



English edition vol.16

# *JSPS Stockholm Newsletter*

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# Prologue

## Winter Scene

By JSPS Stockholm Office Director Takeo Miyazawa

Since my arrival in Stockholm, I have been observing what differentiates this city's lifestyle from that of Tokyo with great interest. First of all, the city of Stockholm impressed me with its beauty and cleanliness. On my way to the office I walk everyday, the sidewalks are all wide and fully accommodate bike paths, and people stride briskly with their back straighten up. They also walk so fast that I always end up constantly overtaken, but considering the Swedish's tall stature and long legs, it is something that I cannot help. Also, probably due to the nation's advanced welfare system, the wealth disparity is not clearly observable. While I am not yet very familiar with the reality of the nation's economic status, at least the streetscapes of Stockholm do not exude the sense of exhaustion we often encounter in some other EU countries. On the contrary, people here seem to enjoy abundant lifestyle. While Sweden is famed for the high tax burden on citizens, their welfare policy and economic success seem to get along surprisingly well. There should be plenty of wisdoms behind the success Japan may learn from.

Stockholmers seem to share many characteristics in common with Japanese. They make room for each other in every public situation, are rather modest and have a strong sense of justice, and while not being extremely cheerful, they give us the impression of humanity with depth. These findings mark a stark contrast to my stereotypical view of wild and savage Vikings. Also, female advancement in the society is far ahead of Japan. At various organizations and government offices I visit, I always witness about the half of managerial positions occupied by females. Likewise, in many street scenes, gender equality seems to take deep root in society. It might be the demonstration of female populations' high awareness for gender equality. Another noted feature here is the high level of English fluency enjoyed by the majority of citizens. One linguist told me that the Swedish's English is more beautifully articulated than any other people. In fact, foreigners seldom

find it difficult to live in Sweden, as they can communicate in English in almost all of daily life situations.

December, numerous related events take places. Among these occasions, I had the opportunity to attend the Nobel Lectures in Physiology or Medicine on 7th December. This year, the prize was awarded to Professor James E. Rothman, Professor Randy W. Schekman and Professor Thomas C. Südhof for their contribution to the understanding of intracellular transport system. The event, opened for general public, started at one o'clock at Aula Media, Karolinska Institutet's modern new building famed for its exterior adorned with mirrors. Once stepping in, I was greeted by receptionists fully dressed in traditional ethnic costumes and filling the venue with a festive mood. The auditorium was packed with probably more than a thousand enthusiastic audience members, with a notable number of young researchers and students among them. Needless to say, the participants included the laureates' pupils and affiliate researchers. Every time the presentation refers to a portion of study where these fellow researchers were involved, the lecturers introduced them to the audience and acknowledged their contributions. At the end, the entire auditorium was filled with the sense of wonderful unity in which the lecturers and audience were closely bonded under the great achievement.

At the event, a thought struck me that the citizens of Stockholm, especially the young researchers and students, are extremely fortunate. They are fortunate because the Nobel Prize, the world's highest prize, comprises a part of the citizens' daily life. The very presence of Nobel Prize seems to drive Sweden's innovative edge and boost the nation's mentality. I strongly recommend young Japanese researchers to visit Sweden more frequently to engage in their studies in this academically charged environment.



## Japan-Denmark Students Information Exchange and JSPS meeting held in Denmark

On November 14, Japan-Denmark Students Information Exchange meeting was held in Copenhagen at the Embassy of Japan in Denmark. The event was organized by the Embassy of Japan, Tokai University Alumni Association and JSPS Stockholm Office.

The aim of the event was to promote active networking among Danish researchers and students who have experienced studies in Japan, to provide them with an opportunity to get acquainted with each other.

Opening remarks were given by Mr Seishi Suei, the ambassador of Japan in Denmark, and welcome remarks by representatives of Tokai University's Alumni Association and JSPS Stockholm office. A lecture on "Japanese Security Policy" was given by the Embassy's Counsellor Mr Kinji Shinoda.

The event was attended by 30 students and researchers, of whom 11 were former JSPS fellows.

