



NEWSLETTER

ARGENTINE ASSOCIATION OF JSPS ALUMNI
ニュースレター - 日本学術振興会アルゼンチン同窓会
BOLETÍN-ASOCIACIÓN ARGENTINA EX JSPS FELLOWS

Issue n°3 - August 2024

Editorial board

Dr. Marcela Bolontrade & Dr. Guillermo Giovambattista

Welcome!

Dear alumni, we welcome you to the Association and to this space in which we hope to share news, experiences, activities, and tips to enrich your experience in Japan.

Goals:

Our objective is to establish a collaboration network between former JSPS scholarship holders, promoting the development of science, technology and knowledge, maintaining our roots in Argentina and Japan, and committing ourselves to promoting activities that promote the technological and scientific enrichment of our scholarship holder countries with our partners in Japan. With this newsletter, we aim to stay connected in a useful way!



News

A logo was proposed for the Argentine Association of JSPS Alumni. It combines the national flowers of Argentina and Japan, and the sun that is present in both flags.



Logo for the Argentine Association of JSPS Alumni. Designed by Gabriela Auge.

On July 5, 2024, we visited the Cultural and information center of the Embassy of Japan in Argentina, and we were received by the cultural assistant Noemí Murakami and the Press officer Mg. Christian Giordano. We talked about the goals of the Argentine Association of JSPS Alumni and the possible ways to promote scientific and social activities.



From left to right: Christian Giordano, Marcela Bolontrade, Gabriela Auge, Luis Morelli, Guillermo Giovambattista, and Noemí Murakami, at the Cultural and Information Center of the Embassy of Japan in Argentina



News

On August 6, 2024, we held the third alumni meeting, this time in person. The meeting was hosted by Luis Morelli, taking place at Instituto de Investigación en Biomedicina de Buenos Aires (IBioBA) CONICET, Polo Científico Tecnológico, in CABA. In alphabetical order, José Amicola, Gabriela Auge, Marcela Bolontrade, Cesar Caiafa, Héctor Ricardo Cicerchia, Guillermo Giovambattista, Silvia Miyazaki, and Luis Morelli, were present at this gathering. To facilitate the participation of all alumni, the format was hybrid, with the participation via zoom of Andrés Greco, Luis Otero, and Marisa Santo. We also counted with the participation of Mariana Rutitzky, from the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation. In addition to the brief introduction of the members, a presentation was made with the activities carried out so far, followed by an exchange of ideas about the next steps to follow

The number of members has increased since the last meeting, now we are 38!



Left to right: José Amícola, Guillermo Giovambattista, Cesar Caiafa, Gabriela Auge, Luis Morelli, Marcela Bolontrade, Héctor Cicerchia, and Silvia Miyazaki, at IBioBA, Polo Científico Tecnológico



Upcoming Events

We are planning an in-person meeting by the end of the year.
Stay tuned!

JSPS-Net (social media)

The JSPS has a social media named “JSPS Researchers Network” (JSPS-Net; [JSPS Researchers Network JSPS-Net](#)) to create communities and connect researchers worldwide. JSPS alumni can freely register in the network and can communicate and share information with other members. Groups can create within this community.

Alumni stories

We usually dedicate a section to “alumni stories” in each issue. This time, we will highlight the I Argentinean-Japanese Lactic Acid Bacteria Meeting, held in Tucuman, Argentina, August 8-9, 2024. Within the framework of the constitution of the Argentine Association of JSPS, and the participation of Dr. Julio Villena, a member of this Association, we will feature, in Julio’s words, this Argentina - Japan bilateral scientific activity, which included the granting of the first award granted by our Association, called *The Argentine Association of JSPS Recognition of Long-Term Collaborative Research*.

These are Julio’s words:



“The mission of the Argentine Association of JSPS Alumni is to establish a collaboration network between former JSPS fellowship holders, promoting the development of science, technology and knowledge, maintaining our roots in Argentina and Japan, and committing ourselves to promote activities that improve the technological and scientific enrichment of our country with our partners in Japan. One of the most important activities that the association wants to do is to recognize the support of Japanese professors and researchers who have actively participated in the development of Argentinean science, through collaborations with former JSPS fellows. Thus, we have created an award called the **Argentine Association of JSPS Alumni Recognition for Long-term Collaborative Research**, and we have decided to award the first of these recognitions to Dr. Haruki Kitazawa, who is full professor from the Graduate School of Agricultural Science of Tohoku University and the head leader Laboratory of Animal Food Function in Sendai, Japan.



Top. The I Argentinean-Japanese Lactic Acid Bacteria Meeting, held in Tucuman, Argentina, August 8-9, 2024. Bottom: the Argentine Association of JSPS Alumni Recognition for Long-term Collaborative Research award, granted to Dr. Haruki Kitazawa.



