

Joint Meeting between the Young Academies of Sweden and Japan
Stockholm 12-13th June 2013

Yuji Nishiyama (Tokyo Metropolitan University)

On 12-13th June 2013, a Joint Meeting between the Young Academies of Sweden and Japan was held at Stockholm with the support of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) and the Science Council of Japan. The objective of the meeting was to promote the interaction between the Young Academies of Sweden and Japan, and to share experiences and build up an international network of young researchers in Sweden and Japan. Ten young researchers from Japan participated in the meeting.

On 12th, we visited some places at Stockholm with a guide of members of the Young Academy of Sweden. First, we visited “SciLifeLab” in the Karolinska Institute. The Karolinska Institute is one of Europe's largest and most prestigious medical universities. We heard reports on research achievements in biological science with the help of Dr. Erik Lindahl. Their report was on the development and future of their research and the next-generation genome sequencers that were recently introduced to their laboratory which identify gene sequences at very high speed.

After lunch, we made a visit to the Royal School of Technology, where we looked around the laboratories of robot engineering. We had presentations on the application of robotics in the living space, for example, the adaptation of robots to unknown situations, the collaborative work with human beings, and the communications between the robots. In the evening, we had a guided tour in the Novel Museum and were lucky enough to visit the underground book storeroom usually closed to the public.

The next day, our Joint Meeting was held at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences (RSAS) near Stockholm University. First of all, we had a guided tour in RSAS, especially in the historic rooms used for discussions of the Nobel Committee. We were absolutely overwhelmed by the atmosphere of the room decorated with the portraits of all the successive directors of academy.

The joint meeting began with the introduction of young academies by Dr. Shoji Komai and Dr. Anna Sjöström Douagi. We understood the organization, the activities, and the background of foundation of each academy. The Young Academies of Sweden was founded in 2011 with the support of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. We were told of an impressive and beautiful episode that the RSAS watered plant seeds and gave them to the young researchers in the opening ceremony.

After lunch, there were two scientific presentations. Dr. Yuji Nishiyama gave a presentation “The Honesty of the Humanities in Face of a Catastrophe” and asked what we should do with philosophy or literature after the triple catastrophe on “11th March”. Dr. Danica Kragic Jensfelt reported on perspectives from Robotics and computer vision and discussed on the possibilities of object recognition and manipulation.

Finally, all the participants were divided into four groups and engaged in deep discussions on four topics: “Career Tracks & Life in Lab (gender-related)”, “Future of National Young Academies & International vs National Activities/Collaborations”, “Policies on Science and Technology: Science in Policy Making and Discussion with the Policy Makers”, “How to Work on Interdisciplinary”.

Although it was a short stay, we were much stimulated both academically and culturally in the visits. The meeting was fruitful in that we were able to promote collaborations between Swedish and Japanese young researchers. We reached a consensus to organize a joint meeting in Japan next year, inviting in turn members of the Young Academy of Sweden. We express deep gratitude to the JSPS and the Science Council of Japan for their strong support.