

JSPS Quarterly

Japan Society for the Promotion of Science



FEATURE: First JSPS *Ikushi* Prize

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Award Ceremony Held for First JSPS *Ikushi* Prize

Graced by the presence of Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan, the first *Ikushi* Prize award ceremony was held by JSPS at the Japan Academy on 1 February. At the ceremony, 17 young researchers received an *Ikushi* certificate and medal.

In 2009, JSPS received an endowment from Emperor Akihito on the 20th year of his reign. Amidst a severe economic environment in Japanese society, His Majesty's desire was to encourage and support young scientists who are working diligently to advance their studies and research. In deference to his wishes, JSPS established the *Ikushi* Prize program and placed it into operation in FY 2010. It functions to formally recognize outstanding doctoral students who can be expected to contribute to Japan's future scientific advancement, while seeking to fan their enthusiasm for education and research pursuits.

For this landmark conferral of the first *Ikushi* Prize, in May 2010 a request to nominate candidates was sent out to 2,535 Japanese universities and academic societies, from which 206 nominations were received by August. Over a 5-month period, JSPS's Research Center for Science Systems conducted preliminary document and panel reviews on the nominees, upon which the program's Selec-



Ms. Nishimoto offering message in presence of Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress

tion Committee made the final decisions. Meeting on 6 January, the Committee members engaged in a vigorous discussion of the nominees taking into account their current research activities and future potential, finally coming to the difficult decision on which 17 nominees to select for the Prize.

JSPS president Prof. Motoyuki Ono opened the ceremony with introductory remarks and was followed by Selection Committee chair Dr. Takeshi Sasaki, who reported on the vetting process. Then, Prof. Ono presented an *Ikushi* certificate and medal to Ms. Noa Nishimoto, doctoral student at Kyoto University, who received them as a representative of all the awardees. This was followed by a congratulatory message from the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, read by Vice Minister Ms. Kumiko Hayashi. The program concluded with a message of appreciation and future resolve on behalf of the awardees by Ms. Nishimoto.

After the ceremony, a tea party was held at the Japan Academy, in which Their Majesties enjoyed pleasant conversation with Vice Minister Hayashi, Dr. Sasaki, and the *Ikushi* laureates.



On Receiving the First *Ikushi* Prize by Dr. Noa Nishimoto, Kyoto University

I am deeply honored to have received such a prestigious award. This prize compensates for the labor invested and difficulties sustained over the course of my research to date. It also spurs me on in the pursuit of my studies by elevating my self-confidence and determination. It was also a great pleasure for me to meet at the award ceremony many brilliant young researchers of my own generation who are advancing cutting-edge research in various scientific fields. That opportunity

both stimulated and encouraged me in my own work. I will be eternally grateful and indebted to Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress, who have created such a wonderful opportunity to heighten the motivation and bolster the morale of young scientists.

My specialty is African area studies and linguistics. I have been doing linguistic studies on the Malagasy language through field research in Madagascar.

Focusing on the Antandroy dialect in non-literate societies in the southern part of Madagascar, I have described and analyzed from scratch its system of phonetics, phonology, lexicon and grammar with the help of native speakers. I have also endeavored to contribute to language documentation by recording oral traditions and oral folktales in this language. Despite living in natural and social conditions different from those I was accustomed to in Japan and facing

difficulties peculiar to developing countries, such as security and hygiene issues, I finally succeeded in creating a holistic picture of the Antandroy language, which has rarely ever been documented, thanks to the understanding and support of the Malagasy people in the field.

If nothing is done, the majority of the world's thousands of living languages will become extinct. In its focus on preserving cultural diversity, UNESCO considers research and documentation of minority or endangered languages to be of paramount importance.

Malagasy belongs to the Austronesian language family, which is widely dispersed over the islands of the Indian and

Pacific Oceans, Taiwan, Southeast Asia, and Maori areas of New Zealand. Henceforth, I would like to further advance my study by expanding my area of research to Indonesia, Tahiti, and Easter Island from 2011. Furthermore, I would like to broaden my horizons to include comparative Austronesian linguistics in an effort to elucidate how individual contemporary linguistic systems of Malagasy dialects and Indonesian languages have evolved. While doing linguistic research, I aspire to being a researcher who actively contributes to resolving global development issues by also turning my attention to individual problems in local societies revealed only after carrying out research in the field.

One month after the prize-award ceremony, I was shocked and shaken by news of the catastrophic Great East Japan Earthquake that struck Japan on 11 March while I was conducting field research in Madagascar. I personally had received wholehearted support from people in Japan and many other countries after the 1995 Great Hanshin Earthquake. So as to give back to society amidst the unprecedented national crisis facing Japan today, I will strive to build a brighter future for Japan by promoting and engaging in friendly competition with other young scientists. Using this award as a new starting point on my research journey, I would like to take up the challenge of conducting a comprehensive, longitudinal research project.

FY2010 JSPS Ikushi Prize Awardees

Humanities and Social Sciences

Akira Ichikawa	Graduate School of Letters, Nagoya University	"An Archaeological Study on the Societies of Classic Period of Mesoamerica and Its Formation Processes"
Haruto Takagishi	Graduate School of Letters, Hokkaido University	"The Role of Theory of Mind in Altruistic Behavior"
Hiromasa Takemura	Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, The University of Tokyo	"Psychophysical Study for Visual Motion Processing Based on Spatial and Temporal Interaction of Visual Signal"
Ai Nishida	Graduate School of Foreign Language Studies, Kobe City University of Foreign Studies	"Old Tibetan Divination Manuscripts from Central Asia"
Noa Nishimoto	Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies, Kyoto University	"A Descriptive Study of the Antandroy Dialect of Malagasy"
Michiko Yoshie	Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, The University of Tokyo	"Psychophysiological Study of the Effects of Social-Evaluative Stress on Motor Performance in Pianists"

