

# JSPS Quarterly

Japan Society for the Promotion of Science



## FEATURE: JSPS Prize

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No. **16**

**2006**  
Summer

On 9 March, the second ceremony was held to award the JSPS Prize. Selected were 24 talented young researchers with excellent records of scientific inquiry and promise to become trailblazers of scientific research in Japan. The ceremony for the FY2005 Prize was held at The Japan Academy in the presence of His Imperial Highness Prince Akishino.

### Selection of JSPS Prize Awardees

JSPS sent out requests for Prize nominees to 3,059 Japanese research institutions and academic societies, from which it received 265 names in June. Adding the 178 carryover nominees from the prior year, 443 researchers were screened by the staff of JSPS's Research Center for Science Systems (directed by Dr. Tasuku Honjo, professor, Graduate School of Medicine, Kyoto University, and staffed by two deputy directors, 16 senior pro-

gram officers and 86 program officers). Based on their results, the JSPS Prize Selection Committee (chaired by Dr. Leo Esaki, president, The Science and Technology Promotion Foundation of Ibaraki, and comprising 13 members) made the final decision on the 24 awardees.

### Award Ceremony

The ceremony for awarding the JSPS Prize was held in conjunction with the awarding of the Japan Academy Medal. At the ceremony on 9 March, JSPS president Prof. Motoyuki Ono offered an opening message, followed by a report on the selection process by Dr. Esaki. Prof. Ono presented the 24 recipients with a certificate of merit, a medal and purse of ¥1.1 million.



Following the awarding of the JSPS Prize, the Japan Academy Medal was presented to five of the researchers. Dr. Hiroo Inokuchi, chairman of the Academy's selection committee, explained the vetting process. Japan Academy president Dr. Saburo Nagakura delivered an address and presented the medal and a commemorative gift to the awardees.

Then, Prince Akishino offered remarks, followed by Mr. Akio Yuki, Vice Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, who read a congratulatory message from the minister. Finally, representing the recipients, a message of appreciation was offered by Dr. Izumi Hoshi (Hamada), associate professor, Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.

After the ceremony, a celebration party was held. Attended by Prince Akishino, the Prize recipients, their guests, and the ceremony attendees, an atmosphere conducive to pleasant conversation was enjoyed by all.



### JSPS Prize

The JSPS Prize was established in FY 2004 with an objective of helping to raise the level of scientific research in Japan to the world's highest standard. It does this by recognizing at an early stage in their careers young researchers rich in both talent and creativity. The Prize is meant to encourage the young recipients in advancing their work.

Up to FY 2005, the Prize was awarded to Japanese researchers and foreign researchers with permanent residency status. From FY 2006, foreign researchers who have conducted research at a Japanese research institution for five years or longer are also eligible. In any case, all must be under 45 years of age and possess a doctoral degree or equivalent expertise and have compiled an excellent record of research achievements in a field of the humanities, social sciences, or natural sciences.

## Comments by Dr. Leo Esaki, Chair, JSPS Prize Selection Committee

Having over my long career achieved some notable research results, I was lucky to have been showered with many awards of merit. Among them, I received my first really prestigious award at age 34; it was the Nishina Memorial Prize. It served as a stepping stone to my subsequent research activities. I am happy that the JSPS Prize can act as the same kind of catalyst for its young recipients.

As it happens, all of my research successes have been underscored by two factors: one was inevitably my own ability and the other, what you might call the “smile of the goddess of chance.” I dare say that the more lady luck’s power outshined than my own ability was when I

made findings that surprised myself, some even being seen as breakthroughs. Therein lies the special charm of research, but also the difficulty of evaluating researchers.

Having compiled excellent records of research accomplishments rich in both originality and creativity, the recipients of the JSPS Prize are expected to assume future roles of global leadership in their respective fields. Using this Prize as a springboard, I look forward to them committing themselves even more devotedly to their work and going on to achieve research milestones, while playing ever more active, prominent roles in the international scientific arena.

## FY2005 JSPS Prize Awardees

Humanities and Social Sciences		
<b>Akira Akiyama</b>	Associate Professor, Faculty of Education, Tokyo Gakugei University	“Studies on German Art in the Age of Dürer”
<b>Masaki Tomonaga</b>	Associate Professor, Primate Research Institute, Kyoto University	“Comparative Studies on Primate Foundation of Human Cognition and Development”
<b>Shin'ya Nishida</b>	Senior Research Scientist, Supervisor, NTT Communication Science Laboratories, Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation	“Psychophysical Study on the Mechanism of Information Processing in Human Visual Perception”
<b>Izumi Hoshi (Hamada)</b>	Associate Professor, Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies	“Descriptive Linguistics of Modern Tibetan (Lhasa Dialect)”
<b>Akihiko Matsui</b>	Professor, Faculty of Economics, The University of Tokyo	“Game Theoretic Approach to Interpret General Social Phenomena”
<b>Mikihiro Moriyama</b>	Professor, Faculty of Foreign Studies, Nanzan University	“The Formation of the Modern Sundanese Literature: A Cultural History”
Mathematics; Physical Sciences; Chemistry; Engineering Sciences		
<b>Yoichi Ando</b>	Senior Research Scientist, Materials Science Research Laboratory, Central Research Institute of Electric Power Industry	“Research on Competing Electronic Phases and Hidden Order in High-Temperature Superconductors”
<b>Hiroshi Imahori</b>	Professor, Graduate School of Engineering, Kyoto University	“Applications of Carbon Nanostructures for Artificial Photosynthesis”
<b>Akira Kageyama</b>	Group Leader, Earth Simulator Center, Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology	“Pioneering Research on Geomagnetic Field by Computer Simulation”
<b>Seiichi Koshizuka</b>	Professor, Graduate School of Engineering, The University of Tokyo	“Development of a Particle Method for Multi-physics Simulations”
<b>Ryosuke Kodama</b>	Professor, Graduate School of Engineering, Osaka University	“Study on an Advanced Concept of Laser Fusion Ignition Using Plasma Photonic Devices”
<b>Tahei Tahara</b>	Chief Scientist, RIKEN (The Institute of Physical and Chemical Research)	“Studies of Molecular Dynamics in the Condensed Phase by Ultrafast Time-Resolved Spectroscopy”
<b>Hiraku Nakajima</b>	Professor, Graduate School of Science, Kyoto University	“Revolutionary Development of Geometric Representation Theory”
<b>Toshihiko Baba</b>	Professor, Graduate School of Engineering, Yokohama National University	“Nanostructure Optoelectronics based on Photonic Crystals and Silicon Photonics”
<b>Satoshi Matsuoka</b>	Professor, Global Scientific Information and Computing Center, Tokyo Institute of Technology	“Modeling and Evaluating Massively-Scaled Parallel Scientific Application on Grids”
<b>Makoto Yokoo</b>	Professor, Graduate School of Information Science and Electrical Engineering, Kyushu University	“Research on Distributed Constraint Satisfaction Problem in Multi-Agent System”
Biological Sciences; Agricultural Sciences; Medical, Dental, Pharmaceutical Sciences		
<b>Masayuki Amagai</b>	Professor, School of Medicine, Keio University	“Elucidation of Pathophysiological Mechanism of Autoimmune Skin Disease, Pemphigus, and Development of a New Mouse Model”
<b>Kazuhiko Igarashi</b>	Professor, Graduate School of Medicine, Tohoku University	“Discovery of the Bach Transcription Factors and Elucidation of Their Function in Cell Differentiation and Body Defenses”
<b>Shigenobu Takeda</b>	Associate Professor, Graduate School of Agricultural and Life Sciences, The University of Tokyo	“Studies on the Role of Iron as a Key Nutrient Regulating Primary Production of Phytoplankton in the Ocean”
<b>Hirofumi Tachibana</b>	Associate Professor, Faculty of Agriculture, Kyushu University	“Studies on Molecular Mechanisms for the Physiological Function of Tea Substances”
<b>Hiroyuki Noji</b>	Professor, Institute of Scientific and Industrial Research, Osaka University	“Frontier Biochemistry of ATP Synthase by Manipulating Single Molecules”
<b>Jian Feng Ma</b>	Professor, Research Institute for Bioresources, Okayama University	“Studies on Tolerance Mechanisms of Mineral Stresses in Higher Plants”
<b>Kenji Yamazaki</b>	Assistant Professor, Department of Cardiovascular Surgery, Tokyo Women's Medical University	“Development of an Implantable Centrifugal Blood Pump for Long-term Circulatory Support in Heart Failure”
<b>Yoshinori Watanabe</b>	Professor, Institute of Molecular and Cellular Biosciences, The University of Tokyo	“Mechanisms that Lead to the Difference in Equational and Reductional Chromosome Segregation”

