



## Getting Acquainted With IMS

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My name is Heiko Hocke. I am a JSPS postdoctoral fellow and currently a member in the group of Professor Yasuhiro Uozumi/ Coordination Chemistry. I arrived in Japan nine months ago. Herein I want to tell about my experience with the Institute for Molecular Science. But in order to tell properly I should start with the very beginning that means before my arrival in Japan.

Previously I had joint as a postdoctoral fellow the group of Prof. B. Giese in Basel/ Switzerland. At this time my work was connected with radicals and peptides. But my research interests moved on to asymmetric catalysis, especially solid supported catalysts. From a labor mate in Basel I heard about the work of Prof. Uozumi — and shortly after that a contact was established. He invited me to join his group as a postdoc giving me the opportunity to gain experience in this field of — after all — black box chemistry.

After approval of my fellowship by JSPS I learned that I need a visa for my period of stay in Japan. This is normally a very time consuming process (about 3 months) unless someone has a so called ‘Certificate of Eligibility.’ I wrote my ‘problem’ to Mrs. Aimi Nishimura (secretary of the group) and got promptly not only the certificate, but also a lot of written confirmations for every thinkable reason and question. The Japanese Embassy in Switzerland issued the visa then in two days.

Mrs. Nishimura also informed me by e-mail that the IMS is able to provide accommodation for foreign

visitors. She was so kind to arrange everything. In fact, when I arrived in Japan, all necessary things had been settled already and I had not to look after anything at all. In the first week Mrs. Hisayo Nagasono (secretary for foreign affairs) took me to all the government offices doing the unavoidable bureaucracy. Maybe this is Japanese style but I was really surprised about the good organization and unconventional handling. I am very thankful to both Mrs. A. Nishimura and Mrs. H. Nagasono for making my start in Japan so easy and I want to use the chance to say thank you to both of them.

I think this example from my starting time at the institute shows not only how well experienced the IMS administration and staff are with the needs and problems of a new arrived ‘gai koku jin’ but also how efficiently things are handled.

Since my beginning I found the atmosphere at the IMS is both stimulating and encouraging. One reason is surely the state of the art equipment available, which makes research very enjoyable, but more important are the people working here. I experience much support, which I need the most in subjects related to information of any kind, since I am not able to understand or read Japanese, from my coworkers. Particularly, I have to thank my host, Prof. Y. Uozumi, and all the members of his group for the hearty and warmly welcome as well as for their constant voluntary and gratuitous help.

A complete different aspect of the IMS is its

multicultural environment. People from many different nations (U.S., China, S-Korea, Hungaria, Russia ...) and cultural background are living on the campus-like area in Mishima Lodge or Yamate Lodge creating a unique pot-pourri. It allows a deep and fast inside to strange custom (at least strange to me), religions and world view not as a tourist, but as a neighbor and friend. Especially at the beginning it did profit me in another area of living too, because it was the fastest way to learn about good shopping centers, historical sites for viewing, sport activities, upcoming events in Okazaki and all the small things that make daily live easier and which helped me to integrate in social live.

Besides all this, the kindness and hospitality of many people living in Okazaki, for instance people from the OIA and from the Rotary Club, are a huge help to get adjusted and make me feel almost at home.