The laboratory of Dr. Kitazawa created a strong connection with the Laboratory of Immunobiotechnology of the Reference Center for Lactobacilli (CERELA-CONICET, Tucuman, Argentina). This collaboration began in 2009 when Dr. Julio Villena (Principal Researcher of CERELA-CONICET) worked at Tohoku University as a JSPS Postdoc under the guidance of Dr. Kitazawa. Over these 15 years Dr. Kitazawa and Dr. Villena have joined forces to investigate the role of beneficial microorganisms in modulating immune responses and their impact on resistance to infections, with the ultimate goal of using these microorganisms to improve human and animal health. The collaborative work was reinforced by regular visits by Dr. Kitazawa to Argentina and Dr. Villena to Japan. In addition, student exchanges have been promoted, through the signing of an agreement on academic exchange in 2016 and a memorandum of understanding on student exchange in 2022. In this context, many of the CERELA and University of Tucuman CONICET fellows have been able to carry out part of their research work at Tohoku University, supported by Dr. Kitazawa, and several Japanese students were able to visit the laboratories of CERELA. In addition to contributing to the advancement of the scientific discipline, publishing more than 70 original works and supporting doctoral and postdoctoral fellows, this collaborative work also created strong bonds of friendship. “



Left: Drs Julio Villena, Haruki Kitazawa and Jean Guy LeBlanc (director of CERELA), Tucuman, Argentina, 2023. Right: Drs. Haruki Kitazawa and Julio Villena, Sendai, Japan, 2009.



Culture highlights



Japanese characters

My Neighbor Totoro (となりのトトロ, Tonari no Totoro) is a 1988 Japanese animated fantasy film written and directed by Hayao Miyazaki and animated by Studio Ghibli for Tokuma Shoten. It stars the voices of Noriko Hidaka, Chika Sakamoto and Hitoshi Takagi, and focuses on two young sisters and their interactions with friendly wood spirits in postwar rural Japan. The film explores themes such as animism, Shinto symbolism, environmentalism and the joys of rural living.

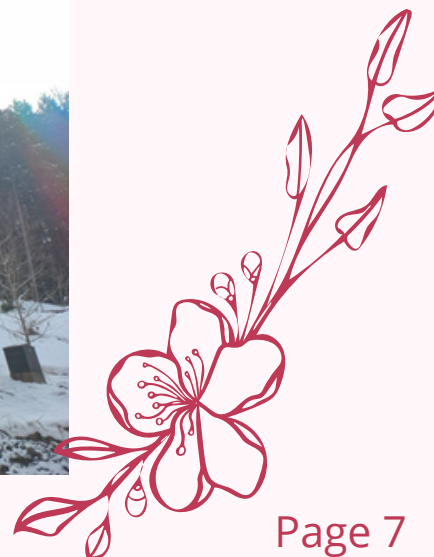
*Photograph from
Guillermo Giovambattista*

Recommendations for a better Life in Japan

Shinrin-yoku: it means “forest bath”. Japan is a very populated country, with huge cities: Tokyo is the largest populated city in the world (with an estimated population of 37,115,035). But you can be in the middle of any of these huge cities and always be able to find a shrine, a pond, a lake, a small or a large forest. Shinrin-yoku helps to disconnect from the crowds and brings a sense of well-being. Go out and find a nice green area every time you can!



Forested area in Takayama, prefecture of Gifu. Photograph from Marcela Bolontrade.



Recommended places to visit in Tokyo

The Sumida Hokusai is a small but beautiful museum located in the Sumida City area of Tokyo, Japan. Specifically, it is situated in the Kamezawa district, near the Ryogoku Station. The museum is dedicated to the life and works of the famous ukiyo-e artist Katsushika Hokusai, who is renowned for several iconic works, particularly his woodblock prints. One of his iconic paintings is the “Under the Wave of Kanagawa”, from the series Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji.



The painting “Under the Wave of Kanagawa” (left) and the Sumida Hokusai Museum in Tokyo (right). Photographs from Guillermo Giovambattista.

