

# Career Advancement through Multiple JSPS Fellowships

**Voices of Two JSPS Fellows**

*Waiting for your  
applications!*

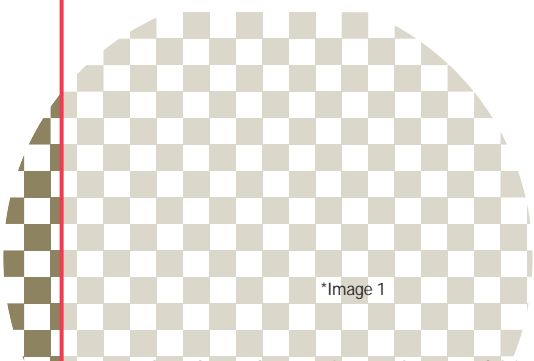


**JSPS**









\*Image 1

The shared experience fostered friendships that have lasted, even after becoming a professor. I met intellectually stimulating individuals and was able to build a network across scientific disciplines and research areas.

This network built through fellowships and the host researcher is crucial when organizing collaborations and applying for grants, which often require collaboration among diverse researchers. As a faculty member, I leverage this by inviting them as guest lecturers to discuss topics like magnetic chip development or nanotechnology. The network also offers potential for interdisciplinary research collaboration.

Participating in the JSPS Science Dialogue was highly beneficial for my career. Engaging with smart and creative students from Super Science High Schools\*<sup>3</sup> was both enjoyable and stimulating, and also helped me communicate effectively and convey complex concepts. This was a valuable experience that has helped me present research to diverse audiences. Also, one dialogue I conducted in Shizuoka led to a useful link with a former student who founded a leading robotics company. Moreover, the teachers at Super Science High Schools\*<sup>3</sup> often have extensive connections with former students who may go on to become renowned professors or CEOs, which can lead to valuable introductions. I have such good memories of the JSPS Science Dialogue and its enriching experience.

### What made you decide to develop your career in Japan, and what are the merits of living in Japan, such as convenience of living?

The decision to build my career in Japan was somewhat lucky. Initially arriving for a postdoctoral position, I gradually expanded my networks, including through the JSPS fellowship. As my fellowship neared

its end, a professorial position unexpectedly became available, presenting a significant career opportunity, so I took it. If this position had not materialized, I would likely have pursued opportunities in Europe or returned to the US, as there were no other prospects in Japan.

Living in Japan offers many advantages: the convenience of an outstanding public transit

\*Image 2

system; organization and cleanliness; safety for individuals, families, and women walking outside at night; a diverse climate; various activities for personal enjoyment, whether skiing in Hokkaido or playing Frisbee. All this contributes to quality of life here. I can speak Japanese and use it in both daily life and work. Japanese is invaluable when working with companies, handling administrative tasks, dealing with landlords, playing sports with Japanese teammates, and so forth. Although English is the norm in research at the university, daily activities outside the university require Japanese. I began studying Japanese as an undergraduate, including one year at ICU (International Christian University). As my proficiency improved, it helped me during subsequent visits to Japan, including the JSPS Summer Program. Speaking the language also enhances the overall experience and opens up opportunities, especially in smaller universities or specific host labs. In summary, Japanese language ability is vital for thriving in academia and society in Japan. Japan has many top scientists and researchers, making it an attractive destination for collaboration, as well as working with leading companies. The Japanese government actively supports collaboration with industry partners and real-world applications, particularly in technology. It also offers KAKENHI, and it seems to be easier to get funding for innovative ideas here than in the US.

\*1 National Institute for Physiological Sciences (NIPS) of the National Institutes of Natural Sciences (NINS)

\*2 Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research: competitive research funds in Japan <https://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-grants/>

\*3 Super Science High School (SSH) : The system Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) specifies for high schools that focus their education on science and math.

\*Image 1: Richard Veale with Tadashi Isa and Mee Phonphanphanee (in Bangkok, Thailand)

\*Image 2: Professor Isa's lab in Okazaki, Aichi circa 2015

