



SPECIAL INTERVIEW

# Jean-Marc OLIVE

■ Professor, Hydrogen Technology Research Center

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OLIVE

National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology has set up the Research Center for Hydrogen Industrial Use and Storage (HYDROGENIUS) on July 1, 2006 in close cooperation with Kyushu University on the Ito-Campus. This research center aims to establish the safety technology of hydrogen utilization and to explore the basic science of hydrogen.

French scientist, Jean-Marc OLIVE is visiting Kyushu University to participate in the research project of HYDROGENIUS.

## Stimulating and Promising Project

**Q:** First of all, please tell us of your academic affiliation in France, and your field of research.

**OLIVE :** In France I belong to the National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), which is a national organization for scientific research. It's the biggest public research organization in Europe. We have 22,000 people appointed, among which 12,000 are researchers in many different fields. This organization has many laboratories spread out all over France, and collaborates with different universities. I used to work in a laboratory located in Bordeaux, belonging to CNRS, as well as University of Bordeaux 1.

My field of research involves charting the behavior of materials in the environment, or the environmental effect on material behavior. These are advanced studies that have many applications in the aerospace industry, as well as the nuclear industry. Such data is useful in trying to predict potential operating problems in those industries.

**Q:** Please tell us what has brought you here to Japan.

**OLIVE :** It's not my first but second time to visit Japan. I visited Japan in 1994 at the Tokyo University of Science. Professor Igata invited me, and I spent two months in Japan at that time. I enjoyed learning a lot about Japanese people, my professional colleagues, and students. After two months I vowed to try and come back to Japan in the future, if possible. Actually, I promised myself I would come back in ten years. It's not exactly ten years since my first visit to Japan, but at least I could keep my promise to come back. That is the first reason I came back. The second reason is the HYDROGENIUS project that started last year. I have found this project to be very challenging, promising and very interesting. To be invited by Professor Murakami was a very good opportunity for me to come back to Japan,

and to contribute to this huge project. So the timing was perfect.

**Q:** Which department of Kyushu University do you belong to?

**OLIVE :** Mechanical Engineering. I belong to Professor Murakami's department.

**Q:** Would you tell us some of the differences between research methods in France and Japan?

**OLIVE :** That's a tough question.

I would say, for example, this HYDROGENIUS project is a very interesting example of some differences because here there is a desire to combine all the facilities and knowledge in one place. As a result, access to facilities and information is much easier here. Therefore you can get a myriad of results at the same time, maybe more so than in France, because more people consolidate their work in these fields here.

Another difference is the level of student involvement in research here in Japan. For example, master course students in the lab where I work here are much more involved in their research, and they work hard to get results. I think these are a couple of the main differences.

**Q:** Can you tell us about the exchange agreement recently concluded by Kyushu University and Bordeaux University?

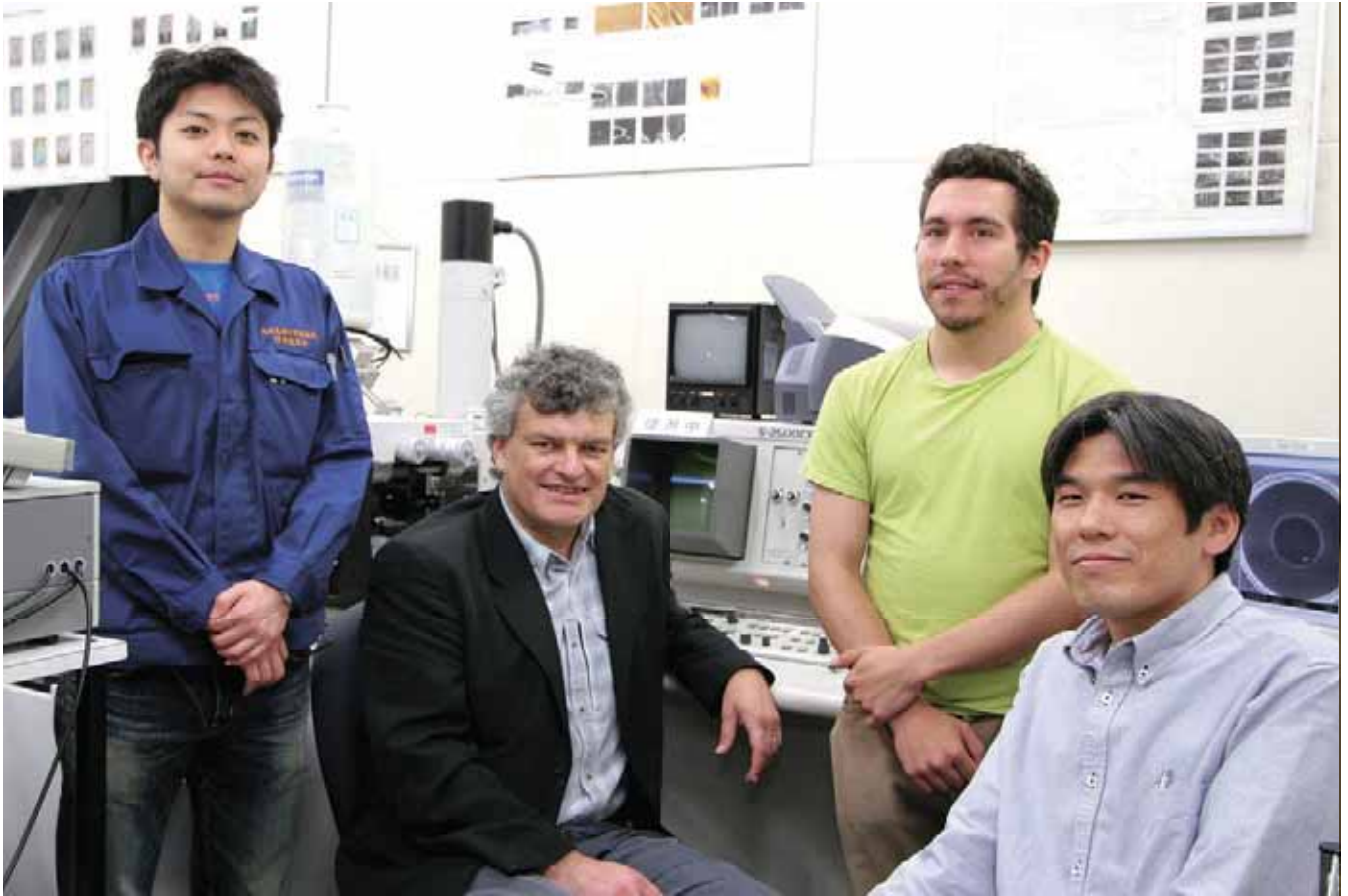
**OLIVE :** Yes. I'm currently in discussion with Bordeaux University to become involved in the new Center of Excellence (COE) program, proposed by Professor Murakami. I'm now discussing with Bordeaux University how to combine research results.

