

万葉

myriad leaves

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Spring 2004 • Issue 44

桜花咲きかも散ると見るまでに
誰かも此処に見えて散り行く

sakurabana saki kamo chiru to
miru made ni
tare kamo koko ni miete chiri yuku

Cherry blossoms fair
Only too soon fall and scatter.
Such is the way of life.
Crowds come and go,
Meet and scatter in a moment.

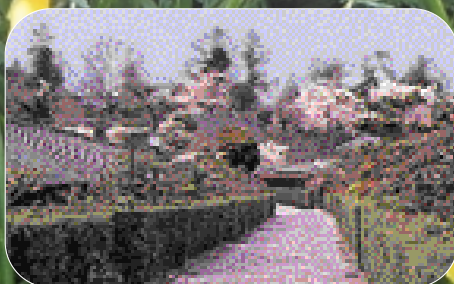
- ① Fukushima
www.pref.fukushima.jp/index_e.html



- ② Oze marshlands, Gunma
www.pref.gunma.jp/english/index.html

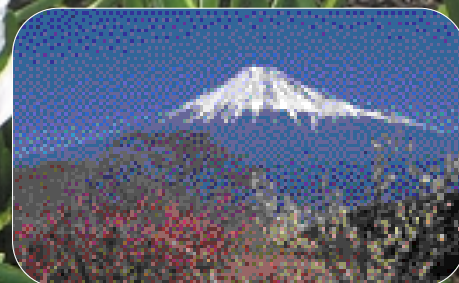


- ③ Kumamoto Castle
www.city.kumamoto.kumamoto.jp/

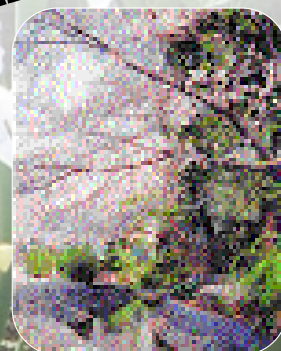


- ④ Gojoban Yashiki, Mie
www.kankomie.or.jp/kanko/discover/

- ⑤ Mount Fuji, Shizuoka
www.pref.shizuoka.jp/kikaku/ki-20/english/



- ⑥ Shakuji river Tokyo.
www.tourism.metro.tokyo.jp/english/spot/itabashi2.html





letter from the editor

Spring has arrived; a time for change and renewal. So it is for JLGC; we have just said a fond farewell to our second-year staff, and have welcomed six new secondees to our London office. Find out more about them on pages 2 & 3, and find out what our leavers thought about their two-year stay in the UK.

Because of the staff changeover both in this office and all Japanese local government offices, March and April are taken up with handovers and learning new responsibilities. There are, therefore, few major events or research trips during this period. Before leaving, however, Ms Shibata managed to find time to contribute an article on her research in Sweden, and Mr. Sugino and Mr. Yamaguchi reported on their trip to the Forest of Dean (see pages 6 & 7).

Decentralisation remains a hot topic both in the UK and in Japan; we have two guest writers contributing their opinions on the subject on pages 5.

After we've all cast a clout when May is out, things will speed up again at JLGC. Our new secondees will go on their work placements, research will continue, and planning will be set in motion for this year's Japan Study Tour, which is to be based in Shizuoka Prefecture. Thank you to all of you who have expressed an interest in applying for the 2004 Study Tour. As yet, schedules have not been finalised, but as soon as we hear from Tokyo, details will be advertised, and the application process can begin. We will, of course, run an article on the Japan Study Tour in the next issued of *Myriad Leaves*.

Until then, happy springtime!

Angela Harkness Robertson, *Editor*

GOODBYE AND FAREWELL



Toru Yamaguchi

I will miss the U.K. so much! I am writing this just 2 days before leaving. That's maybe why my mind is flashing back to all of the wonderful memories I have of the U.K. I only stayed here for 2 years, but it was not a holiday; it was real life filled with excellent memories. I do thank all of you who supported me. There is not enough space to write down all of your

names here, but I hope I will see you again in the not-too-distant future.



