



**JSPS**

Japan Society for the Promotion of Science

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University of  
**BRISTOL**

# Experience as a JSPS Fellow

Alex Malins

The School of Chemistry, University of Bristol

Supervisor:

Prof. Hajime Tanaka

University of Tokyo



**東京大学**  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO

The first thing to say about Japan is...



The first thing to say about Japan is...


*Japan is totally awesome!!*



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... so you should definitely  
apply for a JSPS fellowship



# About me

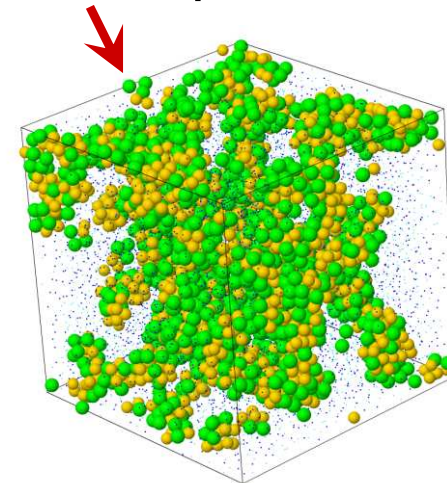
## Background:

- Final year PhD student
- Bristol Centre for Complexity Sciences
- and School of Chemistry at University of Bristol
- study physics
- more specifically soft matter and supercooled liquids
- Bristol supervisors: Dr. Paddy Royall (Chemistry) & Prof. Jens Eggers (Maths)



I use a Supercomputer...

...and do computer simulations



# My Research Trips to Japan

1. Aug 2008 – during Masters to Prof. Tanaka's laboratory, University of Tokyo
2. Dec 2009 – first year of PhD, funded by Sasakawa foundation, to Tanaka lab
3. Apr 2010 – second year of PhD, again to Tanaka lab
4. **Aug 2010 to Mar 2011 – JSPS Short-Term Fellowship in the Tanaka lab, Tokyo**
5. Aug 2011 – Intern at National Institute for Materials Science (NIMS), Tsukuba



# The Tanaka Lab



Extras: 2 Wives, 2 Babies, and a Mother of the lab members



# The Institute of Industrial Science, University of Tokyo



- Modern campus near centre of Tokyo
- Very green
- Different blooms through the seasons
- Shop + cafeteria onsite
- 2 Train stations within 5 mins walk





# The Research Environment

- Clean labs
- Plethora of equipment
- No expense spared
- Fast internet connection
- Air-conditioning



My Lab at Tokyo University

# Working in a Japanese Group

## Pros:

- Well-equipped and well-funded
- High level of expertise from Professor and students
- Different approaches and ideas
- Build new collaborations
- Opportunity to produce high quality research

## Cons:

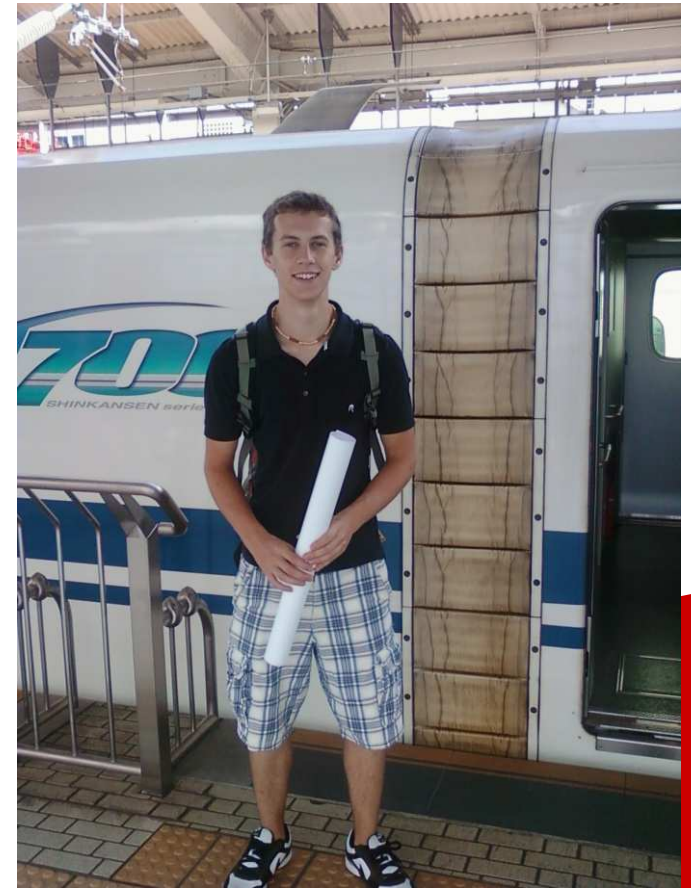
- Definite language barrier!
- Seemingly extreme work ethic
- Far from the West – academic isolation?
- Takes time and effort to gain acceptance
- Not so much interaction between groups



