

JLGC/The Council of Local  
Authorities for  
International Relations

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organisation representing Japan's 47  
prefectures, 17 designated cities and 1,788  
municipalities.

Aomori Nebuta Festival (©JNTO)



# Myriad Leaves

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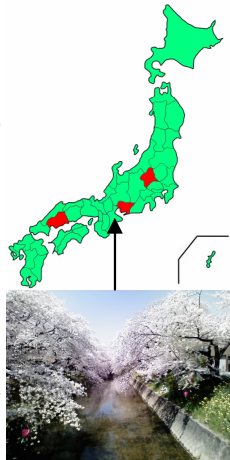
**Myriad Leaves** is the English language title for the earliest collection of Japanese poetry, *Manyōshū*. It contains 4,516 *waka* poems, the last of which is dated AD759. There is uncertainty over the intention of the title: it could mean either 'Collection of ten thousand leaves' or 'Collection for ten thousand generations'.

### Sayonara and Konichiwa Change of staff at JLGC

Every April sees a change of staff at JLGC with assistant directors returning to their local authorities after a two year placement, meaning Deputy Director Toru Murase, Assistant Directors Toshihiko Takeda, Takeya Sato, Yuka Kuwabara and Eitaro Kawamoto taking up new posts on their return to Japan. New staff arriving at JLGC from Japan are:

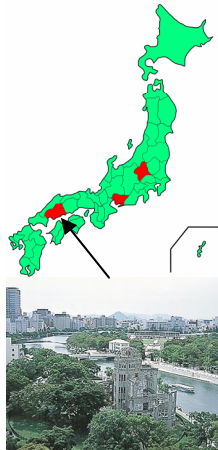
#### **Aichi Prefecture** Eiji Yamaguchi

Aichi is almost in the centre of Japan and is celebrated as where the cultures of east and west Japan have met since ancient times. The population of the region is about 7.4 million, which is near to the population of Greater London. Aichi prefecture is at the centre of the Chubu region and makes up the third largest metropolitan region of Japan. The global brand of Toyota is based in Aichi prefecture where the main industry is automobile manufacturing, and within which has developed into worldwide centre of technology. It is also rich in abundant nature, with Japan's national flower "sakura" (cherry blossom) blooming in full during Spring in all areas. On the right is a picture of one of Japan's 100 most famous sakura spots, the banks of the river Gojougawa. Aichi prefecture is a wonderful place to visit, if you were able to I am sure you would be warmly welcomed.



#### **Hiroshima City** Yoko Miyamoto

Hiroshima City where I was born and raised has six rivers that run through it, and with its calm inland stretches of sea is known as the "City of Water". It is also of course famous as the first city in the world to have the nuclear bomb dropped upon it. Despite having a tragic history, the city continues to grow in various fields as a centre of economics, cultural and local administration. There are also many tourists who come to the area to see the world heritage sites at neighbouring Miyajima, as well as the famous Nuclear Dome. I myself worked at Hiroshima city and experienced working in 4 different sections, such as within International Affairs and Environmental Administration. Having worked there with a JET participant from Wales, I feel I have a great affinity with the UK. I'm really looking forward to the next two years at JLGC.



#### **Gunma Prefecture** Yoshihisa Ogawa

Gunma is famous for *onsen* (hot water springs), and Kusatsu Onsen is one of the most popular in Japan. If you have the opportunity, it is a great place to visit. While you are walking around the town you can try as many steamed buns as you like. I played rugby all the way through school and university as a scrum-half. However, on top of getting old and getting out of shape, I am now left with back pain. Despite this, I would like to try playing somewhere again. I also like football and played in a five-a-side team with colleagues. I would like to try playing in a team here too, as well as watching one of the big four teams in a match. Before working for CLAIR, I worked at the JET Programme office in my prefecture. Before that, I worked at a secondary school in the prefecture. At CLAIR HQ in Tokyo I was in charge of JET orientation and counselling, and will work on similar things in the UK. It looks as though I will see the JET Programme from all angles. I am looking forward to meeting with you all over the next couple of years.



### Public Participation in Japan Town Budget agreed after public "100 member meeting"

Chizu Town in Tottori Prefecture has finalized 18 plans including the local budget for fiscal year starting April 1st 2009, after a "100 member" panel was consulted on revitalising the local community. The former forestry town has seen its industry go into decline like much of non core-urban Japan which has a high proportion of older residents, with a third of the 8,500 locals 65 years or older. Direct involvement by the local community in producing a council's budget is at the moment a rare event in Japan, although there are similar schemes in Odawara, Kanagawa Prefecture and Eniwa in Hokkaido Prefecture. More than 140 local residents or commuters to the town applied for the 100 places, which saw successful participants allocated to one of six sub-committees and asked to brainstorm ideas for plans to revitalise the local community. With no previous experience of budget planning, the education and culture sub panel came up with 25 different plans for community volunteerism, internationalism and teaching local children about their environment and farming. A project supplying locally grown rice, farmed by the town's children for aid work in south east Asia was decided upon after consultation with Japan Agricultural Cooperative. The 180 million yen (£1.2 million) budget is now going through the confirmation process for such schemes and day to day running by the town council.

