



JSPS QUARTERLY

JAPAN SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION OF SCIENCE

FEATURE

Presentation Ceremony Held for
2016 International Prize for Biology

No.58 2016 Winter



Presentation Ceremony Held for 2016 International Prize for Biology

On 21 November, the ceremony for awarding the 32nd International Prize for Biology was held in the presence of Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress at The Japan Academy in Tokyo. The ceremony was organized by the Committee on the International Prize for Biology, chaired by Dr. Takashi Sugimura, former president of The Japan Academy.

In the ceremony, an opening message was delivered by Dr. Sugimura (read by Dr. Kumao Toyoshima, vice chair of the Committee), and a report on the selection process was given by Dr. Hiroo Fukuda, chair of this year's Selection Committee, after which the Prize and an Imperial gift were presented to this year's awardee, Dr. Stephen Philip Hubbell, distinguished professor, University of California, Los Angeles. After congratulatory messages were delivered by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (read by Mr. Koichi Hagiuda, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary) and by Mr. Hirokazu Matsuno, Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) (read by Mr. Naoya Higuchi, Parliamentary Vice-Minister of MEXT), the ceremony concluded with an acceptance address by Dr. Hubbell.



Dr. Hubbell, holding Imperial Gift with his spouse Dr. Patricia Gowaty

To commemorate the awarding of the Prize to Dr. Hubbell, a commemorative symposium was held on 22–23 November in Tokyo, co-organized by the University of Tokyo and JSPS.

International Policy Planning Division



Excerpt from Acceptance Address by Dr. Stephen P. Hubbell

Your Majesties, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted and deeply honored to accept the 2016 International Prize for Biology. I am humbled that you have judged my work to be worthy of this Prize. Previous laureates include some of my greatest scientific heroes, biologists who have made enormous, fundamental, and lasting contributions to the disciplines with which I am most familiar: ecology, evolution, and systematics. Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine that I would one day join the ranks of such an eminent and illustrious group of scholars. Thank you so very much.

First, I wish to thank Their Majesties, the Emperor and the Empress, for their long-term support of the biological sciences through the International Prize for Biology. In a recent editorial, The New York Times lamented that the Nobel Prizes have not kept pace with the changing face of science in the modern world. I am grateful to the Emperor and Empress for a prize that recognizes achievements in the biological sciences that are increasingly critical to the future of humanity and the planet, including ecology, conservation biology, and evolutionary biology.

Second, I honor my parents, Grace Griffin and Theodore Hubbell, both scientists, who taught me the intellectual pleasures of science and mathematics and the love of nature. My father, an entomologist

and evolutionary biologist, took me on many expeditions to the Neotropics when I was a boy, where I became fascinated by the exuberance and variety of tropical life.

In my empirical work, I am indebted to my many students and colleagues for their dedication and passion to understand the extraordinary biodiversity of tropical forests. Robin Foster of The Field Museum in Chicago, and Ira Rubinoff, former Director of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, deserve special thanks. Robin and I launched the world's first, 50 ha permanent tropical forest plot in 1980 on Barro Colorado Island, Panama. From these BCI roots grew a global network of large plots, all following BCI protocols. Ira was instrumental in establishing the Center for Tropical Forest Science (CTFS), the international consortium that maintains the global plot network.

Regarding my work on the neutral theory of biodiversity and biogeography, I must thank Jayanth Banavar and Igor Volkov, then at Penn State University, and Amos Maritan at the University of Padua. These and nearly a dozen other physicists greatly expanded the scope and mathematical tractability of neutral theory, for which I am immensely grateful.

For the full text of Dr. Hubbell's acceptance address, please visit: https://www.jps.go.jp/english/e-biol/03_receipt_ceremony_e_32.html

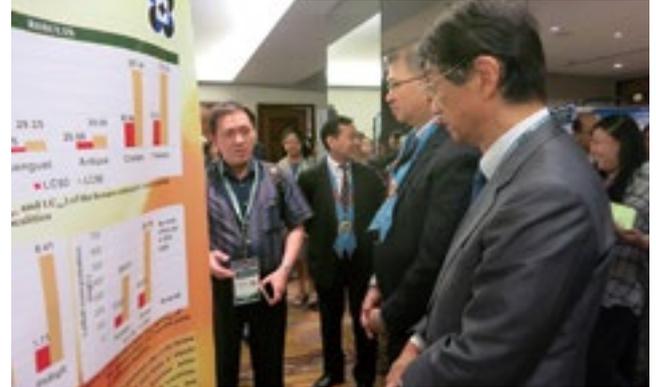


Call for Nominations for 2017 International Prize for Biology

The Committee has chosen "Marine Biology" as the specialization for the 2017 Prize. When making a nomination, fill in the nomination form and attach a brief statement of the nominee's achievements and submit the form by April 2017. For more details and the nomination form, please visit our website: <http://www.jps.go.jp/english/e-biol>



ASIAHORCs Meeting and Joint Symposium Held in the Philippines



On 22-23 September, the 10th meeting of the Asian Heads of Research Councils was held along with the 8th ASIAHORCs Joint Symposium in Manila, Philippines. This ASIAHORCs meeting and symposium were hosted by the Philippine government's Department of Science and Technology (DOST) with an aim to promoting scientific cooperation and building researcher networks within the Asian region.

This year's meeting brought together the heads of leading science-promotion organizations in Japan, China, India, Korea, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam in an exchange of views on the topic "Functional and Organizational Strategies for Research, Development and Innovation." In his presentation, JSPS president

Dr. Yuichiro Anzai introduced Japan's policies in areas of science, technology and innovation and JSPS's strategies for advancing them.

Attended by the researchers from the member countries, the joint symposium was held on the theme "Impact of Changing Regional Environment to Global Health." Four researchers including young researchers from Japan delivered insightful lectures on sub-themes, informed by their research in Asian countries.

For more information about ASIAHORCs, please visit the following website: <http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/asiahorcs/>
International Policy Planning Division

A-HORCs Meeting and Northeastern Asian Symposium Held in China

On 10-12 November, the 14th meeting of the Heads of Research Councils in Asia (A-HORCs) was held in Hangzhou, China, hosted by the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC). This meeting is convened annually for the purpose of allowing the heads of top science-promotion organizations in Japan, China and Korea to meet and exchange views on their countries' S&T policies and other matters of mutual interest. This year, JSPS president Dr. Yuichiro Anzai, NSFC president Prof. Wei Yang, and National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF) president Dr. Moo Je Cho attended the meeting and each gave a presentation on their countries' strategic policies for research funding over the next five years.



Along with the meeting, the 18th Northeastern Asian (NEA) Symposium was held on the theme "Molecular Imaging-based Precision Medicine." It brought together 36 researchers from the three member countries, who formed networks to advance international collaboration to the next level in this research field.

Next year's A-HORCs Meeting will be on the theme "Policies for Encouraging Interdisciplinary Challenging Research," held in tandem with the 19th Northeastern Asian Symposium on the theme "Emerging Materials Innovation (tentative)." It will be hosted by NRF in Seoul.

International Policy Planning Division

A Japanese Researcher Awarded 2016 Nobel Prize

Dr. Yoshinori Ohsumi

Honorary professor, Tokyo Institute of Technology



Having waited anxiously in the evening of October 3rd for the announcement of the 2016 Nobel Prize winners, members of the JSPS staff were thrilled to hear the results—that Dr. Yoshinori Ohsumi, honorary professor, Tokyo Institute of Technology, was chosen to receive the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. This was the first time for a Japanese researcher to be chosen as the lone recipient of the Nobel Prize in this category since Dr.

