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Editorial

Foreword

The first International Symposium on Organic Photochromism (ISOP) was held in Iles des Embiez, France in 1993 and chaired by Professor Robert Guglielmetti.

The early '90s was still a chaotic era for photochromism. Diarylethenes were first reported in 1988 and were on the way to attracting considerable attention in various research fields. CD-R had appeared in the market at the end of the '80s, and the development of erasable optical recording media with much higher recording density using photochromic compounds was urgently desired. Ophthalmic lenses made of plastic materials had been gaining a greater market share worldwide; these plastic sunglasses which were introduced to the market in the early '90s required new photochromic molecules with carefully engineered properties. The first ISOP was held in this exciting atmosphere of expectancy and promise in the research of photochromism.

Since then, the 2nd ISOP was held in Clearwater Beach, U.S.A. (1996), the 3rd in Fukuoka, Japan (1999), the 4th in Arcachon, France (2004), and the 5th in Vancouver, Canada (2007). As a rapidly developing science, the study of photochromism brought together scientists who presented their latest and "hottest" research results and exchanged ideas to improve their work as well as to establish collaborations across academia and industry.

Most recently, the 6th ISOP (ISOP2010) was held from October 17th through 21st, 2010, in Yokohama, Japan with the catchphrase, "*Where Light is Heavy and Heat is Cool*". Photochromism has now established a special position in scientific research so that, in Yokohama, participants from many different research fields got together. ISOP2010 had 157 presentations and 224 participants from 15 countries. The presentations included 2 Plenary Lectures, 18 Invited Lectures, 28 Oral Presentations, and 109 Poster Presentations. The contributions focused on the recent advances in the creation of novel, high-performance photochromic molecules, multifunctional photochromic materials, photochromic mechanical functions, analysis of photochromic reactions, theoretical and calculation sciences of photochromism, structure and properties of photochromic compounds, supramolecular photochromism, photochromic complexes, photochromic organometallic compounds, photochromism in biology, and novel applications of photochromism. The presentations thus covered a wide area – from fundamental research to actual applications of photochromism.

Just after the ISOP2010, a bilateral seminar on photochromism, the Third Japanese – French Joint Seminar on Organic Photochromism (3rd JFJS) – Innovations in Photochromism was also held in Yokohama from October 21st through 22nd, 2010, following in the footsteps of the first JFJS in Hayama, Japan in 2006 and the 2nd symposium in Arras, France in 2008. The 3rd JFJS included 3 Invited Lectures, 13 Oral Presentations, and 36 Poster Presentations.

This Special Issue commemorating the ISOP2010 and 3rd JFJS presents contributions from invited and oral presenters as well as from the research mentors of the Poster Prize winners for both Symposia. As the Chairperson of these Symposia, YY would like to thank all the participants, senior as well as junior, regular as well as new-comers, who made these Symposia very successful. We were able to hold many active and invigorating exchanges on the most up-to-date research results and instructive discussions to deepen our understanding of photochromism and clarify the future problems that need to be addressed.

Finally, we, the invited editors of this Special Issue, would like to acknowledge all of the contributors for their great efforts in preparing their data and manuscripts in a very short time, and also offer our deepest gratitude to the reviewers who have devoted their precious time to improving each work. Thank you very much.

The next ISOP will be held in Berlin, Germany in 2013, and chaired by Professor Dr. Stephan Hecht of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. There, we shall meet again to see the marvelous progress and development of our respective works. See you all in Berlin!

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