#### **Minority support in Japan**

#### **Shiga to hire non-Japanese as part-time interpreters**

As a reaction to two problems, rising unemployment amongst the Nikkeijin population (immigrants of Japanese decent, mainly South American) and the need for language support in Japanese schools, the number of prefectures employing language assistants for state schools is rising. Shiga prefecture has become the latest sub-national government to continue this trend with a statement committing to hiring assistants for employment in elementary and junior high schools as part of measures to support students experiencing problems with the Japanese language. As parents lose jobs and are no longer able to pay for private tuition in their native language the rise in students enrolling at state schools is becoming a problem for local boards of education. Assistants will be hired for 6 month periods to assist in the classroom in Portuguese, Spanish, Chinese and Tagalog. At the start of the year 91 foreign students transferred into state schools. Shiga has around 32,000 foreign residents, with 14,000 from Brazil making up the largest group. Native speakers who can also speak Japanese will be employed as part of the 32 million yen programme (£210,500), although Japanese citizens who meet the requirements will also be recruited.

#### **Best Practice in Japan**

#### **Kanagawa passes limited smoking ban at private facilities**

On the 24th of March, the first laws in Japan preventing passive smoking in both public facilities and private establishments were adopted in a bill in a plenary session of the prefectural assembly. It was carried out after being considered for 10 years and 4 months. At first there was a retreat on a total ban on smoking, but Governor Shigefumi Matsuzawa highlighted the importance of "also having leading penal measures". The regulations are that at schools, hospitals and banks a total ban applies with rules for shops and restaurants serving food and drink to have a separate smoking area. Restaurants with a kitchen of up to 100 square metres, small scale lodgings of up to 700 metres, pachinko (slot machine) and gaming establishments are not regulated, while fines for breaking the rules are a 2000 yen penalty (£10), while the establishment manager is subject to a 10,000 yen fine (£50) starting with restaurants from April 2011. This legislation comes about after recent JLGC research into the effects of the UK smoking ban.

## Guest Article

# Mixing the Best of Britain and Japan *Makuhari International School*

By Paul Rogers, founding head of Makuhari International School in Chiba City, Chiba Prefecture

Makuhari International School opened its doors to around 200 children in April 2009. It will be, in some ways, a fairly unique school. It will take the objectives of the Japanese National Curriculum as well as elements of other curricula – mainly those of the National Curriculum of England and Wales and meld these into a new and fairly unique Program of Study – a syllabus designed to cater for not only Japanese children returning to Japan from abroad, but also foreign and dual-nationality children already living in Japan.

**Japanese System: Top-heavy on Learning Fact.** The Japanese system does a fairly good job of ‘producing’ children who are considerate, hard-working, energetic, knowledgeable, and often, extremely imaginative. Teachers are usually extremely dedicated to the children in their charge. On the other hand there is a widespread view that the curriculum on offer is top-heavy on learning factual information that is not always useful (rather than focused skills learning) as well as an over-emphasis on developing social skills. There is also the common belief that teaching can be pedestrian and repetitious at times and rarely varies in style or reaction to the diverse approaches to learning that children naturally have.

**British Style: Focused on Teaching & Addressing All Children.** If you were to ask a British class teacher what was the biggest handicap to delivering good-quality education, he would probably say it was the constant change from above leaving educators confused, unmotivated and lacking confidence in the Local Education Authorities. Teachers lacking enthusiasm rarely give their best, floundering under a pile of paperwork. However, there is a clear emphasis within the National Curriculum as well as via the teachers’ training on the importance of planning, teaching and assessing for *all* children, as well as a clear expectation that all children can and should make progress at their own levels with the right support and challenge.

**Japanese Reforms: Twists & Turns.** In Japan there was a series of curriculum reforms in the 1990s that aimed to give children more contact with the local environment and community, and encourage independence and self-motivated learning. Teachers were told to assess children’s interests and motivation, not just their achievement on tests. The culmination of the reforms came with a revised National Curriculum published in 1998, which, among other things, introduced ‘integrated studies’ (focusing on cross-curricular, self-planned, and experiential learning). At the time it was claimed that the content of so-called ‘conventional’ subjects such as mathematics was being cut by 30%, partly to make way for new study areas, and partly because of the implementation of a five-day school week and the end of Saturday lessons. These curriculum revisions touched off a storm of criticism. Not only did educators argue that children would no longer be able to cope with the simplest of mathematical problems, but sociologists argued that the reforms would widen the gap between children from motivated homes (who could study independently) and children with less fortunate backgrounds, whose achievement would drop. Educational consultants pointed to declining test results over two decades, and warned of worse to come. A variety of others interestingly looked towards Britain, where the common view was of a country which had supposedly wrecked its education systems with misguided ‘progressive’ reforms before reluctantly getting back to basics. Japan’s education ministry responded to these worries by stressing that the new

curriculum was only a minimum, and set up a nationwide academic achievement test to monitor standards. The latest revisions include the 2011 curriculum reforms that will increase the hours for Japanese, maths, science and English, perhaps in response to previous overreactions to earlier reforms. In reality, compared to many curricula, and despite the reforms that are still ongoing, the Japanese curriculum is still remarkably sparse and generic when it comes to focused and specific ‘skills’ objectives. The new curriculum for 2011 does not address this issue at all. Japanese schools’ shortcomings are in some ways the mirror image of their strengths. The emphasis on community and learning together sets limits on the freedom that children can have in exploratory learning. (This is in marked contrast to the National Curriculum of England and Wales where exploratory learning is strongly advocated.)