Mathematics; Physical Sciences; Chemistry; Engineering Sciences

Ken-ichi Uchida	Graduate School of Science, Tohoku University	"Exploration of Fundamental Physics and Application Technology on Thermo-Spin Effects"
Masaaki Kitajima	Graduate School of Engineering, The University of Tokyo	"Molecular Epidemiological Analysis of Pathogenic Viruses in Water Environments and Control Risk of Infection"
Makiko Sasada	Graduate School of Mathematical Sciences, The University of Tokyo	"Hydrodynamic Limits for Systems of Non-Gradient Type"
Masayoshi Nobukawa	Graduate School of Science, Kyoto University	"X-Ray Study of the Galactic Center Region with Suzaku"
Shuichi Yanagisawa	Graduate School of Science, Nagoya University	"Arene-Assembling Reactions through Direct C-H Bond Functionalization"

Biological Sciences; Agricultural Sciences; Medical, Dental, Pharmaceutical Sciences

Naoki Ikenaga	Graduate School of Medical Sciences, Kyushu University	"Development of the Selective Stromal-Directed Therapies Targeting the Specific Pancreatic Stellate Cells Enhancing the Progression of Pancreatic Cancer"
Tomohisa Seki	Graduate School of Medicine, Keio University	"Generation of Induced Pluripotent Stem Cells from Human Terminally Differentiated Circulating T Cells"
Ryosuke Nakai	Graduate School of Biosphere Science, Hiroshima University	"Phylogeographic Analysis of Microorganisms in the Arctic and Antarctic Polar Regions"
Masayuki Horie	Graduate School of Medicine, Osaka University	"Endogenous Non-Retroviral RNA Virus Elements in Mammalian Genomes"
Yuya Yamagishi	Graduate School of Science, The University of Tokyo	"Analysis of the Function and the Localization Mechanism of the Conserved Protein Shugoshin"
Ayako Yoshida	Graduate School of Agricultural and Life Sciences, The University of Tokyo	"Structural Biology on Amino Acid Kinases Involved in Amino Acid Biosynthesis"

Awardees of Seventh JSPS Prize Announced

Based on the screening deliberations of the JSPS Prize Selection Committee, 25 recipients of the seventh (FY2010) JSPS Prize have been selected, and were announced by JSPS. (See their names listed below.)

In the next issue of *JSPS Quarterly*, the Prize ceremony will be covered, and comments by the Prize recipients who also won the Japan Academy Medal will be published.

— Research Fellowship Division

FY2010 JSPS Prize Awardees

Humanities and Social Sciences		
Etsuko Katsumata	Assistant Professor, School of Theology, Doshisha University	"An Analytic Study of Judaic Literature Based on Aramaic and Hebrew Texts"
Akira Takagishi	Associate Professor, Graduate School of Decision Science and Technology, Tokyo Institute of Technology	"A Study of the Execution and Appreciation of Picture Handscrolls in the Muromachi Period"
Yasumasa Matsuda	Professor, Graduate School of Economics and Management, Tohoku University	"Theory of Spatial Time Series Analysis and Its Application to Spatial Econometrics"
Tadashi Mori	Associate Professor, Graduate Schools for Law and Politics, The University of Tokyo	"Historical Development of the Right of Self-Defence in International Law"
Yuriko Yamanaka	Associate Professor, National Museum of Ethnology, National Institutes for the Humanities	"A Comparative Study of Alexander the Great's Images in the Medieval Middle East"
Mathematics; Physical Sciences; Chemistry; Engineering Sciences		
Osamu Iyama	Professor, Graduate School of Mathematics, Nagoya University	"Representation Theory of Orders"
Takashi Ooi	Professor, Graduate School of Engineering, Nagoya University	"Developments of Asymmetric Syntheses with Chiral Ammonium and Chiral Tetraaminophosphonium Salts"
Takeaki Ozawa	Professor, Graduate School of Science, The University of Tokyo	"Reconstitution of Reporter Proteins by Using Dissection and Reconstruction of Fluorescent Proteins"
Tsuyoshi Kimura	Professor, Graduate School of Engineering Science, Osaka University	"Development of Magnetolectric Materials and Phenomena"
Eiji Saitoh	Professor, Institute for Materials Research, Tohoku University	"Exploration of Physical Phenomena and Application Technology Based on Spin Currents"
Yoichi Sato	Professor, Institute of Industrial Science, The University of Tokyo	"Pioneering Work in Image-Based Modeling for Digital Content Creation"
Taku Tsuchiya	Professor, Geodynamics Research Center, Ehime University	"Theoretical and Computational Study on the Ultrahigh-Pressure Properties of Earth and Planetary Materials"
Kentaro Torisawa	Group Leader, Knowledge Creating Communication Research Center, National Institute of Information and Communications Technology	"Automatic Construction of Large-Scale Knowledge Bases from the Web and Their Application to Web Search"
Tomoteru Fukumura	Associate Professor, Graduate School of Science, The University of Tokyo	"Invention of Magnetic Oxide Semiconductor"
Hiroyuki Fukuyama	Professor, Institute of Multidisciplinary Research for Advanced Materials, Tohoku University	"Novel Materials Processing Based on Chemical Thermodynamics and Development of Thermophysical Property Measurements"
Heiji Watanabe	Professor, Graduate School of Engineering, Osaka University	"Creation of Next-Generation Electronics Based on Semiconductor Surface and Interface Science"
Biological Sciences; Agricultural Sciences; Medical, Dental, Pharmaceutical Sciences		
Masahiro Ito	Professor, Faculty of Life Sciences, Toyo University	"Properties of Bacterial Flagellar Motor Powered by Hybrid Stators"
Hiroki Ueda	Project Leader, Center for Developmental Biology, RIKEN	"Understanding of Design Principles in Mammalian Circadian Clocks"
Takuya Kitaoka	Associate Professor, Faculty of Agriculture, Kyushu University	"Functional Architectonics of Polysaccharides and Fiber Materials"
Tomohisa Kuzuyama	Associate Professor, Biotechnology Research Center, The University of Tokyo	"Diversity in Microbial Terpenoid Biosynthetic Pathways"
Shu Takeda	Associate Professor, School of Medicine, Keio University	"Neuronal Control of Bone Metabolism"
Kenji Matsuura	Associate Professor, Graduate School of Environmental Science, Okayama University	"Ecological Researches on Termite Social Systems and Their Applications to Termite Control"
Toshimasa Yamauchi	Lecturer, Graduate School of Medicine, The University of Tokyo	"Identification of Receptors for Fat-Derived Hormone Adiponectin and Clarification of Molecular Mechanisms for Their Anti-diabetic Actions Including Exercise-Mimicking Effects"
Sho Yamasaki	Professor, Medical Institute of Bioregulation, Kyushu University	"Self and Non-Self Recognition through Immune Receptors"
Masao Watanabe	Professor, Graduate School of Life Sciences, Tohoku University	"Identification of Gene Loci Responsible for Self-Nonself Discrimination and Elucidation of Molecular Discrimination Mechanism in Crustacean Self-Incompatibility"