End of year party

# Benefits of JSPS fellowship

- Return Air-ticket
- Monthly stipend ~£1600 (you have to pause any stipend in the UK you have during the fellowship)
- Settling in allowance to get room + essentials
- Research support allowance each month to cover consumables and some research expenses
- Travel fund to attend (local) conferences
- Health and travel insurance
- Above applies to short-term fellowship, different deals for different JSPS schemes



Travelling to Nara to present poster at conference



# What is it like living in Japan?



21<sup>st</sup> century cities



Amazing train systems



Ancient  
Culture



Beautiful scenery

# What is there to do in Japan?



Sumo wrestling



Baseball

Watch some sports...



# Go to a firework festival



Arrive early!



# Visit the Arcades





# Visit a theme park



- Disneyland in Tokyo, Universal Studios in Osaka
- + Loads of others

# Food & Drink



Chicken and egg rice bowl



University Cafeteria Lunch (~£4)



Okonomiyaki (Japanese Pizza)



Japanese Curry



Suki-yaki (Fried Beef and Veg)



Nomihoudai  
(All you can drink)

- Amazing variety and taste
- Be careful with nomihoudai



# Some practical things:

1. If you go for more than 3 months, **you'll need a Visa** – free and painless via the Japanese embassy in London
2. Where to live: university **accommodation**, private rents, shared houses. Whichever way you go, **it'll probably be small!**
3. **Banking:** In Japan **cash is king!** It's easy enough to get a Japanese bank account **with native help.**
4. **Mobile Phones** are necessary for a social life. It's best to get a **pay as you go** if you're there a couple of months, or a **contract** if you're going for more than a year. Again **take a native when you sign up.**
5. Lots of top tips at the **JSPS pre-departure seminar** and the **JSPS book "Life in Japan for Foreign Reserachers"**  
[http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-plaza/51\\_lifeInJapan.html](http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-plaza/51_lifeInJapan.html)



# After I returned to the UK

- Wrote a report for the JSPS head office on the research conducted
- Wrote a short report on my experiences for JSPS London
- Working hard to get results into the journals: now have multiple papers published with results obtained in Japan
- Join the JSPS Alumni Association to help maintain and create new Japanese collaborations
- Alumni funding for collaboration and events in London
- <http://www.jsps.org/alumni/index.html>



The effect of inter-cluster interactions on the structure of colloidal clusters

Alex Malins<sup>a</sup>, Stephen R. Williams<sup>b</sup>, Jens Eggers<sup>c</sup>, Hajime Tanaka<sup>d</sup>, C. Patrick Royall<sup>e,\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Bristol Centre for Complexity Science, School of Chemistry, University of Bristol, Bristol, BS8 1TS, UK

<sup>b</sup> Research School of Chemistry, The Australian National University, Canberra, ACT 0200, Australia

<sup>c</sup> School of Mathematics, University of Bristol, University Walk, Bristol, BS8 1TN, UK

<sup>d</sup> Institute of Industrial Science, University of Tokyo, Maguro-ku, Tokyo 153-8505, Japan


<sup>e</sup> School of Chemistry, University of Bristol, Bristol, BS8 1TS, UK



# In Summary...

1. Japan is totally awesome!
2. JSPS fellowships are a great way to conduct exciting research, further your career, and experience a new culture

Thanks to:

- JSPS London + Tokyo
  - Prof. Tanaka and his group
  - My Bristol supervisors Paddy + Jens
  - Polly Watson (JSPS London International Coordinator) for answering so many questions!
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*If you have any questions:*

[alex.malins@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:alex.malins@bristol.ac.uk)

- <http://www.jsps.org/index.html>
  - Will send slides to Polly to put on JSPS website
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