



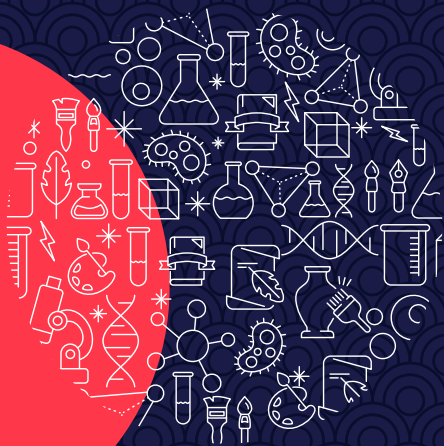
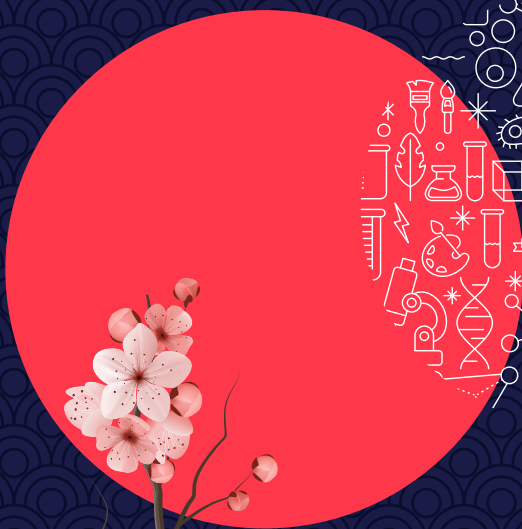
JSPS



FEATURE

JSPS Fellowship Bright Stories

Voice of Former JSPS Fellows





JSPS: Basic Features in Program Operation

What is JSPS?

(Japan Society for the Promotion of Science)



Established in 1932
(with an imperial endowment)

Places high value on both
researcher autonomy and
research diversity

Japan's core funding agency

*JSPS's
committee
chairmen's
meeting in 1937*



What does JSPS support?

Covers the entire spectrum of academic
fields including the humanities, social
sciences, and natural sciences

From basic to applied research conducted
based on curiosity-driven research and
the free ideas of researchers

Application Selection

- ✓ Bottom-up approach; invites applications via open calls
- ✓ Competitive funding; evaluates applications via peer review
- ✓ Fair and transparent screening; selects projects based on academic merit



JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowships for Research in Japan



Standard

1-2 Duration of Fellowship
(in years)

340 Approximate Number
of Fellowships Awarded

Terms of Award



Round-trip
air ticket



Monthly
maintenance
allowance



Settling-in
allowance

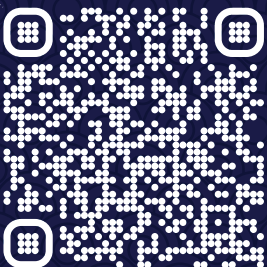


Grant-in-Aid
for JSPS Research
Fellows
(KAKENHI)



Overseas
travel
insurance

There are various programs like the short-term one. Please check the details here.
<https://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-fellow/index.html>



30-40%

of fellows continues to
stay in Japan after
their fellowships

Envisioning Our Co-existence with Robots, and More: Prof. Venture's JSPS Journey



Prof. Gentiane Venture is a Professor at the University of Tokyo. She has been an academician for more than 15 years now and specializes in robotics. Her research and engineering work spans a wide arena—from mechanical and robotic sciences to human motion science, robot control, and the design of technological systems.

Prof. Venture completed her doctorate in France; she found out about the JSPS postdoctoral fellowship by chance! Talking about her JSPS experience, she fondly reminisces about how her friends helped her integrate into life in Japan. Being selected as a postdoctoral researcher in the JSPS Fellowship program not only involved shifting to a new country but also required her to adapt to the academic and other norms followed by Japanese institutions, which she recalls are majorly different from those followed by European institutions. However, she has no complaints.