Susumu Tonegawa received it back in 1987, 29 years ago.

Dr. Ohsumi is eminently deserving of the Prize due to his groundbreaking achievements in advancing the field of autophagy. Autophagy is a phenomenon that allows cells in a starvation condition to degrade and recycle organelles and unused proteins. Although autophagy had been discovered through electron microscope observation of animal cells in the 1960s, its molecular mechanism remained a mystery until the early 1990s when, observing yeast cells under starvation-induced conditions with a light microscope, Dr. Ohsumi saw structures that vigorously moved around appear in the vacuole—a discovery that opened up a whole new field of life science. Autophagy research is currently undergoing explosive advancement all over the world, which could not have happened if it had not been for Dr. Ohsumi's pioneering work on yeast.

Starting from 1982, JSPS has been supporting Dr. Ohsumi's research on cell biology through its Grants-in-Aid (KAKENHI) Program. As evidenced yet again by the awarding of this Nobel Prize, JSPS has been unrelenting in its effort to contribute to the highest level of scientific research. In so doing, JSPS provides bottom-up support for challenging and creative research, which it couples with continual support for basic research of a kind that can drive forward the advancement of science and technology.

Extending a message of applause to Dr. Ohsumi, JSPS president

Dr. Yuichiro Anzai said, “I believe that your award of the Nobel Prize gives recognition to the global impact exerted by Japan's basic research while being a source of pride and encouragement to those engaged in scientific pursuits, especially younger researchers who with great zest and vigor are pushing forward their work toward achieving similar scientific milestones.”

Since being selected as a Nobel Prize recipient, Dr. Ohsumi has been asked to take media interviews and give lectures in Japan. On those occasions, he often says, “Science is the challenging of problems whose solutions may or may not be possible.” He also speaks about the “difficulty of conducting research with long-term horizons” given the current conditions in Japan. His message is that a research environment needs to be created which is conducive to long-term research and that effort needs to be exerted in fostering public understanding in the importance of basic research.

For more information on Dr. Ohsumi's biography and publications, please visit:

http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-biol/02_pastrecipients_awardee2015.html



Upcoming Nobel Prize Dialogue Tokyo 2017

On 26 February 2017, the second Nobel Prize Dialogue venue outside Sweden will be held in Tokyo, co-organized by Nobel Media and JSPS. The aim of the Nobel Prize Dialogue is to elevate public interest in and public understanding of science through the dialogue with a number of the world's leading researchers and intellectuals, including Nobel Laureates. The discussion will focus on evolving human intelligence as well as artificial intelligence (AI) and future society. The event will be open to public including students and young researchers. The basic details are as follows:

Organizers: Nobel Media AB and JSPS

Date: Sunday, 26 February, 2017

Venue: Tokyo International Forum

Theme: The Future of Intelligence

Program: Keynote lectures, parallel discussion streams, panel discussions

Language: English (Japanese simultaneous interpretation provided)

Capacity: 1,000 people

Entrance fee: Free

Website: <http://www.nobelprizedialogue.org/tokyo2017/>

Please watch this site for updates on the Dialogue program, speakers and how to take part!

Research Cooperation Division

JSPS Set to Launch New Social Networking Site, JSPS-Net

In early 2017, JSPS will be set to officially launch the JSPS Researchers Network (JSPS-Net), a brand new social networking site exclusively dedicated to facilitating exchange among researchers and research-support personnel.

As globalization accelerates, the international flow of talent is rapidly increasing, including participation in research activities at overseas research institutions and international academic societies. JSPS-Net supports networking among the members of such organizations who are interested in creating collegial communities and pursuing collaborative activities. One of a kind in Japan, this unique site assists its overseas members in fostering fruitful relationships with active researchers in Japan, while providing a framework that aids its users in creating communities with other researchers—communities within which joint research may be carried out. By exchanging information on such things as research careers, study sessions and friendly get-togethers, researchers can use the site

to stimulate each other in ways that enhance their performance.

Anyone who fits the following profile may participate in JSPS-Net: Researchers anywhere in the world, persons aspiring to become a researcher, and the staff of research and research-support organizations.

Service is available in the English language.

For more detailed information about JSPS-Net, please visit the following site:

<https://www.jsps-net.jsps.go.jp/>

JSPS Fellows Plaza





JUNBA Holds 10th Anniversary Symposium in Tokyo

On 30 September, the Japanese University Network in the Bay Area (JUNBA) held its JUNBA 2016 Symposium to celebrate the Network's 10th anniversary. This special occasion brought the annual event from America, where it is usually held, to Japan. Its program responded to the escalating need for university globalization by bringing together lecturers and panelists with a wealth of international experience and expertise from the United States and Japan. More than 110 people gathered at GakushiKaikan in Tokyo to attend this commemorative event. Titled "Looking Back on 10 Years," the symposium revisited JUNBA's past activities, reflecting upon and sharing the experiences and knowledge it has amassed, with an eye to supporting the globalization of higher education in Japan.

JSPS president Dr. Yuichiro Anzai offered welcoming remarks. The keynote speech was given by Mr. Hiroshi Yoshimoto, Deputy Director-General, Higher Education Bureau, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). Titled "Internationalizing Japanese Universities and Development of Global Human Resources," his speech addressed the current status of globalization in Japanese universities, including international student enrollment and world university rankings. He introduced



a number of government-run higher education projects, such as the "Top Global University Project" and "Re-Inventing Japan Project."

Two panel sessions were held in the afternoon. Seven JUNBA board members (directors of Japanese universities with bases in the US) and a JUNBA executive advisor from California State University, East Bay joined the panels on the current status of and issues related to training programs for Japanese students in the US and on how to establish Japanese university bases in the US. The panelists shared practical information on various interesting student training programs and answered questions from the audience. One of the questioners asked how to explain the significance of Japanese student training in US universities. The panel answered that it's necessary for students to choose a theme for their studies, merge it with corporate observation, and go beyond just English study in preparing themselves for roles in global society.

Please visit the following website for more information about JUNBA:
<http://www.junba.org/aboutus.html>

JSPS San Francisco Office

About JUNBA

JUNBA is a network of Japanese universities with offices located mainly in the San Francisco Bay Area. Since its establishment in 2006, the number of core members has grown to twelve. As one of them, JSPS's San Francisco Office works to promote and carry out JUNBA activities. The mission of JUNBA is to assist Japanese universities in carrying out education and research activities and creating new business opportunities throughout the United States.

Since 2006, JUNBA has held annual symposiums in the San Francisco vicinity, attended by invited presidents of Japanese universities and JUNBA board members hailing from Japanese bases situated in US universities such as campuses of the University of California and California State University. As JUNBA enters its next 10 years, the program will continue to strengthen its agenda to assist Japanese universities that have and will establish bases in the US.

