

Japan the Horned Islands

JSPS Nordic & Baltic Newsletter (10)

2012 Winter



Jigoku bashi (hot sulphatic pond, Aomori)

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I. Prologue

From Stockholm, a Nordic city by Yoshiaki Fujii

I came to Stockholm to start my appointment in JSPS Stockholm office in the middle of November, when the day was getting shorter towards the winter solstice with increasing coldness. I had heard that the last two winters were severe with many days below -20 degrees Centigrade. Fortunately, the winter this year has been relatively mild; poplar trees lining some streets in the city have still retained their green leaves. When I left Tokyo, the gaudy holiday decorations already covered the streets, but when arriving in Stockholm, I found the city calm and peaceful. With the arrival of December, I started to see decorative candles and stars in the windows all around the city. The shop-windows also began to show elaborate Christmas decorations and the city became more lively, while the Christmas preparations took off.

In the beginning of December, the famous Nobel Week takes place. During the week before the Nobel Prize ceremony and banquet which are to be held on December 10th on the anniversary of Alfred Nobel's death, a series of festive events are held such as receptions, Nobel Prize lectures and the Nobel Prize concert. The Nobel Lectures of Chemistry and Physics are held at Stockholm University and those of Physiology and Medicine, and Literature are given at Karolinska Institute and Swedish Academy, respectively. Nobel Peace Prize Lectures are known to be held at the Norwegian Parliament.

On December 7th, I attended the Nobel Prize lecture of Physiology and Medicine which was held in the Berzelius auditorium at Karolinska Institute. The venue can accommodate about 300 people and turned out to be undersized for housing a Nobel lecture. About half of the seats were occupied by invited scientists and guests, while the general audiences of several hundreds were waiting for nearly two hours to hear the lectures. 2011 year's Nobel Laureates in Physiology and Medicine were J.A. Hoffmann, B.A. Beutler and R.M. Steinman. Since Steinman sadly died only three days before the Nobel Prize announcement, his disciple M. Nussenzweig held the lecture on his behalf. While listening to the three lectures talking about the development of

research, I was impressed by the appreciation shown to Japanese researchers. In particular, Drs. S. Akira and K. Inaba were mentioned with their photos. Listening to these three speakers in succession, who have been working on the innate immunity against invasion of foreign matters, regarded as a line to activation of the acquired immunity, I understood why these three Laureates were given the award for this year. If the prize had focused only on innate immunity, there might be a different combination of people that had been chosen, and if putting the emphasis on the activation of acquired immunity, there is again the possibility of a different appointment having been made. Historically, the word "if" is said to be of no use, but it would be interesting to know what discussions were going on to determine the frame of the three Nobel Laureates in Physiology and Medicine for this year. However, we have to wait another 50 years before the details of the discussions will be opened to public.

When looking around the streets in Stockholm at around 6 a.m. with yet no sun rising, I can see the city starting to fill with people in black coats rushing off to work. In daytime, people with a baby are often seen to get on buses, and I have heard it is free of charge when travelling with a stroller. Experiencing Stockholm in December, I noticed that regardless of the short daytime and the cold, the city had still a lively atmosphere. During the days off, I went to see the old town of Gamla stan busily crowded with tourists and people who were buying Christmas gifts. At the square in front of the concert hall where the Nobel Prize awarding ceremony is held, the market stands were spreading out and the snappy voices of vendors calling to customers were echoed in the cold sky. In the campus of Karolinska Institute and its surroundings located north of Stockholm, major constructions were now going on with a number of trucks and towering cranes busily moving, making way for urban redevelopment. They say that these constructions will be likely to continue until 2015. Stockholm seems to have nothing to do with the blow of recession which has hit the southern part of Europe, Greece, Italy and Spain. Suddenly, I remembered an Aesop's

Fables, “The Ant and the Grasshopper”.

