Introduction to the Biophysical Society of Japan (BSJ)

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The Biophysical Society of Japan (BSJ) was founded on the 10th of December in 1960. The first annual meeting was held in Osaka over 3 days and consisted of two parallel sessions, with 50 oral presentations and four invited talks. The BSJ belongs to IUPAB, the International Union of Pure and Applied Biophysics, and sends delegates to the International Biophysics Congress (IBC), held every 3 years. Many members of the Society also enthusiastically participate by presenting their work at the IBC. In 1978, the 6th IBC was held in Kyoto under the leadership of the BSJ. About 2000 biophysicists from ~30 countries participated in this Congress. That event greatly contributed to the future development and activities of the BSJ. Currently, the BSJ has over 3200 members, including 900 students.

BSJ currently publishes an international peer-reviewed journal “Biophysics and Physicobiology (BPPB)” (formerly known as “BIOPHYSICS”) and a review journal “SEIBUTSU BUTSURI” in Japanese. In 2004, the BSJ launched a journal in English, “BIOPHYSICS,” to promote biophysical research in the Asian-Pacific area; BSJ changed the journal’s name to “Biophysics and Physicobiology” in 2015. BPPB covers a broad field and accepts both experimental and theoretical research. Each year, an outstanding paper, published during the last 6 years within BPPB, is awarded and the awardee gives a special lecture at the annual meeting of BSJ. “SEIBUTSU BUTSURI” is a bi-monthly journal mainly written in Japanese. The journal maintains a high quality of invited and submitted manuscripts via a peer review system.

The annual meeting of BSJ is held once a year over the autumn/winter period. For a long time, the official language at the BSJ annual meeting was Japanese. However, in the twenty-first century, BSJ has started to put an emphasis on international activities, and the number of non-Japanese participants at the annual meeting, including invited speakers, has increased significantly. Since 2006, BSJ switched the official language of the annual meeting to English, with all the presentations at the symposia and general sessions, including oral and poster presentations, being given in English. Participants of the annual meeting now include scientists from Asian and Oceanian countries, and the internationalization of the Society is accelerating. BSJ now organizes bilateral symposia with Asian and Oceanic countries. The number of presentations recently exceeded 1600.

After the IBC meeting in 1978, the second Japan-China Biophysics Symposium was held in Kyoto in 1988, and the first East Asian Biophysics Symposium was held in Hyogo in 1994. The fifth East Asian Biophysics Symposium (EABS) and the 44th Annual Meeting of BSJ were held jointly in Okinawa in 2006. The great success of EABS led to the founding of the Asian Biophysics Association (ABA), of which the first meeting under that name was held in 2009 (Delhi, India). Thus, BSJ has been contributing to the growth of biophysics research in the Asia region from a very early stage.

BSJ has also been active in promoting and spreading biophysical research and education internationally. Beyond just engaging with regional activities, many BSJ members have contributed (and continue to contribute) to the activities of the ABA and IUPAB as Councilors and Presidents, including Prof. Kuniaki Nagayama who was the President of IUPAB from 2008 to 2011, and the president of ABA from 2006 to 2009. To further contribute to international biophysical research and education, BSJ successfully submitted a proposal at the 19th International Biophysics Congress (Edinburgh, UK, 2017), to organize the International Biophysics Congress jointly with the 61st BSJ annual meeting in June 2023 at Kyoto. The principal aim of the proposal was to make the IUPAB/BSJ Congress an international platform for presenting state-of-the-art research as well as for sharing the diversity of worldwide biophysical research within

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the culture of IUPAB. Within that bid structure, BSJ also suggested educational programs for students and early career researchers in addition to the main scientific programs. These activities show that BSJ appreciates the many missions of IUPAB—particularly those relating to the promotion of education and capacity building programs for students/young researchers in scientifically developing countries. Through such educational programs, BSJ will offer diverse hands-on courses

of advanced biophysical experiments such as high-speed AFM, super-resolution microscopy, and computer simulation of biological reaction networks. Fortunately, IUPAB accepted our proposal and awarded the 21st IBC to Japan. Since the last IUPAB Congress in Kyoto in 1978, BSJ has played a leading role in the field and is looking forward to hosting the world's largest biophysical meeting for the second time in 2023—once again within the beautiful city of Kyoto.

Bid function in Edinburgh (July 2017).

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest Hideki Kandori declares that he has no conflict of interest.

Ethical approval This article does not contain any studies with human participants or animals performed by the author.

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