**Contrasting Differences Between Japanese & British Styles.** There are also possible restrictions to children’s progress in relation to the attitude to setting. It is interesting to note that until the age of 15, Japanese public education has very little streaming or setting by academic performance. Since 2003, there have been some experiments in setting, almost entirely confined to maths and English teaching, but some of these experiments seem to have been abandoned – and even when they continue, children usually choose their set themselves, which seems to defeat the purpose and is again rooted in the desire to foster confidence and self-reliance. This is in marked contrast to the National Curriculum of England and Wales where setting is standard and considered to be not only hugely effective but a normal expectation in schools. It is an exercise administered by the teacher and not the children.

One other obviously contrasting feature between the two styles of education is the expectation of achievement of individual children. The curriculum in Japan as well as the textbooks used is designed to enable all children to advance at the same pace, and classroom teaching has the same aim. At elementary school, there are many opportunities for children to take the initiative to study on their own or in small groups, but the entire class almost always comes together again after a while to discuss findings and conclusions. What helps to underpin the combination of energetic inquiry and discussion is the unremitting effort to develop a classroom community. All children take turns in leading the class, and all participate in a great variety of small groups for organizing everything from chores (including cleaning) to fun and games. This is often very effective in developing a sense of mutual consideration and respect. But again, it is led at the same pace for all, which by necessity is at the slowest pace. Progress for children is therefore more or less led at the rate of the slowest group within that class. This is again in marked contrast to what happens in an English school. There, planning and teaching are designed to target all children at different levels. Children who are struggling are supported, and more able children are extended rather than having to wait for others to catch up. There is not a reliance on completing textbooks that are solely based on the curriculum; which means that teachers have to know the curriculum more clearly in order to be able to often create and compile their own work for children to use.

**New Curriculum: Taking the Very Best of What’s Available.** Of course the more you look at the two curricula, the more similarities and differences you find and the more strengths and weaknesses in both. The aim of creating a new curriculum (and stressing a vibrant and diverse approach to teaching) here at Makuhari International School is to take the very best from what is already available as well as add new thoughts and ideas. To develop something that offers the creativity and team ethic of one system while incorporating the challenge and focus of another is an exciting journey whose end goal is to provide the very best education that we can for the mixed group of children in our care.

## UK-Japan Links

### Embassy of Japan-JLGC Local Links Seminar

Susan Handley, International Officer  
Local Government Association

#### Embracing Japan

"Small, but perfectly formed", could be a very apt way of describing the existing local authority links between Japan and the UK. In number terms, there are relatively few, with only around 13 formal partnerships on record. In quality terms, however, the links appear to have both depth and range. Something I discovered at a special meeting organised in March by the Japan Local Government Centre (JLGC) and the Embassy of Japan.

Following last year's 150 anniversary of the friendship treaty between Japan and the UK, a group of representatives from UK councils that have Japanese links was invited to look at cooperation between the two countries. Both the Embassy and JLGC are keen to see what they can do to increase and strengthen partnerships.

From the outset, I must declare a clear interest in this subject as one of my roles at the Local Government Association is to promote international links and explain the potential benefits to councils. A hard task in these trying times of economic recession? In part, yes, but there are a number of councils embracing international partnerships as a rich and innovative resource for them and their communities.

International partnerships not only increase cultural understanding and general awareness of global issues, they also provide a real opportunity to focus on the priorities that are at the heart of local government. Councils around the world all face the same issues: namely, how to provide high quality services efficiently and cost effectively. One of the best ways to try to make improvements and efficiency savings is to look at how other councils do things.

In the UK, we are fortunate to have the Beacon Council scheme, which recognises excellence in specific fields, and enables this expertise to be shared with peers. International partnerships provide an opportunity to do exactly the same, but within the context of a different cultural setting.

Gateshead has, for many years, enjoyed a link with Komatsu City. With a strong focus on youth exchange, many of the city's young people have broadened their horizons by taking part in the two-way visits and learning about different cultures and life styles. Gateshead also hosted a study visit by city officials to look at Gateshead's experience of building relationships with the local community; and encouraging better use of public transport. As well as helping to improve services, this type of activity also serves as affirmation of the good work being carried out.

Westminster Council, although not formally linked to a Japanese city, has taken inspiration from the famous Shibuya crossing in Tokyo, where pedestrians are able to use a series of crossings to cross the intersection diagonally as well as vertically. Westminster is looking to implement a similar system in Oxford Street to allow pedestrians to move around more quickly.