Masayuki Sugino

I greatly appreciate that I have worked with wonderful people over the last two years. It really is a golden opportunity for local government staff like me to live and work here in London. I believe my experience at JLGC will definitely give me a well-balanced, broader mind in working as a public employee in the future.

The subject of my research here has been "Regeneration policies in the U.K." Due to many differences between the two nations, Japan cannot thoroughly model on the U.K.'s policies. However, we should learn something important from the sincere efforts of the Government and local authorities to involve residents and private sectors in Regeneration through the framework of partnerships.

Outside work, I took private English lessons in my second year. I am afraid my English skills are still not highly developed. Nonetheless, through frank and broad-ranging conversation with my English teacher, I noticed U.K. citizens have astonishingly diverse opinions and therefore the society as a whole tolerates a diversity of views. Thanks to this tolerance and diversity that the English society has, I will take so many valuable and treasured memories home. The least I can do now is to say again "Thank you!"



Saori Shibata

One of the wonderful experiences here was that I had opportunities to meet and learn from lots of people who work as officers at local governments like I do. It was interesting to learn about the differences and similarities between the systems in the U.K. and Japan. One of my research areas was Swedish local government systems.

This gave me much wider knowledge about their local government system, which is more advanced than Japanese systems in many ways. Personally, I loved the ethnic variety in London. I think this makes London a unique, creative and exciting place. I would love to come back here and I will!



Daiki Kato

Although I only stayed for one short year in London, it was an invaluable experience for me. I found that fundamentally, English people and Japanese people are not so different. I was especially impressed by attitudes of the many eager and enthusiastic football supporters. When I get back to Japan, I want to make use of my experiences, and contribute to the promotion of international exchange. Thank you London, from the bottom of my heart!



Yuko Imai

I have loved London. I have hated it. A Protean city, described as "ungovernable". I am intrigued.

HELLO AND



AICHI



AKITA



AOMORI



CHIBA



EHIME



FUKUI



FUKUOKA



FUKUSHIMA



GIFU



GUNMA



STAFF INTERVIEW : YOSHIYUKI KIRINO

Yoshiyuki Kirino drew the short straw for this issue's Staff Interview. Seconded from Kagoshima City Council, Mr. Kirino's research area is the local government system in Holland. He also holds the JLGC title of "Most Infectious Smile".

When and why did you first become interested in politics?

a When I was a university student, I studied volunteer work and social welfare systems. So I got interested in local politics.

How did you end up at the JLGC?

a I was very fortunate to be chosen as a CLAIR trainee by my hometown public office in order to do some research on foreign local government, and to become more accurate in spoken English.

What are the best and worst things about your job?

a The best thing being able to brush up my English by working with my best colleagues. There is no worst thing about my job.

What's the first thing you would change if you became Prime Minister?

a I would like to call on the international world leaders to destroy all chemical and nuclear weapons.

Is there any policy that you would "import" from Japanese local government? (If so, what is it?)

a No, there isn't any policy. If there were a best policy in Japanese local government I don't think it would be practical in a foreign country, least of all in the UK.

Is there any British policy you would implement in Japan? (If so, what is it?)

a Sorry, I can't think of any off hand.

What single thing would most improve your life?

a A wonderful space where I could relax my mind and body.

Who is your political hero and why?

a Takamori Saigo, the most famous key player in the Meiji Restoration which took place over a hundred and thirty years ago in Japan.

You can invite any celebrity to dinner. Who is it, and why?

a A world famous magician who would entertain my guests at dinner.

What's your greatest achievement?

a I had a great success on a big citizens' event in my hometown.

What was your most embarrassing moment?

a My most embarrassing moment was when I had to make an English speech in public.

What is the biggest problem with local government today?

a I think the biggest problem with local government is the financial issue.