## Japanese Culture

**Q:** Let me change the focus here a little. How do you like

### Jean-Marc OLIVE

2002 University of Bordeaux 1, Habilitation (Director of Research)  
 1996 CNRS (French National Center for Scientific Research)  
 Mechanics-Physics Laboratory,  
 First Class Scientist Researcher  
 1995 Lehigh University, USA, Invited Professor  
 1994 University of Science of Tokyo, Invited Assistant Professor  
 1992 CNRS (French National Center for Scientific Research)  
 Mechanics-Physics Laboratory, Scientist Researcher



the food and cultural environment here in Fukuoka? Are there any foods you don't like?

**OLIVE :** I like Japanese food. We have Japanese food also in France because Japanese food is getting more popular. My family and I used to go to a Japanese restaurant every month in Bordeaux. I came here with my wife and my son, who is now nine years old, so it was a challenge for my family because they had never been to Japan. It is the first time for them. We had a very warm welcome here at Kyudai and it was great. I spent one year in the U.S. and I visited many other countries, but the way we have been welcomed here is something really special. We have enjoyed our stay a lot, both at the university, as well as in the city with our new neighbors. We live in a condominium, and my wife now has many Japanese friends. So the contact with the Japanese population and the culture is wonderful. So, as a result, we are planning to stay here for more than one year. We will probably stay for two years.

### **Blending of Modern and Traditional Japanese Style**

**Q:** Would you please give a message, or word of advice to our Japanese students?

**OLIVE :** The main observation I've been able to notice since arriving here is the way in which students work together. I don't know if it's specific to Professor Murakami's team, but I can see that students always work together and learn from each other from bachelor, to master, and to doctorate courses. I see the students exchanging ideas and knowledge. I think it's a very

interesting way to work, and I would like to advise them to continue in this direction, and not to lose their way of working very closely with each other. With specific regards to the students I work with in Professor Murakami's lab, they are all hard workers, very capable, and thus come up with good results. I advise them to continue in that capacity.

**Q:** You can observe this style of cooperative learning in practically every university in Japan. However, I would say Professor Murakami's lab has a particularly high level of cohesion.

By the way, the relationship between Bordeaux University and Kyushu University is actually very tight. The President of Kyushu University himself visited Bordeaux University last year, and so did one of my staff members.

We hope that we can deepen our ties even further in the future.

**OLIVE :** Yes, and you know we've got three French students, one of whom is here already, coming from Ecole Polytechnique. Two students from Bordeaux University received a scholarship from Kyudai, and they will arrive at the beginning of June and stay until September. I think these student exchanges will continue to improve our level of cooperation. We have already started some promising activities.

**Q:** Thank you very much.

Dr. Olive, we do hope that you will stay with us at Kyushu University for a long time.

**OLIVE :** Thank you very much as well.