Titles and affiliations current as of 1 January 2011

Third HOPE Meeting Held

From 2008, JSPS has been holding HOPE Meetings, which provide a platform for young researchers from the Asia-Pacific region to engage in discussions with Nobel laureates and other distinguished researchers and to interact with peers of their own generation. The third in this series of HOPE Meetings was held on the subject of physics and related fields from 7-11 March in Tokyo. Its organizing committee was chaired by JSPS executive director Dr. Makoto Kobayashi, 2008 Nobel laureate in physics. Attended by about 100 doctoral students from 14 countries and regions of the Asia-Pacific, the meeting was addressed by Dr. Kobayashi, eight other Nobel laureates, and two world-renowned scientists. See their names listed below.

HOPE Meetings comprise five basic components: (1) Lectures by the Nobel laureates and distinguished scientists, (2) group discussions among the participants attended by the lecturers, (3) individual poster displays by the participants, (4) presentations by teams comprising participants of various nationalities, and (5) an observation tour of state-of-the-art research facilities.



Dr. Gross in a group discussion

The young participants of these meetings are both edified and inspired by hearing directly from the lecturers about their research accomplishments and ways of living as scientists, while broadening their perspectives and horizons through close interaction with peers from a wide swath of nations and cultures. The participants of this HOPE Meeting praised this opportunity and the chance it gave them to build networks with future colleagues within the region.

A reception was held in the evening of the first day of the HOPE Meeting. Messages were given by Mr. Koichiro Gemba, Minister of State for Science and Technology Policy, and Mr. Ryuzo Sasaki, Senior Vice Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, which both encouraged the participants and piqued their expectations as the program was about to shift into high gear.

Right in the middle of the team presentations in the afternoon of the last day, the Great East Japan Earthquake struck 370 kilometers northeast of Tokyo. Resulting disruptions caused the participants to return home early, albeit with indelible memories. It's our hope that the meeting participants will put into action the new knowledge they've garnered and networks they've seeded at the HOPE Meeting as they spread their wings and go on to soar as researchers both within the region and the wider global scientific community.

Side Events

On 6 March, the day before the commencement of the HOPE Meeting, a "HOPE Meeting Jr." was held, which gave Japanese

elementary and junior-high school students an opportunity to listen to and talk with Nobel laureates. Numbering 26, the students came from around Japan, and were assisted in conducting an experiment and enjoying their exchange with the laureates by nine of the graduate students who would be attending the HOPE Meeting.



Experiment in HOPE Meeting Jr.

Then, on 10 March during the HOPE Meeting, a "HOPE Dialogue" was carried out. Organized in conjunction with JSPS's Science Dialogue Program, the session gave high school students aspiring to become scientists a unique opportunity to engage in conversation with the HOPE Meeting lecturers, which kindled their interest in research while expanding their international perspectives. Afterwards, the students told us that it was the first time for them to participate in such a fun scientific event and how it elevated their interest in doing research work.



During the HOPE Dialogue

HOPE Meeting Lecturers

Dr. Leo Esaki	1973 Nobel Laureate in Physics
Dr. David J. Gross	2004 Nobel Laureate in Physics
Dr. Makoto Kobayashi	2008 Nobel Laureate in Physics
Dr. Toshihide Maskawa	2008 Nobel Laureate in Physics
Dr. Richard R. Ernst	1991 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry
Dr. Hideki Shirakawa	2000 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry
Dr. Ryoji Noyori	2001 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry
Mr. Koichi Tanaka	2002 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry
Dr. Ada E. Yonath	2009 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry
Dr. Gunnar Öquist	Professor Emeritus, University of Umeå
Dr. Robert Campbell	Professor, The University of Tokyo

— Asian Program Division

ESF-JSPS Frontier Science Conference Held for Young Researchers

On 1-6 March, the annual ESF-JSPS Frontier Science Conference for Young Researchers was held by the European Science Foundation and JSPS, this time on the theme “Cutting Edge Immunology and Its Clinical Application.” Venued in the Netherlands, this seventh seminar in the series was co-chaired by Prof. Kazuo



Sugamura, Miyagi Cancer Center, and Prof. Åke Lernmark, Lund University, on the European side. It featured seven sessions: one on the topics “Development of hemato-poietic and immune system,” “Immune regulation,” “Innate and mucosal immunity,” “Immunological memory and tolerance,” and “Immune disorders,” and two on “Treatment and prevention of diseases.”

Fifty-four young researchers, all selected via open recruitment, participated in this educational program. They received lectures delivered by 22 Japanese and European faculty of eminent researchers on the latest advances and research results across a range of immunological fields, while being provided an opportunity to give “short talks” and report on their own research in poster sessions. Beyond the sessions, the participants engaged each other and the faculty in spirited conversation during meals and on the excursion.

Given the amplifier effect that the seminar had in networking the young and faculty researchers, it was deemed successful in a way that will pay future dividends in both cross-generational and international exchange.

— Research Cooperation Division II

Fourteenth Meeting Held of Japan-India Science Council

On 15 February, JSPS and the Indian government’s Department of Science and Technology (DST) convened the 14th meeting of the Japan-India Science Council in Tokyo. It was attended by the co-chairs, Dr. Thirumalachari Ramasami on the India side and Prof. Keitaro Yoshihara on the Japan side, along with 11 coordinators of the program’s six areas of priority: Molecular and Supramolecular Sciences, Advanced Materials, Modern Biology and Biotechnology, Manufacturing Sciences, Astronomical and Space Science, and Surface and Interface Sciences. They selected the joint projects and seminars to be carried out in FY 2011 and planned the implementation of JSPS’s next two Asian Academic Seminars to be held with DST. The members considered revamping the six priority areas based on current situations within the international community, bringing back with them ideas to develop for the next council meeting.