How would you solve it?

a There is no real solution I would say. Could you suggest any?

You miss something that is widely available in Japan, but is impossible to get here. What is it?

a I miss the Japanese baths and hot springs.

When and where are you most happy?

a When I can finally find time to rest in my room after taking a bath, I feel so happy and relaxed.

What is your favourite karaoke song and why?

a My favourite karaoke song is "Subaru (昴)". When I sing this song I feel encouraged and relieved.

Your house is on fire. What possession do you grab first?

a Maybe I would grab my passport and my money.

WELCOME

Tetsuya Fukushima

Seconded from Kumamoto Prefecture, Kyushu

My first impression of London is just that it's a melting pot. Because many races are living together here and many tourists from all over the world come to visit. I can hear many languages every day. Japan is a very homogeneous society, so I am very surprised and also it makes my small world larger. I am looking forward to seeing everything here.

Terunobu Hino

Seconded from Gunma Prefectural Government

I have never been to the UK before, so I am very happy and excited about my new life here. I was astonished to find that there are so many parks in the centre of the city! The parks are much more beautiful than those in Japan, and we can see many birds and squirrels and other animals so it is a very good environment for my baby. While I live here, I would like to visit many places in this country and visit other nearby countries with my family. I want to enjoy London life, and make many good memories.

Tomomi Inoue

Seconded from Tokyo Metropolitan Government

My expectations here are: living and working right in the middle of London and experiencing the wide diversity of a cosmopolitan city. I would like to visit many places in the UK such as the Cotswolds, the Lake District, Cornwall, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and national parks in Wales. I hope to gain a better idea of the variety of Britain. Here in London, I'd like to walk around the city, visit parks, and watch rugby matches. My first impression of London is that it is big, and offers so much variety. I think it would be better if the rubbish was collected separately, and there was more recycling.

Tomoe Murayama

Seconded from Mie Prefecture

Here in London, I hope that I can work as hard as a Japanese working person and enjoy life like English people.

Ken Nemoto

Seconded from Fukushima Prefecture

I was in the U.K. in 1996. I took care of people who have a disability as a volunteer at a residential home in Bognor Regis. I spent almost 1 year there. When I went to London on my day-off from Bognor Regis, I passed the JLGC office several times. Of course I didn't know what JLGC was at that time. But I'm here now. I didn't expect to be working here 8 years later. It's strange for me. I'm very grateful for the opportunity to work in London. I would like to visit as many museums and galleries as I can, because London is such an artistic city. Also, I would like to see the countryside of the U.K during my stay.

Hisashi Tanaka

Seconded from Shizuoka Prefecture

In my hometown of Shizuoka, there are a lot of people who play and watch football. My family (I have a wife, and two sons aged 7 and 8) like football very much. During my stay in London, we want to enjoy watching and playing football. I like jogging, too, so I want to jog, and I hope to enter the London marathon next year. Shizuoka prefectural government promotes exchange especially with the West Midlands, so I want to help further promote this friendship. Also during my stay in London, I would like to acquire the manners of an English gentleman.



HIROSHIMA



HOKKAIDO



HYOGO



IBARAKI



ISHIKAWA



IWATE



KAGAWA



KAGOSHIMA



KANAGAWA



KOCHI

Our two JET Programme participants are now in Japan: Roy to work in Nagano as an Assistant Language Teacher; Victoria to work as Coordinator for International Relations in Yamaguchi. This issue, we catch up with them and find out what they've been up to, and how reality of life in Japan matches their previous expectations.

Spring is the period of change when the winter snows melt, and the birds return. Of course, being one of the colder prefectures in Japan, our spring season came later than the rest of the country. Spring officially begins when the cherry blossoms bloom. A sign of how cherry blossoms border on national obsession is that every night on the news, there is a report on the state of cherry blossoms across the country.

