

My name is Yaron Silberberg and I was conducting my JSPS research fellowship at the Graduate School of Biostudies in Kyoto University, from 2009 to 2011. My research involved the use of a highly advanced force-measurement tool, the Atomic Force Microscope (AFM), for the investigation of mechanotransduction in live cells. My main focus was on the analysis of the way in which physical stimulus is transmitted from the cell surface and into the nucleus, and the implications this has on genetic expression and cell behavior. Being quite an interdisciplinary field, my research involved various aspects of cell biology, biophysics, biotechnology and nanotechnology. Living in Kyoto for two years, I had the amazing opportunity to be exposed to various aspects of Japanese life and culture, both traditional and modern. I love Japanese food and so I enjoyed very much the diversity of dishes and the whole eating and drinking culture that is quite unique in Japan. I slowly got accustomed to the Japanese way of living, and also improved my Japanese language skills and managed to form new friendships. Naturally, it is not always easy to adjust to the new way of living, and both the language and cultural barriers are quite huge, but if one comes here with an open-minded attitude and the sensitivity and willingness to adapt and experience new things, I believe the reward is very high. Being an enthusiastic amateur photographer, I used my free time to explore and to try and capture different aspects of Japanese life, not only the beautiful shrines and gardens but also the day-to-day life and the contrasts between the traditional and the new. Japan is a fascinating and unique place, and it never ceases to surprise and amaze you. Towards the end of my research programme, I decided that I would like to try and extend my stay in Japan, if I could, and I was lucky to find a new research lab and get funding for another project, this time in Tokyo. I am really grateful to JSPS for giving me this unique opportunity to live and work in Japan, an experience that I will never forget.