(Affiliation at time Prize was awarded)

— Research Fellowship Division



### *Humanities and Social Sciences*

#### Research into Modern Tibetan Description and Editing Tibetan Dictionary

The work for which I received the JSPS Prize entails descriptive linguistic research on modern Tibetan language, especially as pertains to the meaning of verbs. Two aspects of this work have been highly appraised. The first has to do with the usage of predicate verbs, which play an important role in transmitting the meaning of the predicate part of a sentence. I described these verbs in considerable detail, including subtle psychological nuances conveyed by the speaker. Secondly, I was able to describe very precisely the meanings of a large number of verbs by studying their co-occurrence with other words using as my tools a database of word usages and a corpus.

Applying the same methodology, I am now conducting a study on other parts of speech. Based on data obtained, I'm working to create a highly reliable Tibetan dictionary. Using my verb-description method, I have also begun collaborating with researchers in various fields in a project to compile as many Tibetan words, both ancient and modern, as possible into electronic text. The next step will be to build electronic corpora of these words for use as basic lexicon in advancing research in a range of fields. With these tools and materials in hand, I will attempt to elucidate the historical sequence leading to the acquisition of ways used by speakers to express their psychological states of mind.



**Dr. Izumi Hoshi (Hamada)**

Present: Associate Professor, Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

1997: Received Ph.D. from The University of Tokyo

1991: Graduated from The University of Tokyo

#### Economics of Conventions and Norms

Man cannot live alone; people need various relationships, e.g., coworkers, companions, clients. Wherever people may gather, a variety of rules come into play. Among these are conventions and norms. Whether it be the kind of attire businessmen wear or the way ceremonies are performed, we are surrounded by innumerable conventions and norms. It goes without saying that some of them are followed unconsciously, while others are imposed upon reluctant people after feeling implicit pressure or receiving explicit commands "do this, do that." Traditionally, the analysis of such conventions and norms has been thought to come under the purview of the humanities and social sciences; their importance has, therefore, been minimized in neoclassical economics, which is the mainstream of economic research, especially market theory.

The study for which I received the JSPS

Prize was based on "best response dynamics" and "inductive game theory." Its scope includes an analysis of roles played by conventions and norms and their transitions. Using best response dynamics, I analyzed the dynamic processes that take place within societies comprised of people, who held back by conventions, display behavioral patterns that change only gradually. In my inductive game theory analysis, I devised models of people who create their world view inductively from experiences—analogue to painting a picture on a white canvas.

My current work is most sharply focused on the latter analysis. Ultimately, I hope to develop an integrative social science architecture that incorporates within its multidisciplinary scope such issues as prejudice and discrimination.



**Dr. Akihiko Matsui**

Present: Professor, Faculty of Economics, The University of Tokyo

1994: Associate Professor, Institute of Policy and Planning Sciences, University of Tsukuba

1990: Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, University of Pennsylvania

1990: Received Ph.D. from Northwestern University

1985: Graduated from The University of Tokyo

### Study on Tolerance Mechanisms of Plants to Mineral Stresses

I would like to first say how honored I am to have received both the JSPS Prize and Japan Academy Medal.

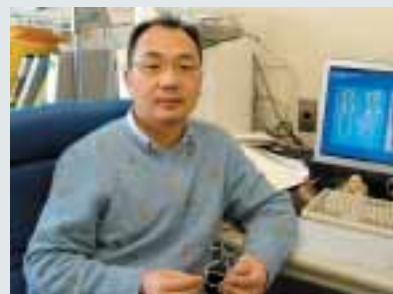
My research has focused on plant stress, particularly mineral stresses. Differing from animals, plants cannot move so they suffer more directly from various kinds of stress over their lives. However, some plant species or cultivars have developed strategies to overcome these stresses. I have been studying the mechanisms of how plants tolerate aluminum toxicity and iron-deficiency stress. Aluminum ion toxicity is a major factor limiting crop production on acidic soils, which comprise 30% of the world's arable land. I've found that the roots of some resistant plants secrete organic acids to detoxify the aluminum in the rhizosphere. Furthermore, I found that a few plant species, such as buckwheat, can accumulate aluminum in their tops at high concentra-

tions, and can detoxify aluminum internally by changing its chemical form from toxic to non-toxic and by sequestering the aluminum into vacuoles.