Since the first meeting of the Japan-India Science Council held by JSPS and DST in 1993, it has overseen all of the two agency’s Indo-Japanese collaborative programs. The meeting saw the regretful retirement of Prof. Yoshihara and Prof. Manabu Kiuchi,



who have worked devotedly to advance Indo-Japanese scientific exchange and the council’s program since its inception.

It was agreed to hold the next council meeting in January or February 2012 in India.

— Asian Program Division

Initial Projects Selected under the NEXT Program

The Funding Program for Next Generation World-Leading Researchers (NEXT Program) was initiated by the Cabinet Office and is implemented under the Leading-edge Research Promotion Fund, established within JSPS using the government’s FY2009 supplemental budget. The NEXT Program aims to support leading-edge R&D with policy and societal ramifications in fields of “green innovation” and “life innovation.” This research is carried out by young and female researchers with expected potential to become world leaders in their respective fields of science and technology.

In February, 329 projects were selected out of 5,618 proposals. Those short-listed via an initial document review were given hear-

ings conducted by the Program Screening Committee, assisted by JSPS which serves as the program’s administrative secretariat. Based on these screening results, the Cabinet Office’s Council for Science and Technology Policy made the final selections.

Over a maximum period of four fiscal years (FY 2010 thru 2013), each project will receive funding in an amount of up to ¥200 million (including 30% to cover indirect costs). Lists of funded projects are posted by categories under “green innovation” and “life innovation” on JSPS’s website. See them at <http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-jisedai/green.html> <http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-jisedai/life.html>

— Leading-edge Research Promotion Division

Korean Alumni Association Holds General Meeting

On 18 February, the Korean JSPS Fellows Alumni Association held its sixth general meeting at the Catholic University of Pusan. It was the association's second general meeting to be held in FY 2010, the first having been held in Daejeon last May.

After messages of greeting by the organizer to start the general



Dr. Shirakawa giving keynote speech

meeting, congratulatory remarks were offered by Catholic University of Pusan president Dr. Kyoung-Chul Youn, Consul-General of Japan in Busan Mr. Shuitsu Tamitsuji, and Busan Chamber of Commerce & Industry president Mr. Jung-Taek Shin.

In this meeting, the keynote address was given by Dr. Hideki Shirakawa, professor emeritus, University of Tsukuba (2000 Nobel laureate in chemistry), who spoke on the theme "The Nobel Prize and Nobel Symposium—My Research and Research Funding." He revisited the research that led to his receiving the Nobel Prize and described the connection between past Japanese Nobel laureates and the budget of Japan's competitive grants-in-aid system (*Kakenhi*), emphasizing the vital need for basic research while conveying the importance of exchange among researchers of diverse backgrounds in the process of advancing milestone-setting work.

After his speech, Dr. Shirakawa posed for a commemorative photograph with some 40 local high school students, whose questions he gladly answered and discussed.

— Overseas Fellowship Division

Bangladesh Alumni Association Holds Second Symposium

On 21 December, the Bangladesh JSPS Alumni Association held its second symposium on the campus of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) in Dhaka. Following welcoming remarks by the organizers, congratulatory messages were given by the special guests: Dr. M. Muhibur Rahman, University Grants Commission of Bangladesh (UGC), and Mr. Tamotsu Shinotsuka, Ambassador of Japan to Bangladesh. A special message was given by the symposium's chief guest speaker, Dr. Hasan Mahmud, State Minister for Environment and Forests. Then, key-



note speeches were delivered by Dr. Yoshihiro Hayashi, professor, Tokyo University of Agriculture, and Dr. Naiyyum Choudhury, secretary, Bangladesh Academy of Sciences and president, Bangladesh JSPS Alumni Association. They spoke on the respective themes of the "Current Status and Future Direction of Wildlife Management in Japan" and "Climate Change and Biodiversity."

A Science Session, chaired by JSPS Bangkok Office director Dr. Wataru Takeuchi, was held after the keynote speeches. In it, four research presentations were delivered by Dr. Shunitz Tanaka, Hokkaido University, Dr. Ryohei Kada, Research Institute for Humanity and Nature, Dr. Md. Abul Hossain Molla, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University, and Dr. Md. Sirajul Islam, Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University. The Q&A session that followed enjoyed an animated discussion that went way over the scheduled time.

All in all, an elevated level of interest permeated the symposium's discussions on climate change and its ramifications regarding biodiversity.

— Overseas Fellowship Division

Symposium on Aging Society Held in London

On 28-29 March, the JSPS London Office in cooperation with the Economic and Social Research Council and International Longevity Centre held a symposium at the Church House Conference Centre in London. It addressed the "Aging Society," a topic of currency in both the UK and Japan.

Like in Japan, there is heightened public interest in the UK in advancing population aging and its impact on society. In major cities of both countries, over 25% of the populations will soon be over 60 years old. Such urban aging is necessitating innovative reforms across a range of issues, including related technology, urban planning, domicile, medicine and social care. This symposium brought together policymakers and researchers from the two countries' universities and research institutes in a lively discussion on new approaches to aging societies, including ways to improve the

quality of people's lives as they grow older in urban environments.



— JSPS London Office

Japan Earthquake Appeal Held in London

On 22 March, an event entitled “Japan Earthquake Appeal” was held at University College London (UCL). Six members of JSPS’s London Office, including its director Prof. Kozo Hiramatsu, participated in the event.

In response to the Great East Japan Earthquake that struck



Japan on 11 March, Prof. Shin-ichi Ohnuma and other members of the UCL faculty planned and organized this event with the support of the JSPS London Office.

The program began with opening remarks by Prof. Derek Tocher, UCL Pro-rector for East and Southeast Asia. Then, all in attendance extended an expression of sorrow and condolence to the people affected in Japan. Prof. Peter Sammonds, director, UCL Institute for Risk & Disaster Reduction, and other researchers gave presentations on the disaster and relief efforts.