The general trend is that the blossoms open first in the south of the country and moves northwards like a wave. Of course, there are endless parties held to enjoy the beautiful views of the flowers. Like most parties in Japan, bottomless bottles of sake flow continuously for the duration of the party. Unfortunately, this means that I personally don't really remember a lot of the beautiful views. I do remember, however, that I had a great time at the party, if not the next day.

April is also when the new school year starts in Japan. Teachers are moved around the schools at this time of year, meaning that I now have a new supervisor and that I work with many new teachers. Having taken so long to get used to my new life here in Japan, it is slightly disorientating for me to find myself surrounded by new teachers and friends.

This is also a period of change for many JETs in the prefecture. Here in Nagano, we have just voted in a new executive for the AJET committee with yours truly being appointed the new President for 2004-05!!! For those of you who don't know, AJET is the Association of JETs which nationally is similar to a union for JETs. On the prefectural level, AJET has a more social function.

Although this period of change is, for me, slightly unsettling, it is also most welcome! Although I liked the winter months and winter sports, socially it has been less-than-thrilling. The melting snow means that the mountain roads are now open and the AETs in Nagano are not as isolated as we were before. Moreover, I have come to appreciate an aspect of the quieter life in rural Japan which I had not considered before: that life here is much simpler. This means that I have come to appreciate more the simple pleasures in life and I feel that I am less demanding than I was before. Living in the rural area has also given me more time for reflection and I do feel that since coming here last year, I have grown into a more adult, responsible person. Furthermore, my coming to terms with this simple life has given me a different outlook on life: whereas before I would have been angry and frustrated by the current events in the Middle-east, now I feel sad too. I feel more impetus to try and make a difference than I did before. Truly, change is upon us.

Roy Fu



April is upon us.

With it comes the aspect of Japanese life I enjoy most and also the one that I find hardest to fathom; sakura (cherry blossom).

The fragile pink blossoms hang delicately from every branch of every tree; the world is bathed in pink. It is undeniably beautiful and the sakura-lined river-banks of Yamaguchi are some of the finest around. With the sakura comes hana-mi (literally, flower-watching) where Japanese everywhere pack their lunches, set up camp under the sakura and proceed to get merrily tipsy under the guise of culture (suffice to say, this is the part that appeals to me most!)

Sounds enjoyable? It is. However, I have yet to understand the appeal of sakura besides it being aesthetically pleasing. Still every year it turns even the most sensible into madmen. For example, the other day, my colleague (who is usually rather staid) and I were walking through the university



and she saw a small branch of sakura that had fallen from a tree. Cooing kawaiiou (poor thing), she scooped up the fallen twig, rushed it to a vase and it has held pride of place in the office ever since. If I find this utterly baffling then I find the amount of attention given to this twig more so. Every day the office staff, including the men, comment on how genki (full of vitality) this twig looks and smile indulgent smiles which to date have been reserved exclusively for proud parents

You may be thinking that this is due to the lack of anything better to do in my countryside city. However, even the national news has "sakura watch" where professional newscasters deliberate over whether the sakura is in fact 13% bloomed or is still only at 12% blossom. They have a special report that tracks how far north the blossom has reached and while there is an abundance of this blossom the Japanese will still stop to admire every tree. Behaviour confounding to most foreigners.

This morning a subdued air in the office greeted me. The twig had finally drooped and the paper-thin blossom was decorating the carpet. As I watched the funeral procession to the bin I couldn't help but feel a bit sad too.

Still, nothing that a few more hana-mi won't cure I'm sure...

Victoria Bentley



KUMAMOTO



KYOTO



MIE



MIYAGI



MIYAZAKI



NAGANO



NAGASAKI



NARA



NIIGATA



OITA

Decentralisation

New Localism: The Argument for Decentralisation Gains Ground in England



Gerry Stoker

New Localism can be characterised as a strategy aimed at devolving power and resources away from central control and towards front-line managers, local democratic structures and local consumers and communities, within an agreed framework of national minimum standards and policy priorities. The call for a shift in the approach to reform and future governance has become quite fashionable within progressive political circles inside and outside New Labour ministerial circles and beyond.