Prior to the event, a meeting with JSPS and its former Danish fellows was held to discuss their relation to Japan and future

Japan-Denmark activities and the fellows expressed wishes to hold meetings on a regular basis. The possibility to establish a Denmark Alumni Club in the future was also discussed.

It was decided that a seminar will be held at the University of Copenhagen in September, to introduce research in Japan and JSPS Fellowship programs.



## Joint Symposium on Environmental Science held in Finland

On 27-28 November, the "Joint Symposium on Environmental Science 2013—Bridging Finland and Japan" was held via collaboration between Hokkaido University, the University of Helsinki, and the JSPS Stockholm Office. Venued on the campus of Helsinki University in Finland, the event attracted around 20 participants from Japan including Prof. Ichiro Ueda, executive and vice-president of Hokkaido University, and Prof. Masaaki Morikawa, who coordinated the symposium on the Japanese side.

The curtain rose on the symposium with keynote lectures delivered by Prof. Heljä-Sisko Helmisaari and Prof. Takayoshi Koike of Hokkaido from the two universities, who gave overviews of the environmental protection situation in both countries. They were followed by presentations by researchers from the two universities on such themes as "sustainable forest management" and "environmental issues under cold weather." Interest in a bilateral approach to these

subjects attracted more than 60 researchers and students to the symposium.

A reception was held in the evening of the first day to give the researchers from the two countries an opportunity to get to know each other personally. At it, the Stockholm Office gave a brief introduction to JSPS's programs, spurring interest among the participants to use them to come or go to each other's countries to advance their research.

This program was started by Prof. Morikawa in 2012 who launched a joint research initiative with Northern European countries. It initially took the form of a scientific exchange implemented jointly by the JSPS Stockholm Office and the Embassy of Japan in Sweden. When later the Hokkaido University Helsinki Office joined in, the effort expanded into a university-scale symposium program, one which the Stockholm Office will happily continue to support in the future.





## Alumni Club Finland's (ACF) General Assembly was held

On 27 November, the JSPS Alumni Club in Finland held its 2013 General Assembly at the University of Helsinki. At it, a report was given of the Club's activities over the fiscal year, new members were welcomed and new Club officials installed. A discussion was also held on what the Club's activities will be in the next fiscal year.

At this juncture, nine new members were admitted, bringing the Club's total membership up to 74. Dr. Kristiina Jokinen of Helsinki University was elected the new chair and Dr. Markus Valkeapää of Aalto University, the new vice-chair. Dr. Jokinen was a JSPS postdoctoral fellow for two years from 1994 at the Nara Institute of Science and Technology. Her current research focuses on spoken dialogue management, non-verbal communication, and multimodality.

Dr. Valkeapää's experience as a JSPS fellow was at the Tokyo Institute of Technology where his study was titled "Search and Tailoring of Misfit-Layered Oxide Materials." The Stockholm Office took advantage of the opportunity to tell the new alumni members that as it will continue to support the Club, it expects them to be vigorous in carrying out its

activities.

As the joint symposium between Helsinki and Hokkaido Universities was held on the same day as the General Assembly, the alumni members joined the symposium participants in that evening's reception, where they enjoyed talking with researchers and students from the two universities as well as with each other.



## Two KVA-JSPS Seminars held with Prof. Shoichiro Kurata and Dr Michiyo Kinoshita

The second seminar in the KVA-JSPS seminar series FY2013 was held on January 9-14 with the invited speaker Professor Shoichiro Kurata of Tohoku University, Graduate School of Pharmaceutical Sciences. Professor Kurata held lectures in Uppsala University, Umeå University, Stockholm University and the University of Tampere in Finland.

The lectures were attended by faculty and graduate students with a general background in cell- and molecular biology.

The theme of the seminar was "Recognition of microbes and regulation of innate immunity", about his research on insect

immunology, especially on how insects without antibodies can protect against infections.

The third and final KVA-JSPS seminar for FY2013 was held February 28 in the University of Lund with invited speaker Dr. Michiyo Kinoshita of the Institute for Advanced Studies (Sokendai) in Hayama. The theme of the seminar was "Polarization and Color Vision in Insects - Sources for foraging, oviposition and navigation". Dr. Kinoshita held a lecture on Cues for foraging flowers in the Papilio butterfly.