Even though the event had been hastily organized, it filled the university’s lecture theater to full capacity. All of the attendees grieved over the terrible calamity that had befallen the Japanese people. Japanese students from mainly UCL collected donations at the entrance of the hall, raising a total of 2,612.51 pounds, which they gave to the British Red Cross and the Japan Society. The event was introduced over the NIKKEI.com website.

— JSPS London Office

International Symposia Held under New JSPS London Schemes

The JSPS London Office has established distinctive schemes for supporting Japanese researchers based in the UK and British researchers belonging to the UK JSPS Alumni Association. The London Office supports travel and other costs related to symposia held jointly in the UK with Japanese universities and researchers. Up till now, the Office has sponsored or cosponsored joint UK-Japan symposia. By separating them into separate schemes—one centering on Japanese researchers based in the UK and the other on alumni association members—it seeks to help the members of both groups in making a smooth transition from post-graduate students or postdoctoral researchers to higher steps in their career paths. At the same time, the new system seeks to elevate the profile of Japan’s scientific research in the UK, while advancing Anglo-Japanese joint research and further internationalizing Japanese universities. The first symposia were held under these two new schemes.

Symposium for Japanese researchers based in the UK

Selected via an open call for proposals, the first symposium under this scheme was held on 10 February at University College London (UCL) on the theme “Mitochondria—From Fundamental Aspects to Medical Importance.”

Registration of participants was started in November. So many applications were received from students and researchers at UCL and other British universities that a waiting list had to be compiled, bespeaking the high level of interest attracted in the run-up to the event.



At the symposium, Prof. Sir Salvador Moncada, director, Wolfson Institute for Biomedical Research, offered opening remarks, followed by lectures from researchers invited from various Japanese universities and from researchers at UCL. Packing the hall, the symposium was carried off very successfully.

Symposium for UK JSPS Alumni Association members

This symposium on “Sports Technology: Engineering the Future of Sport” was planned by a member of the alumni association’s executive board, Dr. Ruth Goodridge, research fellow, Wolfson School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering, Loughborough University. It was held at her university on 23-25 February.



The objective of the symposium was to apply engineering technologies, which have seen rapid advances over recent years, to sports by sharing research information and strengthening collaboration between British and Japanese researchers while discovering new joint research opportunities. Loughborough University is highly appraised for its engineering fields and sports activities. It will serve as a training camp for both British and Japanese teams in the lead-up to the 2012 Summer Olympics. Accordingly, the symposium was of significant meaning for both countries. In fact, in 2009 the Japanese Olympic Committee signed a memorandum of understanding with Loughborough University for the two organizations to work together up to the lighting of the London Olympic torch.

— JSPS London Office

Thai Alumni Association Holds Biochar Workshop

On 3 February, the JSPS Alumni Forum of Thailand (JAFT) held a workshop on the theme “Biochar: A Carbon Negative Technology Approach to Urban Community Development” at Kasetsart University in Bangkok.

A carbon-rich material produced by heating biomass under



oxygen-limited conditions, “biochar” is expected to offer broad-reaching societal advantages, including a decreased release of greenhouse gases, soil improvement, and poverty alleviation. The workshop assembled some 160 members of the Thai public who learned about both the theory and practice of using this technology.

Two authorities on biochar came from Japan to give presentations at the workshop. They were Dr. Akira Shibata and Dr. Hidehiko Kanegae, both professors of Ritsumeikan University. JSPS Bangkok Office director Dr. Wataru Takeuchi also delivered a lecture on environmental changes as viewed via satellite monitoring. In the afternoon, an experiment to make biochar was carried out using a simple kit. It was followed by panel presentations and a discussion, in which the participants engaged in a spirited exchange of views on how biochar may be made and used in each of their regions.

The workshop is considered to have been very meaningful as it worked to proliferate via the JSPS alumni effective scientific practices that accord to unique regional needs and characteristics.

— JSPS Bangkok Office

RONPAKU Medal Award Ceremony and Thai Alumni Association's General Assembly

On 4 February, the JSPS Bangkok Office held a JSPS-NRCT RONPAKU Medal Award Ceremony and the JSPS Alumni Forum of Thailand (JAFT) convened its second General Assembly, the first having been held a year earlier to inaugurate JAFT's establishment. Venued at the Siam City Hotel in Bangkok, the general meeting brought together some 40 alumni members. It began with remarks by JAFT chair Prof. Busaba Yongsmith, who described the alumni association's objectives and the transition

ceremony has been held in cooperation with the National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT) since 2003.

The ceremony was attended by Mr. Tomoyuki Sakairi, first secretary, Embassy of Japan in Thailand, Mrs. Kanchana Pankhoingam, acting secretary-general, NRCT, and Ms. Akie Hoshino, head, JSPS Asian Program Division, who each offered opening remarks.

FY 2009 saw ten RONPAKU graduates from Thailand, of whom eight participated in the ceremony. In the presence of JAFT alumni and other guests, each of the graduates received the RONPAKU medal from Ms. Hoshino and gave a presentation on their doctoral dissertations. Amidst a taut yet warm atmosphere, an ensuing exchange of views and information was held across the various generations of the participants.

With the new RONPAKU graduates desiring to participate in JAFT, the Thai alumni association will move forward its activities toward ever-greater development and invigoration.

At a casual reception held in the evening, the participants compared notes on their experiences in Japan, enjoying the pleasant time together in the cool air of Bangkok's dry season.



Discussion in alumni association meeting

underlying its establishment. A report was given on JAFT's FY2010 activities, an honorary member candidate was introduced, and various important items of business, including the FY2011 agenda, were discussed, with decisions made by consensus. Bouncing from member to member, the discussion was as animated as it was productive.

