

The background of the slide is a photograph of a traditional Japanese castle, likely Himeji Castle, with its white walls and dark roofs. The castle is partially obscured by the out-of-focus, green branches of a willow tree in the foreground. The overall scene is bright and slightly hazy.

Life as a JSPS Postdoctoral Fellow (2005-2007)

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How I obtained the JSPS fellowship

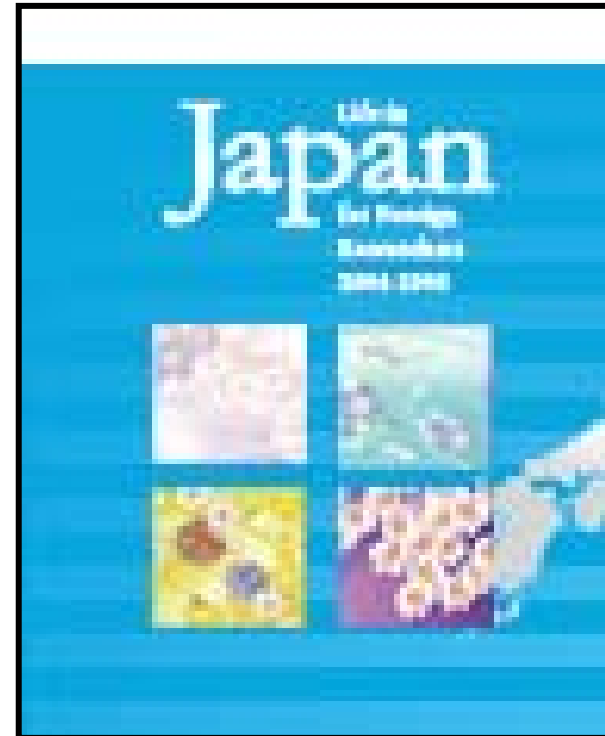
- Whilst writing up my Ph.D.
 - My supervisor told me I should apply for an overseas postdoc
 - But where?
 - We had a contact in Japan, so he was contacted

So I decided to apply to go to Japan

- However, I had no experience of Japan
 - Do you?
- This application was all done whilst I was writing up my thesis, so life was very stressful!
 - However the JSPS application was successful

Preparing to go

- I had very little time to prepare
 - There were no pre-departure seminars
 - I had no Japanese language skills
- However, JSPS did provide a guide book
 - This book was very useful



Try to learn some Japanese!

- I think it will make life easier if you try to learn some basic phrase's before you depart
 - I wish I had done that!
- There are a lot of useful websites
 - <http://japanese.about.com/>
 - <http://www.learn-japanese.info/>

One last thing before you go...

- The JSPS provide a comprehensive book listing all the things you need to do before you go, mainly forms, Visa applications etc...
 - Please make sure that you do all the required form, in the correct time period

Once I arrived in Japan

- For the first week I was living in the MAFF Guest house
 - Therefore, I had to choose where to live in the first week of arrival
 - 1DK, 2DK, 3DK?
 - It is a lot easier if you are living in Tsukuba City or similar
 - JISTEC website and your host will help you

Found an apartment!

- Close to work, 10 min's cycle ride



But.....

- No furniture.....
- This was easy because in Tsukuba lots of people are coming and going all the time so it is easy to get second hand furniture, stove, fridge, washing machine etc...
- Adverts in: <http://www.alientimes.org/>
- Make sure you choose an apartment with A/C (very important for summer)

Work at NIAES

My fellowship was with Dr Hideo Ishii at the National Institute for Agro-Environmental Science (30 mins cycle ride from Tsukuba centre)



Office culture

- One strange thing for me when I arrived in Japan was that my new boss also shared his office with everybody else
 - And this is mostly the same in all Japanese science labs



And everything was conducted in
this office



Your work is very important but.

- Try to make friends outside of your office, lab etc....
 - I made friends outside of the lab following the JSPS induction day
 - And also by joining the JISTEC evening forums
 - Do not get into the trap of only working and not getting out to visit people or going travelling

After 6 months of cycling everywhere

- I bought this.....



My work

- My work looked at fungicide resistance in agricultural crops
 - Therefore I was able to travel around rural Japan collecting samples
 - This was fabulous, as I was able to see sights that others could not get to, using public transport alone



Laboratories at NIAES

- Compared with my previous lab in the UK
- It was very well equipped





Make sure you experience what Japan has to offer

- Food

- So much more than just sushi....
- Try cooking Japanese food yourself
- <http://uk.youtube.com/user/cookingwithdog>
 - Strange title, but very clear instructions
 - You will not have a proper oven in a Japanese kitchen!
- My personal favourite is sukiyaki



Festivals, walking, shopping etc...