## Two IVA-JSPS Seminars held with Prof. Seiji Iwakura and Prof. Hiroaki Suga

On February 20, the IVA-JSPS seminar series first seminar of FY2013 was held. The invited speaker was Professor Seiji Iwakura from the Shibaura Institute of Technology and the theme of the seminar was "Experience from the project to construct a high speed railway in Japan". Professor Iwakura is one of Japan's leading experts in planning and economic analyzes of railways, and he was deeply involved in producing the planning manual for the new Shinkansen. He was also a member of the committee evaluating the Shinkansen.

Director General Gunnar Malm of the Swedish Transport Administration (Trafikverket) presented a Swedish perspective on high speed rail.

On March 3, the second seminar in the series was held with invited speaker Professor Hiroaki Suga from the University of

Tokyo. The theme was "Frontiers of Drug Discovery – Novel Chemistry". Professor Suga presented his work on creating combinatorial chemical libraries containing non-natural amino acids and their usefulness to discover new medicines. Prof. Suga is one of Japan's leading scientists within the field of peptide chemistry and the founder of PeptiDream Inc.

Professor Gunnar von Heijne from Stockholm University/SciLifeLab, presented how Professor Suga's techniques can be used in basic research to study membrane bound proteins.

On both seminars, the lectures were followed by interesting panel discussions on what Sweden and Japan can learn from each other, and the seminars ended with dinner receptions.



## Sweden Alumni Club (SAC) held a board meeting

On March 11, the JSPS Sweden Alumni Club (SAC) held a board meeting at Chalmers University of Technology in Gothenburg. The main focus of the meeting was to review the submitted applications for SAC Activity Seminars FY2014, and the board was impressed by the high quality of all applicants.

JSPS Stockholm informed of the alumni club's upcoming 10<sup>th</sup> year anniversary in 2015, and asked the members to reflect on how to celebrate this special. JSPS Stockholm also informed that current staff will leave their positions as their tenure has ended, and new staff will arrive in April. JSPS Stockholm will have a total of 5 staff during 2014.

The meeting was closed with a presentation by board member Professor Göran Thor of Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) and his BRIDGE fellowship experience in summer 2013. Professor Thor had earlier in March 2013 participated in an inventory of lichen found in the Imperial Palace grounds, and the purpose of the BRIDGE fellowship was to further investigate the collected data. Professor Thor informed that since the previous lichen inventory in the Imperial Palace Grounds in 1995-1996, the number has almost doubled from 57 to 98.



The meeting was held in conjunction with a seminar at Chalmers, with invited speaker Professor Tomoko Nakanishi of the University of Tokyo. The theme was "Radiation and radioisotope studies in plants - including the radioisotope analysis at Fukushima", and Professor Nakanishi showed how radiation and radioisotopes (RI) are an indispensable tool when studying the distribution and uptake manner of water and nutritional elements in plants.

## Japan-Denmark Students Information Exchange

By JSPS Stockholm Office

On November 11, the Embassy of Japan in Denmark, Tokai University Alumni Association (Denmark) and JSPS Stockholm Office co-organized the “Japan-Denmark Students Information Exchange”. The purpose of this event was to gather Danish researchers and students who have experienced research and studied in Japan. The aim was to provide a platform for networking among them and to get acquainted.

Opening remarks were given by the ambassador of Japan in Denmark, Mr Seishi Suei and representatives of Tokai University Alumni Association in Denmark and JSPS Stockholm office offered welcoming remarks. The Embassy’s of Japan’s

Counsellor Mr Kinji Shinoda gave an informative lecture on Japanese Security Policy. The counsellor brought up controversial subjects such as the historical background of the territorial issues that Japan is facing, and the government’s proposal to modify Japanese constitution concerning the country’s military action.

Following the lecture, the participants were encourage to mingle and enjoy sharing nostalgic stories of their experience in Japan with each other.