JSPS San Francisco Office
<http://www.jspssusa-sf.org/>

Fukuoka Institute of Technology California Office
<http://www.fit.ac.jp/en/international/index>

Kagoshima University North American Center
<https://www.kagoshima-u.ac.jp/en/american-center.html>

Kyushu University California Office, Inc.
<http://www.isc.kyushu-u.ac.jp/california/en/>

Obirin Gakuen Foundation of America
<http://www.obirin-gakuen.org/>

Osaka University North American Center for Academic Initiatives
<http://osaka-u-sf.org/en/>

Ryukoku University Berkeley Center
http://www.ryukoku.ac.jp/about/campus_traffic/rubec.html

Yokohama City University California Office
<http://www.yokohama-cu.ac.jp/eng/world/caoffice.html>

Waseda USA, San Francisco Office
<https://www.waseda.jp/inst/us-office/en/>

NAIST - UCDAVIS International Collaborative Laboratory for Medical & Bio Informatics

Tohoku University Center
http://www.tohoku.ac.jp/en/international_affairs/international_affairs_office.html

Technology Partnership of Nagoya University, Inc.
<http://www.nutechtransfer.org/>

France-Japan Joint Forum on Colors Held in Toulouse



On 13-14 October, the JSPS Strasbourg Office held a France-Japan Joint Forum on the theme “Ethno-poïetics of colors—from the experience of the tint to the poetics of the shade.” Venued at the Georges Labit Museum in Toulouse, the forum was cosponsored by the Museum, University Toulouse–Jean Jaurès (UT2J), LARA-SEPIA (Laboratoire de Recherche en Audiovisuel–Savoirs, Praxis et Poïétiques en Art), ISCID (Institut Supérieur Couleur, Image, Design), and the city of Toulouse.

The forum was planned by Dr. Jun Kataoka, honorary professor, University of the Ryukyus, and Dr. Delphine Talbot, UT2J. In carrying out its preparations, they placed particular focus on three areas: Practicable knowledge and know-how involved in the art of designing with dyes; a search for theories and models that can be extracted from various fields of color-related research; and difficulties encountered in preserving traditional colors and hues.

Over the two days of the forum, some 160 people came and heard presentations delivered by 14 French and Japanese researchers, practitioners and artists in the area of color design, who excited highly animated exchanges of views and Q&A discussions. The second day

of the forum concluded with two workshops held in the garden of the museum. One by Dr. Takako Terada, professor, Kwassui Women's University, demonstrated “shellfish purple dyeing,” and the other by Mr. David Santandreu, master dyer, La main des sables (maker of carpets using natural ingredients), showed dyeing using “natural pastel vat.” These, the forum’s presentations and demonstrations are seen to have sparked new areas of interest among the participants, for whom the event offered an ideal opportunity to create networks.

The executive members of the JSPS French Alumni Association used the occasion of this forum to hold a meeting, in which they mainly discussed candidates and applications for an international fellowship awarded by the association. We wish to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Isabelle Sasaki, president of the JSPS French Alumni Association, for her great efforts throughout the process from preparing to convening this very fruitful France-Japan Joint Forum.

Please see the following website for the program of this forum:
<http://jps.unistra.fr/uploads/media/FLYER-A5-01.pdf>

JSPS Strasbourg Office

NIH International Opportunities Expo Held in Maryland

The JSPS Washington Office participated in the 10th International Opportunities Expo at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), held on 20 October in Bethesda, Maryland.

The International Opportunities Expo is sponsored by NIH’s Visiting Fellows Committee. It provides a platform for embassies, multinational companies, research organizations, academia, and industry to reach out to the Postdoctoral Community at NIH. Embassies of Europe, South America, Australia, and Asia had exhibit booths at the event. Several scientific agencies from Asia also participated and displayed promotional materials. Local representatives from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as well as NIH’s own Division of International Services were in attendance.

As an informational event focused on career opportunities for postdocs and graduate students, the Expo was also open to visiting fellows from surrounding universities and organizations who are interested in pursuing international science careers. Besides the exhibits, informational presentations were given in the lecture rooms. A networking session preceded the event.

During the Expo, JSPS’s Washington Office carried out a PR activity to introduce the JSPS Fellowship Program for Overseas Researchers, in which a talk was given by the staff to provide an overview of JSPS’s program and details on JSPS’s international fellowships.

More than 100 people participated in the Expo. As half of NIH’s



research population comprises non-US citizens, the fellows who participated in the Expo hailed from a variety of countries. Visitors to JSPS’s booth engaged in spirited exchanges of questions and answers with the staff. The outreach that the booth extended to its visitors stirred their interest in doing research in Japan. Many were encouraged to learn that JSPS provides fellowships for them to do so.

For information about the JSPS Washington Office, please visit its website: <http://www.jpsusa.org/>

JSPS Washington Office

Symposium on Intercultural Communication and University Internationalization Held in the UK

On 5-7 September, a symposium planned by young members of the JSPS Alumni Association of the UK and the Republic of Ireland was held at Newcastle University. Titled “UK-Japan Symposium on Intercultural Communication and International Universities,” its objective was to advance internationalization in British and Japanese universities while deepening intercultural exchange.

The symposium was organized by Drs. Adam Brandt and Chris Leyland, both of whom had done research in Japan under JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowships. Dr. Brandt did his research at Kansai University from 2011-2013, and Dr. Leyland did his at Kobe University from 2014-2015. Both are energetically advancing their research as lecturers at Newcastle University. In this symposium, they talked about their efforts to promote greater university internationalization using the vibrant conduits they’ve established with Japan, while giving examples of research activities carried out across various lines of interlinguistic and intercultural communication.

A session was held in workshop format to instruct doctoral students on ways to advance their research, covering everything from the analysis of data to the writing of papers. Taking advantage of the merits inherent in a small symposium, the participants engaged intimately with each other in a spirited discussion. This format was highly appraised by the doctoral students. They joined with the other participants in discussing the possibility of holding a similar symposium in Japan and in exchanging ideas on initiating joint



research.

This event was carried out based on the JSPS London Symposium and Seminar Scheme.* The London Office believes that small symposiums are as important as large ones as they provide a powerful platform for promoting bottom-up, long-term scientific exchange. Plugging into the vim and vigor of the alumni association’s younger members, the Office will continue proactively to support these small symposiums.

For this symposium’s program details and abstracts, please see the following webpage: <http://www.jspss.org/event/2016/07/uk-japan-symposium-intercultural-communication-and-international-universities.html>

* JSPS London Symposium and Seminar Scheme

Under this scheme, accepted and screened are proposals for symposiums by members of the JSPS Alumni Association of the UK and the Republic of Ireland and the Japanese Researchers Based in the UK (JBUK) who want support for expanding Japan-related research networks, particularly among younger generations, in the UK. In FY 2016, 13 proposals were submitted for these symposiums among which four were selected. The holding of these dynamic events has elevated an awareness of this symposium scheme among the alumni and JBUK members and British university faculty and students.

For more details about this program, please visit our site: http://www.jspss.org/funding/symposium_scheme/

JSPS London Office

JSPS Bonn Office Holds Evening Event

On 8 September, the JSPS Bonn Office held its annual reporting event, called the “JSPS Abend,” to which it invited members of JSPS’s German counterpart organizations and affiliate academic institutions. The German word “Abend” means “evening” in English. At the Abend, the German and Japanese participants spent a delightful evening of music and fine cuisine, topped off with a riveting lecture by a distinguished researcher.