There are so many things we can learn from each other and so many issues of concern that we have in common. Japan is looking at innovative ways to deal with waste and has one of the first councils with an almost 100% rate of household recycling with no rubbish collections.

Gateshead has for a long time been a city of heavy industry, and Komatsu Corporation, based in Komatsu City, had long wanted a European base. They chose Gateshead because of the similarities between the cities, and Gateshead formally requested a twinning agreement because Komatsu Corp. had contributed so much to

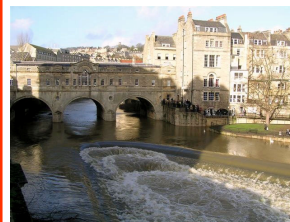


the city. The cities hold successful student exchanges annually, and there has been much development in social welfare thanks to both the city of Komatsu and the corporation. The Mayor of Komatsu was recently given the Freedom of the City by Gateshead City Council



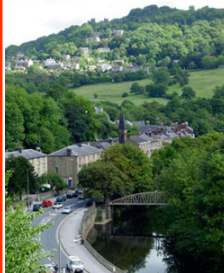
In 1992, the Deputy Governor of Kyoto made a visit to the UK. Interchange had already been happening in the Lothian area, and in 1994, Kyoto signed a friendship agreement with them. After the reorganisation of the councils, intercultural exchange continued with Edinburgh and has been growing ever since with the agreement renewed in 1997. 2007 saw the 10th

anniversary of links between Kyoto and Edinburgh, and cooperation and exchanges now focus on the areas of culture and heritage, education, technology and trade. Edinburgh's long-standing friendship links with Kyoto Prefecture in Japan were symbolised when Kyoto's Governor Yamada officially opened the new Japanese Garden at Lauriston Castle.



A World Heritage city and home of the UK's only hot spring; Bath was perhaps a good choice for a country which had so many hot springs of its own. In June, 1991, the Director of Marketing at Bath made a trip to Beppu and liked the city very much. On the basis of this, two years later, a European Inspection team from Beppu visited Bath and were similarly taken. A formal twinning agreement

was signed in 1996 and formal exchanges have been happening ever since. Beppu is Japan's onsen capital with the largest volume of hot water in the world apart from Yellowstone in the United States and the largest number of hot spring sources in Japan. Like many other Japanese cities, Beppu is sandwiched between the sea and the mountains.



In 1998 Toyota City signed a formal twinning agreement with Derbyshire County Council, Derby City Council and South Derbyshire District Council creating a unique link which continues to go from strength to strength. The twinning link was established as a result of the Toyota manufacturing plant opening in Burnaston, which had a very positive impact on the local Derbyshire economy. 2008 – 10 year anniversary. In 2008 many projects, activities and exchanges were held to celebrate the ten years of twin-

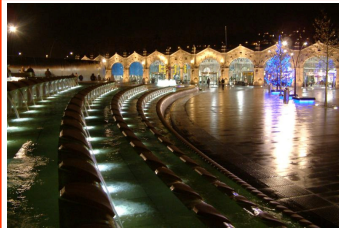
n i n g between the two regions. The first project was an 'Educational Artist Exchange Programme' to embed the global dimension into the classroom and raise awareness of the twinning link, as well as a visit to Matlock council offices by Toyota City Council.





William Adams, the 'Blue-eyed Samurai', also known in Japanese as 'Miura Anjin', was born in Gillingham on 24th September 1564. He is the key to the link between Medway and Japan, being the first Englishman to land in Japan. Since 1947, Ito has held an Anjin Festival to celebrate the inaugural sail of the first western style ships designed by William Adams to the mouth of the Tojin River in 1605. In March 1964 a member of the Diet (Parliament) and citizen of Ito arrived in Gillingham and since then picture, cultural and friendship exchanges between the cities has continued to this day. In February 1982 the Gillingham council voted for friendship links

with Ito and formal negotiations were concluded by the Mayors in July of that year. Through this link Medway has built friendly and cultural relationships with the cities of Ito & Yokosuka. Each summer eight students, from Medway, Ito & Yokosuka share four weeks together for a two week homestay in each other's home city.



The steel industry has always been central to Sheffield's success and indeed it was instrumental in the Industrial Revolution. Kawasaki is also an area of heavy industry with world class production, and these were the common links when twinning was first raised as a serious proposition. Sheffield still continues to be a centre for metallurgy and precision instruments for medicine and aeronautics. In July,

1990 the University of Sheffield's School of East Asian Studies made the suggestion that the two cities could learn from each other as they regenerated following the collapse of the coal and steel industries and the consequent move towards the high-tech spectrum. International trade is the principal objective and each year the trade and exchange between the cities grows.



Yoichi is best known for its brewing, and the brewing of Nikka Whisky in particular. Masataka Taketsuru, a resident of the town went to Scotland to study brewing techniques. Whilst he was there, he met and married a woman called Rita. Upon returning to Japan, they decided to set up a whisky brewery using the techniques he had learnt in Scotland, and a lifetime's work with whisky and a Scottish connection began.

