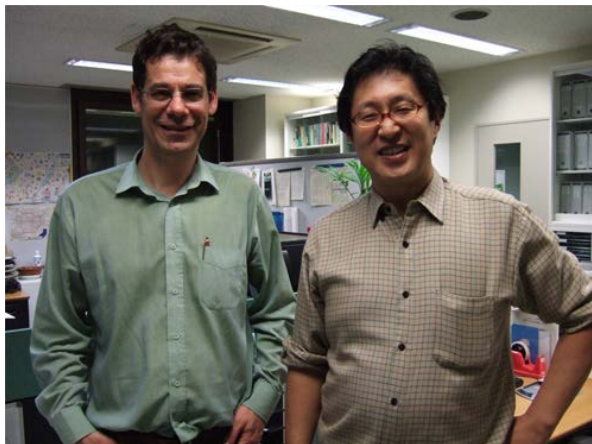


Voice! from Alumni member

Vol.12 Dr Steven Hayward



Steven Hayward and Kitao-san during a research visit by S.H. to Tokyo in 2011.

Dr Steven Hayward at University of East Anglia, an active member of JSPS Alumni Association of the UK and RoI (Republic of Ireland) tells his experiences as a JSPS Fellow and Alumni member. Please have a look at his experiences below.

During the time that I was doing my PhD at Edinburgh University, there was a fascination with Japan with programmes such as “Nippon” appearing on TV. This coincided with a desire in me to go somewhere different (and warmer) after I finished. Thus when I saw a poster advertising JSPS Postdoctoral fellowships it felt like a natural thing to apply for. My PhD was on the subject of applying machine learning to protein structure prediction. As I learnt more about proteins, the more fascinating I found them and I decided I wanted to continue my research on proteins but in the area of biophysics where I could utilise my physics background. Fortunately one of the best scientists in the world in the area of computational biophysics applied to protein research, Professor Nobuhiro Gō, was at the Department of Chemistry, Kyoto University. Professor Gō agreed to host me and my application to JSPS was successful.

Before going to Japan I enrolled in Japanese language lessons at Edinburgh University. We started with 30 people in the class but after 6 months there were only two of us left; the two that were going to work in Japan. When I arrived in Japan I found that

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Biography

1979-1982	BSc, Dept of Physics, Bristol University
1984-1987	Diplom, Dept of Physics, Mainz University, Germany
1987-1991	PhD, Dept of Molecular Biology, Edinburgh University
1991-1993	JSPS Postdoctoral Fellow, Dept of Chemistry, Kyoto University
1993-1995	EU-STP Postdoctoral Fellow, Dept of Chemistry, Kyoto University
1995-1999	Postdoctoral Researcher, Dept of Chemistry, Groningen University, The Netherlands
1999-2005	Lecturer, School of Computing Sciences, University of East Anglia
2005-2016	Senior Lecturer, School of Computing Sciences, University of East Anglia
2016-present	Reader, School of Computing Sciences, University of East Anglia

my Japanese knowledge was helpful but I was disappointed in how little I understood. I continued to learn Japanese as lessons were paid for by JSPS and as time went on my interest grew. At my peak I could read about 200 Kanji but you need to know 2000 in order to be able to read a newspaper so I never quite made it in that regard. Still I do recommend anyone intending to stay any length of time to learn the language if only for the insights it provides into Japanese culture and society.

I went to Kyoto in March 1991 and stayed two years supported by the JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowship and a further two years supported by an EU-STP fellowship. I will never forget the warm welcome I received from the group in Japan. Professor Gō had a large group and was apparently well-known in Japanese academia for insisting that his students present their work in English in group seminars. Thus I was lucky in that the Gō group attracted ambitious and internationally-minded students. I worked a lot with Akio Kitao, a graduate student in the group, as my project followed on from his PhD work. Kitao-san, who later became Assistant Professor to Professor Gō, was someone I

enjoyed working with and all of my research publications from that time have him as a co-author.

I stayed in a “hanare”, a small house in the garden of a bigger house where the landlady and landlord lived. They treated me with great kindness and even took me on holiday a few times. On the down-side the garden and hanare seemed to be infested with enormous insects. To see a “mukade” (a giant poisonous centipede) walk with its numerous legs between me and the TV made me jump more than any horror film has. I killed it with Japanese for Busy People Vol 2.

It was 27 years ago that I went to Japan on the JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowship and I am writing this whilst visiting Kitao-san who is now a full Professor in the School of Life Science and Technology, Tokyo Institute of Technology. We are currently working together on the molecular structure of the Alzheimer Amyloid- β protein performing Molecular Dynamics simulation studies focusing on mutants that result in early onset of the disease. I have been to Japan many times and have been fortunate to have received additional funding from JSPS. In 2007 I received a JSPS Invitation Fellowship for Research in Japan (Short Term), in 2009 a JSPS London Furusato Award, and in 2014 a JSPS Bridge Fellowship. All these were awarded to visit Kitao-

san with whom I have now published twelve journal articles with more on the way. I have met a number of previous members of the Gō group on these visits and have been updated on the lives of many others. It is safe to say that my first visit to Japan supported by JSPS had a profound impact on my scientific career and indeed my life.



Photo taken in 1991 for a local newspaper (thus in Black and White). Professor Gō is in the centre and first to his right is Kitao-san, then a PhD student in the group. The photo was taken on the roof of the Biophysics Building at Kyoto University, a famous spot for viewing the Daimonji Mountain (in background) during the Obon festival.

JSPS Alumni Association of the UK and the Republic of Ireland (RoI)

Please join the JSPS Alumni Association of the UK and the Republic of Ireland (RoI)!

As a former JSPS Fellow, we would like to ask you to join the JSPS Alumni Association of the UK and the Republic of Ireland (RoI). Our Alumni Association was established in 2003 and carries out a number of activities throughout the UK and RoI with numerous benefits for members. One of them is “The JSPS London Symposium and Seminar Scheme.” The aim of this scheme is to provide support for members holding a symposium or seminar and to create high quality collaboration in cutting edge/ internationally competitive areas at institutional or departmental level between research institutions in the UK or RoI and Japan. Under this scheme, JSPS London will partially support the following matters*:

*The detailed support is subject to change.

1

Costs for inviting symposium/ seminar speakers from Japan

2

Costs for hiring a venue, printing materials, advertising and so on*

3

Strategic support to help advertise and organise the event.

The application details of this scheme will automatically be e mailed to registered Alumni members during our next call. For further information please contact JSPS London by email at enquire@jps.org. Again, this is exclusively open to the JSPS Alumni members. So why not join us today?



Joining us

Simply register your membership here

http://www.jps.org/alumni_about/

Once registered you will receive an ID number and password to access the Alumni Association web pages and can start networking.