As for iron-deficiency stress, some gramineous plants, such as wheat and barley, are able to acquire iron from soil by secreting iron-dissolving substances such as mugineic acids from their roots. I have elucidated the biosynthetic pathway of various mugineic acids in different plant species. I also recently identified a gene which is specifically responsible for the transport of the mugineic acid-ferrous complex in barley.

Silicon is an element which can alleviate multiple stresses when accumulated at high concentrations. I have identified a gene which is associated with silicon uptake in rice.

Crop production is limited in about 70% of



#### Dr. Jian Feng Ma

Present: Professor, Research Institute for Bioresources, Okayama University

1999: Associate Professor, Faculty of Agriculture, Kagawa University

1991: Received Ph.D. from Kyoto University

1984: Graduated from Nanjing Agricultural University

the earth's arable land due to mineral stresses. I hope, therefore, that my research will lead to a better understanding of the mechanisms of plant stress tolerance, and ultimately produce plants with enhanced tolerance.

### Protein Shugoshin as Key to Chromosome Division

It is well known that chromosomes in the nuclei of plant and animal cells carry the organism's genetic information. During nuclear division called mitosis, copied chromosomes (called sister chromatids) are transferred in equal numbers to daughter cells. So as to yield progeny, germ cells, on the other hand, produce gametes by accurately halving their chromosomes into a single set for each egg and sperm. This nuclear division is called meiosis. Compared to mitosis, meiosis is seen to entail an additional phase (called homologous pairing) in the process of dividing chromosomes derived from dad and mom. It has long been known that to keep sister chromatids from separating, the cohesion of their centers (centomeres) must be maintained. How this occurs, however, had remained a mystery.

I discovered a protein, called "shugoshin" (guardian deity), that protects against centromeric separation. This shugoshin protein is present in virtually all living organisms including humans. I found that it also works to protect chromosome cohesion during mitosis as well.

Insufficient chromosome segregation in somatic cells is thought to be part of the mechanism causing cancer. Furthermore, miscarriages and Down syndrome in humans are known to stem from a chromosome segregation disorder in meiosis. By advancing my research and further elucidating the molecular function of shugoshin, I hope to be able to unravel the underlying causes of these diseases.



#### Dr. Yoshinori Watanabe

Present: Professor, Institute of Molecular and Cellular Biosciences, The University of Tokyo

1998: Associate Professor, Graduate School of Science, The University of Tokyo

1989: JSPS PD (Postdoctoral Research) Fellow

1989: Received Ph.D. from The University of Tokyo

1984: Graduated from The University of Tokyo

## Mathematics; Physical Sciences; Chemistry; Engineering Sciences

### Research on Distributed Constraint Satisfaction Problem in Multi-agent Systems

When multiple agents, i.e., autonomous entities, each of which can be a human or a software program, are in a shared environment, there usually exist constraints among the possible actions of these agents. A distributed constraint satisfaction problem is a problem in which the goal is to find a consistent combination of actions that satisfies these inter-agent constraints.

A constraint satisfaction problem is a problem in which the goal is to find a consistent assignment of values to variables. Even though the definition of a constraint satisfaction problem is very simple, a surprisingly wide variety of problems can be formalized as constraint satisfaction problems. Therefore, the research on constraint satisfaction problems has a long and distinguished history in computer science and artificial intelligence.

A distributed constraint satisfaction problem is a constraint satisfaction problem in which variables and constraints are distributed among multiple autonomous agents. Various application problems in multi-agent

systems that are concerned with finding a consistent combination of agent actions can be formalized as distributed constraint satisfaction problems. Therefore, we can consider the distributed constraint satisfaction problem as a general framework for multi-agent systems, and algorithms for solving distributed constraint satisfaction problems as important infrastructures for cooperation in multi-agent systems. I have established a method for formalizing distributed constraint satisfaction problems and developed a series of algorithms for solving distributed constraint satisfaction problems.

When I started working on this subject in the late 1980s, virtually nobody was interested in it. I am quite happy to see that this research community has grown and many researchers have started working on this topic.

I prefer working on new, interdisciplinary research topics. I'm also conducting research on mechanism design for internet auctions. This topic is related to game-theory and economics, as well as to com-



**Dr. Makoto Yokoo**

Present: Professor, Graduate School of Information Science and Electrical Engineering, Kyushu University

1995: Received Ph.D. from The University of Tokyo

1990-1991: Visiting Research Scientist, Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, University of Michigan

1986: Research Scientist, NTT Laboratories

1984: Graduated from The University of Tokyo

puter science. Two years ago, I moved from the research laboratory of a company to a university, where I hope to foster students in such a way that they can challenge new research fields.

## Memorandum Signed to Launch Japanese-French Frontiers of Science Symposia

On 15 March at Maison Franco-Japonaise in Tokyo, a ceremony was held in which JSPS president Prof. Motoyuki Ono and His Excellency Mr. Gildas Le Lidec, French Ambassador to Japan, signed a memorandum of understanding to implement the Japanese-French Frontiers of Science (JFFoS) Symposia. The JFFoS Symposia have their origin in a March 2005 summit between the Japanese and French heads of state, in which they agreed to create a framework conducive to the development of bilateral research exchanges. The JFFoS program is administered by JSPS on the Japanese

side and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE), French Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research (MENESR), and Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) on the French side.

In advance of the MoU signing, a planning group of 13 talented young Japanese and French researchers met to decide the session topics for the first symposium. The eight chosen included such titles as "Neurobiological Origin of Language" and "RNA in Systems Biology."

The initial symposium under the pro-



Prof. Ono and Ambassador Le Lidec

gram will be held at Shonan Village Center in Kanagawa, Japan, on 27-29 January 2007.

— Research Cooperation Division

## Agreement Updated with Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic

On 24 February, a revised Memorandum of Understanding was signed between JSPS and its counterpart the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (ASCR).

On 23 May 2005, Dr. Petra Buzková, Minister of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic, and ASCR president Dr. Václav Pačes came to JSPS to discuss revisions to the initial MoU signed in 1993. An agreement

was reached on the new content and a revised document drafted.

Two main revisions were made to expand the scope of the MoU: Whereas the research implementing organizations under the old program were limited to those affiliated with ASCR, under the new program organizations under the jurisdiction of Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports are also included. Secondly, joint research pro-

jects were added to what had been only a researcher exchange program.

The document Details for Implementing the MoU was signed at that same time, establishing a concrete framework for carrying out an enhanced program of scientific cooperation between Japan and the Czech Republic.