While looking carefully around the city of Stockholm, however, I realized that there were a few persons who sat on their heels on a sheet of blanket in the corners of the city to beg for money. In the safe city of Stockholm as well, in Sweden, a model country of high-quality welfare and high

taxes, I realize that the dark side of city life, probably due to social distortions begins to expand gradually. For the next two years, I look forward to carefully watching the developments in science and technology, and societies of the Nordic countries (*Director, JSPS Stockholm*).

II. Reports

BRIDGE Fellowship at Doshisha University, Kyoto by Kristiina Jokinen

I was a Bridge Fellow at the Doshisha University in Kyoto at the end of 2010, and returned to Finland in the beginning of 2011 just before the 3/11 Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami.

My host was Professor Seiichi Yamamoto at the Department of Intelligent Information Systems in the Faculty of Electrical Engineering, and my place of work was at Kyotanabe Campus. The main campus of Doshisha University is located just north of the Imperial Palace in the Kyoto city centre, while the new campus lies about 30 minutes train ride south of Kyoto, in the town of Kyotanabe. The modern tile buildings are located on top of a hill and can be seen from the train lines passing from Kyoto to Nara. The campus is beautiful and green, and lively with all the students. From my office window I had a beautiful view of Mt. Ikoma, and could enjoy seeing the faraway mountain change its color according to the weather and the time of day.

My host Professor Yamamoto and the members of his laboratory were very kind and helpful, and we finalised a paper about our joint research on eye-tracking technology and human interaction management. The paper is accepted for

publication in the ACM journal. The visit also resulted in two other conference papers, and project plans to continue our joint research further. Moreover, I also visited and gave talks at the University of Kyoto and at the University of Tokyo.

The visit was very fruitful and successful, and deepened the existing contacts and collaboration. In fact, in May 2011 Professor Yamamoto and some members of his laboratory reciprocated the visit by attending the 3rd International Symposium on Multimodality, which I organised in Helsinki, and they also participated in the Finnish JSPS Alumni meeting organised in Joensuu (see 4/2011 issue of the JSPS News).



BRIDGE fellow Kristiina Jokinen

During my stay I also enjoyed the hospitality of the Japanese people and learned more about Japanese culture and history. The Kyoto city is of course an endless source of beautiful and historical places to visit, but I stayed in a lively international residence for students and researchers located half-way between Kyoto city and the Kyotanabe campus, and this area is also close to some historically important though less known places. These include, for instance, the old Momoyama castle of the great warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the tombs of Japan's first modern emperor Meiji and his empress, and the Fushimi-Inari Shrine with its hundreds of bright red torii gates running along the slopes of the hill. The Fushimi area is also famous for its clear water which the locals and visitors can collect from the public pumps in the area. The clear and tasty water has also been the basis for several sake breweries that had been established in the area, already since the times of Hideyoshi and his thirsty samurai living in the area. Not far away from the residence is the beautiful city of Uji which is the location of some of the romantic episodes in the Tale of Genji, the first novel in the world, written by Lady Murasaki in 11th century

Heian Japan. Uji also has the famous Byodoin temple, also called the Phoenix temple due to its special architecture, and depicted in the 10 yen coin. Uji is also famous for green tea, and various types of tea, tea utensils, and tea cups can be bought in the little shops lining its narrow streets.

My visit occurred at the time when Nara celebrated the 1300th anniversary of Heian-kyo, the first capital of Japan and permanent residence of the Emperor Shomu. I was happy to attend the annual exhibition of Shosoin, the treasure house of the Imperial Court, and could admire the splendid and elaborate artefacts that had been acquired by trade on the Silk Road that ended here.

The visit was very useful from the point of view of research and intensified the collaboration between the research groups. On a personal side, the visit allowed me to learn more about Japanese culture and history, and to improve my Japanese language skills which I had acquired during my first JSPS Fellowship. I would like to thank JSPS for the excellent opportunity to visit Japan again (*Adjunct Professor, University of Helsinki*).