Rita began to exchange letters and works of art between Yoichi and her home town of Strathkelvin. In July, 1988 the then Mayor and his wife made a trip to Japan and in October of the same year a return trip was made by the Mayor of Yoichi. From then on, schools have corresponded with each other, children have sent over drawings, and good-will parties have visited the respective towns. Yoichi has dedicated an area of town to look Scottish, there are shops where Scottish goods can be bought, and there is even a Bagpipe Appreciation Society.



In 1993, Maizuru in Kyoto prefecture opened a brick museum and Portsmouth donated an 18th century brick for them to display. This saw the beginning of informal exchange between the two cities. In 1997 it was formally suggested that the two cities consider twinning. Maizuru development was greatly spurred after the naval port was installed in 1901. Today, Maizuru is a key district headquarters for the Japan



Maritime Self-Defense Force. In July of 1997 a delegation from Maizuru went to Portsmouth to officially discuss the exchange and a return visit was made in October. Finally, the year after, an agreement was finally reached. Each year 20 students from each city have the opportunity to spend some time in the twinned city to learn something about the culture and everyday activities of their counterparts.

The increasing ageing population is as much of a concern in Japan as it is in Europe. Providing health care services has been given a boost in Japan by the use of new technology. Doctors are able to check on the condition of older people living in outreach areas, by observing them via mobile phone images. This helps doctors prioritise patient care and saves valuable time.

We cannot ignore the softer benefits of international partnerships. At last year's Japan Day seminar, a student from Derbyshire expressed his gratitude to the people of Toyota City for their kindness and hospitality. A choir of school pupils had just returned from a visit to Toyota City, where they had performed for, and with, their counterparts. The young man very eloquently described his perceptions of the community, which he thought was "one of the most polite" he had ever experienced. It is impressions and experiences like this that will have a lasting impact on young people.

If you are more interested in 'hard' benefits, I also listened to Toyota's Director of Corporate Affairs explain that choosing to locate a major plant in Derbyshire had, in fact, been influenced by the relationship with the local councils. I'm not suggesting that every international partnership will result in a business link - Toyota is, after all, one of the UK's biggest inward investors - but it can certainly help to stimulate the economy and give local businesses an edge. Working together during difficult economic times is possibly even more important than when the economy is flourishing.

Lastly, we should also remember the rich culture of Japan that fascinates so many people. Peterborough Council and its community-led Japanese society, held a very successful festival to showcase a range of activities; from martial arts to calligraphy - Taiko drumming to Haiku poetry, and the people of Peterborough got a real taster of the unique facets of Japan. JLGC's meeting included views from the smallest of town councils, to district, unitary and county councils and produced a range of ideas on how to progress bilateral relationships which I'm sure will be announced in future editions of Myriad Leaves. There are also several organisations, featured on the JLGC website that can help with education links and language training. Mr Fujishima, JLGC's Director, reminded us of the JET programme which enables young graduates to go out to Japan and teach English.

International partnerships are only as good as the rationale that governs them! Councils must be clear about their aims and objectives, and have measurable outcomes to demonstrate value for money. But it's a blank canvass and, whether you're looking to improve services; enhance the aspirations and opportunities for young people; up-skill your work force; or enrich cultural experiences, international partnerships can play a vital role.

#### **For UK local authorities wishing to establish international affiliations with a Japanese local authority:**

1. **Requests should be sent directly to CLAIR London (Japan Local Government Centre).**
2. **After registering with CLAIR, prospective partners are listed on CLAIR Tokyo's homepage directory and introduced in CLAIR's monthly newsletter sent to local governments throughout Japan.**
3. **JLGC will then notify prospective partners if Japanese local authorities make any queries.**



Japan Local Government Centre  
Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR), London

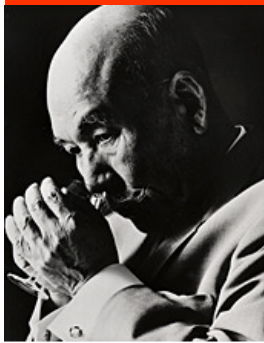
<http://japanuklinks.wordpress.com/>

# UK-Japan Relations

## Masataka Taketsuru

### "Father" of Japanese Whisky

By Keith Kelly, PR Officer



For those readers north of the border it is with sadness that your fellow Scot exiled here in Whitehall, must tell you the Japanese have recently trounced us in one of our most celebrated traditions; Japanese whisky has scotched all criticism as being a poor relation to *honkaku* (original) "*Uisge Bheatha*" by being voted the best in the world, beating Scottish distilleries.