The event kicked off with remarks by Dr. Mariko Kobayashi, director of JSPS’s International Program Department, followed by messages from Mr. Ryuta Mizuuchi, Consul General, Japanese Consulate-General in Düsseldorf, Prof. Dr. Heinrich Menkhaus, chair of the German JSPS Club, and Dr. Thomas Hesse, deputy secretary general of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. Then, Dr. Toshiharu Hase, regional director of the European Center for Academic Initiatives at Osaka University, delivered a lecture on the theme “Proteins as Macromolecular Machinery of Life: Seeing, Understanding and Utilizing.” Addressing a highly specialized topic in easy to understand language, Dr. Hase spoke about the importance of protein research from interdisciplinary, international, and university-industry collaborative perspectives. His lecture captured everybody’s rapt interest. As has become the event’s annual



custom, a vibraphone and harp performance was enjoyed by all.

For more details, please see the following website: <http://www.jspss-bonn.de/veranstaltungen/symposium20/jssp-abend-2016/>

JSPS Bonn Office

Tokyo Tech-Uppsala University Joint Symposium Held in Sweden



Photo by Mikael Wallerstedt



On 12-13 September, the third Tokyo Tech–Uppsala University Joint Symposium was held in cooperation with the JSPS Stockholm Office. It provided a platform for a vibrant exchange among researchers working in a variety of fields at the Tokyo Institute of Technology (Tokyo Tech) and Uppsala University (UU). Its agenda encompassed a wide spectrum of both universities' programs. Held at Uppsala University, this third symposium included more researchers than before from other universities with an aim to expanding collaboration.

The symposium opened with welcoming remarks by UU vice chancellor Prof. Eva Åkesson. She was followed by Tokyo Tech president Prof. Yoshinao Mishima, who introduced the university and its programs. His speech was charged with expectation for expansion of research collaboration between the two universities. Next, JSPS Stockholm Office deputy director Ms. Yuriko Kawakubo described JSPS's international exchange programs. Then, keynote speeches were given by Prof. Kristina Edström, dean of research at UU and member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences, and by Prof. Gunnar Ingelman of UU and member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.

The symposium featured sessions on a variety of research fields, titled Energy Technology, Materials Science, Energy Systems and Analysis, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Mathematics, Applied

and Nuclear Physics, Serious Games and Human Interface, and Digitalization. More than 80 faculty members and students from Tokyo Tech, Uppsala University, Tokai University and Hokkaido University participated in the sessions' presentations and discussions. Still more researchers and students attended this 2-day event, which gave them an ideal opportunity to brainstorm concrete possibilities for future cooperation in education and research.

In their first joint symposium held in September 2014 at Uppsala University, the two universities concluded an MoU to facilitate joint research and signed a letter of intent to promote research cooperation across all their departments. Then, under the adroit leadership of the two university presidents, it was agreed to continue holding the joint symposiums, effectuating the second, convened at Tokyo Tech in November 2015.

For the speakers' abstracts and more information about the symposium, please see the following website:

<http://www.teknat.uu.se/research/uu-tt/>

For more information about the activities of the JSPS Stockholm Office, please visit our website:

<http://www.jsps-sto.com/activities.aspx>

JSPS Stockholm Office



Scandinavian Alumni Hold Activity Seminars

On 7-9 August, the JSPS Alumni Club in Finland (ACF) held its activity seminar on the theme "2nd Bone and Biomaterials Workshop" in the Finnish municipality of Inari. On 11 October, the JSPS Alumni Club in Sweden (SAC) held its first 2016 activity seminar on "Music Interaction for Health" at KTH Royal Institute of Technology. Then, on 20 October, it held its second seminar, titled "Paper Yarn Textile and Fashion—A Compostable Raw Material for the Future?" at the University of Borås.

These seminars were hand-crafted and carried out by members of the two alumni associations, who had spent a tenured period of time engaging in research at Japanese research institutions as JSPS international fellows and then returned to their home countries in Northern Europe. Holding these seminars gives the former JSPS fellows a valuable opportunity to advance academic exchange in ways that strengthen linkage between Scandinavian and Japanese researchers. It is not unusual for seminars like these to spawn future exchange events and further research collaboration. In fact, such results were precisely what each of these seminars achieved.



11 October seminar by Swedish Alumni

A summary of each of the seminars can be found on the Event Information page of the JSPS Stockholm website:

<http://www.jsps-sto.com/activities.aspx>

JSPS Stockholm Office



JSPS Fellow Alumni Association in China Holds General Assembly and Annual Symposium

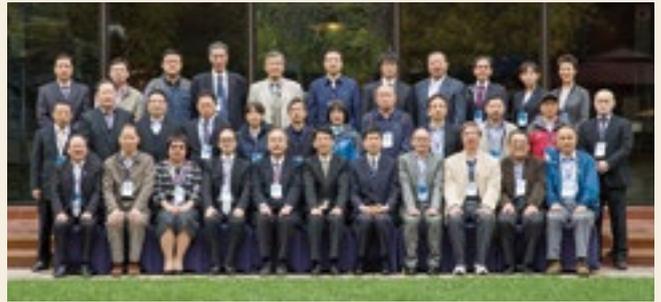
On 22 October, the JSPS Fellow Alumni Association in China held a board meeting, General Assembly, and annual symposium at the Sheraton Tianjin Hotel in Tianjin City and at Tianjin Medical University.

Prior to the General Assembly, the board meeting was held to nominate Dr. Dexin Kong, professor, Tianjin Medical University, as the chair of the alumni association and to endorse the next period of executive board members. A vigorous discussion was advanced on enhancing the association's future program and a concrete exchange of views held on the activities of the association's regional branches.

At the General Assembly, the new members of the board were introduced, following by inaugural remarks from Dr. Kong, who succeeded Dr. Hong Zhang, professor, Zhejiang University, in the chairmanship of the JSPS Fellow Alumni Association in China. Then, six alumni who had been awarded BRIDGE Fellowships reported on their revisits to Japan. They spoke animatedly about how they had expanded their networks with Japanese colleagues initiated through their participation in JSPS programs and about collaborative research achievements that will give impetus to the next generation.

In the afternoon, the venue moved to Tianjin Medical University for the annual symposium, in which invited lectures were delivered by two Japanese and one Chinese researcher on the theme "Scientific Health Care for Longevity." The many symposium participants listened with great interest to the lectures, as they addressed medical systems adapted to ageing populations and healthcare from the viewpoints of Western and Chinese medicine.

The General Assembly and symposium gave the alumni a rare



opportunity to meet and engage in exchange as it overarched research institutions and fields in bringing them together under one roof from regions around China. The combination of events were seen to have provided a both meaningful and exhilarating experience for all the participants.

Established six years ago in November 2010, the JSPS Fellow Alumni Association in China has as its purpose contributing to the advancement of scientific collaboration between China and Japan. Having currently some 1,300 members and growing, it is the world-wide JSPS alumni community's largest scale alumni association. The JSPS Beijing Office will be delighted to continue lending its support to the Chinese alumni association in the future as well.

For information of JSPS's Beijing Office, please visit the following website (Chinese and Japanese language only):

<http://www.jsps.org.cn/jpsbj/site/indexch.jsp>

JSPS Beijing Office



Nepal Alumni Hold Symposium and General Assembly



On the left: Kagawa University professor Dr. Shuichi Hasegawa. On the right: NJAA president Dr. Rijan Bhakta Kayastha.

On 2 October, JSPS and the Nepal JSPS Alumni Association (NJAA) held their second joint symposium, titled "Infrastructure Development in Transport Sector of Nepal," along with an NJAA General Assembly. Both were venues at Hotel Yak & Yeti in Kathmandu, Nepal. The symposium celebrated 60 years of

diplomatic relations between Japan and Nepal.

