's National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST). Its aim was to stimulate increased science exchange between Japan and Norway. I also

had an opportunity to visit Nagoya University and RIKEN, where I delivered research lectures and discussed scientific issues of common interest.

I must say that the timing of my visit was indeed very good. First of all, Osaka lived up to its reputation for high quality and very tasty Japanese traditional cuisine. During the October-November period, the weather is usually dry with temperatures around 15-25°C in the daytime. With Kyoto and Kobe within a 30-minute train ride, the Osaka area also offers many cultural sites amidst very beautiful scenery. The famous *momiji* maple and ginkgo trees turn spectacular hues of reds and yellows in this season.

Moreover, the excellent research facilities of Osaka University's Suita Campus, not to mention the very dedicated and skilful staff at LaSIE, also helped to make my



**Dr. Mikael O. Lindgren**

Professor, Department of Physics, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)

JSPS Invitation Fellow (Short-term), October-December 2007

visit a real pleasure. I am indeed looking forward to more scientific exchange visits to Japan in the future.



At Takasaki Science Camp



Suita Campus of Osaka University

### JSPS Alumni Associations

At present, alumni associations with homepages have been established in Germany, the UK, Sweden, France, the US and India.

- **JSPS Club (German alumni association)**

<http://www.jsps-club.de/>

- **UK JSPS Alumni Association**

<http://www.jsps.org/alumniassociation/aboutus/index.html>

- **JSPS Alumni Club in Sweden**

<http://www.jsps-sto.com/site.aspx?id=548>

- **French Alumni Association**

<http://assoc-jsps.u-strasbg.fr/>

- **US JSPS Fellows Alumni Association**

[http://www.jspsusa.org/Alumni\\_association/alumni.htm](http://www.jspsusa.org/Alumni_association/alumni.htm)

- **Indian JSPS Alumni Club**

<http://www.indianjspsalumni.org/>

JSPS Fellows Plaza's Alumni Association homepage:

[http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-plaza/20\\_alumni.html](http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-plaza/20_alumni.html)

## Chiba Prefectural Kashiwa High School

Date: 24 November

**Dr. Michele Guarnieri** (Italy)  
Host institution: Tokyo Institute of Technology  
Title: "From Snakes to Humanitarian Assistance Robots"



## Hyogo Prefectural Kakogawa Higashi High School

Date: 18 December

**Dr. Patryk S. Lykawka** (Brazil)  
Host institution: Kobe University  
Title: "Origin and Evolution of the Solar System: Outstanding Questions and Mysteries"



## Fukui Prefectural Fujishima Senior High School

Date: 26 November

**Dr. Christoph Gerle** (Germany)  
Host institution: Kyoto University  
Title: "What Is Science and Why Am I Doing Science?"



## Ibaraki Prefectural Takahagi High School

Date: 3 December

**Dr. Myrian Nunomura** (Brazil)  
Host institution: University of Tsukuba  
Title: "Introduction of Brazil"



Date: 25 January

**Dr. Hsinyi S. Tsang** (USA)  
Host institution: National Institute of Infectious Diseases  
Title: "Bioinformatics: Is It Really Science?"

## Ikeda High School (Kagoshima)

Date: 28 January

**Dr. Alexander D. Hernandez** (USA)  
Host institution: Kyoto University  
Title: "The Ecology of Parasites in Japanese Macaques and Other Wildlife"



## Gunma Prefectural Takasaki High School Gunma Prefectural Takasaki Girl's High School Waseda University Honjo Senior High School (Saitama)

Date: 10-11 November

**Dr. Mikael O. Lindgren** (Sweden)  
Host institution: Osaka University  
Title: "To See Is to Believe—and Some Optical Phenomena in Nature"

**Dr. Kittiphong Paiboonsukwong** (Thailand)  
Host institution: Saitama Medical School  
Title: "An Introduction to Gene Therapy"

**Dr. Dorothee Dorner** (Germany)  
Host institution: National Institute for Materials Science  
Title: "Some Notes on Materials Science"

**Dr. Matthias U. Frey** (Switzerland)  
Host institution: Tokyo Institute of Technology  
Title: "Chocolate, Cheese and Converters—An Introduction to Switzerland and A/D Conversion"