JSPS Colloquium
Nuclear Energy & Nuclear Applications
by Kazutoshi Ono



Colloquium participants

On 13-14 October, the JSPS Stockholm Office held a JSPS colloquium on the topic “Nuclear

Energy and Nuclear Applications.” in Gothenburg, Sweden. With the historic building Chalmersska Huset as its venue, the colloquium, which featured 14 Japanese and Swedish lecturers, was attended by some 60 interested members of the academic community. Taking the lead in planning the event was Dr. Imre Pázsit, Chalmers University of Technology, who had experienced research in Japan under JSPS programs.

In the wake of the breakdown of Japan’s Fukushima nuclear power plant, the focus of the colloquium naturally centered on that incident, with the Japanese lecturers commenting on its scientific ramifications and on the lack of

adequate tsunami countermeasures. Some also spoke about their firsthand experiences of engaging in post-disaster response activities in the affected area over the past half year. From the Swedish side, presentations were given on such topics as the country's adoption of EU stress tests prompted by the Japanese plant failure. At the dinner reception, Dr. Pázsit gave a spirited talk on his several experiences of going to Japan, in which he praising Japan's culture and high level of its scientific research.

Abstracts of the presentations delivered are posted in the "Past Activities" section of the Stockholm Office's website (<http://www.jspss-sto.com>).

- JSPS Stockholm Office

On 20 August, JSPS joint Scandinavia-Japan colloquium was held in Stavanger, Norway. The title was "Abiotic stress from genes to biosphere". The meeting was held in adjoining of the bi-annual Scandinavian Plant Physiology Society,

SPPS, conference.

In the northern area of earth, growing environment for plants is severe. Cold, draught and limited-photoperiod particularly restrict their growth. To cope with these stresses, Nordic plants have evolved a variety of mechanisms. The aim of the meeting was to analyze and understand such mechanisms. The presentations were diverse, focusing on ecology, physiology and molecular biology. Identification of a "memory" of conifer to determine the budding timing in spring will be useful for tree physiology in the future. The critical role of phytohormone, abscisic acid, in stress response was also pointed out. Many papers gave novel information, and will significantly contribute to future research in this field.

JSPS's first colloquium in Norway gathered some 70 participants and have hopefully promoted an increase in Scandinavian-Japanese research exchange (*Program Coordinator, JSPS Stockholm*).

JSPS-KVA Seminar Japanese Youth in Transition by Kazutoshi Ono



Professor Hiroshi Ishida

From 2009, the JSPS Stockholm Office has partnered with the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences (KVA) in planning and holding seminars in which Japanese researchers with achievements of high interest within the Nordic region give presentations on their work. The third in this series of seminars was held on 24-26 January at

Stockholm University. Dr. Hiroshi Ishida, professor in the Institute of Social Science, University of Tokyo, was invited to speak at it.

His presentation on the theme "Japanese Youth in Transition" introduced occupational, marriage and other trends among young people in Japan, while spurring a spirited exchange of views on such subjects as job searching and marriage partner hunting. As there is little familiarity in Sweden with such social phenomena peculiar to Japan, Dr. Ishida's talk sparked interest in the attending students and researchers, who asked volleys of questions—wrapping up the last day of the seminar on an animated note (*Program Coordinator, JSPS Stockholm*).

IV. News & Announcements

Fellowship Information

If you are planning to visit and perform research in Japan, the JSPS Stockholm Office is ready to provide you with useful information on the JSPS fellowship programs. The JSPS fellows are usually recruited in each fiscal year (beginning in April and terminating in March of the following year).

Two ways of applications are available. The main route is (A) to prepare application forms through your host researcher at the host-university or institution in Japan. The host will send all documents to the JSPS Head Office, Tokyo. You may be able to ask your host researcher in Japan to apply for it in advance. This route is open for researchers in almost all countries outside of Japan. JSPS have about 10 awardees for each call. As for the deadline of each application, please find the table as below.

The other route (B) is to apply through the nomination system in relevant countries, where the applicant lives. In this case, the country must be assigned as a partner country by JSPS (note that not all countries are assigned as JSPS partner). This route is in principal, open only for researcher who is a national of such country.

