

“Jokichi Takamine; 130 Years of Glasgow-Japan Collaboration”, 5th-6th September, School of Chemistry, University of Glasgow

UK Scientific Lead: Dr. Rudi Marquez, Ian Sword Reader in Organic Chemistry, University of Glasgow

Japanese Scientific Lead: Professor Keisuke Suzuki, Tokyo Institute of Technology

Invited Speakers:

UK

Dr. Joëlle Prunet – University of Glasgow

Dr. Justin Bower – Beatson Cancer Research Institute

Dr. Andrew Roe – University of Glasgow

Dr. Andrew Sutherland – University of Glasgow

Professor Colin Suckling – University of Strathclyde

Professor Simon Mackay – SIPBS

Professor Robert Liskamp- University of Glasgow

Japan

Professor Keisuke Suzuki – Tokyo Institute of Technology

Professor Yujiro Hayashi – Tohoku University

Dr. Masahiro Yoshida – University of Tokushima

Professor Shu Kobayashi – University of Tokyo

Professor Hiroaki Suga – University of Tokyo

Report

This 2 day symposium marked and highlighted the 130th anniversary since Professor Takamine's research visit to Glasgow. Jokichi Takamine's greatest achievement was to develop takadiastase, a highly successful enzymatic process which became one of the cornerstones upon which Sankyo (now Daiichi-Sankyo) grew into a world leading pharmaceutical company. Jokichi Takamine is admired by chemists in the UK as a prolific inventor, establishing the first superphosphate plant in Japan to fertilise rice as well as developing a method for recrystallizing the hormone adrenaline.

The symposium held at Glasgow University in Professor Takamine's honour was a celebration of organic, biological and medicinal chemistry involving world class researchers both from across the city of Glasgow and Japan and was well attended with over 100 researchers on both days. Professor John Chapman (Vice-Principal of the University), Professor Kozo Hiramatsu (Director of JSPS London) and Mr. Shinichi Hamada (Acting Consul General of Japan) gave the opening and closing remarks of the first day.

The symposium commemorated the long standing relationship between Glasgow and Japan and featured twelve lectures (six per day). Five lectures were given by speakers from Japan and seven from researchers based at institutions in Glasgow which included the University of Glasgow, University of Strathclyde, SIPBS and The Beatson Cancer Research Institute. Researchers also from the Netherlands, Germany and France attended. The interdisciplinary nature of the programme which included lectures on chemical genetics revealing new insights into virulence gene regulation and antibacterial and other minor groove binders for DNA, brought attendance by researchers from disciplines outside chemistry (i.e. biology, proteomics, etc). This presented a key opportunity for the development of cross-disciplinary research programmes between Scotland and Japan. The quality of the speaker line-up was widely recognised and resulted in some last minute attendance from industry representatives.

The main aim of the symposium was to motivate the next generation of scientists in Glasgow by world class science while at the same time encouraging them to build long lasting research links with Japanese groups and institutions and enhance researcher mobility at different levels. In looking forward to the future of Scottish-Japanese collaborations, a mixture of established researchers together with some rising stars of Japanese and Scottish Chemistry were invited.

There was an exciting level of interaction between the Japanese researchers and researchers from Glasgow. The students were particularly excited about the possibility of conducting research in Japan. The symposium dinner was well attended and provided an opportunity for greater interactions between speakers in an informal setting. A number of possible collaborations were also discussed after the symposium and the work on forming concrete proposals and research results are to emanate from these discussions shortly. In a number of instances, there have already been e-mail exchanges between the Japanese speakers and the postgraduate students and a great amount of positive feedback from the attendees has been received. - **Rudi Marquez**



The opening lecture from Professor Keisuke Suzuki, Tokyo Institute of Technology