The breadth, variety and thrust of the agenda are captured by the former minister Alan Milburn (2004) in a speech delivered in March 2004. It is worth quoting at length the views of a relatively recent convert to localism:

I believe we have reached the high water mark of the post-1997 centrally-driven target-based approach. That view is also widely shared in government. Reforms to enhance choice, diversify supply and devolve control are all now taking hold as the Government moves from a centralised command and control model to what has been called new localism. The issue now is how much further to go....Public services cannot be run by diktat from the top down. In this next period, accountability needs to move downwards and outwards to consumers and

communities. Empowering them is the best way to make change happen.

There are differences of emphasis among government ministers about how to take forward the New Localist agenda. The Blair camp is more willing to go along with user or consumer choice and the Brown camp is less keen but still interested in the issue of how public services can be 'personalised' and made more responsive to users. Sometimes the emphasis is on managerial reform, giving more power to head teachers or community-based police commanders, on other occasions it is much more explicitly about giving communities or citizens control, wrapped up in a wider expansion of civil renewal, as suggested in the speeches of David Blunkett. For some established local government needs to be brought back into the frame as central to New Localism, others are not so convinced and argue for establishing new directly single service boards to run for example police services or a new network of neighbourhood councils.

There is undoubtedly much that is pure rhetoric in the new found interest on the part of New Labour in localism and much that represents a strategic political response to the possibility that the Conservatives might use localism to attack the control freakery, state paternalism and big spending plans that could be said to characterise many of New Labour's policies. Yet I hold that the shift in thinking implied by the embrace of New Localism has some substance and value. In

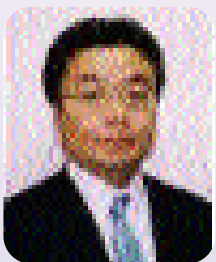
short it represents a practical response to a significant practical challenge: how to manage a substantial variety of state service provision and interventions in a world that defies the application of simple rule-driven solutions and often requires an effective response from the recipient of the service or intervention in order for the state action to work.

The complexity of what the modern state is trying to achieve, the need for a more engaging form of politics and a recognition of the importance of issues of empathy and feelings of involvement to enable political mobilisation make the case for a New Localism because it is at the local level that some of these challenges can best be met. The point is not that all political action and decision should be local but rather that more of it should be.

The vision of New Localism needs to be carefully specified in a way that recognises diversity in communities and a concern with equity issues. The argument is not for a romantic return to community decision making or a rampant 'beggar by neighbour' localism. It is precisely because of recognition of these concerns that 'new' is added to the localism advocated now. New Localism is crucially set in the context of national framework setting and funding. It is about a key and growing role for local involvement in decision making about the public services and the public realm as part of a wider system of multi-level governance.

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Japanese Decentralisation - Entering a Second Stage



By Akihide Hirashima, Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications

Just released in January, Japan's 2004-2005 national budget is calling for over 1 trillion yen to be cut from local government subsidies. What are the next steps on the road to governmental decentralisation?

Decentralisation is a major concern for local governments both in Japan and around the world. The Japanese decentralisation movement began in the 1990's. Government councils had submitted several reports proposing

structural reforms during the 1980's, and in 1993 a major report concluded that deregulation and decentralisation were essential to government systems. These remain the most important issues in government reform today. Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has stated that structural reform policies should "leave to the private sector what it can do," and "leave to the

localities what they can do."

During its short history, the push for decentralisation reform has been supported by both houses of the Diet. In 1993 the government established the Decentralisation Promotion Committee (DPC) and called for submissions of decentralisation reform recommendations. The Decentralisation

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



OKAYAMA



OKINAWA



OSAKA



SAGA



SAITAMA



SHIGA



SHIMANE



SHIZUOKA



TOCHIGI



TOKUSHIMA

Japanese Decentralisation - Entering a Second Stage

Package Law was enacted on the DCP's instigation, and effected in April 2000. The Law helped abolish the system of agency-delegated functions, long a symbol of centralised governance, and led to numerous reforms encouraging decentralisation. But many feel the decentralisation reforms should not be limited to the Package Law alone.

