

# myriad leaves

JUNE 2006



Universal Design Workshop for Elementary School Children, Shizuoka Prefecture

万葉

**Myriad Leaves** introduces Japanese local government and related issues to people working in local government in the UK. Its title comes from the earliest collection of Japanese poetry, and means "thousands of poems" or "thousands of leaves".

	<b>News</b>	2.3
Feature:	<b>Universal Design</b>	4.5
	Prefecture: <b>Fukushima</b>	6
	<b>JET Letter</b>	7
	<b>japan Study Tour</b>	8

# news

2

## Elementary English

The results of a survey into the current level of English teaching at elementary schools in Japan were released on the 26th March. The survey of state schools has taken place annually since 2003. This year the number of schools included in the survey numbered 22,232. At the present time English teaching is not part of the national curriculum for elementary schools, however the survey found that 20,803 schools provide some English language teaching to their pupils. Compulsory English education only begins at junior high school level at the present time.

The survey stressed the importance of children having a basic knowledge and understanding of English prior to starting at junior high school. It also revealed that pupils already have a keen interest in learning English, and a great many Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) on the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme (JET) make weekly visits to elementary schools. It was recommended that it would be beneficial to



utilise this existing interest English in a more regulated curriculum rather than the current non-uniform system.

As a result of this survey the Central Council for Education has recommended that pupils in lower grades should learn the language as part of games and other such activities, and older pupils at elementary school should be given hour long English lessons each week. The report recommends that the focus of the lessons should be on speaking and listening exercises to improve the pupils communication skills, rather than simply focusing on written English.

Although the majority of the members of the Central Council for Education appear to agree with many of the points raised by the sub-panel, there are those that believe the emphasis should be placed on teaching Japanese and other subjects rather than English at elementary schools.

## Aichi Expo a Resounding Success

Recently released figures show that the Aichi Expo, which ran from March to September of last year, was a major success. The Expo ran for 185 days and despite the number of visitors being lower than predicted at the start, the event soon proved massively popular with numbers reaching 22 million by September, well above the target of 15 million set at the start. A total of 3 million people paid a visit to the British Pavilion.

Over 100,000 people acted as volunteers during the Expo, and people from over 120 different countries from around the world actively participated in the numerous events that took place over the six months.

In order to make suitable use of the site, the majority of the buildings and facilities constructed for the Expo are to be cleared, and the space used to create a new city park.

For more information please visit the official Expo website: [www.expo2005.or.jp](http://www.expo2005.or.jp)

Festivities at the Closing Ceremony





## Nara Police Feeling Blue

Taking its lead from a scheme introduced in Glasgow in 2000, the police force in Nara Prefecture have recently started using blue street lighting on a number of its main streets.

The blue lighting is believed to offer clearer visibility at night and it is hoped that as a result a decrease in street crime will be seen in the coming months. Early figures show this to be the case, with a marked decrease in petty thefts and damage to public property reported.

In order to promote the scheme a number of blue lights are in place in the streets surrounding the Nara Prefectural Government Building. At the current time twelve municipalities have entered into the scheme, with over 450 blue lamps in place in over 20 different locations.



Following on from the success seen in Nara, it is predicted that a number of local authorities may introduce similar schemes in the future.

## Japanese Prefectures Facing Up To Demographic Changes

With Japan's ageing population and the continuing decline in the birth rate, local authorities in Japan are having to face up to a number of related issues. One such issue is the decline in the number of people living in urban centres, in part due to the cost, but also due to factors such as the increase in out of town facilities meaning younger families are seeking homes outside of the city centre. Toyama Prefecture is one of the prefectures actively seeking to promote the revitalisation of the city centre in order to boost the population there. The overall population of Toyama City has seen an increase of 18,000 over the past 25 years due to a number of municipal mergers. However, the population in the centre of the city has seen a decrease of 11,000 over the same period.

With an increase in the population key to the economic revival of the city, Mayor Masashi Mori is keen to increase the number of the residents in the city centre by 7,000 by the year 2014. A number of meetings were held at which suggestions on how to bolster the city were taken from the residents. It was felt that it was important to further pedestrianise the city and make getting about easier for those without cars. Together with this is the effort to support and maintain the traditional city shopping arcade.

