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Research institution 1: Nagoya University.
Department: Environmental Systems & Planning Laboratory (Tanikawa Lab), Department of Environmental Engineering & Architecture,
Host: Prof. Hiroki Tanikawa

Research institution 2: Ritsumeikan University.
Department: Recycling Society Laboratory (Hashimoto Lab), Department of Environmental System Engineering,
Host: Prof. Seiji Hashimoto

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Countries that rely on the net import of materials, components, etc., such as Japan and the UK, are in greater need of improving material efficiencies in order to reduce their reliance on the import of primary materials and increase the resilience of their infrastructure systems by minimizing the risk of network failure. My fellowship began the initial discussions and data collection for a comparative study between the UK and Japan to provide insight on the material efficiency of key infrastructure sectors, and helped build the interdisciplinary expertise between our institutions. Aside from my everyday research in the lab, I also gave seminars at each laboratory and also gave a lecture on Low Carbon Cities in the UK on the module: *Low carbon cities studies & Environment system analysis and planning* at the Tanikawa Lab. I was also able to visit the British Embassy's science team to develop a wider network. Many of my weekends were spent with lab members visiting historical/cultural places of interest; this was an excellent way for me to learn more about the Japanese way of life and also help improve the students' English skills (and my Japanese).

Living in Japan is amazing, and your time flies so quickly as you soak in the all beautiful culture/traditions and landscapes. I quickly settled into Japanese life and was made to feel right at home. I also cycled everywhere which meant I saw lots more of Japan than I would have using the public transport. The language barrier was fine, comical at times, and I used my phrasebook regularly and picked up some useful phrases off the locals. The food was also amazing, I can thoroughly recommend okonomiyaki, shabu shabu, and of course all the sashimi (fish and chicken!). In Kyoto I visited many temples and also enjoyed the Gion Matsuri festival that was spectacular. I also watched the Sumo in Nagoya, which was amazing, and I even got to watch them train in the morning before the fights. I also went wakeboarding in Osaka and made some really great friends of whom I am still in contact. Among many day trips I also visited Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, Fukuoka and Hiroshima, and got lost in each of these cities but I was always helped by someone. My advice to anyone thinking about applying for a JSPS scheme is go for it! It was the best experience of my life so far, and I hope to visit again and continue our collaboration in the future.

Tips for Japan:

- Be prepared. Read the JSPS guidance before you leave.
- Make every effort to fully embrace Japanese culture and lifestyle, it is truly amazing.
- Try to take advantage of everything you are offered, you will not regret it.
- Always carry pen/paper to write things down: names, places to visit, etc.
- Learn some of the regional dialects – people love it when you do.
- Plan your weekends/evenings well. There is always something to see.
- My best experiences started with me being lost somewhere, it happens.
- Don't be afraid to ask for anything, the Japanese are the nicest people in the world.
- Keep a journal for all your memories. When I miss Japan, it's all there.

Clockwise from top left: Feeding the deer in Nara Park. At the beach near Fukuoka. Sumo training, Nagoya. The train to Ninja City, Iga.

