

JSPS Fellow Summer Programme Research Experience

For the duration of the JSPS 2013 Summer Programme I was located in Kyoto, where the city's beauty, history, and culture combine in the summer's sweltering heat to leave a lasting impression of awe on all who visit. The city's primary higher education institution, Kyoto University, has three campuses; Yoshida in the bustling city centre, Uji in the south near the famous maccha fields and Katsura in the west nestled amongst a quiet residential area. I was based on

Ginkaku-ji (Golden Temple)



Katsura Campus at sunset

the latter, a modern and spacious precinct, which houses many state of the art engineering and science facilities. Here, I was warmly welcomed into Professor Seijiro Matsubara's synthetic organic chemistry laboratory. The group have impressive wide ranging research interests from popular thiourea organocatalysis to transition metal catalysis involving; palladium, nickel and zinc chemistry.

My supervisor had previously met Matsubara sensei at an international symposium, and knowing of my interest in the JSPS Summer Programme, put us in contact. Given our similar research fields, the University of Bristol's link with Kyoto University, and Kyoto's central geographical location, I was extremely excited to apply. The project we designed involved aspects from my PhD thesis, *e.g.* asymmetric ligand synthesis, in conjunction with an interesting nickel catalysed reaction developed by Prof. Matsubara's laboratory. Importantly, we incorporated a way to quickly commence research when I arrived, by utilising some materials I brought from the UK and commercially available compounds. The research period is only eight weeks so a well planned project in conjunction with high productivity is crucial. Additionally, the project was interesting, had high potential for lucrative results, literature precedence, and employed equipment and techniques which I was familiar with. The project progressed well and there are plans to publish the results. I





lived near to Katsura campus, which enabled a facile commute to the laboratory, but was also close to multiple bus routes and train lines which meant I could easily access Kyoto Station or even Osaka! Studying in the centre of Japan allowed me to visit many interesting nearby towns and cities which greatly enhanced my trip. Overall I had a fantastic time; I experienced Japan and all it had to offer first hand, the programme was superbly organised by the JSPS, I made firm friends with the other students in Matsubara's laboratory and I am tentatively planning a return visit!