Three simultaneous tax and funding reforms

Much debate arose in 2001 following the DPC's final report, which stated that the reforms' next focus should be on local government funding and tax systems. The ensuing discussions have involved all administrators up to the ministerial level. Last summer, the government finally set a framework for decentralisation reforms to be implemented by FY 2006:

- Elimination or reduction of state subsidies by about 4 trillion yen
- Review of Local Allocation Tax (LAT)
- Transfer of tax revenue resources to local governments

Prime Minister Koizumi has led the government's FY 2004 budget proposals, which will eliminate almost 1 trillion yen in state subsidies. It will also establish the Income Transfer Tax, a tentative tax transfer to local governments. In addition, the government will reduce total LAT payments and implement LAT system reforms that will be continued within the FY 2005 and 2006 budgets. I believe that LAT's core purpose must be preserved. LAT is a fundamental source of revenue for localities, designed to adjust revenue disparities between local governments. It ensures that local governments can provide standardised administrative services and invest in quality infrastructure, regardless of their population size or gross annual production.

The growth of municipal mergers

The other main issue affecting decentralisation has been the merging of municipalities. Japan has experienced two significant eras of municipal merging. The first was in the late nineteenth century, when almost 70,000 municipalities were merged into 15,000, to manage the citizen's registration system. Postwar, around 10,000 municipalities were merged into 3,500 to promote compulsory junior high school education.

Today, the main purpose of municipal merging is to promote decentralisation and policies for ageing society. Japan aims to reduce the present number of municipalities from 3,200 to about 1,000, and has enacted a merger promotion law which grants special legal, financial and other treatment to merging municipalities. The law expires on March 31, 2005. By October 1, 2003, a total of 1,442 municipalities had established formal merger associations. A widely-held view remains that a new municipal merger law should be enacted. This would further encourage municipal mergers, and help carve out local governments capable of dealing with a rapidly-ageing and decentralised society, even after the present law expires. A report by the Local Government System Research Council indicates that the Japanese government is planning to submit a bill for the next municipal merger promotion law soon.

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jlgc staff research

All JLGC staff are expected to conduct research on a set topic during their secondment. This research is not restricted to the UK; JLGC London is also responsible for Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. The results of the research are disseminated through various publications such as The CLAIR Report (published primarily in Japanese and distributed to prefectural and city offices as well as other related organisations), and CLAIR's website

Social Welfare services for the Elderly in Kiruna

Saori Shibata

The Kiruna *kommun*, in the northernmost part of Sweden, is one of the smallest *kommun* in terms of population, yet covers the largest area of any Swedish *kommun*.



SOCIAL SERVICES IN KIRUNA

Sweden is internationally known for its high standards in social welfare. I asked about the general social services provided in Kiruna.

The administrative department, under the committee of Social Services, consists of three sections: Care for the Elderly, Care for the Handicapped, and Personal and Family Care. 70% of the total budget of the Social Service Department goes to the section of the Care for the Elderly; 20% to the Care for the Handicapped; and the rest to Personal and Family Care. The Care for the Handicapped section is divided into sections depending on the type of handicap: e.g., mental or physical handicap, etc. The Personal and Family Care section provides care for children who need special support, people who are addicted to drugs or alcohol, and people who need temporary financial support.

A NURSING HOME IN KIRUNA

I visited one of the nursing homes in Kiruna, which provides a house with access to care from social workers, nurses and doctors for elderly people who cannot live on their own.