With a large number of elderly living in the outskirts of the city Mayor Mori is also hoping to improve the city's transportation system in order to limit the number of people isolated in hard to reach areas. The Toyama Prefectural Government hopes that the revitalisation of the city centre will become a model for other prefectures to follow.

Another aspect of the demographic change currently taking place in Japan is the declining birth rate. This is of course an issue of national concern which the national government is taking very seriously. However, a number of local authorities have also begun to initiate policies to encourage families to increase their numbers.

For a number of years Fukui Prefecture has been a frontrunner in offering families with three children or more free medical care for their infants prior to them starting at elementary school. However, from this April a more uniform system for support was introduced called the 'Fukui Three Child Family Support Project'. Under this project the medical and childcare costs for a third child born to a family would in principle be covered by the prefecture up until the child's third birthday.

Over 400 specialists from a number of fields such as child welfare and education will be on hand to support child rearing, and the level of assistance offered to mothers looking to return to work after child birth will also be increased.

## jlgc news

On March 20th this years One Year Trainee Programme participants took part in a final presentation session at the Institute of Local Government Studies, University of Birmingham, where they had been studying UK local government for the past year. The trainees gave presentations on two current issues of importance to local government in both the UK and Japan. Mr. Nobuo Maezawa spoke on the topic of participation and partnership, and Ms. Satoko Toriyama on tourism partnerships.



The two trainees at their final presentation day

As one set of trainees successfully completed their period of study, we were delighted to welcome this years new One Year Trainee Programme participants to the UK, Ms. Hitomi Morita (Nara Prefecture), and Ms. Hiroko Saita (Ibaraki Prefecture) both seated



Our director, Mr. Shigeru Naiki welcomes the two new trainees to the UK

# feature

## Design for Everyone

### A Look at Universal Design Policy in Japanese Local Government

by Richard Kelner  
Publications Officer and Assistant Researcher  
Japan Local Government Centre

#### Universal Design

A great many local authorities in Japan have been quick to pick up on the importance of not simply ensuring facilities and amenities are "barrier free" for senior citizens and those with disabilities, but are designed with the needs of all citizens in mind. With a number of changes taking place in Japan, not least of all the huge demographic changes being brought about by the increasing number of elderly people and the reduction in the birth rate, in recent years a large number of authorities have wholeheartedly embraced the challenge of learning about the concept of Universal Design (UD). UD is predominantly known as Inclusive Design in the United Kingdom.

Universal Design is based on the principle that all areas, spaces and equipment should be designed so that they are usable by the most people possible, irrespective of differences in age, sex, ability and race. With the ageing of society in Japan, most local authorities are for obvious reasons focusing their attentions on providing better and easier to use facilities for the elderly. However, the local authorities working to promote the ideas behind UD have been working tirelessly to introduce environments which aim to improve the standard of life for everyone, regardless of age, situation, ability, or social background.

#### The 7 Principles of Universal Design

1. Equitable Use
2. Flexibility in Use
3. Simple and Intuitive Use
4. Perceptible Information
5. Tolerance for Error
6. Low Physical Effort
7. Size and Space for Approach and Use

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#### Case Study: Shizuoka Prefecture

Shizuoka Prefecture, situated approximately in the centre of Japan (about 160km west of Tokyo), is a prefecture which has taken somewhat of a lead in this field, and is therefore suitable as a case study for this article. In order to develop and promote the tenets of Universal Design, the Shizuoka Prefectural Government established the Universal Design Promotion Headquarters in April, 1999. This office was founded with the hope that a high level of cooperation would be reached between municipalities, businesses and the people of the prefecture to promote the advancement of Universal Design across the prefecture.



#### The Universal Design Promotion Headquarters

The headquarters acts as the centre of a broader organisation, and is made up of the governor of Shizuoka Prefecture, who acts as director, along with the 25 departmental heads from the prefectural government. Below this is the Officers Association made up of 24 members. Running parallel to these is the Universal Design Office, which is based in the Department of Civic and Cultural Affairs, and undertakes the administrative side of affairs.

