

Research Report

Wil Baker

Loughborough University (Environmental Ergonomics Research Centre)

Email: w.d.r.baker@lboro.ac.uk

JSPS Summer Program Fellow (2010)

Host Institute: Kinki University (Osaka)

Host Researcher: Prof. Setsuo MAEDA

During the second year of my PhD (studying the human response to whole-body vibration exposure), the JSPS Summer Program provided an opportunity to travel to Japan for 10 weeks and work with leading researchers in my field. The first week was spent at a graduate university outside Tokyo and this was a great chance to meet the other fellows on the program, while taking part in a busy combination of cultural orientation and Japanese language training. After the orientation week I travelled to Osaka where I met my host researcher and moved into my apartment near Kinki University.

I stayed in Osaka for 3 weeks and used this time to plan and prepare the experimental work I would be conducting in Japan. Interacting with Japanese researchers and exchanging ideas provided a different perspective on my PhD research and I gained valuable advice for spending my time at Kinki University. The laboratory in which the actual experimental testing took place however, was located at the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, Japan (JNIOSH) in Tokyo, where I spent the final 6 weeks of the Summer Program. I was therefore fortunate enough to experience two distinctly different cultural regions, cities and working environments.

Osaka has been described as the 'nation's kitchen' and there is certainly a large variety of fun and lively restaurants in the city, offering amazing foods and I gained a particular fondness for *takoyaki*. Within the university I also had the opportunity to take part in various student activities and give some lectures at the English language centre on campus. Moving to Tokyo gave me a very different experience and there never seems to be a dull moment in the bustling city centre. My host researchers were so friendly and helpful, taking me out to restaurants and showing me areas of Tokyo that I would not have known about or found on my own. Throughout my time in Japan I took every opportunity to travel and explore other areas of Japan. Some of the highlights were the *Gion Matsuri* in Kyoto, Kobe beef (the real deal), the deers in Nara, hiking on Mt. Fuji and an emotional visit to the memorial museum in Hiroshima.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Professor Maeda and the other researchers in the laboratory for their continued support and advice during this research. Work hard, play hard!