The professor is, in fact, very appreciative of the research environment in Japan. “I really enjoy the research, in particular, the university environment,” she smiles. She finds the environment to be very supportive. While she remarks that interdisciplinary science is not encouraged by the traditional flagbearers of certain disciplines, she acknowledges how important it is for her field of study.

As a roboticist researching how humans can live with robots, her work is on the precipice of robotics and humanities. As a result, Prof. Venture collaborates with professionals from diverse backgrounds—scientists, philosophers, psychologists, artists, communicators, and even athletes. She also is a part of various industry–academia collaborations and is thankful for her local industrial partners placing their trust in her despite the stark difference in their cultural backgrounds and nationalities.

However, Prof. Venture has come a long way from being a postdoc in France—she now speaks fluent Japanese and has her own lab! “It’s like running a very tiny company,” she explains when asked about her experience heading the GV Lab. The professor envisions a future where robots and humans work closely together and is curious to know what would happen if they did. Her parting words for budding researchers hoping to come to Japan? She encourages them to accept the differences between Japan and their home countries and to respect the Japanese culture.



A Lifetime of Learning, Philosophy, and More: Prof. D. Sakthi Kumar's Tryst with Japan

Since his childhood days, Prof. D. Sakthi Kumar, now the deputy director of the Bio Nano Electronics Research Center at the Graduate School of Interdisciplinary New Science, Toyo University, has been fascinated with Japan. He recalls checking the medals obtained by Japan in the Olympics, even during his school days!

It was partly this fascination that motivated him to apply for the JSPS Fellowship back in 2000 and come to Japan. He ended up staying all these years and now lives in Japan with his family. The enthusiastic professor's interests range from cancer research to the development of a cricket club.

As a scientist who works at the intersection of biology, physics, chemistry, and mathematics, he believes interdisciplinary research is the way forward. He highly regards the efforts of Toyo University in bringing together scientists from varying disciplines, providing scope for mutual interactions, and thereby advancing towards being a hub for intersectional discussion and innovative research areas. "The world is now talking about interdisciplinary fusion. But Toyo University did it much earlier," he says.

Through his own research, which involves the application of knowledge from multiple scientific disciplines, he dreams of making the world cancer-free. His research group at



Toyo University studies and uses 'nanoparticles' to identify and eliminate various cancers at the early stages.

Prof. Kumar understands the importance of publicizing the opportunities available to the global research community. "I'm happy that JSPS is going in that direction," he beams. He perceives that language issues may be deterring people from applying for the program, but the professor lays to rest any such doubts—he himself did not face any such problems in his career trajectory, and learning Japanese was not imperative for him.

Being a person of Indian origin, he was extremely keen on forming an association of Indian alumni who have benefited from the JSPS Fellowship Program. His long-drawn efforts in accumulating all the required information onto a website for the purpose have received recognition from the embassies of both countries. Maybe some of these scholars will fall in love with Japan and stay on, like Prof. Sakthi did, making great breakthroughs in research!



Balancing Academic and Industrial Research: Dr. Yonathan Asikin's JSPS Journey



Dr. Yonathan Asikin, an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of the Ryukyus, Japan, was accepted for a JSPS' postdoctoral fellowship in 2014. He had studied in Japan before as an exchange student during his master's course. Subsequently, he worked in the food and packaging industries and also had a stint as a Junior Lecturer at a private university in Indonesia. However, the wealth of experience obtained through these professions led Dr. Asikin to a single conclusion: That he needed to study more.

Enthralled by the technological advancements, he decided to return to Japan for his PhD. "Japan was one of my top priorities because Japan is known in Southeast Asia as the leading technology country," he says. He recounts that his former advisor was the one who told him to apply for the JSPS Fellowship. "JSPS is the best fellowship for postdocs in Japan and is very prestigious," he remarks.

As a postdoctoral fellow, Dr. Asikin delved deeper into the biomolecular application aspects of food and agriculture. He mentions that the JSPS Fellowship helped him extend his research and gain experience in fields apart from his own. While collaborating with other researchers from various universities, he maneuvered the scope of his research to address both academic research and the application-based perspective of industrial research.