Fulfilling an advisory role is the Committee for the Promotion of Shizuoka Universal Design, which was also established at the same time as the Headquarters. Its members include specialists from a variety of fields in both the public and private sectors, such as child care, university research and design institutes, and town planning. The committee meets regularly to discuss upcoming events, and the strategy for the future development of Universal Design in the prefecture.

#### Shizuoka Universal Design Plan (2000-2004)

This initial plan for the promotion of UD in Shizuoka Prefecture was introduced in December 2000. It was made up of five main parts:

1. To further the understanding and appreciation of UD
2. To create a town comfortable and easy to live in for all residents
3. The creation of equipment and facilities easy for all to use
4. The offering of services/information suitable for all residents
5. The promotion of active participation in society by residents.

Every year the prefecture undertakes a survey to find out how familiar citizens are with UD. From 31.1% being aware of the ideas behind UD in 1999, the figure leapt to 65.5% by 2003. A clear indicator of how successful the prefecture has been in such a short period of time.

One of the most successful ideas implemented in the prefecture over the past few years include an increase in the number of buses and trams fitted with low entrances and steps in order to make them more accessible to children and seniors, as well as to those in wheelchairs. Another has been the introduction of so-called 'family restrooms'. These are public toilet facilities designed to be easily used by seniors, those in wheelchairs and mothers with young children.



New signs in place at the Shizuoka Prefecture General Hospital

Fine street gratings have also been introduced in a number of areas to prevent objects such as walking sticks and high heels becoming stuck in them. The prefectural government is also working to create a new system of clear and easy to understand road signs and notice boards. An example of which can be seen in the above picture. As well as the introduction of these new UD-based facilities, the Shizuoka



Prefectural Government has also been working alongside local industries to help promote the use of a number of products aimed at making life easier for those with difficulties. These products include shampoo and conditioner bottles with serrated edges to make them easily identifiable from each other, and public telephones fitted in easily accessible locations for those in wheelchairs, with such functions as volume control and language selection buttons.

### Shizuoka Universal Design 2010 Plan

This year the Committee for the Promotion of Shizuoka Universal Design will also be heavily involved in working towards the goals of the Shizuoka Universal Design 2010 plan which was drawn up in 2005 as a five year plan to create a fresh and revived Shizuoka and make it as convenient and easy a place to live in for the highest number of people possible.

Taking the five basic principles outlined above as its base, the new plan focuses on three main areas. Firstly, the plan aims to promote cooperation between the prefectural government and businesses/organisations involved in the creation of UD products/facilities. The prefecture will increase the amount of information given to such organisations, and also assist with staff training related to UD. The aim is to ensure that products and services are developed which reflect the true needs of the users. The second part of the plan focuses on the importance of educating children about the issues related to UD from an early age. Such education will focus on teaching children the importance of understanding the needs of different people when living in an increasingly diverse society.

The final main point of the 2010 plan centres on offering a higher level of service to the elderly citizens of the prefecture. The future is likely to see an increase in the number of elderly people actively participating in society, through such things as charity and volunteer work. In line with this it has been deemed important to develop suitable programmes focusing on lifelong learning and sports to enable this participation to take place. The aim is also to create suitable and comfortable environments in towns and cities across the prefecture, with one eye on making things as easy and accessible for the great many elderly residents who have so much to offer the local communities by way of skills and experience.

### Shizuoka Universal Design Convention

The flagship event for the promotion of UD in Shizuoka Prefecture is the annual 'Shizuoka Universal Design Convention'. It was held for the fourth time between the 28th-29th January of this year, and the theme focused on issues related to UD and food. Over the two day period the convention was attended by over 2,000 people.

The event began with a keynote speech by Yoshinobu Ishikawa, the governor of Shizuoka Prefecture, who spoke of his pride that Shizuoka was the first prefecture to hold a national Universal Design convention when it did so in 2001. That event was held with the support of a number of non-profit organisations and was a great success, leading as it did to a greater understanding of issues relating to UD, and a large number of events in the years which followed.