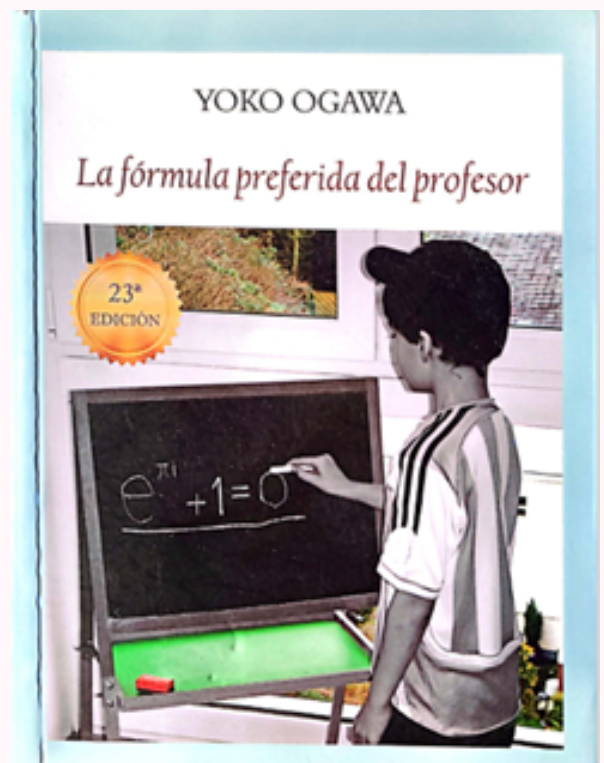


Suggested Japanese movies, series and music

Recommended books from Japanese writers



La dependienta (2016, コンビニにんげん) written by Sayaka Murata, suggested by Guillermo Giovambattista.



La fórmula preferida del profesor (博士の愛した数式, *Hakase no Aishita Sūshiki*, 2003) written by Yoko Ogawa, suggested by G. Giovambattista

**Recommendations
from Alumni are
welcome for future
issues of this
newsletter!**



Antes de que se enfríe el café (コーヒーが冷めないうちに, *Kohi ga Samenai Uchi ni*) is a 2015 novel by Toshikazu Kawaguchi, suggested by Gabriela Auge.



Recommended Japanese Food

The objective of this section is to share experiences with the members of our Alumni Association about the Japanese foods enjoyed during their stays in Japan, and that this information can serve as suggestions for future JSPS fellows. Photos and comments are welcome to be included in future issues of the Argentine Association of JSPS Alumni Newsletter.

Traditional Japanese Breakfast

A traditional Japanese breakfast is a delightful and balanced meal that combines various flavors and textures. Here's what you'll typically find on the breakfast table in Japan:

- Gohan (ご飯): A bowl of steamed white rice or rice porridge.
- Shiru (汁): A bowl of miso soup, rich in umami flavors.
- Okazu (おかず): The main dish and two side dishes, which can include grilled fish, tofu, or vegetables.
- Kouno mono (香の物): A small plate of pickled vegetables.

This breakfast follows the ichijyu sansai principle, emphasizing balance and nutrition. While it might seem like a full meal, it's designed to energize you without weighing you down.



Takoyaki

It means “grilled octopus”. It is typically prepared in a cast iron skillet like the ones in the photograph below. The wheat flour dough incorporates the octopus, and it is skillfully moved with chopsticks until cooked. The final form is a ball, served with mayonnaise and katsuobushi: this is typically bonito or tuna, prepared as “scales” that give an appearance of continuous movement to the topping. You can find it in restaurants and as street food. Warning: served VERY HOT!



Top: Takoyaki balls. Right: Preparing takoyaki at the lab. Photographs from Marcela Bolontrade.

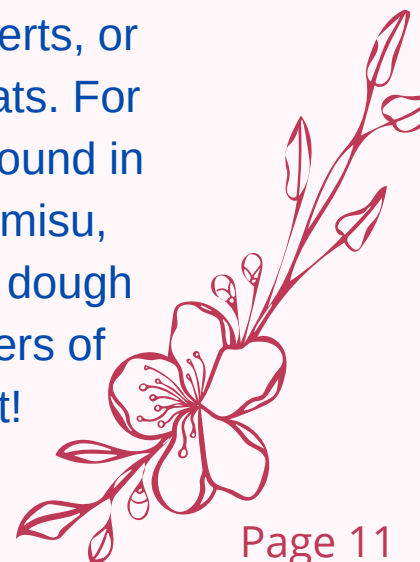


Dessert

Matcha is powdered green tea and can be drunk or applied as a powdered ingredient to desserts, or incorporated in various formats. For example, an option, usually found in Konvinis, is the Matcha tiramisu, which incorporates layers of dough soaked in matcha, with layers of mascarpone. Let's try it!



Matcha Tiramisu, a combination of mascarpone, dough and matcha. Photograph from M. Bolontrade.





**WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR
SUPPORT
AND PARTICIPATION!**

**Please stay tuned with the
Argentine Association of JSPS Alumni**

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Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in the contributions within this newsletter are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of JSPS.

The objective of this newsletter is to inform members about relevant topics and updates, and serve as a means of communication among members. Readers are encouraged to verify any information and consult relevant experts before making decisions based on the content herein.