It is believed that each elderly person has the right to live as they



TOKYO



TOTTORI



TOYAMA



WAKAYAMA



YAMAGATA



YAMAGUCHI



YAMANASHI



CHIBA



FUKUOKA



HIROSHIMA

want, and these kinds of nursing homes are constructed to respect each person's privacy. Everyone here can have their own room, each equipped with different appliances according to the occupant's needs.

If someone cannot move at all, they have a necklace with a button, which the wearer can push and call for help when needed. If someone has dementia, he/she has a small mat, which is spread at the foot of the bed so that staff can tell if they get up in the night. These tools are made with careful consideration, and are designed to blend in with the furniture, so that the occupants' lives seem the same as others'.

The elderly people who live in such houses can decorate their rooms and bring their own furniture, ornaments. Houses for the elderly used to be called "institutions" a decade ago, which implied that the inhabitants needed special care. But now, lots of local governments are changing these services, trying to create nursing homes where the elderly can live normal lives with just a little help.

I am impressed by their way of thinking: everyone wants to live as normal a life as possible, and each of us has the right to live in our own way. Local governments are required to provide housing for elderly people which satisfies their demands. There is a sense of unity; elderly people who cannot live on their own are not segregated or distinguished from others. Local government has to treat these people with respect and consideration, and needs to make efforts towards providing various services tailored to individual needs.

There was a big reform in social and medical care for the elderly in 1992. Medical care for the elderly used to be provided by county councils, but under this reform, municipal governments can provide medical care and social care together.

FJÄLLGÅRDEN nursing home asks for money from the municipal government, which is used for medical care for its residents. The staff told me that it became easier for many people to provide the necessary care for elderly people. If there is a good partnership between the municipal government and county council, the elderly get more satisfactory services. This is very interesting because the necessity for integration of the social and medical services is often mentioned in Japan too. It doesn't seem that every municipal government in Sweden provides both social and medical care like Kiruna kommun; I heard that it's sometimes difficult to create this sort of partnership between municipal governments and county councils.

Another interesting service is The LSS Law, implemented in 1997. This law allows people who need special care to ask social workers or nurses to take as much care of them as they need. This must be wonderful for the elderly and handicapped, but I wondered how local governments can afford to provide such services. As I thought,

this is cause for much argument among local governments. Many authorities have complaints about this law, because central government decided on the policy, but doesn't give enough money for local government to provide such services. I have heard similar arguments in Japan, especially in relation to devolution from central government to local governments. When it comes to social services, it is difficult for local governments to stop providing services once they have started. Central government is currently giving grants for the implementation of this law, but they will stop in a few years, and then local governments will have to provide the services on their own without any special grants. This situation happens quite often in Japan too. Indeed, the source of revenue problem with regard to the relationship between local governments and central government seems to trouble local governments everywhere.

Regeneration for Future Generations

Masayuki Sugino

Mr. Yamaguchi and I had a wonderful opportunity to join some visiting Japanese academics on a programme in the Forest of Dean District Council organized by Mr. Stephen Wright, Director of Gloucestershire Rural Community Council.

The Forest of Dean is located in West Gloucestershire. As the name suggests, it boasts an astonishingly rich and beautiful natural environment, including the Royal Forest of Dean, the River Severn, and the Wye Valley. Despite this natural beauty, the area suffered from high unemployment after the collapse of the coal mining industry. Gloucestershire tackled the unemployment issue enthusiastically, and reinvigorated the declining local economy with a complete change of industrial structure.

Changes in recent years have seen a shift from manufacturing to service sector industries but the area still remains largely dependent on manufacturing. During the programme, we visited a new factory built and owned by the South West Regional Development Agency. The factory is to be rented by light manufacturing companies. Nearby one can see some historic coal mine buildings. Although they are not listed buildings, many people are eager to protect the buildings as a symbol of history, and are against development in that area. Both Mr. Yamaguchi and I were brought up in the countryside in Japan, so we fully understand how difficult it is to strike a balance between the preservation of natural beauty and the enforcement of economic development in rural areas like the Forest of Dean.