The convention programme for 2006 offered a wide range of talks and events including workshops on kitchen goods for



A workshop at this years Shizuoka Universal Design Convention

### The International Association for Universal Design



The International Association for Universal Design (IAUD) was established in Japan in November 2003 with the aim of contributing towards the enhancement of the welfare of all human beings. The origins of the organisation stem from the "International Conference for Universal Design in Japan 2002", the theme of which was "For All, For Everybody". The "International Universal Design Declaration in Japan 2002", which defines UD as "creating a social environment in which individual characteristics are respected" was adopted on the last day of the conference, and became a key part of the IAUD on its inauguration.

The IAUD is made up of members from over 130 companies, many of which are major players in the electrical and automobile industries. The IAUD aims to provide a forum for discussion and the development of UD products through the undertaking of "theme studies" and reports, and aims to contribute towards an improvement in relations between the user and the manufacturer.

It aims to disseminate information regarding UD from Japan to the world, and its members are keen for Japan to play a leading role in establishing the UD ideals. With a view to this, in October of this year the IAUD will hold the 2nd International Conference for Universal Design in Kyoto. It is hoped that a great number of people will participate in the conference not only from Asia, but from all over the world.

For more information please visit the official homepage of the conference: [www.ud2006.net/en](http://www.ud2006.net/en)

With thanks to Keiji Kawahara, Executive Director, International Association for Universal Design.

the over 60s, a UD idea contest, and a talk on the use of UD in industry. There were also a number of workshops for elementary school children in which the children were introduced to the many issues surrounding UD. They were encouraged to think about what facilities in Shizuoka Prefecture could be improved, and took part in role plays which aimed to give them an idea of what it would be like living with a disability, and introduce them to some of the issues faced by such citizens on a daily basis.

As well as Shizuoka, a number of other prefectures are also working hard to promote Universal Design and educate their citizens to its benefits. It therefore seems certain that the future will see the continuation of a healthy competition between prefectures, leading to the proliferation of new products and designs aiming to improve the lives of citizens.

### Resources Used:

Shizuoka Universal Design homepage, Shizuoka Prefectural Government, May 2006, [www.pref.shizuoka.jp/ud/english](http://www.pref.shizuoka.jp/ud/english)

The International Association for Universal Design homepage, May 2006, [www.iaud.net/en/index.php](http://www.iaud.net/en/index.php)

The 2nd International Conference for Universal Design in Kyoto 2006 homepage, May 2006, [www.ud2006.net](http://www.ud2006.net)

The Center for Universal Design (1997). The Principles of Universal Design, Version 2.0. Raleigh, NC: North Carolina State University



Universal Design workshop activity for elementary school children

**Fukushima Prefecture**

Population: 2,103,888

Area: 13,782km<sup>2</sup>

Fukushima Prefecture, situated in the south of the northeastern Tohoku region is the second largest prefecture on Japan's main island of Honshu. When you look at the map of Fukushima, you might mistake Fukushima for Australia. This is because the shape of Fukushima is rather similar to that of the Australian continent. The prefectural capital is Fukushima City, which is roughly 90 minutes from Tokyo by bullet train.

The prefecture is divided from east to west into the three regions of Hamadori (coastal region), Nakadori (central region) and Aizu by two mountain ranges. In the winter, the Hamadori region, situated adjacent to the Pacific Ocean, enjoys dry, sunny weather, while there is heavy snow in the Aizu region. Indeed, snowfall sometimes reaches 4 metres in the mountainous areas of south-west Aizu. The prefecture has five national parks. In the northern part of Aizu lies Bandai-Asahi National Park, which is home to Mt. Bandai, the symbol of

