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In 2013 I participated in the JSPS summer programme and performed a multi-array field study of Sakurajima volcano, Kagoshima. My PhD research focuses on the sources of sound generated by volcanic eruptions, with a goal of returning eruption parameters from the recorded signals. Sakurajima provides an excellent case study for such monitoring, with fantastic site access, frequent explosive activity and a comprehensive, well maintained in-situ monitoring system. In order to setup the collaboration I contacted the head of the DPRI at Kyoto University who then put me in contact with my host. The program fell at the end of the second year of my PhD and the data gathered will be used as part of my final thesis.

Over the course of the field campaign, 3 infrasound arrays, recording low frequency noise, were deployed at a range of back azimuths from the active Showa crater, to investigate both source and topographic influences on the signals generated. Additional to the acoustic data obtained, the Sakurajima observatory have also provided thermal infrared and visual data for the length of the campaign.

During the course of the program I worked with many experts in both volcano monitoring and the Sakurajima system. This collaboration was highly beneficial to myself and greatly enhanced my knowledge and research results. Additional to the academic staff, the Sakurajima observatory employs several technicians and support staff all of whom were extremely supportive and friendly during my stay. The observatory staff have many daily duties to perform but always found time to assist me with my work and help me to resolve any issues with field kit. Successful completion of the project would not have been possible without this support and the good working relationships we developed. Outside of work we took visits to local sites, attended festivals, took evening cruises and went for some amazing meals, as I was the only JSPS fellow in Kagoshima, the friendship extended to me greatly enhanced my stay. I would advise anyone doing the programme to take the time to get to know the people you work with and attempt to communicate in Japanese, your experience will benefit greatly.

Further to my work, I was very keen to experience as much of Japan as possible during my stay and so with the backing of my host, was given permission to enter Japan a month early. Over this month I cycled from Aomori, North Honshu, down to Sakurajima. During the course of my ride I was overwhelmed by both the beauty of Japan and the generosity and kindness of the people. I would recommend both the summer programme and Japan to all; both provide an unforgettable experience.