**Dr. Erik D. Reese** (USA)  
Host institution: The University of Tokyo  
Title: "Cosmology"

## Kumamoto Prefectural Daini High School

Date: 6 November

**Dr. Khaled F. H. Greish** (Egypt)  
Host institution: Sojo University  
Title: "Cancer in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Challenges and Solutions"



## Miyazaki Prefectural Miyazaki Kita High School



Date: 14 December

**Dr. Pavel Kocan** (Czech Republic)  
Host institution: Kyushu University  
Title: "World of Nano-Science"

## Osaka Prefectural Tondabayashi High School

Date: 1 November

**Dr. Thi Thi Zin** (Myanmar)  
Host institution: Osaka City University  
Title: "Introduction to New Technology of Image Processing"



## Nara Prefectural Nara High School

Date: 21 November  
**Dr. Marie Paschaki** (Greece)  
Host institution: RIKEN  
Title: "Only the Nose Knows"



Date: 26 December  
**Dr. Oanh T. P. Kim** (Vietnam)  
Host institution: Nara Women's University  
Title: "From Genes to Proteins: A Brief Overview"

## Ritsumeikan Senior High School (Kyoto)

Date: 18 December  
**Dr. Tito Akindede** (UK)  
Host institution: Kyoto University  
Title: "From Atoms to Molecules: The Making of a Scientist"



## Seishin Girls' High School (Okayama)

Date: 13 November  
**Dr. Siu Shan Mak** (UK)  
Host institution: RIKEN  
Title: "A Tale of the Columella"



## Shizuoka Kita High School (Shizuoka)

Date: 31 January  
**Dr. Oleg Gusev** (Russia)  
Host institution: National Institute of Agrobiological Sciences  
Title: "Sleeping Chironomid and Its Usage in Space Life Science"



## Shizuoka Prefectural Iwata Minami High School

Date: 13 December  
**Dr. Devang K. Thakor** (USA)  
Host institution: Kyoto University  
Title: "Neuropathic Pain and Gene Therapy of the Peripheral Nervous System"



**Dr. Aneta A. Kowalska** (Poland)  
Host institution: National Institutes of Natural Sciences  
Title: "From Casual Life to Science"

## Tezukayama Senior High School (Nara)

Date: 6 November  
**Dr. David C. K. Ng** (Malaysia)  
Host institution: Nara Institute of Science and Technology  
Title: "Image Sensor and the Human Eye"



**Dr. Hedvig Rozsnyoi** (Hungary)  
Host institution: Nagoya University  
Title: "1000 Years of Hungarian History"

## Yamanashi Prefectural Tsuru High School

Date: 2 November  
**Dr. Abid A. Shah** (Pakistan)  
Host institution: Tokyo Institute of Technology  
Title: "Introduction to Pakistan and My Research in Japan"



Date: 6 November  
**Dr. Lokesh K. Sahu** (India)  
Host institution: The University of Tokyo  
Title: "Global Ozone and Climate Change & Culture of Chhattisgarh"



Date: 11 December  
**Dr. David R. Mutekanga** (Uganda)  
Host institution: The University of Tokyo  
Title: "General Introduction to Africa and Uganda—Sustainable Development"



Date: 14 December  
**Dr. Charles S. Vairappan** (Malaysia)  
Host institution: The University of Tokyo  
Title: "Marine Ecology Research in Borneo"



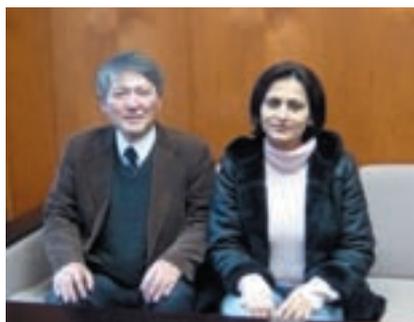
Date: 25 January  
**Dr. Chi Wai Wong** (UK)  
Host institution: The University of Tokyo  
Title: "Flow Control Studies on Airfoils"

Hailing from Nepal, Dr. Kaushal Tewari has been conducting research at the Faculty of Agriculture, Niigata University under a JSPS postdoctoral fellowship since April 2006. After obtaining a master's degree in Nepal, she was selected for a scholarship by the Japanese government to continue her graduate studies at Niigata University from 2000. Focusing on enhancing crop production, she is doing her research work under the supervision of Prof. Takuji Ohyama, who is a renowned scientist in the agricultural field.