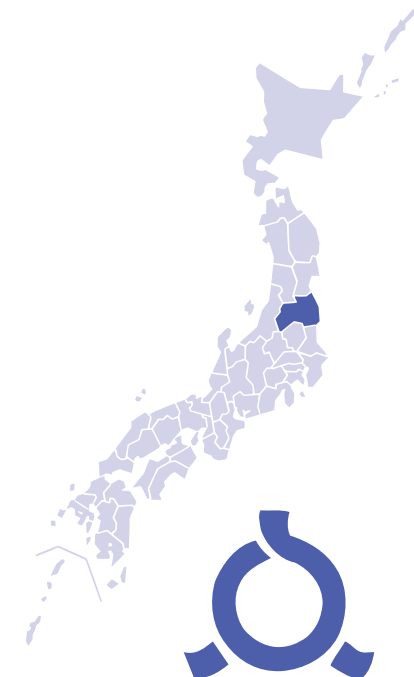
# Introduction to Fukushima Prefecture

by Ken Nemoto, Assistant Director JLGC (2004-2006)

Fukushima, and Lake Inawashiro, the third largest lake in Japan. The region also features the Urabandai Plateau which consists of various breathtaking lakes and marshes.

With regards to industry, the number of electronic manufacturers being established in Fukushima has increased at a remarkable pace, and the electronic products shipped abroad now accounts for over 30% of Fukushima's manufactured products. Another important point regarding industry in Fukushima, is the large number of foreign companies being established locally.

In September last year, Mr. Eisaku Sato, the governor of Fukushima Prefecture came to the UK. He visited Nottingham City Council to study good practice for town centre management, and also visited the JLGC. Some city centres in Fukushima Prefecture are seeing a decrease in the number of retailers and shoppers due to an increase in the number of hypermarkets in the surrounding suburban



areas. Governor Sato is keen to tackle this issue. In Nottingham he was lucky enough to attend presentations by Nottingham City Council, the Government Office for the East Midlands, and the East Midlands Development Agency concerning planning policy and regeneration.

He was also taken to the city centre to witness city centre management first hand. After returning to Japan he proceeded to formulate regulations for better city centre management similar to the Planning Policy Statements (PPS6: Town Centre and Retail Development) in the UK.

1. Mt. Bandai, the symbol of Fukushima
2. Wakamatsu Town, the oldest town in Fukushima Prefecture

**TOPIC**

**The Story of Fukushima's Most Admired Citizen**

Dr. Hideyo Noguchi, who appeared on the 1,000 yen note is regarded as one of Fukushima Prefecture's most distinguished people. In 1876, he was born the son of a very poor peasant near Lake Inawashiro in the Aizu region. Although his left hand was deformed as the result of serious burn during his childhood, Hideyo Noguchi grew up with the encouragement and support of the people around him, and after an operation to cure his disabled hand, he was inspired to follow a career in the field of medicine. He received his medical practitioner's license when he was twenty, and began work as an assistant doctor at the Kitasato Epidemic Disease Research Centre in 1898. On moving to the United States, he become involved research, and having made several major medical discoveries, was admitted as a member to the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research.

In 1918, he discovered the pathogenic organism for Yellow Fever, which at the same time was prevalent in Ecuador, South America. Dr. Noguchi succeeded where others before him had failed by creating a vaccine for Yellow Fever from the blood of sufferers. This vaccine was effective in South America, but was later found to be ineffectual against the African strain of the disease. Consequently, in an effort to find a cure for this variant of Yellow Fever, Dr. Noguchi relocated to Africa against opposition, and started research and treatment of patients there. However, he himself contracted the disease, and died in 1928 at the Accra in Ghana.

The achievements of Dr. Noguchi continue to be revered to this day, and the house where he was brought up in Fukushima Prefecture is preserved as a museum celebrating his work.



# Letter from a JET

*Kim Woodruff,  
Coordinator for International Relations (CIR)  
Sakurajima Town*

"You're sending me to an active volcano? Fantastic!" I shrieked down the phone at the poor woman who had just told me the result of my JET Programme placement.

Hailing from the flat lands of Leicester, I was thrilled to be going to the deep south of Japan to live on the slopes of Sakurajima. The most famous landmark of Kagoshima, Sakurajima was once an island until the great eruption of 1914 ejected 3 billion tonnes of lava and fused it onto the mainland. I admit I was also a little relieved to discover the volcano had quietened down in recent years. Unlike my pre-predecessor, I wouldn't need to sweep ash out of my house on a daily basis or carry an umbrella to use during ash-fall.

