

Editorial



Prof. Masahiro
Murakami

Dear Readers of CHIMIA,

The year 2018 marks the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the first modern government in Japan in 1868. At that time, Japan lagged well behind western countries in many aspects – in science in particular. This situation resulted in a number of brilliant Japanese scientists going to European countries to study and train. Switzerland was one of the centers of learning that attracted and generously accepted these Japanese scholars.

At the beginning of the 20th century, for example, the following three Japanese chemists studied in Zurich at the same time (see the photo on the cover page): Professor Riko Majima (middle, an organic chemist) and Professor Yasuhiko Asahina (left, a pharmacist and an organic chemist) trained under the direction of Professor Richard Willstätter at the ETH Zurich. Professor Yuji Shibata (right, an inorganic chemist) studied in the laboratory of Professor Alfred Werner at the University of Zurich. These three chemists later returned to Japan to foster many academic progenies, and ever since then there have been strong ties between the chemistry communities of Switzerland and Japan. To this day, Switzerland remains an excellent venue in the education of Japanese chemists.

The December issue of CHIMIA is a special issue that collects original papers from ten groups of Japanese chemists who are currently active in academia in Japan. Each one of these scientists was engaged in research activity in Switzerland during their early careers – either as PhD students, as post-doctoral fellows, or as visiting professors. Without exception, they benefited from their experiences in Switzerland which, in turn, have contributed to their successful academic careers. They are all immensely grateful for the chemistry community of Switzerland, and are thus delighted to contribute to this special issue.

Yukihiko Arakawa was a post-doctoral fellow in the group of Prof. Helma Wennemers at the University of Basel (2009–2011) and the ETH Zurich (2011–2013).

Yoshiya Ikawa joined the group of Prof. Donald Hilvert at the ETH Zurich as a visiting researcher from 2003 till 2004.

Ryo Irie joined the group of Prof. Manfred Schlosser at the University of Lausanne as a postdoctoral fellow from June 1996 till May 1997.

Shunsaku Kimura stayed at the laboratory of Prof. Robert Schwyzer at the Institute of Molecular Biology and Molecular Biophysics, ETH Zurich, as a post-doctoral collaborator twice from 1982 till 1984 and in 1986.

Atsushi Kittaka joined the group of Prof. Albert Eschenmoser at the ETH Zurich as a post-doctoral fellow from 1987 till 1989.

Seijiro Matsubara joined the group of Prof. Manfred Schlosser at the University of Lausanne from December 1984 till December 1985 for a PhD program in collaboration with the laboratory of Prof. Hitosi Nozaki (Kyoto University).

Masahiro Murakami took leave from Kyoto University to train at the ETH Zurich as a post-doctoral fellow for Prof. Albert Eschenmoser from May 1991 till March 1992.

Shin-ichiro Shoda conducted his postdoctoral work at the ETH Zurich with Prof. Dieter Seebach from 1984 till 1986.

Keisuke Suzuki enjoyed a sabbatical year as a Visiting Professor at the ETH Zurich with Prof. Dieter Seebach from 1990 till 1991.

Masakazu Tanaka performed a postdoctoral work with Prof. Dieter Seebach at the ETH Zurich from October 1994 till July 1995.

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It is with great pleasure that the Editorial Board of CHIMIA thanks Prof. Masahiro Murakami for his efforts in the planning and successful realization of this issue on 'Chemistry Ties Linking Japan to Switzerland' illustrating the great benefits of international collaboration for all involved.