

CAWS STUDENT TRAVEL GRANT REPORT

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The CAWS student travel award granted to me in 2017 supported me to travel to Kyoto, Japan for the joint meeting of the 33rd annual meeting of the International Society of Chemical Ecology (ASCE) and the 9th meeting of the Asia Pacific Association of Chemical Ecology (APACE) during 23rd to 27th August 2017.

I arrived at Fukuoka airport, Japan and from there found my way to the “shinkansen”. It was a pleasurable travel. I always thrive riding trains and this was one thing that I wanted to experience. I took the “shinkansen” and arrived at Kyoto and from there travelled in a taxi to my hotel, which will be my home for about a week, elegant looking building built up by using a small land area. The rooms were really small but have everything that need to be there. Japanese sure knows how to make the best use of the space. Conference was held at Fukakusa Campus, Ryukoku University which was a beautiful university which was established as a Buddhist seminary called “Gakuryo” (Boarding school) for the promotion of research and Shin Buddhism education and is considered as one of the oldest institutions of higher education in Japan. There were more than 500 delegates from all around the world who work in the field of chemical ecology gathered to this place to mingle and exchange ideas. I was blessed to meet several authors that usually mention in my work. There were three concurrent sessions each day providing great opportunity for diverse learning. I enjoyed most of the sessions, especially the plant-animal interaction session and chemical ecology of invasive species sessions that contained loads of new ideas and discoveries. My thinking expanded and I learned a lot by listening to more than 20 presentations during the course of my stay and found everyone very open to my questions.

There were two poster sessions with more than 150 posters and I presented my poster during the first session and was glad to receive good feedback, suggestions and appreciation from great scientists and fellow researchers. Not only that, I was honoured to receive an award for the best student poster presentation at the closing ceremony.

During all the lunch breaks we were provided with Japanese style lunch which I enjoyed a lot. Their food is superb. I loved the desserts. Not only that, whenever time permits, I did bit of travel around Kyoto, the city of 1000 shrines, and enjoyed the hospitality of Japanese people appreciating their art and culture. When you are walking in the city it is common to see people wearing Kimonos with their “tik tok” sounding wooden slippers. There are many shrines and palaces of late kings. I manage to see some of them during my short stay. Even though the shrines are situated inside a busy city, as soon as you enter you will feel like you are in a peaceful place. The place that took my heart from among all the places I visited was the Arshiyama walk. My mind became so peaceful and calm with the sound of the insect buzzing, water dripping and leaves falling when I was walking to this small temple, Senko-ji, at top of a mountain. That place is mind blowing as for a moment my soul actually became one with the surrounding nature.

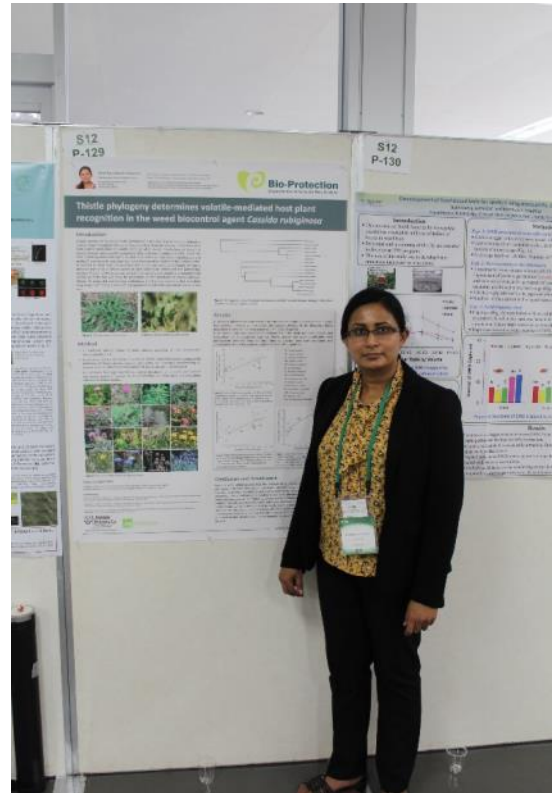
Overall my time away was enjoyable and constructive. I am really grateful for the opportunity CAWS has given me to gain all the priceless experiences. Thank you CAWS.



Fukakusa Campus, Ryukoku University



Arshiyama walk – path between the river and the forested area



Me with my poster