

ヴェエルダゲ (Michel Verdaguer) 教授

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ミッシェル・ヴェルダゲ教授はピエール・マリー・キュリー大学（パリ第6大学）の名誉教授になられたのを機会に、大阪大学客員教授として当センターに3ヶ月間滞在された。パリ南大学を卒業後、約20年間高等師範学校で教鞭を取られた。その間、研究にも熱意を燃やされ、当時パリ南大学におられたオリヴィエ・カーン教授 (Prof. Olivier Kahn) のもとで理学博士の学位を取られた。パリ南大学助手を経て46歳でピエール・マリー・キュリー大学教授に就任されている。高等師範学校で長年教育活動に携わってこられたので、人生の残りを研究活動に打ち込みたいとの思いから60歳で退職し、名誉教授の道を選択された。今まで通り研究室を維持できるので、今は研究ざんまいの生活を楽しまれ世界を駆け巡っておられる。分子磁性体に関する研究を大いに展開する傍ら、EU コミュニティーでの若手育成のための活動にも積極的に関与されている。ヴェルダゲ教授の講演を拝聴していつも感じるのだが、研究が楽しくて楽しくてたまらないという熱気が伝わってくることである。

ご夫妻揃っての本格的なアルピニストで、日本滞在中もお一人で晩秋の富士山、伊吹山、北アルプスをトレッキングされ、インターネットでフランスの奥様に映像を送っておられた。写真は当センターをバックにした記念写真である。

(名誉教授 徂徠道夫)



Michel Verdaguer
Emeritus Professor

Paris-Jussieu, September 25, 2003

Professor Michio Sorai
Research Centre for Molecular Thermodynamics
Graduate School of Science, Osaka University
Toyonaka, Osaka 560-0043, Japan

Dear Professor Sorai,

It is a pleasure to tell a few words about my stay in your laboratory as an invited professor. Indeed, you gave me last year the chance to stay during three months in the Research Centre for Molecular Thermodynamics in the Graduate School of Science in Osaka, one of the seven Imperial Japanese Universities. I had the opportunity during these three months to be a privileged witness of the work in your group, to deliver a plenary lecture at the 38th Conference of the Japanese Society of Calorimetry and Thermal Analysis, to be introduced to this field rather new for me, to begin some measurements and a collaboration on some molecular magnetic systems and to visit many scientific groups in several Japanese universities.

May I tell you first, that I was very much impressed by the strong impact of your activity in all these occasions. You have a very nice and well equipped laboratory, the only one of this kind in Japan and among the best in the world; an efficient and friendly team, managed efficiently and in a gentle way. You and your laboratory have a strong position in the very lively Japanese Society of Calorimetry and Thermal Analysis, which took you a lot of efforts in the past. You won the status of a very highly respected scientist and person in all Japan and beyond. All these impressions confirmed what I knew from your papers, in particular the seminal one with your former supervisor Professor Seki, in the *J. Phys. Chem. Solids*, in 1974. Through very accurate measurements of the heat capacity of the spin crossover you discovered that the electronic change in entropy was not enough to account for the experimental value and you suggested that a strong coupling between electronic state and phonon coupling was implied. This discovery changed deeply the manner to look at the spin crossover phenomenon for the international community of chemists and physicists and can be considered as a significant cornerstone in the expanding field of molecular magnetism.

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I used in rare occasion in the past heat capacity measurements and I am more convinced after my stay among you that it is a very useful technique to solve many problems in molecular magnetism, which allows in particular to choose between the different possible theoretical models of spin hamiltonians. I realized also that it is a very delicate and difficult technique, so that it is very important that under your leadership, accurate home-made calorimeters were designed and made available in your laboratory for very precise measurements in different areas of molecular science. I realized also how much your co-workers are deeply engaged in these demanding measurements, nights and days. There were few occasions during my nocturnal visits to the laboratory, even late (an invited professor alone abroad has indeed the privilege to work at any time...), that I did not find some of your co-workers working hard to get perfect results, without looking at the clock !