— Research Cooperation Division

## Letter of Intent Signed with Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sports

On 7 March, Dr. Dragan Primorac, Minister of Science, Education and Sports, Mr. Drago Stambuk, Croatian Ambassador to Japan, and other member of a Croatian delegation came to JSPS. At the meeting, Dr. Primorac and JSPS president Prof. Motoyuki Ono signed a Letter of Intent to continue consultations on research coop-

eration between the two countries. Based on it, further discussions will be held on possible collaboration between JSPS and the National Foundation for Science, Higher Education and Technological Development of the Republic of Croatia.

— Research Cooperation Division



Prof. Ono and Dr. Primorac

## Ninth Meeting of Japan-India Science Council

On 11 March, a meeting of the Japan-India Science Council was held in Bangalore. JSPS's bilateral program with the Indian government's Department of Science and Technology (DST) was established in 1993. At the Council meetings held since then, the Japanese members (led this time by Prof. Keitaro Yoshihara, fellow, Toyota Physical & Chemical Research Institute) and Indian members discuss the program's operations. At this ninth meeting of the



Council, the members reviewed the performance of the program's FY2005 activities and discussed an implementation plan for FY 2006.

This was the first time for applications to be openly recruited under the program. Both joint research projects and seminars were selected in the numbers shown below.

	Applications	Selections
Joint research	55	18
Seminars	4	3

— Asian Program Division

## First Meeting Held of Japanese Committee under Japan-China Medical Exchange Program

On 2 March, the Japanese committee of the newly reestablished Japan-China Medical Exchange Program was convened in Tokyo. Operated by JSPS in cooperation with the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences (CAMS) and endowed by Dainippon Sumitomo Pharma Co., Ltd. and Sankyo Co., Ltd., the

program supports joint research projects and seminars in newly selected fields of Japanese and Chinese medical sciences.

At the Japanese committee meeting (chaired by Prof. Shigetaka Asano, Waseda University), proposals were

selected as candidates for FY2006 joint research projects and seminars. These were matched with the selection results of the Chinese committee, and three proposals ultimately chosen for funding via negotiation between the two agencies.

— Asian Program Division



## Follow-up Workshop Held Under ESF-JSPS Science Conference Program

On 6-11 March at Shonan Village Center, a follow-up workshop on the theme "Functional Genomics—From the Bench to Bioinformatics" was held under the ESF-JSPS Frontier Science Conference Series for Young Researchers. Cosponsored by JSPS and the European Science Foundation, these workshops are held about three years after a conference on the same subject. Their object is to see what progress has been made via collaboration between the participating young researchers from Japan and Europe over the 3-year period, while reinforcing working networks among them. To these ends, the workshops provide the young participants a platform to report and discuss their research activities. Added to this, the participants also receive lectures from leading international researchers in the subject field.

In this case, the conference on functional genomics was held in October 2003 in San Feliu de Guixols, Spain. Both the conference and workshop were

co-chaired by Prof. Satoru Miyano, The University of Tokyo, and Prof. Gunnar von Heijne, Stockholm University. Ten speakers from Japan and Europe addressed the workshop, attended by 40 young participants. Differing from the ordinary conference format, communication was not one-directional: The young participants were also given the opportunity to deliver their presentations and engage coequally in discussions. As a result, volleys of opinions highlighted the event.

There was one participant who had attended the conference on the European side, but having moved thereafter to do research at a Japanese institution, attended the follow-up workshop on the Japanese side. This also testified to the successful development of Euro-Japanese exchange in the wake of the conference. Nevertheless, it was pointed out in a closing session discussion that room still exists to advance the exchange further. Ways of doing so were broached and discussed, with all agreeing that a grant



from JSPS or ESF would add impetus to the collaboration.

During the period of the workshop, an excursion was made to the historical city of Kamakura and a cultural program held. These activities gave the participants an opportunity to strengthen their ties as a group of colleagues and friends. On the last day, the co-chairs presented an award to the two participants who had been judged to deliver the most excellent presentations. They were Dr. Yoshiaki Minezaki, National Institute of Genetics, and Dr. Nuria Lopez-Bigas, Centre for Genomic Regulation, Barcelona.

— Research Cooperation Division

## Fourth Science Colloquium Held by San Francisco Office

On 25 February, the JSPS San Francisco Office held its fourth Science Colloquium, this time on the theme "Interrogating Japan's Soft Power." Venued at The University of Texas at Austin, the event was cosponsored by the university's Center for East Asian Studies.

The colloquium focused on Japan's "soft power"—Japan's ability to exert influence on other countries via the appeal of its culture, entertainment media, and other vehicles. Eight leading Japanese and American scholars engaged in various related fields of research were invited to address the col-

loquium. Kicking off the proceedings was an explanation of the colloquium's purpose by its coordinator Dr. Nancy Stalker, followed by remarks from San Francisco Office director Dr. Seishi Takeda. In each of the ensuing sessions, there were two panelists: One spoke while the other commented and asked



questions, after which they engaged the general participants in a Q&A discussion. Then, the two panelists switched roles and repeated the process.

Spurring an animated back-and-forth exchange of views between them, this format jelled the panelists and some 40 participants together into a tightly concentrated group. They carried out an interdisciplinary dialogue on both the pre- and postwar influence of Japan's soft power from the various perspectives of pop culture, traditional culture, aesthetics, and religion.

— JSPS San Francisco Office

## Support for Symposium by University Consortium on Pacific Rim Earthquakes

On 21-22 April, a research symposium, titled "Earthquake Hazards Around the Pacific Rim—Global Watch and Environmental Impact" was held between the Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU) and the Association of East Asian Research Universities (AEARU), two federations of leading

universities in the Asia-Pacific region. Held in San Francisco, the symposium was carried out by UC Berkeley and Osaka University under the cosponsorship of JSPS and other related organizations. It was linked to the various international conferences being held to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anni-

versary of the Great 1906 San Francisco Earthquake.

The purpose of the symposium was to apply new research to the forecasting and prevention of disasters in the Asia-Pacific region while fostering partnership among the participating



universities. In this vein, the results of research were presented on such topics as new sensing and monitoring technologies for earthquakes and other natural disasters, risk management on lifelines, damage mapping, and government response. In swapping knowledge on these and broader matters of regional concern, such as ways to reduce environmental loading, members of the two collegial associa-



tions sought ways to advance cross-disciplinary joint research and to strengthen technical collaboration between their universities situated along

the "Rim of Fire."

The total number of participants was more than 90, including 20 attendees of a session opened to the public.

