

Message to the Japan Neuroendocrine Society.

*From Gareth Leng, President of the International Neuroendocrine Federation*

When I began my own career in neuroendocrinology, it was as an electrophysiologist, studying the magnocellular neurones of the supraoptic nucleus. In 1983 I came to Japan for the first time, to meet some of the people who had been so influential in that field. I went to Jichi to meet Kinji Yagi, whose introduction of the technique of antidromic identification was a critical advance, and I went to Kita-kyushu to meet Hiroshi Yamashita, whose lab was at the very forefront of technical innovation and pouring out exciting and innovative papers. For me those meetings were to be hugely important, they were the beginning of lifelong warm friendships, and a scientific collaboration that cascaded down through the years since, and which continued long after Hiroshi and Kinji had both themselves retired. Only last year, I as an author of a paper in *Nature*; two of the other authors were from Jichi, and another was from Kita-kyushu.

I have been a regular visitor to Japan ever since 1983, and have seen neuroendocrinology grow from strength to strength with every passing year. Now the Japan Neuroendocrine Society is one of the key rocks on which the International Neuroendocrine Federation is built. The Federation's one aim is to promote international exchange and understanding in neuroendocrinology, an aim which I fervently believe in. My lab in Edinburgh currently has members from Germany, France, Spain and Australia – and I am delighted that we have just welcomed two new visiting workers from Japan. The exchange of skills, experience, and most importantly ideas, is important for competition at the highest level in all areas of science, but this is particularly true in neuroendocrinology. Research at the frontiers of neuroendocrinology can take so many unexpected turns – the oxytocin neurones that regulate parturition and milk-ejection also regulate the kidney, are key for sexual bonding, and now are emerging as key regulators of appetite. We need so much diverse knowledge, and so many different skills, - we need each other.

In 2014 the next International Congress of Neuroendocrinology will be held in Sydney, Australia – look out for the announcement of the date, please, and plan to be there, because it will be an exciting and fully international celebration of the best in neuroendocrinology from all parts of the world. I know that Japanese Neuroendocrinology will be well represented there, and I look forward to meeting you there.