The event was a success and it was decided to hold the “Japan Alumni Assembly” later in 2014.

### Questionnaire results

#### Did the event meet your expectations?

• Yes	17
• No	0
• I did not have any expectations	4

#### If we decide to organize this kind of event again, what kind of periodicity would you prefer?

• Twice a year	6
• Once a year	14
• Every second year	1
• Every third year or more seldom	0

#### Comments and suggestions

“Lecture on Japanese culture. Mentor network is fine.”

“Twice a year or more!”

“More on Scientific Exchange”

“List of participants.”

“Do some more seminars in Danish.”

“Workshops?”





## KVA - JSPS Seminar

By professor Shoichiro Kurata, Tohoku University, Graduate School of Pharmaceutical Sciences

It was my great honor and pleasure to have the opportunity to present lectures at Uppsala University, Umeå University, and Stockholm University through the recommendation of Prof. Ylva Engström from Stockholm University. In addition, through the opportunities provided by the KVA-JSPS seminars, I was able to present a lecture at Tampere University in Finland.

I am studying the control mechanisms of innate immunity. Innate immunity is a host-defense mechanism that differs from adaptive immunity, which is the well-known system that produces antibodies, the so-called vaccine effect. In adaptive immunity, there is a time lag between the infection and the production of antibodies. Therefore, how are organisms protected against infection in the interim until the antibodies are produced? Moreover, adaptive immunity is found only in vertebrates, which comprise only 4% of animal species. How do invertebrates survive infections in the absence of an antibody response? The answer to these two fundamental questions is innate immunity. Innate immunity is the first line of defense in all individuals at all times, providing an immediate response to infection.

The late Prof. Hans Boman (Umeå University, and Stockholm University), a Swedish microbiologist, and his colleagues greatly contributed to the development of innate immunity research with his studies of insect immunity. In 1972, they found that antibacterial activity is induced in insects after infection, and in 1980, they identified an antimicrobial peptide with strong bactericidal activity. We are investigating the mechanism of pathogen recognition and regulation of antimicrobial peptide production using *Drosophila melanogaster*, a model organism. Therefore, it was a great honor for me to introduce our research in the home country of the late Prof. Boman. In addition, it was nice to be able to renew old friendships with students of the late Prof Boman, Prof. Håkan Steiner, Prof. Ingrid Faye, and Prof. Dan Hultmark. From Prof. Faye, I received a surprise reprint of the 1972 paper. There is a similarity between the mechanism of

antimicrobial peptide production in insects and that of innate immunity activation in mammals, and the 2011 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine was awarded to three researchers who made a major contribution to this research area.

The temperature was a relatively warm, 2-3°C, when I arrived at the Stockholm Airport on January 8, similar to that in Sendai City this time of year. Although the typical colder weather returned within a few days, I received a warm welcome, despite the fall in temperature to -23°C by the end of my visit. This is also a good memory. At Uppsala University, Prof. Kenneth Söderhäll served as the host. After the lecture, I was given the opportunity to take part in a series of individual discussions with researchers of invertebrate immunology, and I toured the animal breeding facilities, which are unique to Uppsala University and include facilities for crayfish. In Umeå University, Prof. Hultmark served as the host. The groundwork for collaborative research between Umeå University and Tohoku University was established by fruitful discussions with microbiologists after the lecture. At Stockholm University, Prof. Engström served as the host. In addition to the lecture, Prof. Engström organized a workshop with graduate students and young researchers in the field. We engaged in deep discussions ranging from experimental details to fundamental problems, and I could feel the young forces and passion of the participants. These KVA-JSPS seminars, including the lecture at Tampere University in Finland, each attracted more than 200 participants, and I had the pleasure of speaking individually with approximately 50 related researchers. This was an excellent opportunity to engage in active discussion, and stimulate further academic exchange between Sweden and Japan.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to Profs. Engström, Söderhäll, and Hultmark for their wonderful hospitality, and to Dr. Takeo Miyazawa, the director of the JSPS Stockholm Office, and Ms Sawae Futakami, International Programme Associate of the Office, for their kindness during my stay in Stockholm.