In the JSPS-NRCT RONPAKU Medal Award Ceremony that followed, medals were presented to the graduating RONPAKU scholars. This ceremony is held to celebrate the accomplishments of these scholars who have earned a PhD degree from a Japanese university through support provided under the RONPAKU Program while encouraging them in their future endeavors. The



RONPAKU Medal recipients

— JSPS Bangkok Office

Japan-Germany Colloquium Held in Münster to Commemorate Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations

Each year, the JSPS Bonn Office holds a Japan-Germany Colloquium. This year's, held on 16-19 February, marks the seventh in the series. Venued at the University of Münster, it addressed the theme "Regulation Beyond the Law? New Approaches to Social Regulation under Conditions of Complexity, Uncertainty and Risk." The colloquium's coordinator on the German side was Prof. Dr. Thomas Hoeren, Institute for Information, Telecommunication and Media Law, University of Münster, and on the Japanese side was Prof. Toshiyuki Kono, Faculty of Law, Kyushu University. They were joined in the event by eleven German and six Japanese researchers.



On the evening of the 16th, an informal reception was held to give the participants a chance to get to know each other. The colloquium on the 17th and 18th brought them together in an intensive discussion driven by cutting-edge research presentations.

Rapid advances in science and technology and societal changes over recent years have engendered a myriad of problems related to social regulation as based on existing legal frameworks. In addressing the uncertainties and risks accompanying such complex issues, the participants delivered reports from a wide range of academic viewpoints including law, social science and philosophy as well as various theoretical perspectives. Also approaching the theme from the standpoint of actual problems on the ground, the discussion segued to social regulation from culture, lifestyle, information/intellectual property, and economic vantage points.

This year's colloquium was held as a designated event to commemorate the 150th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Germany. On the evening of the 17th, a formal reception, attended by Mr. Markus Lewe, Mayor of Münster, and Mr. Kiyoshi Koinuma, Consul General of Japan in Düsseldorf, was held in the Friedenssaal (Peace Hall), where the Peace of Westphalia ending the Thirty Years' War was signed in 1648.

— JSPS Bonn Office

Returnees Gathering with JSPS Alumni Club in Finland

On 4 March, a gathering was held of Finnish students who have returned from educational stays in Japan supported by Japanese government scholarships. Hosted at the residence of the Ambassador of Japan in Helsinki, the event was sponsored by the JSPS Alumni Club in Finland and the Embassy of Japan.

At the gathering, Ms. Anni Kynsilehto, who was the first Finn to earn a bachelor's degree under the Japanese government scholarship, spoke in fluent Japanese about her experiences living in Japan, where she attended one year of Japanese language school and underwent four years of undergraduate study at the University of Tokyo. As many of those attending the event had been to Japan and could speak Japanese, an amiable atmosphere filled the room, punctured by occasional spurts of laughter.

Then, a lecture was delivered by Prof. Atsuhiko Shinmyo, vice president, Nara Institute of Science and Technology, who spoke on recent trends in plant biology from the perspective of environmental issues. As his presentation was delivered in a friendly manner that was even easy for those without a specialized knowledge of the subject to understand, it evoked a great number of questions from the attendees.

After the meeting, a buffet dinner was held in the reception hall

of the Ambassador's residence, giving the returning students and JSPS alumni an opportunity to converse and strengthen ties.

Held for the first time by the alumni club, this gathering was carried out very successfully as it gave Finns with interest in Japan a chance to interact and network, while introducing JSPS's program to the returning college students who may become future JSPS fellows.



— JSPS Stockholm Office

Swedish Alumni Club Holds Seminar on Japanese Culture

On 8 March, the JSPS Alumni Club in Sweden teamed up with the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities to hold a seminar on Japan's traditional culture and modern sub-culture. Attended by some 100 mostly women, the seminar testified to the high level of interest in Japanese culture in Sweden.

The proceedings started with remarks from Prof. Hiroshi Sano,

director, JSPS Stockholm Office, who introduced JSPS's programs and the Swedish alumni club's activities. His remarks offered members of Sweden's public a good opportunity to learn about JSPS, with the young researchers who are studying Japanese culture listening particularly intently.

The seminar's program featured a lecture on Japan's traditional



Ms. Salme giving presentation

kimono culture by Ms. Petra Holmberg, curator, Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, and an exhibit of a beautiful array of kimonos by Ms. Satoko Salme, who also gave a demonstration on the art of putting on the various layers and components of the kimono. This was followed by a lecture from Ms. Anna Pettersson, who is researching Japanese sub-culture at Stockholm University. Impressed with her presentation, some of the attendees said that they were surprised by how divergent in flavor Japan's sub-culture is from its traditional culture.

Prior to the seminar, the alumni club held its general meeting, in which the members discussed the next seminar theme, the BRIDGE Fellowship Program, and club's bylaws, among other items of business.

— JSPS Stockholm Office

Forum and General Assembly Held by US JSPS Alumni Association

On 11 March, the US JSPS Fellows Alumni Association held a "Multidisciplinary Science Forum" at the University of Washington in Seattle. Taking a full day, the forum started with an opening ceremony and a keynote lecture by JSPS's Washington DC Office director Dr. Hirotaka Sugawara on the subject of climate change, after which five sessions were carried out in the fields of biology and medical sciences, chemistry, engineering, mathematics and physics, and social sciences and humanities, in which six Japanese and three American researchers delivered lectures as "invited speakers." Altogether, some 60 people participated in this event, which enjoyed lively discussions in its Q&A and poster sessions. Making the forum especially successful was the superb cooperation received by the staff of the University of Washington and the active participation of its researchers and students.

Then, on 12 March, the alumni association held its annual general assembly. Under the leadership of its chair Dr. Blanca Chatten-Kacouris, several items of business were taken up, including a review of the association's bylaws, the screening schedule and method for the FY2011 BRIDGE Fellowship, an activity report from the FY2010 BRIDGE fellow, the preparatory schedule



At the alumni forum

for the next Multidisciplinary Science Forum, and the collection of membership dues. In the past, the association has carried out its activities with financial support from JSPS's headquarters; at the meeting, the members agreed to work toward making the association more fiscally independent and more vigorous in pursuing its agenda.

— JSPS Washington Office

Orientation Held for NIH-hosted JSPS Fellows

On 7 March, an orientation co-organized by JSPS and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) was held in Stone House on NIH's premises for fellows selected in FY 2010 under the JSPS Fellowship at NIH for Japanese Biomedical and Behavioral Researchers. The 14 fellows had started their research activities at NIH during the period from January through March.