Dr. Tewari lives in Niigata city with her husband and two children, a son in elementary school and an infant daughter. Her daughter was born last year in Japan. During the interview, she told us how thankful she is to Prof. Ohyama for creating an accommodating environment that allowed her to continue her research while raising her infant daughter.

*What kind of research are you doing under the JSPS fellowship?*

My study deals with a new technology for the deep placement of slow-release fertilizers in enhancing soybean growth. In Niigata Prefecture, fields consist mostly of clayey gray soil, and adverse soil conditions such as poor water drainage cause low average soybean yield. However, deeply placed, slow-release fertilizer is shown to improve  $N_2$  fixation, which in turn improves the efficiency of the fertilizer and dramatically raises soybean crop yield in drained paddy fields of the prefecture. Using this approach, I have been doing field experiments each year in different fields within the prefecture. The promotive effect of this new technique is a bean (seed) yield of about 2 to 3 times higher than with the conventional technique in each subsequent year. My



Dr. Tewari with her host Prof. Ohyama

research is ongoing; I am now experimenting with a nitrogen-release type of slow-release fertilizers. I hope to come up with some very fruitful results for improving yields using this method.

*How did you become interested in your research field?*

Having come from a so-called "least developed country (LDC)" like Nepal where more than 80% people depend on agriculture, I was very interested to learn more about the agricultural systems of developed countries like Japan. In Nepal, agriculture is of the highest priority because economic growth is dependent on both increasing the productivity of existing crops and diversifying the agricultural base for use as industrial inputs. Therefore, my main interest was to do research related to increasing agricultural productivity.

*Why did you choose Japan to pursue that goal?*

Studying and conducting research in Japan can be a boon as well as a challenge for people like me who come from an LDC. Japan was merely a point on the map before I came here; culturally, I knew virtually nothing about the country. Frankly, the main reason I chose to come to Japan was having gotten a Japanese government scholarship for my master's and doctoral studies. Academically, however, I knew that Japan was the best destination for furthering my postdoctoral studies because of its research environment: Its level of experimental possibilities is higher than in other Asian countries. Japan's ever-accelerating research environment is both eye-opening and mind-expanding for a researcher like me.

*Are there any other merits in conducting your research in Japan?*

There are various merits, among which the main one is being able to conduct research in a laboratory that is both well-equipped and well-funded. Japanese institutions enjoy stability in their research funding, planning and implementation, which makes Japan an excellent place to do research, as an unstable research environment is reflected in the outcome of one's work. Such stability enhances the stimulus one receives in forming research concepts. Japan's economic prowess also gives one



### Dr. Kaushal Tewari

Ph.D. (Bioresources and Environment Science), Niigata University, Japan, 2006

M.Sc. (Bioresources and Environment Science), Niigata University, Japan, 2003

M.Sc. (Microbiology and Biotechnology), Tribhuvan University, Nepal, 1999

B.Sc. (Microbiology and Biotechnology), Tribhuvan University, Nepal, 1996

the opportunity to participate in many international conferences, which enables direct contact and discussion with other professionals in the same field.

*What are your plans after the fellowship ends?*

I intend to return to my country and utilize the knowledge I have gained in Japan. Moreover, I would like to maintain a very close relationship with my professors and co-workers and to do some collaborative research with them in the future.

*What do you like to do when not working on your research?*

Coming to Japan gave me my first experiences of touching snow and going to the beach. Now, I love going to the beach in the summer and to snowy parks in the winter with my friends and family. I also go out with them to enjoy a variety of traditional Japanese foods. I lack sufficient words of praise for Japan's long culinary past and the refined cuisine it has developed which is highly sensitive to the change of seasons. Additionally, I like going to hot-water baths (*onsen*), seeing flower arrangements (*ikebana*), going to seasonal activities like summer festivals, watching fireworks (*hanabi*), and viewing cherry blossoms (*hanami*) and tulips. I also take part in many activities organized by the International Students Association of Niigata University (ISAN) in my free time.