## The Japan-Europe Science, Technology & Innovation Symposium 2014 in Sweden

By Yasuhiro Kato, the University of Tokyo

The Japan-Europe Science, Technology & Innovation Symposium 2014 was held on March 3rd and 5th in Stockholm and London, respectively. The Purpose of this symposium was to introduce the global contribution of highly original innovations in science and technology made in Japan to the community of science and technology in Europe. The symposium in Sweden was held at the Royal Academy of Engineering Science (IVA) conference center, hosted by IVA and JSPS, with support from the Chemical Society of Japan, the Sweden-Japan Foundation, the Embassy of Japan in Sweden, and PeptiDream Inc. As the main speaker, Prof. Hiroaki Suga (The University of Tokyo, Co-founder of PeptiDream Inc.), who conducts research in a venture pharmaceutical company as well as in academia was invited and a lecture and panel discussion titled “Frontier of Drug Discovery – Novel Chemistry” was presented.

With opening remarks by Dr. Anders Ekblom (Former CEO of AstraZeneca Sweden), Prof. Hiroaki Suga introduced his drug discovery technology, “RaPID (Random non-standard Peptide Integrated Discovery) system”, and its practical applications for the practical drug discovery in academia as well as industry. The RaPID system can isolate macrocyclic peptides bearing non-natural amino acids from a library with high affinity against drug targets. Prof. Gunnar von Heijne (Stockholm University) gave a lecture about his research on membrane protein biogenesis. He also talked about a collaboration with Prof. Hiroaki Suga, in which his investigations were expanded using non-natural amino acids. After the two lectures, Dr. Annika Jenmalm-Jensen (Karolinska Institute) and Dr. Björn Odlander (HealthCap Inc.) addressed the current state and perspective of drug development from their academic and venture capital viewpoints, respectively, followed by a panel discussion amongst

all speakers with Dr. Johan Weigelt acting as moderator, titled “The potential of innovative chemistry to strengthen drug discovery and what Sweden and Japan can learn from each other”. I felt that it was an interesting concept that Sweden and Japan would be good collaboration partners based on their similar humble characteristics.

I had expected the coldest weather that I would have ever experienced, but the weather was actually quite moderate, and there was little snow. What I was the most excited about was the visit to the rooms where Nobel lectures were held and Prof. Shinya Yamanaka was interviewed after the Nobel Prize Award Ceremony, in Stockholm University and IVA respectively. Although I could not enter the rooms, I was overwhelmed by the history of the great scientists. In the refreshment and dinner after the symposium, I enjoyed talking with researchers and doctor’s course students about our respective research topics. I feel that the most exciting situation at the reception was at the table where I sang “Helan Går” (a popular Swedish drinking song), which I had practiced before the trip. During my stay in Sweden, I became reaffirmed that there are many contributors aside from scientists for the progress of science and that it is possible to communicate deeply with each other through science all over the world. I also would like to add a note that we have migrated to London, UK in the following days we had another symposium in UK. It was also as exciting as the Stockholm symposium and international relationship.

Lastly, I truly appreciate all of the help and support during my stay in Sweden, from IVA, the Chemical society of Japan, the Sweden-Japan Foundation, the Embassy of Japan in Sweden and PeptiDream Inc. And also I would like to thank JSPS Stockholm office for giving me this great opportunity.





## All Alumni meeting in Finland

By Sanae Ito, Ph.D. Student in Assyriology, University of Helsinki

An all alumni meeting co-hosted jointly by the JSPS Stockholm office and the Embassy of Japan in Finland was held on the 27th of March 2014 at the Japanese Restaurant Tokyo 55 in Helsinki, capital of Finland. A modern and comfortable cellar of the restaurant was rented for this event.

In total 28 people took part in the meeting, which consisted of JSPS Alumni Club Finland (ACF) members, Japanese Government Monbukagakusho Scholarship Alumni (JMSA) members, and Japanese researchers currently working in Finland, and the embassy staff members. The participants came from not only Helsinki and its neighbouring areas but also other cities such as Turku, 2 hours away by intercity train. The meeting started with the opening remarks by Mr. Miwa of the embassy. He talked about relationships between Japan

and Finland, and the events organized by the embassy in this year. Following Mr. Miwa's remarks, Prof. Michael Gasik from Aalto University, one of the board members of ACF, gave welcome words and wished to promote further academic collaboration between Japan and Finland. Lastly, Ms. Salomaa as a representative of JMSA, reported their activities.