The meeting began with remarks from Washington Office director Dr. Hirotaka Sugawara, NIH review-panel chair Dr. Keiko Ozato, and JSPS Research Fellowship Division head Mr. Isao Oshiro. Members of his division also explained the program's administrative procedures and fielded questions, after which the new fellows gave presentations on the nature of their various research activities.

A reception following the orientation was attended by some 70 former and current JSPS fellows at NIH, NIH host researchers, Japanese researchers currently working at NIH and others, who mingled with the new fellows, exchanged views and information, and strengthened collegial ties. As a mentor and supporter of JSPS postdoctoral fellows at NIH, Dr. Ozato noted in her



Dr. Sugawara offering remarks

reception remarks the vital role played by the NIH internship program in providing valuable research opportunities for young Japanese researchers.

— JSPS Washington Office

Gathering of JSPS Japanese Fellows Held in San Francisco

The JSPS San Francisco Office holds what it calls “Gatherings of JSPS Japanese Fellows.” The 16th such gathering was held on 25 February, attended by 13 fellows under both JSPS’s Research Fellowships for Young Scientists and Postdoctoral Fellowships for Research Abroad and other Japanese researchers laboring in the US, along with five members of JSPS’s Tokyo headquarters and San Francisco Office.

Office director Dr. Seishi Takeda opened the meeting with welcoming remarks, followed by Mr. Yasuharu Sasaki, deputy head of JSPS’s Research Fellowship Division, who gave a briefing on JSPS’s fellowships for Japanese doctoral and postdoctoral researchers. Then, the participants introduced themselves and their research activities, each presentation delivered in a personally unique and creative fashion. They formed collegial ties with each other by asking questions about the research fields presented while exchanging views including on their experiences of living and doing research in the US.

The gathering gave the young Japanese researchers dispatched to the US under JSPS fellowship programs an opportunity to build



mutual networks, which will be valuable in strengthening exchange among them not only while residing in the US but after they return to Japan. Believing the provision of such opportunities to be very meaningful, JSPS will continue to proactively support them in the future as well.

— JSPS San Francisco Office

Recent Visitors to JSPS (February-April 2011)

Chairman of the Board, RFBR

Prof. Vladislav Panchenko, Chairman of the Board, Russian Foundation for Basic Research (RFBR), came to JSPS on 23 February to participate in the signing ceremony for a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that extends bilateral scientific cooperation between Japan and Russia, which has been carried out by JSPS and RFBR since the first

MoU was concluded in 2004. On this occasion, Prof. Panchenko and JSPS president Prof. Motoyuki Ono discussed ideas for future collaboration between their two countries.

— Research Cooperation Division I



Eminent Scientist Prof. Ada E. Yonath

On 9 March, Prof. Ada E. Yonath (2009 Nobel laureate in chemistry) paid a courtesy visit to JSPS president Prof. Motoyuki Ono, having been invited to Japan under the JSPS Award for Eminent Scientists program. Before coming to JSPS, Prof. Yonath served as a lecturer at the HOPE Meeting, where she carried out a 2-hour Q&A session with the participants. In her conversation with Prof. Ono, she said that she found the participants to be excellent young researchers, being impressed by their

probing questions and insightful views. She emphasized the need for stimuli and structures that prompt young researchers to focus more on basic than applied research. For that purpose, she proposed creating “centers of basic science” even if small in scale and few in number, though it may be difficult to get governments to fund such centers as they would not be linked directly to generating revenue.

— Overseas Fellowship Division



President, University of Ouagadougou

On 9 March, Prof. Jean Kouliadiati, president of the University of Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso, paid a courtesy visit to JSPS president Prof. Motoyuki Ono. Prof. Kouliadiati explained that in Burkina Faso research emphasis is being placed on HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, biotechnology, environmental issues, waste materials, and hazardous material disposal, saying that scientific exchange

with Japan will be indispensable in developing his country into one undergirded by science and technology in the future. Responding, Prof. Ono said that expanding exchange among mainly young researchers through JSPS’s programs should be expected to strengthen collaboration among universities and advance science in both countries.

— Asian Program Division



Akita Prefectural Yokote Seiryu Gakuin High School

Date: 4 February

Dr. Mohamad S. Chikh Ali (Syria)

Host institution: Utsunomiya University
Title: "Plant Viruses: The Underestimated Threat"



Kumamoto Prefectural Daini High School

Date: 25 January

Dr. Long H. Hoang (Vietnam)

Host institution: Kyushu University
Title: "Biocontrol of Plant Disease Using Endophytic Bacteria"



Aomori Prefectural Hachinohe Kita High School

Date: 24 February

Dr. Andrew P. Lavender (Australia)

Host institution: The University of Tokyo
Title: "Australia—My Home, Neuroscience—My Research"



Nagoya Koyo Senior High School (Aichi)

Date: 4 February

Dr. Dana Ulanova (Russia)

Host institution: Osaka University
Title: "Invitation to Microbiology: The Role of Microorganisms in Nature and Human Life"



Fukui Prefectural Fujishima Senior High School

Date: 19 February

Dr. Ooi-Kock Teh (Malaysia)

Host institution: Kyoto University
Title: "Our Colourful Planet Earth: How Cell Biologist Use Fluorescent Proteins to Understand the Cellular World"



Naragakuen Tomigaoka Junior High and Senior High School (Nara)

Date: 5 February

Dr. Surawut Chuangchote (Thailand)

Host institution: Kyoto University
Title: "Nanofibers for Solar Cells"



Date: 22 February

Dr. Vinai Norasakkunkit (USA)

Host institution: Kyoto University
Title: "Cultural Differences and Modern Japan: A Cultural Psychological Perspective"

Nara Prefectural Nara High School

Date: 24 January

Dr. Timothy J. Stasevich (USA)

Host institution: Osaka University
Title: "Seeing Cells in Action"



Gifu Prefectural Gizan Senior High School

Date: 17 January

Dr. Edi Suharyadi (Indonesia)

Host institution: Nagoya University
Title: "From Indonesia to Japan: Social & Research Perspective"



Saga Prefectural Chienkan Senior High School

Date: 5 March

Dr. Dakrong Pissuwan (Thailand)

Host institution: Kyushu University
Title: "Biological Applications of Gold Nanoparticles"