Former Nepalese Prime Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai was invited as the Chief Guest of the symposium's Inaugural Session. It began by holding the traditional Nepalese ceremony "Dignitaries on dais," followed by welcome remarks from Mr. Hisashi Kato, Advisor for International Affairs at JSPS Tokyo Office. Moderated by NJAA executive member Dr. Nawa Raj Khatriwada, the session continued with remarks by a number of distinguished guests from Japan and Nepal. Then, NJAA secretary Dr. Kundan Lal Shrestha introduced the association's activities, and NJAA president Dr. Rijan Bhakta Kayastha spoke about ways being devised to strengthen collaboration between Japanese and Nepalese researchers.

The following Scientific Session was moderated by NJAA vice-president Dr. Ranjan Kumar Dahal. Leading it off was Dr. Shuichi Hasegawa, Vice-Dean, Faculty of Engineering, Kagawa University, who delivered a lecture on "Engineering Geological Issues in Nepal for Infrastructure Development." In it, he compared the Himalaya

region of Nepal with the southwestern region of Japan, noting that they have similar geological characteristics despite being different tectonically. Accordingly, he said that lessons learned from the surveying and development of the mountains on Japan's Shikoku island can be utilized in constructing an expressway in Nepal. (Dr. Ranjan was the first JSPS postdoctoral fellow from Nepal to do research under Dr. Hasegawa in Japan.)

Then, Mr. Sourab Rana, associate program manager of the Japan International Cooperation Agency's Nepal Office, described "JICA's Cooperation for Transport Infrastructure Development in Nepal." Next, Dr. Sandip Shah, president of Nepal Tunneling Association, spoke on the theme "Tunneling in Nepal: Challenges and Prospects." Lastly, Prof. Kuniaki Yamashita, director of JSPS Bangkok Office, gave an overview of JSPS's mission and its international programs. The attendees paid rapt attention to the messages delivered by each of the speakers.

The symposium wrapped up with a panel discussion whose members included Mr. Saroj Pradhan, Deputy Director General, Department of Roads, Government of Nepal. It was chaired by NJAA executive member Dr. Surya Raj Acharya. At the following reception, the attendees enjoyed a spirited exchange of views among themselves and with the speakers, delving deeper into the symposium topics.

In the General Assembly held before the symposium, NJAA's executive members discussed plans for carrying out NJAA activities and engaging in JSPS's international programs.

For the meeting programs and photos, please visit the following site: <http://www.njaa.org.np/events/annualgeneralmeetingandsecondsymposium>

JSPS Bangkok Office



Indian JSPS Alumni Association Holds International Conference in Mysore



The seventh International Conference on “Science and Technology: Future Challenges and Solutions” was held at the University of Mysore (UOM) on 8-9 August. Now famous as a center for the practice of yoga, Mysore was the old capital of the Kingdom of Mysore for six centuries up to 1947. This conference was planned and carried out as an activity of the Indian JSPS Alumni Association (IJAA).

JSPS special advisor Mr. Masayuki Inoue kicked the opening session off with warm remarks of welcome to the audience. From the host organizer’s side, UOM Vice Chancellor Prof. K. S. Rangappa wrapped it up with a florid speech. The event featured some 20 lectures and talks on cutting-edge R&D being advanced in various scientific fields. Prof. Ichiro Uyeda, executive and vice-president of Hokkaido University, delivered a keynote address in his field of specialization, plant pathology, which attracted an animated audience.

The event set yet another milestone in this series of conferences. As many as 600 people participated in it, marking a record high

attendance. Moreover, the University of Mysore celebrated its 100th anniversary this year, which added a gala mood to the event.

The conference catered to the younger generation. Some 381 research posters were submitted by students and young researchers. Also, 18 Japanese universities set up exhibit booths at the venue, where the participating students gave presentations and fielded volleys of questions about the universities’ international programs. One highly noteworthy event was an interactive session, themed “Igniting Young Minds,” between Indian high school students and Japanese scientists. In its first half, the Japanese scientists talked about state-of-the-art research being carried out in Japan and about their various research topics. They encouraged the students to reach for higher heights by studying hard and going abroad to gain international experience. Around 40 students listened absorbedly, aspiring to become independent scientists themselves in the future.

Please visit the below site for more information on the Indian JSPS Alumni Association: <http://www.indianjspsalumni.org>

JSPS Fellows Plaza



Essay by a Former Fellow Dr. Spyridon Kitsinelis

In 2002, I was finishing my PhD in England and seeking my future career. I decided to apply for a JSPS postdoctoral fellowship while I had ongoing interviews with several private western companies. I remember I was at home in Athens, Greece for Christmas when news arrived that I was accepted for a position at Ehime University as a postdoctoral JSPS fellow. I knew immediately that everything else was no longer an option as the experience in Japan would be unique. I immediately started preparing for my travel to Japan.

During the JSPS fellowship period (2003-2005), my host professor, Dr. Masafumi Jinno, and the rest of the research group did all they could to assist me. I loved everything about Japan. I think that a laidback lifestyle in suburban Shikoku, apart from the main



Japanese island of Honshu, gave me a great opportunity to see the classic side of Japanese culture. My work at the university was very successful as it resulted in a number of scientific publications plus one world patent in low-pressure plasmas for various applications that include displays, sterilization, medicine and others.



After my tenure as a JSPS fellow, my academic activities in my home country Greece and in Europe have expanded to a new area. I have become very active in science communication projects that aim to attract the general public’s interest in science. This began in 2007 with my awarded participation in the international competition FameLab Greece. Since then, the highlights of my outreach activities have included my appearance in 2013 as a speaker on TEDxAcademy, an Athens-based nonprofit platform for dialogue among unique thinkers aimed at creating and sharing a future vision for Greece, authoring hundreds of articles for popular magazines, and being the only science radio program host in Greece on one of its largest radio stations (Skai Radio).

Although a decade has passed since my departure, Japan always has a special place in my heart. One way that I keep the magnificent country of the rising sun in my life was by writing a book dedicated to Japan, titled *Japan in My Eyes*. Published in Greek, my hope is that the book will spread my special appreciation of Japan to the Greek public.

Dr. Kitsinelis’ website: www.the-nightlab.com



Science Dialogue

Scientific Adventure of an Australian Fellow in Japan

Dr. David L. Butler



Coming to Japan from Australia, Dr. Butler visited Tezukayama Senior High School on 7 September to give a lecture to 44 second-year students under JSPS's Science Dialogue program. In it, he attempted to explain how "prejudice" can be investigated in children and primates by employing concepts in his chosen field of cognitive neuroscience.

Do Babies Have Prejudice?

In his lecture, Dr. Butler first showed the students a simple video of six people tossing two basketballs and asked them to count the number of passes. Most got the number right. But, then, when he asked them if they had noticed a gorilla walking around in the video and a change of color in its background curtain, puzzled chuckles followed. The lesson for the students was that "even though you are paying attention to something, you may not be perceptive of everything."

After this introductory exercise, Dr. Butler talked about his current experiment on prejudice; that is, forming negative impression of people based on their group membership. To discover how prejudice is acquired, he showed 6-month olds various videos (e.g., with a Japanese and a non-Japanese person on the same screen) while playing either fearsome or happy sounds. The results of this experiment indicate that under certain conditions even infants may start associating negative stimuli, such as fearful voices, with out-group members.