As a native of Indonesia, Dr. Asikin agrees that there are a lot of cultural similarities between his home country and Japan. But he also stresses that he could not have explored the applicative side of his research so much in his home country. Japan provided him the opportunity to understand the needs of the people—the farming community in this case—and address those needs through his research.

Stepping into a new society and culture can feel daunting for foreign researchers. But he assures the future generation of the cooperation and kindness he received from his mentors and peers. He mentions that many JSPS fellows who came to Japan for the first time fit in easily, even without being fluent in Japanese. He speaks highly of the effect this fellowship has had on advancing his own career. He feels the experience that can be gained from working and studying in Japan, along with the advanced research opportunities that Japan has to offer, will encourage other researchers to apply for the JSPS Fellowship. Dr. Asikin leaves future applicants with a very inspiring message. He says, "We have to dream. We have to dream for the future and I think the dream will bring more motivation."

Prof. Beise-Zee's Experience with JSPS and Making a Foreign Land Home

Prof. Beise-Zee Marian—the Vice President for Research at the Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (APU) in Japan—was a former fellow of the fellowship program run by the JSPS.

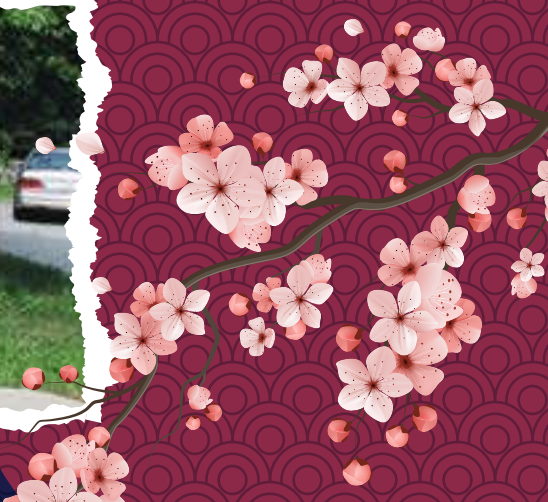
The professor's association with JSPS started in 2003, when he came across an advertisement for the program. Then a postdoctoral researcher in Germany, he applied for the fellowship, thinking it was a good way to get to know a foreign country. Many years later, he acknowledges how that decision positively impacted his life and career when he decided to return and continue working in Japan. "The fellowship had a big impact because it was very enjoyable. It made me very happy at a point in my life when I didn't know exactly what was next in my

career," he recounts. With immense support from his host institution—Kobe University—and JSPS, he seamlessly settled into his new life in Japan.

Alongside facilitating an international level of research, his host institute provided a plethora of opportunities for off-work activities and successfully embedded their researchers and faculty into a strongly connected community. This was very important, in his opinion. He also recommends finding a community outside of your host institution and interacting with a lot of people. "Local society in Japan can be good communication opportunities," Prof. Beise-Zee tells us. What he found particularly refreshing, though, was the fact that he did not need to know Japanese to communicate with others. It was more important to be confident during these interactions.

The bilingual communications at APU, which is his current affiliation, make it easier for researchers to integrate with administration as well. Communications are largely in English, and meetings are translated so a non-native speaker can follow the proceedings. This trend—which is followed by most Japanese institutes of global repute—makes it much easier for researchers to integrate with their institute's administration and to chart a clear career path in Japan, be it in research or in an administrative role, Prof. Beise-Zee explains.

The professor poses an important question to young researchers who are in the process of deciding their career trajectory on a global scale: "What do you want from your life?" He applauds the long-term effect that the JSPS and other fellowships have on young researchers, and how it proved to be an excellent fit for his own development.



Across Cultures and Research Fields: Dr. Lötstedt's JSPS Experience



Dr. Erik Viktor Lötstedt is an Associate Professor at the University of Tokyo. He is currently a part of the quantum chemistry

group at the Department of Chemistry, the Graduate School of Science.