Hyogo Prefectural Kakogawa Higashi High School

Date: 8 February

Dr. Richard C. Bardoux (France)

Host institution: Kyoto University
Title: "Light Sources in Our Daily Life"



Dr. Paulius Jurcys (Lithuania)

Host institution: Kyushu University
Title: "Law and the International World"



Junior High and Senior High School at Komaba, University of Tsukuba (Tokyo)

Date: 29 January

Dr. Giorgio Barone (Italy)

Host institution: Tokyo Polytechnic University
Title: "Research in Civil Engineering: An Italian Point of View"



Saitama Prefectural Urawaichijo High School

Date: 25 February

Dr. Andreas Unterweger (Austria)

Host institution: The University of Tokyo
Title: "Structural Retrofitting—How to Make Buildings Stronger for the Next Big Earthquake"



Shiga Prefectural Zeze High School

Date: 29 January

Dr. Boyen Huang (Taiwan)

Host institution: Kyoto University

Title: "A Journey to Scientific Research"



Tokushima Prefectural Jonan High School

Date: 24 February

Dr. Danny Tang (USA)

Host institution: Hiroshima University

Title: "Copepods Are the Coolest Crustaceans"



Shizuoka Kita High School (Shizuoka)

Date: 24 January

Dr. Carlos B. Zavalaga (Peru)

Host institution: Nagoya University

Title: "An Introduction to the World of Seabird Research"



Yamanashi Prefectural Tsuru High School

Date: 14 January

Dr. Yi Ching Ong (Malaysia)

Host institution: The University of Tokyo

Title: "Story at the Boundary"



Date: 27 January

Dr. Giuseppe Lorusso (Italy)

Host institution: RIKEN

Title: "The Origin of the Chemical Elements in the Universe"



Dr. Thomas J. Bell (UK)

Host institution: Tokyo Institute of Technology

Title: "Nuclear Power"

Shizuoka Prefectural Iwata Minami High School

Date: 16 February

Dr. Jeffrey A. Fawcett (New Zealand)

Host institution: The Graduate University for Advanced Studies

Title: "How Do Species Evolve and How Do Their Genomes Evolve?"



Date: 28 January

Dr. Kamlesh K. Shrivastava (India)

Host institution: Hamamatsu University School of Medicine

Title: "Nanotechnology and Applications"



Dr. Alexandre Laine (France)

Host institution: The University of Tokyo

Title: "Modelling of the Earth Climate"

Dr. Dan Wang (China)

Host institution: RIKEN

Title: "From Memory to Molecules"



Shizuoka Prefectural Kakegawa Nishi High School

Date: 8 March

Dr. Ashok P. Dimri (India)

Host institution: Nagoya University

Title: "Role of Topography in Defining Weather and Climate"



Date: 3 February

Dr. Effah K. Antwi (Ghana)

Host institution: The University of Tokyo

Title: "The Effect of Mining on Land Use Change"



Takada Senior High School (Mie)

Date: 18 March

Dr. Christian Joseph R. Cumagun (Philippines)

Host institution: Kobe University

Title: "Worry about Sick Plants! Call a Plant Doctor!"



Date: 18 February

Dr. Alka Saxena (Australia)

Host institution: RIKEN

Title: "Molecules Involved in Learning Disorders"



Tokai University Takanawadai Senior High School (Tokyo)

Date: 28 January

Dr. Sathiparan Navaratnarajah (Sri Lanka)

Host institution: The University of Tokyo

Title: "PP-band Retrofitting for Low Earthquake Resistant Masonry Houses"



Yamanashi Prefectural Yoshida High School

Date: 19 January

Dr. Sulayman K. Sowe (Gambia)

Host institution: National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies

Title: "Developing and Using Software for the Ne(x)t Millennium: What Can We Learn from Open Source Software Projects and Communities?"



*Message of Appreciation from
Prof. Motoyuki Ono, President,
Japan Society for the Promotion of Science*



On 11 March, the Great East Japan Earthquake and accompanying tsunami wreaked immense destruction on coastal communities of Japan's northeastern region. Having lost its cooling function due to electrical supply loss caused by the tsunami, the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant began leaking radiation, causing countries to issue travel-deferral advisories and creating a highly intense atmosphere within Japan and abroad.

Despite a myriad of aftershocks and the resulting high level of day-to-day anxiety in the affected area, many countries from near and far extended Japan a helping hand in moving forward rescue and recovery efforts. Because, however, the scope and degree of the damage is so massive, it will take a long time to achieve a full recovery. On 23 March, the Cabinet Office took stock of the damage to the affected area's social capital, housing, company assets and other factors, estimating it to be in the neighborhood of 16-25 trillion yen and requiring a huge expenditure to carry out the recovery.

The earthquake has had an extensive impact on research activities in Japan. It caused many overseas researchers doing work in Japan to temporarily return to their countries. Some research facilities were directly damaged by the quake while others have been indirectly affected by electrical shortages stemming from a gap caused in demand and supply, triggering delays in the implementation of research projects.

Amidst this environment, JSPS has received a great many encouraging messages from our counterpart overseas institutions, embassies, JSPS alumni associations, and former JSPS fellows. Their warmhearted words, and even offers of monetary contribution, have lifted our spirits and strengthened our resolve. We have shared these messages with our staff and affiliates, all of whom are deeply moved by the thoughts and wishes expressed.

While this earthquake has been devastating for Japan, it has also taught us anew of the existence of so many people in other countries who are willing to support the Japanese people and research community in a time of need. Never forgetting your warm friendship and caring words, we will continue with your strongly anticipated cooperation to pour our energy into advancing scientific research in Japan.

Again, I extend you all our heartfelt thanks for your encouragement and condolences.

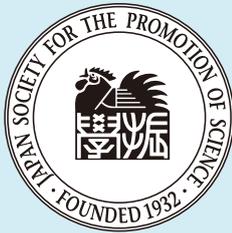


Cover photo:

In the summer, lotus flowers adorn the ponds of Japanese temples. Rising from the mud and blossoming immaculately, they symbolize Buddhism.

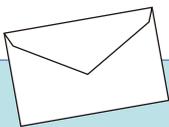
About JSPS

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



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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