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# *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.





## 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!!

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STOCKHOLM

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