After these three speeches, the people enjoyed free discussion, networking, and Japanese food including Sushi. It was a great opportunity for the ACF members to collaborate with the JMSA members because they can be future ACF members if they are awarded JSPS fellowship as qualified researchers. JSPS Stockholm office kindly sent us their brochures and their original goods for this meeting, and many participants brought them home.



## Up-coming Seminars and Symposia

### IVA Seminar: "Blue LED, scientific breakthrough with real world impact"

In 1986, Prof. Isamu Akasaki and his group at Nagoya University created the first electronic-grade high-quality GaN single crystalline material, and in 1989, they further developed the first GaN p-n junction blue LED.

GaN-based devices are robust, and they enable significant energy savings. Their use will be a major weapon in the fight against global warming.

Prof. Akasaki will give a lecture on the Development of GaN-based semiconductors of excellent quality and their p-n junction blue-light-emitting devices.

Organized by IVA, Chemical Society of Japan, Meijo University, Sweden-Japan Foundation, The Embassy of Japan and JSPS.



Prof. Isamu Akasaki  
Meijo University

#### Speakers

- Prof. Isamu Akasaki, Meijo University
- Prof. Lars Samuelson, Lund University
- Prof. Bo Monemar, Lund University
- Christofer Sifvenius, Swedish Energy Agency

#### Date

Wednesday May 21, 17.30-20.00 followed by dinner

#### Venue

IVA Conference Center, Grev Turegatan 16, Stockholm

#### Registration and dinner

Please register at [www.iva.se/seminar-20140521](http://www.iva.se/seminar-20140521) no later than 14 May.

The cost of dinner is SEK 400 (incl. SEK 80 VAT) and should be paid into "bankgiro 5108-2527." Participation in the seminar is free of charge.

More information and detailed program can be found here:

<http://www.iva.se/press/Kalendarium/Blue-LED-scientific-breakthrough-with-real-world-impact/>

# Notice

## Staff changes at JSPS Stockholm Office

JSPS Stockholm office would like express heartfelt thanks to Director Takeo Miyazawa, Deputy Director Naomi Yoshizawa and Program & Account Officer Ms Sawae Futakami for their service at JSPS Stockholm Office. Best of luck to all of you and your future endeavors!

From April 1 we wish the new team members of JSPS Stockholm welcome!

Deputy Director:  
**Yuriko Kawakubo**

Hej! My name is Yuriko KAWAKUBO, Deputy Director of JSPS Stockholm Office, successor of Ms. Naomi YOSHIZAWA. Before I am working here, I have been in charge of international cooperation at Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. It is my pleasure to work here to promote cooperation between Nordic and Baltic countries and Japan. As I am very interested in culture and life style, I wish to learn cooking and play the violin in amateur orchestra here.



*From left to right: Natsumi Kudo, Yuriko Kawakubo and Satomi Oe.*

Program & Accounting Officer:  
**Satomi Oe**

Hej!  
My name is Satomi Oe from Ishikawa, Japan. I am originally from Kanazawa Medical University and have engaged in supporting inter-national students and researchers as an administrative staff. I started working at JSPS Stockholm Office from this April and am very excited to be able to work in Sweden!

Program & Accounting Officer:  
**Natsumi Kudo**

Hi!  
My name is Natsumi Kudo from Hokkaido, Japan. I came to Sweden to start my work at JSPS Stockholm office in April. Although it is first time for me to live in out of Japan, life in Stockholm is very comfortable and I enjoy it!! I'm looking forward to seeing many people in Sweden!!

### Subscribe to JSPS Stockholm Newsletter

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Our newsletters are also available on our website for reading online.

## JSPS Stockholm Newsletter #16

**JSPS**  
STOCKHOLM

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