外国人客員所員を経験して

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I was introduced to the scientific approach and exceptional skills of Japanese scientists already during my Ph.D. work studying the seminal works of Profs. Minoru Takahashi and Masuo Suzuki. It was followed by a post-doc term with Prof. Kazumi Maki in the States I was acquainted with where students/collaborators and during my stay in Switzerland to Japanese colleagues, by now friends. My first visit to Japan was in 2004 attending a workshop in Sendai and a summer school in Tokyo organized by Prof. Masaki Oshikawa and having the first opportunity to get a glimpse at the life and culture in Japan.

This three month long visit to ISSP, kindly organized by my host Prof. Hirokazu Tsunetsugu, was really my first opportunity to live and work in Japan. Scientifically, it was very intense and fruitful. Daily hourlong discussions with Prof. Tsunetsugu, opened new directions in my research plans as well as on common projects. It was also very good timing as there are serious developments in the dynamics of integrable systems that we are cur-rently pursuing. Interaction with members of his group (in particular Dr. Tatsuhiko Ikeda and others at the ISSP Theory Department) was very cordial and scientifically interesting. Presentations of and attending seminars at ISSP and discussions at the Univ. of Tokyo with Profs. S. Miyashita, M. Ogata, S. Aoki were very constructive. And with the opportunity to attend the March Japanese Physical Society Meeting in Osaka I witnessed a vibrant Japanese physical society working at the frontiers of science.

And all this of course would not have been possible without the kind, friendly and efficient assistance of the

secretaries, Ms. Mayumi Matsushita and Atsuko Tsuji of my host group and Ms. Yuko Ishiguchi and Ayano Hashiguchi of the International Liaison Office, that made my stay comfortable and enjoyable.

About visiting Japan, a while after I arrived, I was asked by my colleagues what made me more impression. My spontaneous answer was the politeness of people and the variety of seafood! - of which I am great fun. In the meantime, with my wife that visited for 3 weeks, we had the opportunity over the "Golden Week" and a couple of weekends to visit the impressive cultural places in Tokyo, Kyoto and Nikko, shrines, temples, museums, which is what tourists do.

But also, to enjoy a walk through the Rikugien garden - distinctly Japanese, to enjoy the nature in a hiking through Ryuokyo valley, to wonder through the lively neighborhoods of Tokyo, a clean and safe metropolis - a contradiction in terms for other parts of the world - , to be impressed by the perfectly organized and punctual metro and trains, to meet passers-by ready to help a lost tourist, to have dinner at simple restaurants and meet very friendly locals eager to start a conversation, to see the very hard working but also fun loving people, to have some delicious "street food" (e.g. takoyaki), to note the particularities of Japanese daily life.

And all this was possible due to the hospitality of my host and ISSP which I believe, besides being an outstanding center of physics, gives an opportunity to appreciate the unique Japanese culture.