For the symposium's program, please see the following website:  
<http://www.osaka-u-sf.org/APRU%20Symposium%20schedule.pdf>

— JSPS San Francisco Office

## Third Japan-Germany Colloquium Held

On 27 February through 2 March, the JSPS Bonn Office held its third in the series of Japan-Germany Colloquia, this time on the theme "Relativistic Universe." Venued in Wildbad Kreuth nestled in the mountains about 80 kilometers south of Munich, the colloquium was cosponsored by Max Planck Institute for Extraterrestrial Physics (MPE) and the Institute of Space and Astronautical Science, Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency.

Held on a selected theme each year, these colloquia allow a relatively small group of frontline Japanese and German researchers to lodge together and engage in in-depth discussions. The planning of this colloquium owes greatly to the efforts of the organizers, JSPS Bonn Office director Prof. Yasuo Tanaka and MPE director Prof. Dr. Günther Hasinger, and to the cooperation of Dr.

Yoshihiro Ueda, Kyoto University, and Dr. Stefanie Komossa, MPE.

The colloquium was titled "Relativistic Universe" in celebration of the World Year of Physics, organized to salute the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the quantum leap made by Albert Einstein in this field. The origins and evolution of the universe, replete with a myriad of relativistic phenomena, were addressed from various observational and theoretic angles including galactic sources, gamma-ray bursts, active galactic nuclei, clusters, and black holes. These presentations introduced the abundant research results being achieved in both countries in the subject field, including those based on the latest observation data obtained from Japan's new X-ray astronomy satellite "Suzaku." During the 2.5-day event, the snow-bound seminar house was heated by flames of

enthusiasm that carried both presentations and Q&A discussions over their allotted time frames.

Afterwards, the organizers received words of praise from the participants, including many who said that the colloquium was a very meaningful event with diverse ramifications for collaborative opportunities. The participants are expected to build bridges for future scientific exchange in this field between Japan and Germany.

— JSPS Bonn Office



## Eleventh Japanese-German Symposium "Frontiers of Cancer Research" and General Meeting of JSPS Club

Held in regions around Germany, Japanese-German Symposia are co-organized each year by the JSPS Bonn Office and the German JSPS alumni association, JSPS Club, for the purpose of introducing leading-edge research being conducted in the subject field in Japan and Germany and promoting mutual understanding and research cooperation between the two countries. This year, the 2-day symposium was held on 21-22 April in the conference room of Ringhotel Munte am Stadtwald (hotel) in Bremen. This symposium on the "Frontiers of Cancer Research"

focused on three topics: basic research, epidemiology, and societal relationship and future prospects.

In prelude to the presentations, JSPS Bonn Office director Prof. Yasuo Tanaka delivered opening remarks, followed by congratulatory messages from Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (AvH) secretary general Dr. Georg Schütte and Deutsch-Japanische Gesellschaft zu Bremen e.V. president Dr. Wolfgang Haas. JSPS Club chair Prof. Dr. Heinrich Menkhau, then, thanked everybody for their participa-

tion and cooperation. Attendance at the symposium totaled about 230 including JSPS Club members, other former JSPS fellows from around Germany, and staffs of AvH, German Research Foundation (DFG), German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and other JSPS counterpart agencies.

All the presentations were delivered in such a way as to articulate sophisticated content in an easy-to-understand manner. Of particularly high interest were three Japanese presentations on the relationship between DNA, aging and cancer with mention of the 19<sup>th</sup> century painter Taikan Yokoyama; culture, eating habits and cancer prevention; and "patient-first" team medical care with reference to (the 6<sup>th</sup> century) Prince Shotoku's "spirit of harmony" principle.



After the end of the first day's program, a buffet-style dinner was held at the historical Ratskeller restaurant beneath the UNESCO World Heritage town hall of Bremen. Following a piano recital by former Humboldt fellow Ms. Mariko Mitsuyu, Mr. Akira Mizutani, Minister,

Japanese Embassy in Germany, offered a toast to the further development of Japan-Germany exchange.

Following the symposium on the second day, an annual General Meeting of the JSPS Club was held to discuss and plan

the new fiscal year's activities and next year's symposium.

For the speakers' CVs and abstracts, please see the following website:  
<http://www.jsps-bonn.de/>

— JSPS Bonn Office

## Sweden Office Cosponsors Japan Studies Seminar in Helsinki

On 27-29 April, the Nordic Association for the Study of Contemporary Japanese Society held a seminar in Helsinki on the topic "Politics of the Japanese." The Association was established in 2002 for the purpose of promoting research and education on contemporary Japanese society. Since 2004, the Association has been organizing conferences including annual seminars. This, the third, seminar of lectures and discussions was focused on Japan's socio-political milieu in the post-Cold War world. The JSPS Stockholm Office cosponsored the seminar with an eye to promoting academic exchange between

Japan and Sweden, and it funded the participation of the Japanese speaker.

One keynote address was delivered by Dr. Paul Midford, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, on Japan's Asian diplomatic strategy since 1990 with emphasis on its support for Southeast Asian countries and its East Asian relationship with China and Korea. The presentation was grounded in Dr. Midford's own research and educational experiences in the US and Japan. He was followed by the Japanese speaker Dr. Itsuko Kamoto, Kyoto Women's University. She spoke on why



a low birth rate is posing a critical social problem in Japan, and how an increase in international marriage is altering the character of Japanese society. A spirited discussion evolved over Japan's family register system and other distinctive Japanese social institutions.

— JSPS Stockholm Office

## Inter-University Postgraduate Symposium Held in London

On 20-21 February, the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) and Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS) teamed up to hold a symposium in which postdoctoral researchers and doctoral students gave presentations on their various research activities. Held on the SOAS campus, the symposium was cosponsored by the JSPS London Office.



About 30 members of the two faculties

and student bodies came to hear presentations and engage in discussions on such diverse topics as "Rituals and Social Relations in Java" and "The Tokugawa Shogunate's Daimyo Kaieki (attainder)."

Organized as a component of TUFS' 21<sup>st</sup> Century COE Project, the seminar went a long way in promoting international exchange between the two higher learning institutions.

Following the first day's proceedings, JSPS London Office director Prof. Masaru Osanai gave a briefing to the participants on opportunities offered by JSPS fellowships and other exchange programs.

— JSPS London Office

## Conference for Bridging Japan and the UK

On 17 February in London, a "Conference for Bridging Japan and the UK" was held to make a platform for information exchange available to Japanese researchers engaged in research at universities and other public research institutions in the UK. Organized by the JSPS London Office, this conference in the series brought together 16 researchers in fields of the natural science and engineering, ranging widely in career stage from junior to senior researchers.