### What advice would you give to new JSPS fellows?

Being able to communicate is very important both in living in Japan and working with the members of one's research team. Therefore, it would be worthwhile if you acquire some knowledge of the language and culture before coming. Making an effort to study and use the Japanese

language will increase your independence and self-confidence. Furthermore, research and life in Japan requires cultural flexibility and understanding of what others do and think. Maintaining a close relationship with your host researcher and co-workers will ensure that your planned research proceeds smoothly. Last but not least, have fun and enjoy each day in this unique country.

Finding humor and making room for fun in a foreign culture is an excellent way of coping with stress. There are many reasons to laugh (and cry), so applying yourself to the adventure of adapting can color your experience in Japan with vivid hues of excitement and joy. Good luck!

## Introducing Japan: Niigata

The city where Dr. Kaushal Tewari is doing her research, Niigata is the seat of the Niigata Prefectural government. It is the largest port on the Japan Sea, and as such has flourished as a hub for foreign trade since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Today, Niigata is accessible from Tokyo by the *Shinkansen* bullet train. It is also a gateway for traveling by ferry to Sado Island and even Hokkaido.

The city is situated on the estuary of the Shinano River, which running from interior mountain ranges to the sea is Japan's longest river. To minimize flooding in Niigata from the spring thaw at the river's headwaters, a long canal has been constructed through the city to the sea. Water shuttles ferrying commuters and tourists back and forth across it create a picturesque scene. In August, a spectacular fireworks festival is held on the banks of the river. While over 10,000 fireworks burst and dance in the night sky, waterfalls of fire-

works cascade off a nearby bridge.

In April, hundreds of tulips, so loved by Dr. Tewari, are arranged to create large walls of flower pictures. Early June features the "great kite battle." About 300 giant kites are flown from each bank of the Naka-no-kuchi River. In fierce dogfights, they battle to cut each other's lines. In the summer, people flock to the city's 12 beaches, whose shallow waters and gentle waves are ideal for bathing. Sunset concerts and other events on the summer beaches also attract large gatherings of people.

Among the facilities displaying the prefecture's natural and cultural heritage are the Niigata City History Museum, Marinepia Nihonkai (Japan Sea) Aquarium, and Niigata Furusato Mura (country village), where Dr. Tewari likes to bring her children. It even has a 3D video show depicting the traditional life and customs of village people in the prefecture. In one corner of the hall,

manmade snow falls from the ceiling all year around to give visitors a taste of winter in the prefecture. After all, Niigata is smack-dab in the middle of Japan's western seaboard "snow country."

If one really wants to revisit past Japan, Sado-ga-shima, the archipelago's sixth largest island, is the place to go. Its "old-fashion" living environment, undisturbed mountains and seashore, and uniquely traditional culture lie an only 2.5-hour ferryboat ride away from Niigata. Or, believe it or not, just one hour by "jet ferry."



Water shuttle on Shinano River



Fireworks festival



Niigata Visitors and Convention Bureau

### JSPS Fellows Plaza Website

JSPS Fellows Plaza is continually in the process of updating its website, which provides information for present, past and prospective JSPS fellows. Please give us a visit at:

<http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-plaza/>

You'll find pages on "How to Apply," "Experiences and Messages from JSPS Fellows," "Program Guidelines," "e-Orientation," "Find Nearby Fellows," "Science Dialogue," and "Alumni Associations." The site also carries current and back copies of our newsletter "JSPS Quarterly" and the booklet *Life in Japan for Foreign Researchers*.

If you have any opinions or impressions you wish to share regarding our website, please contact us at the JSPS Fellows Plaza.

— JSPS Fellows Plaza





**Cover photo:**

April cherry blossoms along the foot of hills nestling Kyoto.

## About JSPS

The Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) was established as an independent administrative institution to perform the following main functions: fund scientific research, foster researchers, and promote international scientific exchange.



### Crowing Rooster, Emblem of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science

From days of old in Japan, it has been the belief that the vigorous cry of the rooster in the gray of the morning augurs the coming of a new and bright day. As the crowing rooster can therefore be thought of as a harbinger of the kind of new knowledge that promises a brilliant future for humankind, it was chosen as the emblem of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. This emblem was designed in 1938 by Professor Sanzo Wada of Tokyo Fine Arts School to depict the rooster that symbolizes the breaking dawn in a verse composed by Emperor Showa.



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E-mail: fellowsplaza@jps.go.jp  
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