

Thanks to the generous support of the JSPS research fellowship, I was able to spend three summer months in 2010 in Tokyo for a series of collaborative research work. I worked in Professor Hiroshi Yamada's laboratory in the Department of Psychology, Nihon University, which has a wonderful research environment. People in the department were very resourceful and friendly. I met quite a few new friends on this trip. I was fortunate to work with a group of very talented people in Professor Yamada's lab. Our research mainly tackled issues related to face recognition. We focused on how visually distinctive faces may catch people's attention more easily. With the help of a bright and diligent postgraduate student, we completed several experiments over the summer. Our main finding was that human observers tend to spot changes on a distinctive face more easily than on a more average-looking face. We also found that people automatically classify faces based on statistical information of facial features summarized over past exposures. At the moment we are writing several research reports for publication.

The research visit was a wonderful experience. Everything went rather smoothly because I had already been to Japan many times. The fact that I speak the language definitely helped. I studied in Japan for my master's degree. I am still proud of having written my master's thesis in Japanese. My Japanese typing skills have since deteriorated significantly because I rarely used written Japanese after graduating from Nagoya University. However, I was quite happily surprised to be able to present my research talks in Japanese this time. Knowing the language is an obvious advantage in a Japanese research environment. However, because quite a few Japanese researchers can speak English, lack of this ability should not be a major concern. I found living in Japan really easy, particularly if you like Japanese food! And there is such a great variety that should match every possible taste. If any new Fellow wishes to learn more about my experience in Japan, please feel free to get in touch with me ([c.h.liu@hull.ac.uk](mailto:c.h.liu@hull.ac.uk)).

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