At the conference, Dr. Hiroaki Yanagida,

deputy director of JSPS's Research Center for Science Systems, described his experiences as the London Office's first director and his collaborations as a researcher with colleagues in the UK. His remarks were followed by self-introductions from each of the participating researchers. Their ensuing discussion delved into a number of topics on Japan's S&T system, including ways to elevate creativity in Japanese research, the system of evaluating research, establishing a prize to encourage undergraduate and graduate students and young researchers, and creating a



system to accommodate researchers returning to Japan. Their discussion yielded many valuable ideas and suggestions. Responding to a questionnaire that they were asked to fill out, the participants said the conference offered a rare opportunity for them to exchange views while working abroad.

— JSPS London Office

## Indian Alumni Chair Comes to JSPS

On 28 April, Dr. Sakthi Kumar, chair of the newly established Indian JSPS Alumni Club, came to hold a discussion at JSPS. A former JSPS fellow, Dr. Kumar is currently conducting research at Toyo University in Japan. He and a group of other former Indian fellows had on their own initiative organized the Indian alumni club. At JSPS, Dr. Kumar talked to Fellows Plaza director Mr. Hiroshi Fukai and other members of JSPS's staff about how the club was established, its objectives, its membership criteria and pro-

cedures, among other pertinent topics. He introduced samples of the club's homepage. Mr. Fukai expressed thanks to Dr. Kumar for his work in organizing the alumni club; and in an amicable atmosphere, held a spirited exchange of views with him on the future activities and prospects of the Indian club and its role in encouraging Indo-Japanese researcher exchange.

The alumni club's website, which includes a registration page for current and former Indian JSPS fellows, is as

follows: [www.indianjpsalumni.org/](http://www.indianjpsalumni.org/)

— JSPS Fellows Plaza



Dr. Kumar and Mr. Fukai with JSPS division heads Mr. Kato and Mr. Endo at left and right

## Science Dialogue

The following fellows participated in JSPS's Science Dialogue Program during the period from February through March 2006. See program webpage at: <http://www.jps.go.jp/english/e-plaza/e-sdialogue/>

— Overseas Fellowship Division

### YAMANASHI

#### Yamanashi Prefectural Tsuru High School

Date: 14 February 2006

**Dr. Christopher Noble** (UK)  
Host institute: Teikyo University of Science & Technology  
"Using Self-feeders in Fish Biology"



This was the fifth lecture to be held at Tsuru High School. Though listening attentively, the students initially had a hard time understanding what was being said in English. With repeated sessions, however, they became better able to understand both the English and the content of the lectures. This spurred them on to being more active in asking questions. Now, they even surrounded Dr. Noble after his lectures and engaged him in conversation. The program has, thus, produced very meaningful results in both elevating the students' interest in science and deepening their international understanding.

### CHIBA

#### School for the Deaf, University of Tsukuba

Date: 8 March 2006

**Dr. Jason P. Webb** (USA)  
Host institute: The University of Tokyo  
"Foreign Countries and My Country"



This was the first lecture under the Science Dialogue Program to be delivered at a school for the handicapped. It was Dr. Webb's wish to address the students of the School for the Deaf. His lecture, given in Japanese, was interpreted into sign language by a teacher of the school. Following the lecture, there was a session titled "Communication Activity," in which each student asked Dr. Webb questions they had prepared in advance. He was careful to answer their questions in such a way as to be easily understood and to promote communication with the group.

## Events

#### Stockholm Office

The 7<sup>th</sup> JSPS Colloquium  
"Frontiers of Genome Science and Challenge to Medical Applications"  
*The Nobel Forum, Stockholm, 30 August 2006*

#### Strasbourg Office

French Academy of Sciences-JSPS Workshop  
"Translational Research from Genome-based Sciences to Clinical Medicine"  
*Insitutit de France, Paris, 5 September 2006*

#### London Office

UK-Japan (JSPS, Imperial College London, The University of Tokyo)  
Symposium  
"Climate Change: Energy Technology and Green House Gas Mitigation"  
*Imperial College London, London, 27-28 or 28-29 September 2006*

## Recruitments

For FY 2006

JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowship (Short-term) for North American and European Researchers  
Application deadline from host institution to JSPS: 7-11 August 2006

For FY 2007

JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowship for Foreign Researchers (Standard)  
JSPS Invitation Fellowship for Research in Japan (Short/Long-term)  
Application deadline from host institution to JSPS: 4-8 September 2006

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



## Message from Former JSPS Fellow (4)

### Earthquakes & Volcanoes: Research in Japan

I am a geophysicist. But unlike most geophysicists I build “bottom-up” models of the Earth based on laboratory experiments, rather than data-driven “top-down” models based on say earthquake seismograms or satellite data. I did my PhD on arctic sea ice mechanics. For my postdoc, I worked on earthquake mechanics, which is a fascinating subject if rather esoteric in England. The things that attracted me to the subject were the societal impact of earthquakes, the new physics of fractals and complexity that were being applied to earthquakes and the sophisticated laboratory experiments that could be built to simulate earthquakes. A move to Japan was an obvious choice if I were to continue in earthquake research.

Japan obviously has pre-eminence in geophysics with a research track record that goes back to the Meiji restoration, ground-breaking research and Nobel laureates, and is itself a natural laboratory. There have been strong links between Japan and England in earthquake research dating back to the time when John Milne, often regarded as the father of modern seismology, in 1875 at the age of 25, took a position as professor of Geology and Mining at the new Imperial College of Engineering in Tokyo. He worked there for 20 years, married a Japanese woman and founded the first seismological society in the world. The relationship between my university, UCL, and Japan goes back to 1863 when five young noblemen of the Choshu clan in feudal Japan secretly came to England, at a time when travel abroad was still strictly forbidden. One of these, Shunsuke Ito, later Prince Hirobumi Ito, became the first and four-times Prime Minister of modern Japan.

As a JSPS postdoc fellow I went to work

with Prof. Mitiyasu Ohnaka at the Earthquake Research Institute of The University of Tokyo. Prof. Ohnaka had himself been a JSPS postdoc fellow at my home laboratory at UCL. But more than this I was interested by his approach to earthquake mechanics and the unique experimental facilities in his laboratory for simulating earthquakes. It was also great working in an institute dedicated to earthquake research, and especially in a country where there is such strong interest in earthquake research. I had the opportunity to present my research at the Seismological Society of Japan, visit geophysicists at other Japanese universities and travel about Japan as a tourist. I formed many friendships which last to this day. I returned to England to a Royal Society research fellowship and following that became professor of geophysics at UCL.