In an interview with JSPS's staff, Dr. Butler explained how people's lives are filled with unjust prejudice, saying that he wants to engage in



the solution of real-world issues by applying the scientific knowledge and skills he has acquired. Dr. Butler told us that he became fascinated in the study of psychology because it offers a way of knowing who we are and how we work. Then, he concluded the interview on a note of encouragement for the younger generations, saying that they should find a work-life balance, be passionate about what they do, and enjoy doing it as they will be spending much time doing so in their futures."

Dr. Butler started his JSPS postdoctoral fellowship in the field of cognitive neuroscience at the Graduate School of Education, Kyoto University, in April 2015 after receiving his PhD in psychology from the University of Queensland in Australia.

Overseas Fellowship Division

The following fellows participated in JSPS's Science Dialogue Program during the period from July through September 2016. For details about the program, please see its website: www.jspss.go.jp/english/e-plaza/e-sdialogue

Venue	Lecturer	Nationality
Hokkaido Kushiro Koryo High School (Hokkaido)	Dr. DOAN, T. Dr. MIFSUD, E. J.	Vietnam Australia
Fukushima Prefectural Fukushima High School	Dr. BARBIERI, F. Dr. SHUKLA, C.	Italy India
Ibaraki Prefectural Namiki Secondary School	Dr. ARPUTHARAJ, J. N. Dr. KIEREPKO, R. Dr. RENAUDIE, M. J. Dr. TRIVITTAYASIL, V.	India Poland France Thailand
Ibaraki Prefectural Takezono High School	Dr. FOUQUET, T. N. Dr. OUTRAM, B.	France UK
Chiba Municipal Chiba High School	Dr. HO, Y.	Taiwan
Chiba Prefectural Chosei Senior High School	Dr. JEHL, Z.	France
Chiba Prefectural Funabashi Senior High School	Dr. SAYED ALY, A. H.	Egypt
Chiba Prefectural Sakura High School	Dr. MCEOWN, K. S. Dr. AXELSSON, M.	Canada Sweden
Ichikawa Gakuen Ichikawa Junior & Senior High School (Chiba)	Dr. PARAJULI, L. K. Dr. TAYLOR, R. J.	Nepal UK
Junior High School at Komaba, University of Tsukuba (Tokyo)	Dr. RAMIERE, A. M. Dr. TAKAHASHI, T. S.	France France
Senior High School at Komaba, University of Tsukuba (Tokyo)	Dr. SINGH, M. K.	India
Tokyo Metropolitan Tama High School of Science and Technology	Dr. JAFARI SONGHORI, M.	Iran
Fukui Prefectural Fujishima Senior High School	Dr. KIM, J. Dr. HAIMES, P. W. Dr. KARIM, M.	Korea Australia Bangladesh
Fukui Prefectural Koshi Senior High School	Dr. LIMLAHAPUN, P. Dr. TABA, F.	Thailand Australia
Fukui Prefectural Takefu High School	Dr. DECHANT, A.	Germany

Venue	Lecturer	Nationality
Yamanashi Prefectural Hikawa High School	Dr. CRUZ, F. T.	Philippines
Yamanashi Prefectural Tsuru High School	Dr. HOSSAIN, H. Z.	Bangladesh
Yamanashi Prefectural Yoshida High School	Dr. LUCHETTI, A.	Italy
Shizuoka Prefectural Iwata Minami High School	Dr. AW, W. Dr. VEALE, R. E.	Singapore USA
Aichi Prefectural Jishukan Senior High School	Dr. KARAK, S. Dr. QUELICONI, B. B. Dr. STOLIAR, P. A.	India Brazil Argentina
Aichi Prefectural Kariya Senior High School	Dr. BURTON, L. A. Dr. GOVINDAN, A. Dr. LEITE VICENTE, C. S. Dr. MOST, H. N.	UK India Portugal Bangladesh
Shiga Prefectural Hikone Higashi High School	Dr. DAY, T. F.	USA
Kyoto Prefectural Jonan Ryoso High School	Dr. ANWAR, M. S.	Pakistan
Osaka Prefectural Hirakata High School	Dr. LO PICCOLO, L.	Italy
Hyogo Prefectural Akashi Kita Senior High School	Dr. BRADAK, B. Dr. DESHMUKH, D. K. Dr. BUTLER, D. L.	Hungary India Australia
Tezukayama Junior & Senior High School (Nara)	Dr. GENZANO, N. Dr. LALA, D. K. Dr. SHA, J. C.	Italy New Zealand Singapore
Wakayama Shin-ai Junior and Senior High School (Wakayama)	Dr. CAPRON, M.	France
Kagawa Prefectural Kanonji Daiichi High School	Dr. DUSHENKO, S. Dr. MACPHERSON, T.	Russian Federation UK
Ikedagakuen Ikeda Junior-Senior High School (Kagoshima)	Dr. CHO, B.	Korea
Okinawa Prefectural Kyuyo Senior High School	Dr. TINELLO, M.	Italy



Top Global University Project

Introducing the Participating Schools

Keio University

Under the theme “Enhancing Sustainability of Global Society through *Jitsugaku* (Science),” a Top Global University Project is being implemented at Keio University. It comprises three transdisciplinary initiatives: Longevity, Creativity, and Security. They are led by faculty members who specialize in related fields and are affiliated with Keio’s undergraduate and graduate programs. This wide-spread faculty participation gives the Project a campus-wide framework for advancing research—from basic to applied—and for bringing together Keio students and researchers from Japan and abroad in carrying out research and education activities that transcend national and disciplinary borders. Keio shares the fruits of this research by publishing papers in various languages and by encouraging co-authorship with international researchers so as to promulgate the program’s outcomes and benefits to wide swaths of society.

Keio’s Global Initiatives Across Disciplines



In April, Keio launched the program “Global Interdisciplinary Courses” (GIC) to foster students who can play key international roles in carrying out the abovementioned three Project initiatives. GIC provides all Keio students with a list of courses offered in English and other languages, along with a classroom environment in which Japanese and international students can study side by side. These courses incorporate cross-



During one of the GIC classes

disciplinary learning strategies that integrate the humanities and sciences. Emphasis is placed on small class sizes that facilitate student interaction in a highly engaging learning environment. Undergraduate students gain experience in writing research papers in foreign languages and acquire the basic skills used in presenting them at international conferences. These courses also help students who will continue on to graduate studies develop the kind of communication skills and international mindset needed to function effectively in a globalized world. This is done through their participation in the Project’s education and research activities, and mentoring under full-fledged Japanese and international researchers.

Going forward, GIC will be expanded to establish a common platform upon which Keio’s undergraduate faculties and graduate schools will not only provide specialized courses offered in foreign languages, but will also offer degree programs that allow students to obtain degrees in languages other than Japanese.

Website: <https://www.keio.ac.jp/en/>



Yukichi Fukuzawa
Founder of Keio University

Established in 1858 by Yukichi Fukuzawa as a small school for “Western learning,” Keio University boasts a history of being Japan’s very first private institution of higher education. During his lifetime, Fukuzawa made three voyages abroad, to Europe and North America, through which experiences he gained an acute awareness of the need to introduce a Western system of education into Japan so as to accelerate the nation’s move toward modernization. Ever since then, internationalization, and later globalization, has been at the core of Keio’s educational thrust and institutional mission. Over the 150 years since the university’s founding, Keio has strived under

its founder’s motto of *Jitsugaku* to transform Japan into an ever-more vibrant modern nation by way of its contributions through education and research, including state-of-the-art medicine.

