Biophysical Society of Japan, 45 years ago

Mikio Kataoka¹

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Abstract

A personal memory of the Biophysical Society of Japan 45 years ago is described by a senior member of the society.

Keywords Activity of academic society · Young biophysicists in Japan

The 57th annual meeting of the Biophysical Society of Japan (BSJ) held at Miyazaki was finished with great success. We had more than 1,000 presentations including posters and symposia. BSJ is surely one of the most active academic societies in Japan. The annual meeting that I attended at the first time was the 14th annual meeting held in Osaka in 1975. I was a graduate student of Osaka University. The number of presentations and participants of the Osaka meeting was almost 1/3 of the Miyazaki meeting. Since then, I have attended almost all annual meetings of BSJ and observed growing activities of BSJ.

At that time, I also joined the activity of the Society of Young Scientists in Biophysics (BPwakate; wakate means young generation in Japanese), which is composed of graduate students, post-docs, and junior faculty members. It is older than BSJ. Actually, the general assembly of BPwakate contributed to the establishment of the bylaws of BSJ. Since the time of the foundation, BSJ appreciates traditionally the involvement of younger generation in the management of the society. The executive committee was composed of 20 members, and 3–4 members were always selected from the candidates nominated by BPwakate. Therefore, BSJ can discuss continuously the proposals, requests, or suggestions from younger generations. This is one of the reasons why BSJ keeps its high activity.

Incorporation of opinions of younger generation is essential to improve and renew the activity of the BSJ.

In 1975, BSJ announced that BSJ would host the 4th International Congress of Biophysics. We, the graduate students at that time, were keen to contribute to the Congress actively. BPwakate proposed the International Summer School of Biophysics (ISSB1978) as a satellite meeting of the Congress. We could have excellent lecturers at ISSB1978 who were nominated as invited speakers at the Congress. ISSB1978 was held prior to the main Congress and became good training for Japanese graduate students for the main Congress. Some of the organizers as well as the participants became core members of BSJ. In fact, 6 among 10 recent successive presidents can be found in the group photo (Fig. 1). ISSB became one of the official activities of IUPAB since then until late 1990s. The success of the main Congress made BSJ international and more active. I am sure that BSJ keeps its high activity and frontier mind in the future.

The author served as the president of BSJ in the period of 2010 and 2011. He graduated from the Department of Physics, Faculty of Science, Kyoto University in 1974 and completed the doctoral course of Graduate School of Engineering Science, Osaka University in 1980. He promoted to a professor of Graduate School of Materials Science, Nara Institute of Science and Technology in 1998, through a research assistant in the Department of Physics, Tohoku University and an associate professor in the Department of Biology, Osaka University. He joined to the Department of Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry, Yale University as a visiting scientist during 1988 and 1989. He is interested in protein physics, structural biology, and photobiology (Kataoka and Kamikubo 2019; Nakagawa and Kataoka 2020).

✉ Mikio Kataoka
kataoka@ms.naist.jp

¹ Nara Institute of Science and Technology, Ikoma 630-1192, Japan

Fig. 1 Group photo of ISSB1978

Author's contribution MK wrote the manuscript with his memory.

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest The author declares that he has no conflict of interest.

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