I have visited Japan many times since, including as visiting professor at The University of Tokyo in 1999. I have hosted a JSPS postdoc fellow in my laboratory and many of my students have spent time researching in Japan. My research has shifted again and volcanology has become a new research interest of mine in the last few years. (I am also back to doing research on



At alumni association's evening lecture



**Prof. Peter Sammonds**

Postdoc JSPS Fellow 1991-1992

Professor of Geophysics, University College London, University of London

Chair, UK JSPS Alumni Association

arctic sea ice.) I have visited a number of volcanological observatories in Japan with my students. Japan again is a natural laboratory for volcanoes and some of the monitoring and modelling research is highly advanced.

A few years ago I was approached by the JSPS London Office to help set up a UK Alumni Association. I was delighted to do this as a way of strengthening UK-Japan research collaboration and facilitating the exchange of young scientists. For both UK and Japanese young researchers there is always going to be the pull of the USA as the first choice country for working as a postdoc or for research collaboration. However, for me there is no doubt that working in Japan was at a formative time for my own research ideas, important for my career, and a key part of my life with the deep friendships I formed there.

### To Past and Present JSPS Fellows:

We are in the process of updating our mailing list. If you have changed your address or would like to add your name to the *JSPS Quarterly* mailing list, please mail your full name and address (including country) to JSPS Fellows Plaza, 6 Ichibancho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-8471 or fax it to us at +81-3-3263-1854. Please indicate whether you are a current or former JSPS fellow.



## Introducing JSPS Overseas Offices: London



Established in 1994, the JSPS London Office is located on the third floor of a building in the Mayfair district of central London. The area around the office is impressively lined with historical buildings, art academies and museums. Transportation is convenient, making it easy for the visitor to drop in the office. Presently, the office is staffed with a director, deputy director, advisor, international program manager, and two international program associates.

Since the office's establishment, the staff has worked closely with JSPS counterparts—e.g., The Royal Society, The British Academy, Research Councils UK—to promote scientific collaboration between Japan and the UK. In 2004, the office celebrated its tenth anniversary with a commemorative ceremony held at The Royal Society.

### Creating a Top-level Knowledge Exchange

Every year, the office organizes a large-scale symposium on a selected scientific theme. Smaller-scale seminars are held

several times a year, and in the future will feature such popular topics as global environment protection and life sciences. By way of these activities, the office attempts to raise awareness among not only specialists but also interested members of the public in the high level of research and technical expertise in Japan; and in so doing, advance both Anglo-Japanese dialogue and cooperation.

### Building Bridges for Japan-UK Research Exchange

The office supports the building of networks between Japanese and British universities and researchers.

In 2004, an alumni association of former JSPS fellows was established in the UK. It now boasts more than 120 members. They normally hold two seminars a year, publish a newsletter, and give lectures at briefings on JSPS programs held by the office staff at universities. The center also provides opportunities for Japanese researchers resid-

ing in the UK to get together and exchange information.

In an effort to broaden the office's human network, the staff plans to expand its liaisons with education and scientific exchange organizations of Japan and other countries that have offices in the UK.

On another front, the office issues two calls a year for application for JSPS's Postdoctoral Fellowship (Short-term) Program for North American and European Researchers, and selects candidates to recommend to JSPS's home office. In this screening process, the staff works closely with JSPS's counterpart organizations and Japanese researchers in the UK.

Last but not least, the office disseminates information and holds seminars in support of the international activities of Japanese universities.

— JSPS London Office

## Evening Lecture in London; UK JSPS Alumni Association Evening Lecture and JSPS Presentation Event in Edinburgh

On 28 February in London and 1 March in Edinburgh, "Evening Lectures" were held by the JSPS London Office on a theme of development assistance for Africa. As such assistance was proposed by the UK at the G8 Gleneagles Summit, it attracted considerable interest as the theme of the lecture series.

The Evening Lecture in London, titled "Supporting Industrial Development in Africa," was conducted with the support of the Intercollegiate Development Discussion Panel comprising Japanese students at King's College London. Prof. Keijiro Otsuka (National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies; chairman, board of trustees of the International Rice Research Institute) spoke



about the prospects of applying East Asia's cluster-based development model to Africa. Then, Dr. Francis Teal (University of Oxford) addressed the importance of a manufacturing industry that through exporting can help grow Africa's economy. The 70 some participants, who included government administrators, researchers and students, engaged the speakers in an active exchange of questions and answers.

In Edinburgh, the UK JSPS Alumni Association Evening Lecture, titled "The Green Revolution in Africa" was held at the Scotch Whisky Heritage Centre. Invited to speak this second evening as well, Prof. Otsuka talked about the need to develop a new variety of rice capable of enduring African droughts. Then, Prof. Jonathan Kydd (Imperial College London) elaborated the conditions required to accomplish a green revolution in Africa. At the dinner that followed, a spirited discussion was enjoyed by the alumni and both researchers and students from the Edinburgh vicinity, who numbered more than thirty.



On 2 March, a "JSPS Presentation Event" was held on The University of Edinburgh campus for young researchers and graduate students. JSPS London Office director Prof. Masaru Osanai introduced JSPS's Postdoctoral Fellowships for Foreign Researchers and other programs. UK JSPS Alumni Association vice chairman Dr. Martyn Kingsbury (Imperial College London) and Dr. Erfu Yang (The University of Edinburgh) added their research experiences as JSPS fellows in Japan. This and their expanded discussion on life and culture in Japan gave the young participants a greater sense of familiarity with Japan as a possible research destination.

— JSPS London Office

Hailing from Belgium, Dr. Ruth Vanbaelen started her JSPS postdoctoral fellowship at University of Tsukuba in September 2004. Altogether, she has lived in Japan for 12 years. She participated in this interview using fluent Japanese. Including Japanese and her native tongue Dutch, Dr. Vanbaelen speaks five languages. The interviewer was surprised to learn that, depending on the situation or her mood at the time, she can switch her thinking between these languages.

*What are you currently researching under the JSPS fellowship?*

I am working on a sociolinguistic comparative study between Dutch in the northern part of Belgium (=Flanders) and Japanese. In Flanders, a new variety of Dutch is emerging, positioning itself between the standard language and different dialects. I view the "informalization" of society as one of the factors influencing this tendency. My research aims at finding whether such a tendency is happening in Japan as well.

*That's sound fascinating. How did you become interested in your research field, linguistics?*

Belgium has three official languages, so I've always had contact with different languages since I was a child. Also, my personal interest tends to be toward languages rather than sciences. Graduating from high school, I decided to study a language different from the Romanic or Germanic languages I had learned so far.