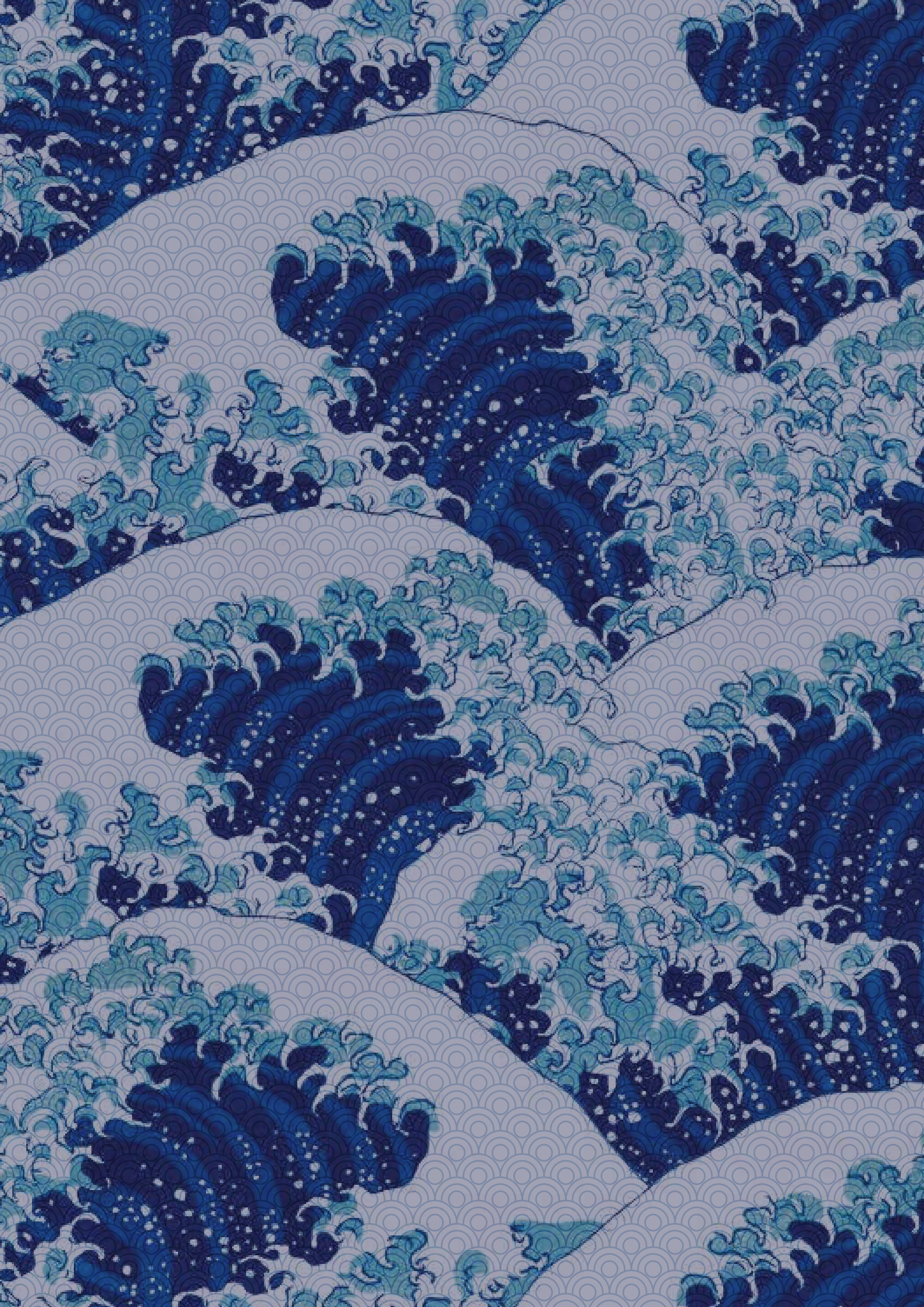
As a young scholar, theoretical physics—which employs mathematical models and calculations to understand natural phenomena—piqued Dr. Lötstedt's interest. However, it was only during his PhD in Germany that he started working in physics, with lasers. Still, he felt like his work was a bit too theoretical and lacked real-world experimentation and application. So, while deciding upon a postdoctoral position, he looked for opportunities in the field of theoretical chemistry.