Jitsugaku, as defined by Yukichi Fukuzawa, was the application of reason, observation and verification in ways that broke Japan free of Confucian concepts of society which had informed Japanese scholarship of the 19th century. As “science” in the truest sense, *Jitsugaku* continues to be employed by Keio University as a powerful tool in its enduring search for practical solutions to real-world problems.

The project's aim is to enhance the international compatibility and competitiveness of higher education in Japan. It provides prioritized support for top world-class and highly innovative universities that can lead the internationalization of Japanese universities.

Top Global University Project website: <http://www.jspss.go.jp/english/e-tgu/index.html>



Ritsumeikan University

Human Development to Collaborate Across Cultures and Contribute Globally to Asian Communities

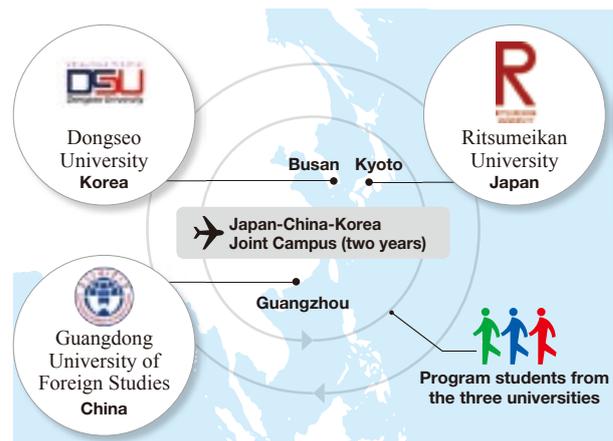
We live in a time when talented individuals with an understanding of different cultures and an ability to solve issues are needed. Ritsumeikan University has networks with 438 institutions formed in 67 countries and regions across the world. While continually strengthening these collaborations, Ritsumeikan University is working to create a vibrant global education model, including the establishment of a double undergraduate degree program with one of the world's leading universities, the Australian National University. By embedding a project/problem-based learning program within our curricula, we are striving to enhance and accelerate the university's Asian outreach and multicultural cooperation. This cooperation agenda is being pursued with an aim to fostering individuals who aspire to solving common issues within Asia while contributing to building a regional community sustained by proactive people with creative minds.



We call our core global strategy “Multilateral Educational Model (Campus Asia Program),” which has three major pillars aimed at cultivating people who can collaborate across cultures and contribute globally to the Asian community.

1. A common curriculum across three universities

This is a four-year integrated program implemented jointly by three universities: Ritsumeikan University (Kyoto, Japan), Dongseo University (Busan, Korea), and Guangdong University of Foreign Studies (Guangzhou, China). A Campus Asia pilot program (2012-2015) was carried out in these historical cities. Among the program's salient features were its initiatives to improve student's intercultural communication skills and to forge next-generation leadership networks. In the future, we plan to establish a joint degree program among the three universities.



2. Practical learning in China and Korea—“Two Years, Two Lands, Two Times”

Twenty students selected from each country will spend two years in a “two-round campus mobility system,” whereby they stay at each of counterpart universities for nearly six months during their second and third years as undergraduates. Working together with local students, they will learn about the culture and history of the other countries through specialized courses taught in the language of those countries.

3. “Next-generation Humanities Leaders in East Asia”

This program works to foster people with proficiency in foreign languages, expertise in areas of East Asian humanities, and abundant communication skills. The program's goal is to create a pool of individuals who will play leading roles in advancing the next generation of humanities research and practice within East Asia.

Website: <http://en.ritsumei.ac.jp/rsgu/>
<http://en.ritsumei.ac.jp/campusasia/>



Prof. Ryuzo Ueno
 Director of Campus Asia Program
 Vice Dean, College of Letters

Asia's peoples account for about 60% of the world's population. This endows Asia with hefty influence in navigating directions toward ensuring sustainability on the planet. As Asia undergoes rapid economic growth, its countries are widely diverse in such areas as ethnicity, language, religion, customs and social systems, which can make achieving solutions to conflicts and discordance among them difficult. Concomitantly, rapid economic growth is giving rise to several shared problems within the Asia community, such as environmental conservation, energy resources, food supply, as well as matters related to health, safety and security. Such international challenges cannot easily be resolved in a single step. What's needed to tackle them and

overcome conflicts will be the strengthening of ties among the nations' peoples and the cultivation of mutual understanding including cross-cultural tolerance. To this end, it is imperative that we remain firm in our belief in the region's peoples, and continue to foster them as friends and partners.

This is precisely what the Campus Asia Program seeks to do. The participants (students from Japan, China and Korea) study together over a period of two years and learn from each other how to confront and overcome cultural differences while creating lifelong ties of friendship and trust. These qualities will be the key to building a new, more integrated Asia community. From this program will be born leaders of the coming era in and among Japan, China, and Korea.

Research and Life in Japan
By a JSPS Fellow
No. 40

Dr. Marco Pellitteri

“Soft Power of Japanese Culture and Images of Japan in Europe”

JSPS Postdoctoral Fellow, Kobe University, 2014–2016
The Japan Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow, Kobe University, 2013–2014
Honorary Research Fellow, London Metropolitan University, UK, 2011–2013



Coming to Japan from Italy, Dr. Marco Pellitteri has been conducting research with his host, Prof. Kiyomitsu Yui at Kobe University under a JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowship. We asked him about his research activities and life in Japan.

Q. What have you been researching under the JSPS fellowship?

My main research topic and goal under the JSPS fellowship was to survey, analyze and measure the relationship between the success of contemporary Japanese media and popular culture within the European context vis-à-vis the ways in which notions of Japan as a nation and a people (depicted in public opinion and mainstream media) have changed under that cultural input and influence.

Through this research, I will be able to say something about the concept of “soft power,” a notion that is very popular among people in the Japanese government, especially in the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports,

Science and Technology (MEXT), and is one of the reasons why the government decided to launch the “Cool Japan” initiative to promote Japanese culture overseas. One of the major points of my research is that Japan’s alleged “soft power” is, in practical terms, much weaker and limited than many people tend to (or want to) believe. I find that, as a matter of fact, many of the old stereotypes of Japan continue to hold a strong grip in the minds of most Europeans, and that the popularity of Japanese contemporary culture has, at best, created newer stereotypes of Japan.

Practically speaking, this means that—although I myself greatly respect Japanese culture and am a very fond reader of manga and watcher of sci-fi and war anime which I often find emotionally engaging and culturally compelling—“Cool Japan” promotion committees could or should consider, in the near future, using additional cultural strategies and scenarios of Japanese culture if they want to give full expression to the nation’s immense cultural heritage. I am inclined to think that when considering

ways to do this, the committees could also seek advice from foreign experts, as doing so would be helpful in further enhancing “Cool Japan” policies and practices.