As Coordinator for International Relations in Sakurajima Town (population 4,700), I was placed in the Planning and Coordinating Division of the Town Hall. My work included providing English



Another aspect of my job is editing a quarterly English newsletter that we send to the city's former and current foreign residents. I was keen that the newsletter should focus more on the lives of people in Kagoshima. I've had great fun interviewing the captain of the Sakurajima Ferry, skateboarders in the park, bar owners in Kagoshima's hidden-away drinking alleys, and a world-class taiko drummer.



Interpreting at a courtesy visit to the mayor



Hard at work in the Sakurajima Town Hall



Me and my volcano!

tourist information for the many visitors to the town, English conversation classes, school visits and a monthly column in the local newsletter. I also translated several letters to Guinness World Records, to plead with them to accept our application for "World's Most Oranges on One Tree" (24,649), or "World's Most Frequent Ferry Service to a Volcano" (88 round trips a day). I think the mayor was keen for the town to get as many records as possible, after it successfully achieved the certificate for "World's Heaviest Radish" (31.1 kg). I also learnt how to sell town-subsidised ferry tickets to local residents, which sometimes meant asking one of my ever-patient colleagues to interpret between my standard Japanese and elderly farmers who only spoke hardcore Kagoshima dialect.

Once a week I escaped the office to visit the local nursery school, where I entertained pre-schoolers with Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes and made up dances to that under-rated song Reach, by UK-rockers S-Club 7. I would return to the office drenched in sweat and out of breath, much to the amusement of my serene and air-conditioned colleagues.

My colleagues in Sakurajima had grown up together, many went by their first names, and the work atmosphere was much more relaxed than I had expected. At 3 o'clock every day the famous Radio Taiso (radio callisthenics) music would play over the public address system. Ignoring the instructions to "Breathe in deeply! Bend your knees and stretch up," several employees would take this as an opportunity for a smoking break, and others (including me) would enjoy a coffee and whichever edible souvenir was on offer.

I had a fantastic year on Sakurajima, but had to change offices when my town merged with nearby Kagoshima City. Although I was apprehensive about this change, in the end my new job at the International Affairs Division of Kagoshima City Hall was a great opportunity to experience different aspects of work.

Kagoshima has four sister and friendship cities (Perth, Australia; Miami, USA; Naples, Italy; and Changsha, China) and much of my office's work involves coordinating sister city visits and other exchange projects. Whenever correspondence needs to be sent out in English, I translate it from Japanese. I also try my best at interpreting for non-Japanese speaking guests when they visit the mayor.

My experiences in Sakurajima have also come in useful in my new job. When a BBC documentary film crew visited Kagoshima last summer to film the volcano, I could recommend lava fields and managed to arrange for them to film at a local school and gain access to the island's massive debris channels.

I've now got just two months to go before leaving Kagoshima, and I know I'm going to miss it like crazy. At work, I'll miss my colleagues, the variety of my job, the chance to use my Japanese everyday, and the satisfaction of learning how to deal with the bureaucracy that I found so frustrating at first. Outside of work, I'll miss my taiko drumming group, and my friends who tolerate my attempts at Japanese puns and indulge me when I suggest a midnight trip to the Sakurajima Dinosaur Park and its amazing roller slide.

In short, I've had a brilliant three years on the JET Programme. I would definitely recommend the job to anyone who would like to experience working in Japan, improve their Japanese and become involved in the local community.

*JET = Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme*

*CIR = Coordinator of International Relations*

## about jet

The JET Programme was set up by the Japanese government in 1987, with the aim of promoting grass-roots international exchange. The programme enables local authorities in Japan to employ young people from countries all over the world, to work in foreign language education, sports education, and promoting international exchange at the community level. In 2004 over 1000 participants from the UK joined the programme. The programme is administered by CLAIR in Japan.

