

# 外国人客員所員を経験して

**Andrés Felipe Santander Syro**  
**Associate Professor - Université Paris Sud**  
**Junior Chair - Institut Universitaire de France**

**CSNSM IN2P3/CNRS Université Paris Sud, Bâtiments 104 et 108 91405**  
**Orsay cedex, FRANCE**

+33 (0)1 6915 5222 [andres.santander@csnsm.in2p3.fr](mailto:andres.santander@csnsm.in2p3.fr)

The ISSP asks its invited academics to write, when their stay is ending, an informal essay about how their visit was. I soon found out that writing this essay was much more difficult than I originally thought! The reason is that *I enjoyed so much* the 5 months spent here that I had a hard time accepting that my visit would be over soon, and that I had to look back and write the report marking the official end of it. Of course, reviewing all the cutting-edge research that I could perform these months at ISSP, the enriching interactions with the people in the group of Professor Shin (my host team), in the Institute, and in Kashiwa campus, and the wonderful cultural (and culinary!) immersion made possible by this stay, were all delightful motivations to happily undertake the task.

I was visiting Professor at ISSP from mid-March to mid-August 2014. I worked in the group of Professor Shin, studying by photoemission spectroscopy the electronic structure of several correlated-electron systems, including two-dimensional electron gases at the surface of transition-metal oxides and the quantum criticality in some of heavy-fermion materials. The Shin group has an impressive collection of state-of-the-art instruments for photoemission measurements using laser excitation. I could take advantage of this to perform or participate in experiments using several variants of photoemission spectroscopy, like ultra-high-resolution angle-resolved photoemission, time- and angle-resolved photoemission, and laser-excited photoelectron microscopy. The results of some of these experiments are now the subject of a paper under preparation, and more data is still under analysis. More generally, I found it very beneficial to be able to have at one's disposal such a variety of techniques in the same laboratory. This gives a lot of versatility in the research and boosts creativity. Moreover, it was a true honor and a lot of fun to work side by side in the lab with the members of the Shin group. I strongly appreciated their ability to combine, in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, meticulous measurements with jubilant conversations and gargantuan dinners in delicious (or extreme!) Japanese restaurants. The interactions nurtured during these months with the Shin group became the basis of a collaborative long-term project (JSPS-CNRS) that we are now preparing.

One of the most remarkable experiences during my stay was the interaction with Ms Akiko Kameda and Ms Chihiro Seki at ISSP's International Liaison Office. They virtually prepared all the formalities for my venue, and helped me with all the paperwork and practical issues before and during my stay, like reserving a room in the International Lodge, opening a bank account, or lending me an awesome green-fluorescent bike during all my stay. The bike was very convenient for wandering around Kashiwa, and let me amusing souvenirs, including a mildly cracked rib after a rather innocent fall – not a serious injury, its only effect being that for a couple of weeks I had to embrace myself when laughing to hold the pain.

In fact, Akiko and Chihiro know extremely well how to navigate smoothly in the labyrinth of Japanese administration. Furthermore, they were always happy to help even in complicated bureaucratic procedures or situations of the daily life of a *gaijin* trying to find his way in Heisei-26's Japan. Additionally, they always had their office open for sharing a coffee and discuss about mundane and divine subjects. I enjoyed a lot our conversations on Japanese and Latin-American cultures and literature, as well as their help to organize some of my weekend travels around Tokyo.

Another enjoyable part of the daily life at Kashiwa Campus was having a coffee at Yamamoto-san's Café in the Coop store just in front of ISSP. She is a very friendly person, and her coffee is by far the best around. Many of the foreign visitors in Kashiwa Campus frequent Yamamoto-san's Café for an espresso after lunch or a break in the afternoon. She knows the names and deeds of all!

During my visit to ISSP I could also join the Japanese lessons for foreigner visitors offered by the Kashiwa Campus. The courses provided basic skills for understanding and communicating in everyday situations, and were a nice way to get more involved into Japanese life and culture. I enjoyed the lessons a lot, although the work in the lab and the research duties prevented me from reviewing assiduously at home the lessons of each day. However, I felt that most of the courses focused in memorizing conversations of commonly encountered situations, without a clear connection between consecutive lessons and few elements about the structure and logic of the language. Having learnt other languages before, my impression is that, for an adult, learning first the basic grammatical elements and the structure and logic behind a new language might be a better approach, rather than, for instance, trying to memorize from the beginning the dozens of different ways to enumerate things depending on their nature, size or shape.

During my stay I took home at the University of Tokyo's Kashiwa International Lodge. The residence hosts students, post-docs and visiting academics from all over the world. It is modern, clean and well organized. My room, albeit small, had all what I needed for a comfortable stay. More important, the residence is very well located, exactly mid-way between the Campus and the Tsukuba Express station and shopping mall –both 5 minutes by bike. As a constructive remark, the International Lodge has a few rather constraining rules that are difficult to understand or whose rationale is not well explained. Sometimes these rules give the impression of being treated as a child. For instance, visitors staying overnight are not allowed –so it's not possible to host family members or friends for short visits. This seems not logic for an apartment for which one is being responsible and paying a rent.

The period of my stay allowed me to appreciate the beauty of Japan during spring and summer. I loved the magic and power of the Cherry Bloom, and the merry Hanami parties under flourished trees to enjoy with friends the arrival of spring. During weekends I usually took the time to explore Tokyo, and discover restaurants and parks around the megalopolis. I was struck by the magnificence of nature all around, and how one can find oneself immersed in amazing landscapes, walking in a deep gorge along a small river of playful crystalline waters, the whole just a couple of hours by train from Tokyo! But above all, I was deeply marked by the genuine kindness of the people I encountered all around Japan.

All in all, my stay at ISSP has been among the best scientific and human experiences of my career, and one of the most fun adventures I have lived.