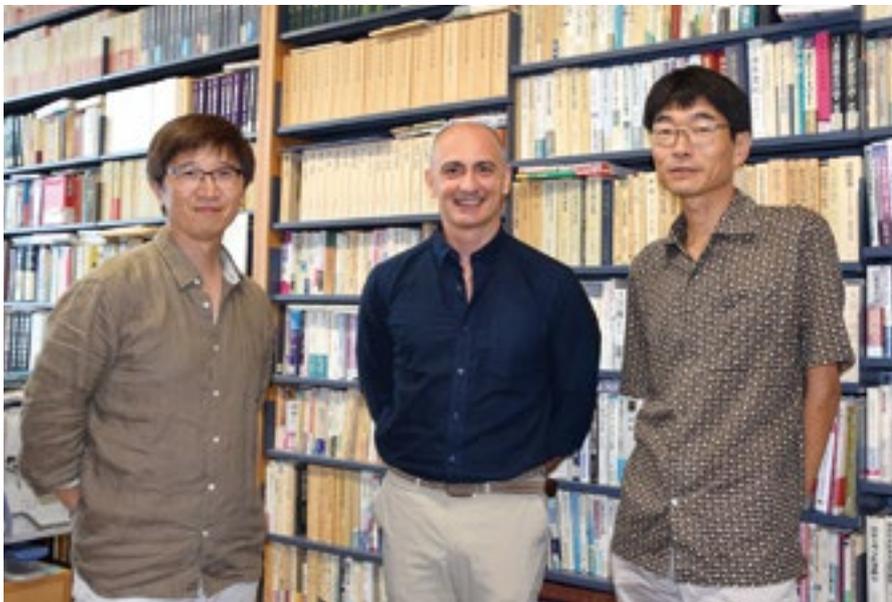
Q. What is your opinion of Prime Minister Abe being shown in a promotional video as “Super Mario” in the closing ceremony of the Rio Olympics?

I think Mr. Abe’s nice performance was meant to be a demonstration of Japan’s soft power aimed at advertising the country to the rest of the world. The idea was to show Japan as a cool and friendly, but also strong and independent, country. I believe that the choosing of an anime or game character was not the best idea. Those industries are a colorful but tiny part of Japanese culture. I think what Japan could show the rest of the world is more about its people and their accomplishments, instead of pop culture.

Q. When and where did you encounter your research subject?

Even before I started doing research here in Japan, I had already published in the 2000s a variety of books and essays, some of which dealt with Japanese manga and anime, back in Italy. I thank my host researcher and senior friend and colleague Prof. Yui for making possible those opportunities. During my years as a PhD student at the University of Trento (which hosts the highest ranked sociology department in Italy), I joined an international research team based in Paris and directed by the French scholar Jean-Marie Bouissou, a group which Prof. Yui also soon joined. From then, I started to collaborate at an international level with the group members, until Prof. Yui kindly encouraged me to apply for research grants from JSPS and The Japan Foundation.

Q. What is your impression of Japan’s research environment compared to those of Italy and other European countries?



Dr. Pellitteri with his colleagues

There are aspects that strike me as positive, others as negative. First the negative: It appears that very few people can speak English fluently. Staffs, students and professors either do not know how to express themselves in English, or prefer not to because they are afraid to make mistakes. This is not a healthy attitude, as academia is an international environment in which English proficiency is very important.

In this sense, many aspects of the Japanese academic environment reveal, up to a point, Japanese universities to be overall self-secluding. Many Japanese scholars publish papers in Japanese only, as one example. Many Japanese universities, especially national universities, are not thoroughly internationalized. Also, the Japanese research environment has too many men and too few women. Female researchers appear to be a neglected resource in Japan.

Positive aspects: First of all, there is much more money allocated for research in Japan than almost anywhere in Europe. Research and development are taken very seriously here. Researchers are given ideal conditions in which to work and produce knowledge. They do not have to struggle with daily needs. This is an enormous advantage for researchers, not just in practical terms, but especially in psychological terms: Researchers who work in Japan feel

cherished, nurtured, and appreciated. This allows researchers to work with heightened satisfaction and gratitude—at least in my case. It's also because of this environment that researchers can attain good results. In many European countries (and especially in countries like Italy...) the situation is quite the opposite.

Q. Could you please give some advice for young researchers who may be thinking about doing research in Japan?

I would suggest that you learn some Japanese before coming and during your research tenure in Japan. You should also try to make as many Japanese acquaintances (colleagues, friends, drinking buddies) as possible so as to improve your language skills. I am sure this must be one of the most frequent comments by JSPS fellows who answer this question!

But the most important virtue for a foreign researcher to have when working in a Japanese university is to assume a *zen* attitude toward bureaucratic procedures and paperwork! It may be frustrating at times as administrative personnel do not speak English as a rule. If, however, you are kind and patient and follow the rules thoroughly showing respect for the system (however complicated and “twisted” it may seem to a foreigner), the staff, who are always very professional, will become a great

asset in your research, helping it to proceed smoothly in all administrative aspects: travel reimbursements, budget allocations, and so forth.

Final tip: If you come from a country where manners are rather casually observed, please be aware that in Japan manners are taken very seriously. “When in Rome do as the Romans do.” Good luck!

In talking with Dr. Pellitteri, we found his research to be rather bold as it also focuses on the performance of the Cool Japan initiative. Being quite detailed and complex, the Cool Japan “mission” still has a long way to go before being fully implemented. Dr. Pellitteri’s research, which intersects the program at this stage of its development, finds that because of conceptual and implementation shortcomings “Cool Japan” might not fully achieve its intended impact when applied in European countries. Dr. Pellitteri is working to create an evidence-based proposal for improving this situation, one that includes greater participation by foreign experts who can contribute innovative concepts and a wider spectrum of ideas when devising strategies to move the overseas component of the program forward. As Dr. Pellitteri says, Japan has immense cultural assets. We admire his efforts to expedite their wider and deeper promulgation within the global community.

Introducing Japan: Kobe City, Octopus Capital of Japan

Kobe, together with its environs, is well known for a lively seafood industry, which boasts the largest production of octopus (*tako*) in Japan. *Akashi-dako* is a local octopus, uniquely named for its short, chewy tentacles, harvested in the Akashi port and along the coast of Hyogo Prefecture, of which Kobe is the capital city. *Akashi-dako* is representative of the local seafood cuisine that I enjoy.

Kobe and its surrounding fishing ports remind me of my hometown in Sicily, located in the southern part of Italy where local seafood is

considered to be among the best in the country as well as across the entire Mediterranean region. We eat a variety of fish, shellfish, octopus and other seafoods as much as the Japanese people do, although we rarely eat them raw.

It is always interesting to find differences between the Japanese way and our way of preparing seafood. One such example is *Akashi-yaki*. It is an egg-based dumpling with chopped *Akashi-dako* octopus inside and served with a specially seasoned soup (*dashi*)



for dipping. It is one of the unique seafood delights of this area. Loved by the locals as a mouthwatering dish, *Akashi-yaki* of course requires dexterous maneuvering of one's chopsticks to eat!

My Japanese friends and acquaintances are shocked when they see how much I know about fish and the sea, and how skillful I am in cleaning and eating fish. They thought Japan had somewhat of a “monopoly” on seafood culture. I've shown them that Sicilians are a little bit akin to people in Kansai (Osaka-Kobe area)!



Akashi-dako at local seafood market



Akashi-Yaki



Cover photo:

Silkworm cocoons
Japan is well known for its traditional sericulture. Spun by silk moths, each silkworm cocoon is made of as many as 3,000 feet of thread, with as many as 3,000 cocoons needed to make one pound of silk.

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



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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