I had the chance for example to work with Miyazaki-san on his calorimeter, to follow and study the very exciting electronic transition, thermally induced, of an iron-cobalt analogue of Prussian blue, suitably modified by A. Bleuzen in Paris with some inserted sodium cation. Even if liquid helium was missing at this time because the replacement of the helium liquefier of the university, Yuji struggled a lot to get perfect data. And I hope that thermodynamics will give us important informations on the nature of this complex transition, combining electron transfer, spin cross over and structural phase transition and that will initiate a long-living collaboration between our groups, between our young coworkers and with some other Japanese colleagues, competitors - and friends - in this domain, like Prof. K. Hashimoto in Tokyo.

A second important aspect of my long stay in Japan was the possibility offered in that way to discover new people, new customs and religions, new cultures. I am deeply indebted to you and to all your co-workers, first for your kindness and your smiling and efficient help in everyday life. I was living in a room of the International Residence of the University, a small one indeed but fitted out with magnificent equipments provided by the laboratory and installed by you and your co-workers. I had everyday common and silly questions with money, bank, transportation problems, administrative papers or computer connection and everything was always solved in a smooth way by you and by your colleagues, bringing me in the right place and finding the right solutions. Difficult to forget the discovery of Awaji island with your friendly group, during an unusual but wonderful "hiking" day, in car !, exceptional for the bridge and the ferry, the whirlpool, the shrine, the museum of the Awaji's fault and Kobe's earth-quake, something like a concentrate of Japanese technology, culture and religion, sea-landscapes, kindness and fighting spirit against the natural disasters too often occurring in Japan.

Second, I am very grateful to all of you for giving me some keys to better understand Japan and its people, not to be surprised that a Japanese can be Shintoïst in his infancy, catholic when getting married and Buddhist to be buried ... Or to understand that Japanese

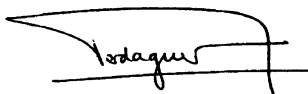
politeness imposes to never answer no, so that you are aware that sometimes in the street, asking for your way, you can be sent in the opposite direction in a very polite and exquisite manner rather than to be confronted with an abrupt negative answer ...

May I add, that I discover during my stay, beyond the scientists who did a lot for Science in Japan and abroad, the human beings fond of culture, hikers, musicians, artists able to fashion woodblock prints with cunning hands ... Many thanks for this bath and lesson of mutual understanding to you Michio – without forgetting your wife – and also to Mrs. Takako Abe and to Kazuya Saito, Yatsuhisa Nagano, Yuji Miyazaki and Tadahiro Nakamoto, with a special mention to your young students and more particularly to Satoaki, the master of ceremony and to Kana the president of the coffee foundation.

I would like to say a few words about one of the visit I was able to make during my stay in Japan, in Hiroshima. Of course, Miyajima island and the floating torii are remarkable places but what I shall remember of my life is the visit to the atomic dome and to the Peace museum. As scientists, we have a special responsibility about the peaceful use of our discoveries. It is highly significant that Japan keeps alive memory of this murderous tragedy for the next generations. Never more ...

Now that you are retired, your laboratory still goes ahead. I hope that the exceptional work that you realised with the development of the Research Centre for Molecular Thermodynamics will continue and that the new status coming now for Japanese universities will not question it. I would like, dear Michio, to wish you and your wife a very happy, pleasant and active period as an Emeritus Professor and to wish to your co-workers new successes in their works and projects. The university world is a tiny world. I am sure that we shall meet and continue to discuss and exchange ideas in the near future somewhere in the world, if we are able to keep it peaceful, either in attractive Japan or in welcoming Paris ...

With my best regards, very sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Verdaguer', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Michel Verdaguer
Emeritus Professor at Pierre et Marie University, Paris
Chairman of the ESF Molecular Magnets Programme (1998-2002)