For example, if you are a Swedish researcher, you can apply through the nomination system of the following programs, depending on your career and research field: Post-doctoral fellowship (Standard-KVA, SSF, VINNOVA and Short-term-KVA) or Invitation fellowship (Short-term-VINNOVA).

You can find necessary information through the website of JSPS Head Office (as below) or JSPS Stockholm Office (<http://www.jsps-sto.com/> →Menu :Fellowship). *(Kazutoshi Ono, JSPS Stockholm).*

Program (Main Route)	Duration	Application Dead line(※1)	Commencement of fellowships (※2)
JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowship Programs For Young post-doctor etc. http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-fellow/postdoctoral.html	(Standard) 12 to 24 months	<1 st Call> 29 Aug 2012 - 2 Sep 2012	Apr 1, 2012 – Sep 30, 2012
		<2 nd Call> 7-11 May	Sep 1, 2012 – Nov 30, 2012
	(Short-term) 1 to 12 months	<1 st Call> 3-7 Oct 2011	Apr 2011 – Mar 2012
		<2 nd Call> 21-25 Nov 2011	Apr 2011 – Mar 2012
		<3 ^d Call> 30 Jan-3 Feb 2012	Jun 2011 – Mar 2012
		<4 th Call> 2-6 Apr 2012	Aug 2011 – Mar 2012
		<5 th Call> 7-11 May 2012	Sep 2011 – Mar 2012
<6 th Call> 30 Jul-3 Aug 2012	Dec 2011 – Mar 2012		
Invitation Fellowship Programs for research in Japan For Professor or mid-career Researchers etc. http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-inv/main.htm	(Long-term) 61 days to 10 months	Sep 2, 2011	Apr 1, 2012 – Mar 31, 2013s
	(Short-term) 14 to 60 days	<1 st Call> Sep 2, 2011	Apr 1, 2012 – Mar 31, 2013
		<2 nd Call> May 11, 2012	Oct 1, 2012 – Mar 31, 2013

※1 These deadlines are for the head of the host institution to submit the application to JSPS Head Office; the time frames for applicants (host researchers) to submit their applications are normally earlier.

※2 Successful candidates must start the Fellowship in Japan during these periods.

JSPS Fellowships Sweden

JSPS Post-doc standard

Swedish nominating authorities are now calling;
KVA, application deadline 2 April, 2012
SSF, application deadline 1 April, 2012

JSPS Post-doc short

Swedish nominating authorities are now calling;
STINT, application deadline 27 March, 2012
KVA, application deadline 2 April, 2012

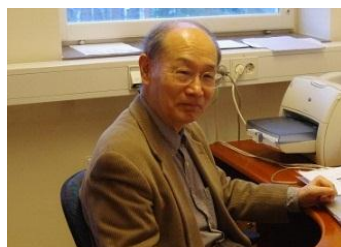
JSPS BRIDGE - Alumni revisiting fellowship

JSPS Stockholm Office is now calling;
Application deadline 29 February, 2012

JSPS Fellowships Finland

JSPS BRIDGE - Alumni revisiting fellowship

JSPS Stockholm Office is now calling;
Application deadline 29 February, 2012



I was appointed Director of JSPS Stockholm Office from November, 2011. I have not lived abroad since I was on a two and a half years tenure as a postdoctoral at Rockefeller University in New York 40 years ago. However, I have visited Stockholm many times before and I came to know it as a city where I wanted to live once. Since I have done studies into the gene expression mechanisms by hypoxia and drugs, I have by now many old friends at Karolinska Institute. I am pleased to be able to meet them all again, while investigating science and technology and education of the Nordic countries .



I am Naomi Yoshizawa, who was appointed Deputy Director of JSPS Stockholm Office from October, 2011. I have been in charge of Asia-Africa relations and business policy in the past, this is my first experience of relationship with Europe. I would like to support and promote international collaboration between Swedish and Japanese researchers. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.



Japan the Horned Islands No. 10 (Winter)

Published on February 16, 2012

Edited by Lisa-Mi Swartz

Published by Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS)
Stockholm Office

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