Yoichi is the first variety produced

outside Scotland to win the coveted single malt award in an international competition run by Whisky Magazine. Suntory Hibiki, the brand advertised by the washed-up actor played by Bill Murray in the film *Lost in Translation*, scooped the award for the world's best blended whisky. How was this possible you may ask? It is down to the man pictured above. Masataka Taketsuru (1894–1979) founded Japan's whisky industry in 1929, at the invitation of Torii Shinjiro (founder of Suntory), and worked as first plant chief at the Kotobukiya Yamazaki distillery (now known as Suntory), the first Japanese producer of original method "Scotch" whisky. After this, in order to pursue the production of more authentic whisky, Taketsuru founded the Dai-Nippon Juice company, now known as Nikka Whisky. As an expert, he is known for introducing the quality production of whisky in Japan. He drank High Nikka enthusiastically, one bottle a day, although this had fallen to two bottles every three days in his later years.

In 1962, when UK Deputy Prime Minister Hume made a visit to Japan, he apparently described Taketsuru as the "youth who stole all the secrets of our whisky making arts with a fountain pen and a notepad". Of course this was something said in praise of Taketsuru. The whereabouts of this famous Taketsuru notebook was for a while unknown, until much later when it was presented to Nikka Whisky by the descendants of one of his employees from the Settsu distillery (merged with the Takarashuzou Brewery in 1964) who had discovered it hidden away and protected.

At school one of the pupils in the year below him was the future Prime Minister Hayato Ikeda, whom he continued to correspond with until the end of his life. Taketsuru also had a great effect on Ikeda, as at international receptions he provided guests with Japanese whisky.

Taketsuru studied distillation at Osaka Technical High School (now part of Osaka University). In March 1916 and under the guidance of a senior student from his studies he made a visit to the Settsu Distillery in Osaka city with an interest in the newly introduced western beverages, and without graduating started working at the company. Due to a coming conscription inspection for national service his time was limited but it was not long before he was promoted to chief engineer, armed with his copy of a London publisher's "Prescription Book" of brewing methods. That summer there were a number of incidents where the unsterilised bottles used to make wine from grapes (a new process to Japan) exploded outside the distillery shop. However, the method used by Taketsuru to brew "Amber" port-wine had ensured that his produce was thoroughly sterilised without increased production of yeast, a feat which ensured Taketsuru's professional reputation in the brewing world.

From the 19th century whisky had been imported to Japan via America, with only fake whisky rather than real Japanese whisky being produced there. Therefore the plan at the Settsu Distillery was distilling the real thing. In 1918 Taketsuru went to Scotland to study applied chemistry at the University of Glasgow. His other brothers had gone on to other paths, not pursuing a career in the brewing industry, and it is believed that his parents were disappointed with him not continuing in their tracks by carrying on the family company. However, he set to earnestly studying the craft of whisky distilling and practicing the processes in visiting the places where it was produced. It is said that he even cleaned the inside of the pot stills used for making whisky so he could learn their internal make-up, a job hated by the brewers themselves.

While he was in Scotland he was asked to teach Judo, and married Rita, the elder sister of one of his students, Ramsey Cowan. However, as Ramsey and the family were firmly opposed to the marriage, they married at a lonesome civic ceremony with only two witnesses rather than celebrated in a church. That year in November he led his wife Rita back home to Japan. The Cowan family were still against the marriage, but finally accepted him as her husband once and for all.

On returning home, the plan was to produce quality Scotch whisky, but because of the world wide financial crisis their plans were put on hold temporarily. In 1922 Taketsuru left the Settsu Distillery and went to teach chemistry to students at Touzan Middle School in Osaka (now Touzan College High School).

In 1923 western liquors sales company Kotobukiya (now called Suntory) made plans for the production of genuine whisky produced in Japan. When the Director Shinjiro Torii inquired as to whether or not there was an appropriately qualified person in Scotland, he received the reply that Taketsuru was in Japan. Torii had previously done business with the Settsu Distillery, and had met with Taketsuru on a number of occasions. Torii offered Taketsuru the extraordinary sum of 4000 yen per year, the same amount he would have offered a specialist coming from Scotland. That year in June, Taketsuru officially started work at Kotobukiya. Taketsuru said that it was necessary to build a distillery in Hokkaido as it had similar climate to Scotland, but Torii disapproved of this as there would be costs of shipping the product to the target markets and that customers would want to inspect the production facilities themselves. After considering about five proposed sites, Yamazaki, Osaka Prefecture, was chosen on the basis that the water was of good quality, had a climate near to that of Rothes, Moray which he was familiar with, and there was a lot of mist. Taketsuru made the design of the factory as well as the production equipment. In particular there was no one in the country who had manufactured a pot still before, for which Taketsuru made countless visits to the manufacturer to point out the finer details.

On the 11th of November 1924 the Yamazaki factory was completed, and Taketsuru became plant manager of the first such distillery in Japan. It was however a very small factory with only one other member of staff apart from Taketsuru. That small whisky factory has gone on to become a giant of brewing in Japan, now the famous Suntory Corporation which has produced the 30-year old Hibiki, winner of best blend whisky over Scottish whisky. Further still, Taketsuru's own brewery which he set up in Hokkaido as originally planned, in Yoichi town which has a twinning agreement with East Dunbartonshire, has gone on to produce a whisky voted the world's best malt named, Yoichi 20, of the same name as the town. It's enough to make a Scotsman weep into his Glenmorangie.



## Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme UK



### JET Programme Experiences

*Nara "Kencho" from a JET's point of view.*

**Josy Audigier, CIR, 2006-2008**



Josy and her supervisor Wada-san

After completing my degree in Japanese and History I was lucky enough to gain a place on the JET programme as a Co-ordinator for International Relations. I was thrilled to find that my placement was in Nara City working for the Culture and International Affairs Division of the Prefectural Government.



Nara was the site of Japan's first international Capital, Heijo-kyo nearly 1300 years ago. It is an interesting city, crammed with cultural treasures, world heritage sites as well as a huge park with thousands of tame deer that wander around freely. The Kencho - Prefectural Government building is located at the edge of the park, so our office had a stunning view of Nara's famous Todaiji temple and the mountains behind.

Structure of the Kencho

#### Structure of the Kencho

The Prefectural government is run by an elected Governor, Shogo Arai. Under Mr. Arai are the Bucho, or director generals, who look after several divisions. Each division is headed by a Kacho, or director. When I arrived, I started to work in the Culture and International Affairs division. There were three sections within our division, each with a Hosa to guide them. This sounds pretty complicated but it is quite a clear structure once you get the idea! My day to day activities were supervised by my supervisor as well as the Hosa, who worked closely with our Kacho. I loved my role. I had the chance to work on translating, interpreting, planning international events, writing and recording an English broadcast, editing a newsletter and a whole range of other activities. One of my most interesting roles was carrying out a survey of tourists visiting the prefecture to discover ways to improve the facilities available to them.

#### April Reshuffle

One of the things that took me by surprise was the huge office re-shuffle in April. Each year the Prefectural office (well...all Japanese public offices) transfer staff around so different people get to work in different parts of the government. Sometimes the offices are moved as well. We had a couple of weeks of confusion as people moved desks, files and cupboards to different areas of the building. After my first year there were several changes in April: Our department became the International Affairs and Tourism Division and we moved to a different part of the building. In some ways this can be very frustrating- after getting used to the office structure everything gets turned on its head! You might get confused about who does what role or be moved away from a favourite supervisor. However the reshuffles can bring in fresh ideas, clean out files that are no longer needed and breathe



new life into to communication in the workplace. It also means people have contacts in departments all over the government, which can be an excellent aid



#### Radio Taiso

Every afternoon at 3pm there was music played around the prefectural office. Our office was always a hive of activity with people rushing about and working hard, so they would all ignore the music. However, a few times I was moving around the building to

deliver messages or go to a meeting and I noticed that in most offices, people would stop work and stretch along with the voice-over. I was pretty shocked to see this the first time, but it actually seemed like a good idea to get people moving away from their computers for a while. I was always too embarrassed to join in, but looking back I wish I had tried it!!

#### Decision making

One other large difference to working in the UK, was the decision making process. Whenever we had meetings within the Kencho, people would speak to each other and gain a consensus in advance. This meant decisions seemed to be made prior to the meeting, and the actual meeting was a formality to inform them of the decision. If I planned an event, wrote a script or finished a newsletter, I would need to slip it to a board called a kairan. This kairan would then be sent around the office so that everyone can look at it, and stamp it with their name. Each day several kairan boards would be passed around the office. It can be a lengthy process, but is useful as it lets everybody know about information, events or procedures. Party events would go around on a kairan too!

#### Social events

Working within our department was made even more enjoyable by the social side of the office. We had meals to celebrate new members of staff or to say goodbye to others. There are also parties to celebrate the end of the year, as well as to thank staff for their hard work after large events. Getting to know colleagues outside work really helped the running of the office as people were happy to help each other out and work together closely. Apart from parties, colleagues would come to our events or invite us to join them when they visited festivals. My favourite moments of my time on JET were after I joined a group of Kachos for hikes to see some of Nara's most scenic areas.



Living in Nara and working for the local government was a privilege and a pleasure, and I hope I will be able to go back to visit my ex-colleagues in time for the festivities planned to celebrate the 1300th anniversary of the Heijo-kyo capital next year.

**For more information on the JET Programme, please visit:**  
<http://www.jet-uk.org/>

## Editorial

### L.A.s' economic countermeasures in the Japanese media

Compiled by Seiki Kimura, Asst. Director,  
edited and translated by Keith Kelly

#### "Local help measures for car, house repayments"

As the economic situation in the regions gets worse, local authorities are taking measures to support repayments on high value articles such as cars and houses. Saitama prefecture is providing grants to help ease the burden of home loan repayments for a five month period from April, up to a maximum of 10 million yen (£67,900), while Akita prefecture has started a scheme where the VAT portion is repaid when replacing a car with a new low emission vehicle. Novel local counter measures are gathering pace in the face of economic policies which have been up to now slow to impact at national level, but there is also worry that as these schemes spread widely the state of local government finances will become more strained. (Nikkei Net 26.04.2009)

(<http://www.nikkei.co.jp/news/keizai/20090226AT3B2301726022009.html>)

