

ICR, Kyoto University Sponsored Visit to the Research Group of Prof. Takeo Kawabata

David T. J. Morris

School of Chemistry, University of Bristol, UK

Due to a well-established collaboration between Prof. Kawabata and my PhD supervisor, Prof. Jonathan Clayden, I was given the very exciting opportunity to work in Japan for three months on a shared research theme.

During my stay, I worked on the development of an exotic 'cyclochiral' conformational motif previously established in the Kawabata group. It was envisaged that upon development, this motif could be used for the asymmetric α -fluorination of α -branched aldehydes, which are of great value as intermediates in the synthesis of pharmaceuticals and typically very difficult to make. The target molecule of my project represented a significant synthetic challenge. This enabled me to hone my skills in synthetic organic chemistry by learning new synthetic techniques and experiencing work in an entirely different synthetic laboratory. Additionally, the exotic conformational properties of the structure required special analytical techniques, which complemented and built on my expertise in the analysis of complex dynamic molecules. This, in addition to the progress, literature, textbook and synthesis problem seminars, made for an excellent learning experience which will help me with both my practical and theoretical work in Bristol.

Overall, my placement in Kyoto served as an invaluable cultural, societal and intellectual exchange which will not only help me with my future work in Chemistry, but also act as a large collection of great memories for me. I want to thank Prof. Kawabata for organising and coordinating my stay, and to all of those in his group for helping and teaching me in the laboratory. I also want to thank the Kawabata group for contributing to an unforgettable experience which I will always treasure, but more specifically for feeding me delicious sashimi and belting out The Beatles with me at karaoke bars.