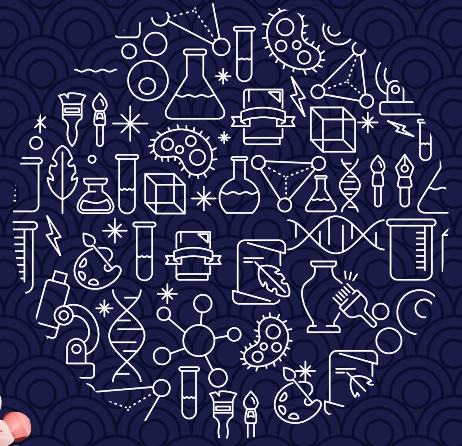
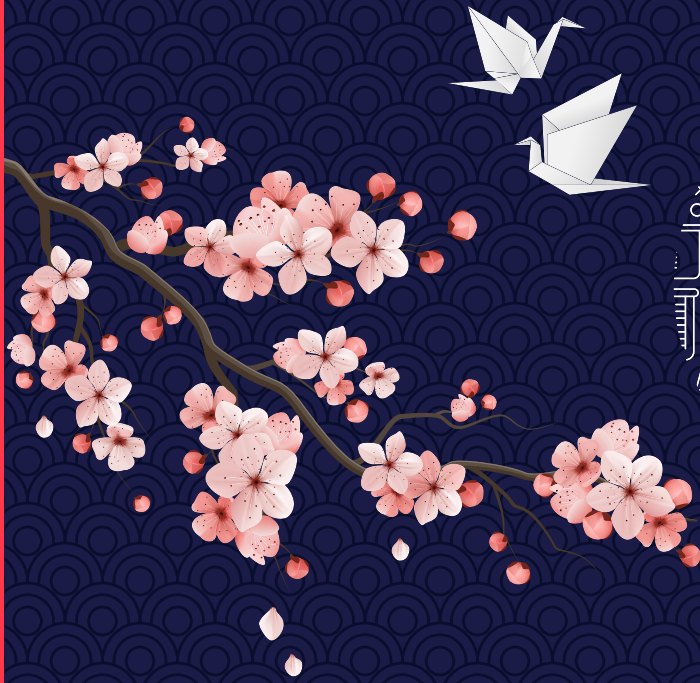
It was not long before he discovered the JSPS postdoctoral fellowship. He connected with Professor Yamanouchi, an acquaintance, who agreed to host Dr. Lötstedt. This was in 2009. Over a decade later, he still recalls the experience to be extremely fulfilling, alongside being well-paid.

Dr. Lötstedt believes that scientific research is special in a way because it does not change with the place it is being done in and maintains its sanctity across the world. He found this to be particularly true while working at the University of Tokyo. "The equations remain the same everywhere," he tells us, "irrespective of the researchers' nationalities."

Settling in a new country, understanding the cultural differences, and acquainting yourself with the region is perhaps the more daunting part, Dr. Lötstedt feels. Even so, he did not have much trouble with administrative communication even when he was new in the country, thanks to his wife's help. "I remember she even went with me in the subway sometimes!" he recalls fondly, remembering his difficulties while commuting around a new city. He does mention how things have gotten much easier now, thanks to smartphones, which let you access everything from maps to translations at your fingertips. Given the scope for foreign researchers in the country and his own positive experiences, Dr. Lötstedt is confident when he says, "I would recommend Japan without hesitation as the kind of place to go to for doing good research."

One day, he hopes to have his own research lab and go on to make brilliant discoveries.





JSPS Overseas Offices



ABOUT JSPS

The Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) operates as an independent administrative institution to perform the following main functions: fund scientific research, foster researchers, promote international scientific exchange, and advance university reform.



JSPS

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