#### "Premium local produce gift certificates, runaway success"

The "Dai-Yonago" gift certificate has started selling from the 7<sup>th</sup> April, aimed at linking the supplementary income payment [as explained in ML March] to buying local goods in Yonago City, Tottori Prefecture. One batch on that day sold out, with around 22,000 sets retailing out of a planned 41,667 issued sets with a total face value of 500 million yen (£333, 333). One set of gift vouchers can be bought for 10,000 yen (1000 yen x 12 gift vouchers) and 1 person can buy up to 5 sets. The supplementary income payment was provided from the 30<sup>th</sup> of March. In Yonago city's market place, Suehiro town, local people were queuing up at the Yonago Convention Centre from around 5.30 am, and by 10 am, when sales of the tickets started, a 700 meter long queue of 3000 people had reached the banks of the Kamogawa river. (Mainichi Newspaper 8.4.2009)

(<http://mainichi.jp/area/tottori/news/20090408ddlk31020734000c.html>)

#### "Tottori City – reacting by accelerating projects"

At a Tottori city management board meeting, there was discussion of the plans for next year's programme, based on the planned government subsidy to the city, on whether or not there are any projects that can be brought forward with an advanced payment. These include projects from this spring such as the renovation of beauty spots and the sculpting of sand statues for an international sand statue festival, part of events in the "Tottori 2009 Inaba Festival". It was decided all are able to start this year. It was also concluded that there should be close examination of whether there were other things that could be done to create work apart from accelerating the process of these payments. (Asahi Newspaper 24.12.2008)

([http://mytown.asahi.com/tottori/news.php?k\\_id=32000220812240001](http://mytown.asahi.com/tottori/news.php?k_id=32000220812240001)).

#### "Town heads take pay cut"

With the drop in tax revenue as a result of the current

economic climate, there have been cuts in mayors' and other top level local authority figures' salaries. It was announced that from April Atsugi City mayor, Tsuneyoshi Kobayashi, will have a 20% pay cut during the remainder of his second year term in office. Minamiashigara town will also take the same measures. The region has also already seen this trend with Kanagawa prefectural governor Matsuzawa Hirofumi also taking a 20% cut in pay from April. These local authorities, who had been advocating attracting big business to the prefecture to raise higher tax revenues, are seeing a worse economic climate than was anticipated. In Atsugi City, apart from the mayor, the deputy mayor and the head of education have seen respective pay cuts of 15 and 10%. The city is taking a direct hit from the lack of tax revenue from the Nissan car manufacturing plant and electrical goods producers based there. Next year's budget is being hammered out with the anticipation of a "comparative fall from last year of 1.1 billion yen in corporate business tax". (J-Net21 6.03.2009)

([http://j-net21.smri.go.jp/watch/news\\_tyus/entry/20090306-10.html](http://j-net21.smri.go.jp/watch/news_tyus/entry/20090306-10.html))

#### "Local Authorities to create 643 projects for 3400 council jobs in Hokkaido"

Subsidised national employment projects will come in two types – "Hometown renewal special measures projects" tackling unemployment of over one year, and "emergency job creation projects" for less than 6 months. Each prefectural government will make a fund from government subsidies to be used in projects realized by the prefecture and local authorities on the island. For the "hometown" projects Hokkaido prefecture will distribute about 8.2 billion yen, with about 5.3 billion yen of this for the emergency projects within the next three years. Within this 3.3 billion yen is set aside to be used within this financial year 2009 for the "Hometown" project. Local authorities have publicly committed themselves to 16 prefecture wide projects and 155 specific local projects. After the New Year, the prefecture requested ideas from local authorities to consider how to revitalise the local economy, and schemes expanding specialized goods markets, the development of tourist products, and projects revitalizing shopping areas were all adopted, based on Hokkaido produced goods. (Hokkaido Newspaper)

(<http://www.hokkaido-np.co.jp/news/politics/156561.html>)

#### "Revised central government draught budget '09, 1 trillion yen allocation to local authorities, under government and ruling party consideration"

The government and ruling party considered additional economic measures in the revised budget for 2009 on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April, which currently plans to offer local authorities additional 1 trillion yen (£6.9 billion). It is to be spent by the local authorities without limit on how it can be used in countermeasures. It is thought the funds are to be raised by government issue bonds, with the aim of helping local authorities, facing financial hardship through a fall in tax revenue, support measures creating jobs and revitalizing the local economy. Up until now Subsidies were targeted at specific industries, however the government's revised budget for 2009 established a "special regional fund for local economic revitalization and living" of 600 billion yen (£4.02 billion). After establishing the division of responsibility over national and regional companies assisted by government funds, there was an appeal for raising another 1-2 trillion yen

(6.7 billion-13.4 billion) which could "be used fairly and appropriately with swift dispatch" by Tottori prefectural governor Shinji Hirai." (Nikkei Net 28.04.2009)

(<http://www.nikkei.co.jp/news/keizai/20090328AT3S2703S28032009.html>)

The Japan Local Government Centre is the UK office of CLAIR. CLAIR is a joint organisation of local authorities, working to promote and provide support for local internationalisation.

The main functions of JLGC, 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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