*As an undergraduate, I understand you studied Japanese.*

At the time, China was still very much a closed society, whereas Japan was

experiencing an economic bubble. I took up Japanese studies because it seemed to hold good future potential. As Japanese was different from any language I had learned before, I found studying it to be most interesting. I've never regretted my choice of majors.

However, majoring in Japanese studies without really knowing the country seemed like a contradiction. So after graduating from the university in Belgium, I applied for and received a scholarship from the Japanese Ministry of Education and Science, which enabled me to study linguistics in a postgraduate degree course at the University of Tsukuba. I did a sociolinguistic study on "gender differences in the Japanese language," which besides a literature survey entailed on-the-ground interviews and fieldwork.

*Did you meet your host researcher when you were doing your doctoral studies at Tsukuba?*

Yes, I met Prof. Ryuichi Washio when I was enrolled in the doctoral program there. He contacted me about being a research assistant. He was and is still doing comparative grammar research in Japanese, Dutch, Mongolian and Korean. He also gave me valuable comments on my doctoral dissertation; and after graduating, he agreed to be my host researcher under the JSPS postdoctoral fellowship. It was through my association with Prof. Washio that I became interested in pursuing my current research on comparing the Dutch and Japanese languages.

*What's your impression of the University of Tsukuba?*

I've known my host institution since the time I was a graduate student. I feel that



**Dr. Ruth Vanbaelen**

Ph.D. (Linguistics), University of Tsukuba, Japan, 2003

M.A. (Linguistics), University of Tsukuba, Japan, 1997

B.A. (Japanese Studies), Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, 1994

over the years, the students' academic skills have improved along with their language abilities, which is important in today's global society. Tsukuba is a very international city, which makes life easier for foreign residents. I also like Tsukuba because of its rich natural environment. When I feel in need of some urban stimulus, I can always go to Tokyo. However, having lived in Tsukuba for many years, I've developed a fond attachment to it. In Belgium, Louvain is very much like Tsukuba in that it is a planned city with a strong academic environment.

*What do you usually do outside of your research activities?*

I bike to and from the university; besides that, I work out at the local gym. It is a perfect place to de-stress myself as well as to meet people, both Japanese and foreigners. The Japanese always introduce me to new aspects of their culture.

*Speaking of culture, what do you think of life in Japan—its culture and customs?*

I really enjoy my time in Japan. It is a safe society where people respect each other. The culture is very diverse, having everything from martial arts, to pottery, to public baths. Soon a friend will take me to spend the night at the Eiheiji Temple so that I can get a glimpse of how Buddhist monks live in Japan. The local *matsuri* make a hot and humid summer something to look forward to.



Dr. Vanbaelen in her study



On the University of Tsukuba campus



*What do you plan to do after your fellowship ends?*

I have no concrete plans at this moment, though I would like to work at a Japanese university, teaching linguistics and languages while continue my research. As my initial research focus was on the Japanese language, Japan was THE place for me to be. Because I am still comparing Dutch and Japanese on a sociolinguistic level, it remains the best base of operation for me.

*What advice would you give someone about to begin a JSPS fellowship?*

Having Japanese language proficiency is not a must but basic Japanese skills will definitely aid you in communicating with colleagues as well as facilitating contacts with people in your daily life. For people like me who are in the humanities or social sciences and whose research involves Japan, it will make your work much easier if you study Japan's culture and to

some degree its language before coming. I might suggest also that you be ready to spend some time helping Japanese colleagues and students with proofreading and other tasks. They too will be there for you when you need them! Remember, life in Japan is not all research—please take time to experience and enjoy the Japanese culture as well.

Interview by JSPS Fellows Plaza

## Introducing Japan: Tsukuba Science City

*JSPS fellow Dr. Ruth Vanbaelen wrote this article about the city where she is doing her research.*

Tsukuba is located in Ibaraki Prefecture about 50 kilometers northeast of Tokyo. As one of Japan's major science cities, it is home to the University of Tsukuba along with scores of renowned research institutes such as the Tsukuba Space Center of JAXA (Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency) and KEK (High Energy Accelerator Research Organization). Mainly because of these institutes, the city has a large number of foreign residents hailing from over 125 different countries.

It is safe to say that before the establishment of the University of Tsukuba in 1973, Tsukuba was very much a farming town. Even nowadays the outskirts of this 200,000-inhabitant city are a patchwork of rice paddies and fields. At the center of the city is an area laid out according to plan with wide streets, a central walkway and a bicycle path. This "esplanade," as it is somewhat ambitiously called, connects several parks that attract many families with children on weekends. For others, the path provides a daily jogging track.

In August 2005, Tsukuba became directly connected to Tokyo via the Tsukuba Express train line. Though this gives a boost to real estate development, fortunately there is still plenty of nature to keep the city green.

In past decades, Tsukuba has seen a big influx of people, both Japanese and foreigners. To provide them with a sense of home, several festivals are held throughout the year. Scheduled for the last weekend of August this year, Matsuri Tsukuba features *nebuta*, big floats made of bamboo and paper lit up from the inside. During the International Exchange Fair in May, foreign residents introduce their cultures and cuisines. The plum blossom festival



The city with Mt. Tsukuba in background

on Mt. Tsukuba marks the onset of spring.

A neighboring city, Tsuchiura, is well known for its lotus root production. Before New Years, you can see farmers harvesting the roots by digging them out of cold, deep mud fields. The prefecture's capital Mito is not only known for its plum tree garden but also for its *wara-natto*, sticky fermented soy beans wrapped in straw. Enjoying their distinct flavor needs an acquired taste, even for a lot of Japanese!



Wara-natto



### 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:

One of many fireworks festivals held in cities throughout Japan to celebrate the summer holiday season.

## 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.



## Request for Reader Comments

We are taking a survey with an eye to reflecting reader interests in the *JSPS Quarterly*. If you have an opinion of our newsletters, we would like to hear from you. We would also like to know your impressions of the JSPS Fellows Plaza webpage. Please e-mail your comments to the JSPS Fellows Plaza at

[fellowspiazza@jpsps.go.jp](mailto:fellowspiazza@jpsps.go.jp)

or fax them to us at

+81-3-3263-1854.

For further information on JSPS's organization and programs, please visit our website [[www.jpsps.go.jp/english/](http://www.jpsps.go.jp/english/)], or mail or fax inquiries to JSPS Fellows Plaza using the address or fax number given below. JSPS Quarterly and our brochure may also be downloaded.

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