For further information please visit the JET programme website: [www.jetprogramme.org](http://www.jetprogramme.org)



# JAPAN STUDY TOUR

15-25 October 2006, Tokyo and Aomori

Applications are now open for the Japan Local Government Centre's Study Tour to Japan. Held every year in autumn, the study tour aims to foster a deeper understanding of Japan, its culture and its system of local government, and to encourage the exchange of ideas and information. The tour is mainly designed for senior personnel from UK local government and related organisations.

This year's tour will take place from 15-25 October, beginning with a visit to

the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications in Tokyo where participants will learn about central and local government in Japan. Then, following the theme: 'Conservation and the use of the Natural Environment' participants will travel to Aomori Prefecture in northern Japan, to learn about Japanese local government and participate in visits and meetings relevant to the theme. Participants will also experience a short homestay with a Japanese family.



Further information, including the application form and a provisional schedule, can be found on our website: [www.jlgc.org.uk](http://www.jlgc.org.uk).

**Deadline for applications:**

**Monday 24th July 2006.**

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## Keep on Running!



The 2007 Tokyo Marathon will take place on February 18th next year, and will consist of both a full marathon course, and a 10km course. This is the first time such an event will be organised by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, and it is predicted that 25,000 people will take part in the full

marathon. Aimed at promoting Tokyo as a great holiday destination, there will be a number of lively events built around the marathon in what is being called the 'Tokyo Big Marathon Festa 2007'.

Like the London Marathon the Tokyo event will not only be for top runners but for citizens of the city wanting to take part and do their best at their own pace. The route will take in a number of famous Tokyo sights such as the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building, the Imperial Palace, Ginza, Tokyo Tower, and the Tsukiji Fish Market.

With the Tokyo Marathon still in its planning stages a group of Tokyo Metropolitan Government Officials visited London on a fact finding mission to learn about the planning that is involved in the running of the London Marathon. The marathon was held on Sunday 23rd April, and the group arrived a few days prior to this in order to take part in some related visits. The group partook in a trip around the course as well as a question and answer session with Nick Bitel, the Chief Executive of London Marathon Ltd. This was also the first year that the Tokyo Marathon had a booth at the London Marathon Exhibition.

The group returned to Japan with a greater understanding of the work that must go into planning an event of this kind, and no doubt many of the ideas picked up will prove invaluable as preparation work for the Tokyo Marathon gathers steam.

On behalf of the group we'd like to thank all of the people that assisted the visitors during their time in London, and extend a warm invitation to our readers to visit Tokyo next February for the Tokyo Big Marathon Festa 2007.

For more information please visit the official marathon website: [www.tokyo42195.org/event\\_e.html](http://www.tokyo42195.org/event_e.html)

## Partnership Agreement signed by Mayor of London and Governor of Tokyo

On the 31st May, Governor of Tokyo, Shintaro Ishihara, visited City Hall in London to meet with Mayor of London Ken Livingstone, and sign a Partnership Agreement between London and Tokyo. The agreement establishes firm links and focuses on common issues faced by both cities such as urban regeneration, transport, the environment, and tourism. In particular London is keen to learn from Tokyo's pioneering policies on lowering emissions. It is hoped that the agreement will serve to greatly benefit the citizens of both cities as well as improve quality of life and mutual understanding.



Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, and Governor of Tokyo, Shintaro Ishihara meet to sign the Partnership Agreement at City Hall

The Japan Local Government Centre is the UK office of CLAIR – the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations. Founded in 1988 with the support of Japan's Ministry of Home Affairs, now the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, CLAIR is a joint organisation of local authorities, working to promote and provide support for local internationalisation.

With its head office in Tokyo, CLAIR has branch offices in each of Japan's 47 prefectures and 14 designated cities, and also has 7 overseas offices – in Beijing, New York, Paris, Singapore, Seoul, Sydney and London. Each overseas office is responsible for a specific area; the London office covers the United Kingdom, Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden.

The main functions of the JLGC in London are to conduct research on local government in the UK and northern Europe, and to promote exchanges between individuals, including government officers and local government representatives, in the UK and Japan. We are also involved in implementing the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) programme, which employs UK graduates in the fields of international exchange and English language education in Japan.



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Issue 51