In 2000, the Forest Regeneration Partnership secured £1,000,000 of funding through the Single Regeneration Budget to improve services for young people in the Forest of Dean. The programme, known as the Forest of Dean Young People's Support Scheme, will run until March 2005, and is aimed at people aged 11 to 18. Through the support scheme, a great number of important projects have been set up, such as the Youth Worker's Network and the Forum for Youth. In our experience, Single Regeneration Budgets concentrate mostly on physical regeneration rather than education and youth issues. The fact that the Partnership has succeeded in receiving money from the Single Regeneration Budget reminds us of how unique their comprehensive approach to regeneration issues is.

Mr. Yamaguchi and I believe that the opportunity of discussing youth and regeneration issues has given us a well-balanced insight into the diversity of approaches to regeneration. We were delighted to be able to spend some time in the Forest of Dean, observing the improvement of life for the younger generation.



A room in the nursing house FJÄLLGÅRDEN



KAWASAKI



KITAKYUSHU



KOBE



KYOTO



NAGOYA



OSAKA



SAPPORO



SENDAI



YOKOHAMA



Sayuri
Ishikawa Prefecture

Sayuri's Tail

by Sonya Harding

Leaving Japan after four years, I found I had accumulated several boxes to send back to the U.K.: a kimono, Japanese text books, tatami mats, fans, chopsticks... and a cat!

Sayuri was a six-week-old abused and abandoned kitten

when I found and rescued him. He lived with me in rural Nakajima, then Kanazawa, then Tokyo. When the time came for me to leave Japan, I was faced with a dilemma: what would happen to Sayuri? After a long search to find him a suitable new home, I realised the only responsible option was to take him home with me.

Finding a vet in Tokyo who was familiar with the Pet Passport Scheme was an adventure. In order to avoid quarantine in the U.K., Sayuri needed to have a microchip fitted, a rabies vaccination and antibody test, and tick and tapeworm injections 48 hours before the flight. He also needed a special airplane-approved carrying box and an air ticket where I paid by the kilo!

Sayuri and I couldn't return to the U.K. together as he had to wait for six months after passing his rabies test. I arranged a homestay for him on a flower farm in Tochigi Prefecture, and returned to Japan nine months later to collect him.

The journey to Sayuri's new home was long, but with help from Japanese friends, relatively straightforward. Upon arrival at Heathrow, Sayuri was taken to the quarantine office for health and passport checks. When we finally got him back to our London flat and its garden, Sayuri was so happy – it's as if he'd always lived here!

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New Localism:

The Argument for Decentralisation Gains Ground in England

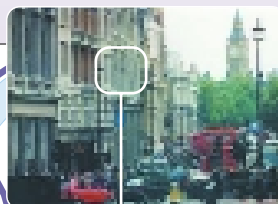
Moreover there is nothing in New Localism that means that is simply assumes that local politics is automatically devoid of the tensions that characterise politics at other levels. Conflict between interests and the resolution of those conflicts remain at the heart of politics wherever it is conducted. Localism does not imply a sort of romantic faith in communities to come up with solutions for the common good. Nor it incompatible with a redistribution of

resources provided through the power of higher levels of government.

The argument for New Localism is an argument in England at least for a shift in the balance of governance, one that allows more scope for local decision making and local communities. It is also based on the idea that meeting the challenge of equity does not mean treating all communities or individuals the same but rather it involves tailoring solutions to meet particular needs.

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View from Trafalgar Square
London office is on the first
floor of the building which
has the blue signboard on
the centre of the picture



The Japan Local Government Centre is the UK office of CLAIR – the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations, and is a joint organisation representing local government in Japan's 47 prefectures and 12 major cities.

With its head office in Tokyo, and branch offices in each of the 59 local authorities' International Relations Divisions, CLAIR has 7 other overseas offices – in Beijing, New York, Paris, Singapore, Seoul, Sydney and the United Kingdom.

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