Tea

- I did not really like green tea before I went to Japan
 - However, I adapted in two years to find it a really satisfying drink
 - However now I do not like the green tea from UK supermarkets and now I have to import it direct from Japan

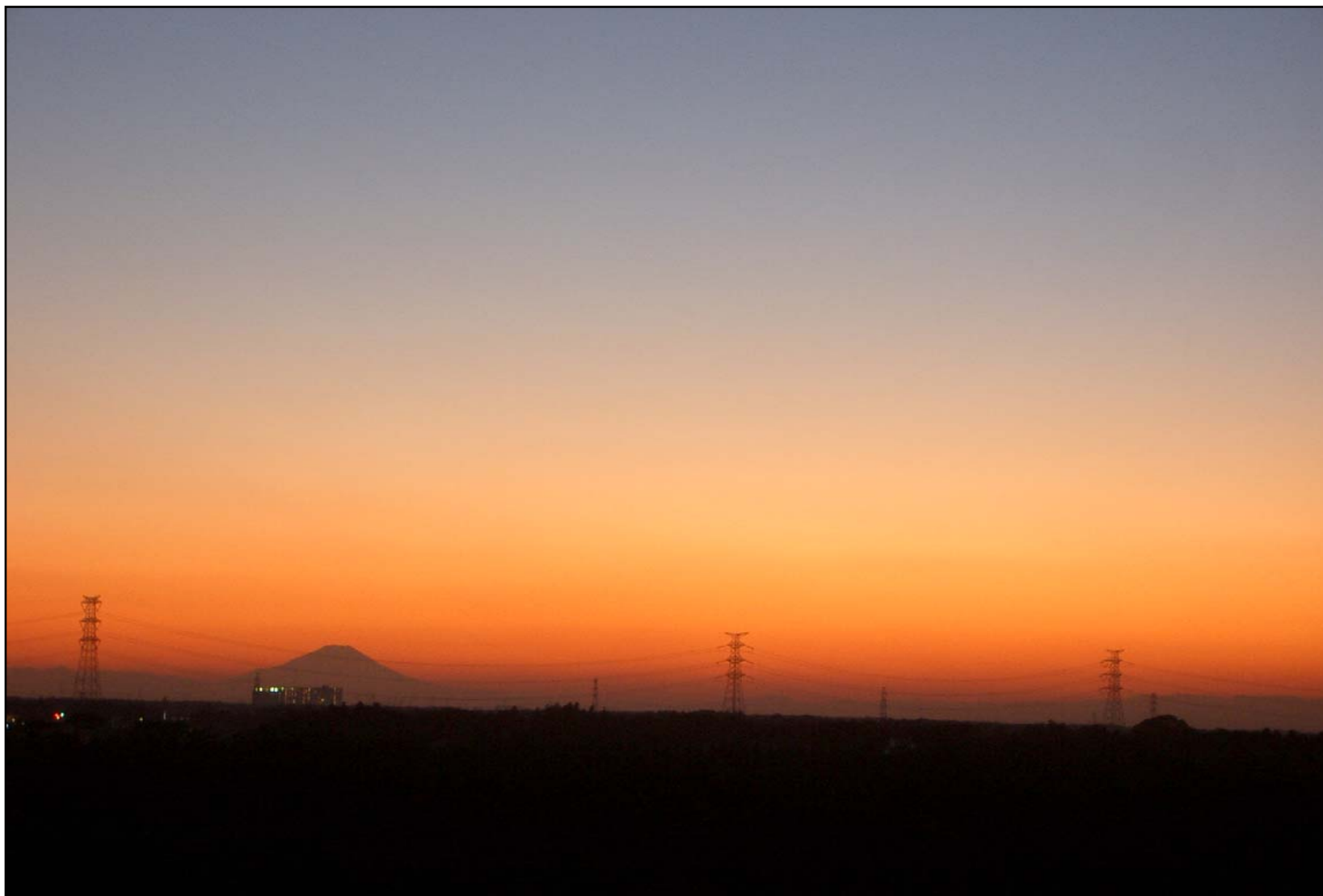


JSPS and JISTEC

- Both these organisation with provide you with lots of support throughout you fellowship, take full advantage
- The induction course is a great opportunity to meet new people who will be starting their fellowships at the same time, I made some great friends at this event
- http://www.jistec.or.jp/Fellow/fellow_overview_e.html

What the fellowship has given me..

- After my fellowship I was able to gain a permanent position at SAC in Edinburgh working as a plant pathologist
 - The fellowship has enabled me to develop my career in its current direction
 - It has also given me greater confidence
 - And enabled me to share my experiences with our current undergrad students and hopefully develop a continuous link between SAC and NIAES



View from NIAES, Tsukuba, Ibaraki, Japan

