

# myriad leaves

SEPTEMBER 2005



万葉

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE JAPAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT CENTRE, LONDON

**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".

News	2.3
Feature: <b>Cool Biz</b>	4.5
Prefecture: <b>Gunma</b>	6
<b>JET letter</b>	7
<b>Yosakoi Festival</b>	8

## Number plates help promote civic identity



Car number plates in Japan display a variety of information. Just by looking at a number plate, you can tell the type of the car, for example: the size of the car, whether it is a hired car or not, whether it is allowed to carry passengers or not, and in which area the car is registered.

Large cities already have their own names shown on number plates, however, smaller cities and towns have been eager to display their names on number plates too. This way more people can see their cities' names and it will lead to wider recognition of the city or region.

In late July, the Minister for Land, Infrastructure and Transportation allowed 18 new cities and areas to show their names on number plates as a consequence of much lobbying by these cities and towns over the years.

The cities welcomed the Minister's decision and expressed their hope to promote regional acknowledgement with many cars displaying their names on number plates.

## “Autonomous Movement Support Project” to be conducted in Kobe

Following preliminary trials for the “Autonomous Movement Support Project” in Kobe last year, this social infrastructure project which uses information technology to enhance access to public facilities, particularly for the physically disabled and the elderly, is now scheduled to be conducted in Kobe this year.

With an aim to providing universal access to public facilities, the Ministry of Land Infrastructure and Transport is promoting this project to establish a system by which information required by people on the move can be accessed “anywhere, anytime, and by anyone” utilising the world's most advanced ubiquitous network technology in Japan.

About 40,000 electronic tags and sensors have been embedded in roads, pavements and street furniture, providing diverse information such as explanations for tourists about historical sites, to warnings for wheelchair users about obstacles. In addition, the system offers potential for businesses to advertise to those walking nearby, as well as providing multilingual information and directions to tourists.

This year Kobe marks the 10th anniversary of Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, and the city government is also working towards opening Kobe Airport, scheduled for February 2006.

## jlgc news

- July** JLGC manned a booth at the LGA Conference for the first time
- August** Westminster City Council held a meeting to exchange information with JLGC staff  
Twelve delegates were chosen to participate in our annual study tour to Japan. We received a record number of applications: thank you for your interest
- September** Three Japanese trainees arrived to begin their three-month studies of local government in the UK and France

Do you know how many twinning connections there are between the UK and Japan?

There are 13 twinned local governments as of 30 June 2005.

Orkney Islands Council in Scotland. They would like to create a technical or administrative link to exchange information about the opportunities and problems affecting small and remote island communities, and how these issues are handled by local governments

In June, staff from the JLGC visited Orkney Islands Council. We had the opportunity to learn how a local authority operates on islands in the UK. We realised that Orkney has a rich history, part of which was influenced by Norway. Although the Orkney Islands look far from

# Linking with a Japanese local authority

However, there are a total of 1520 affiliations between Japanese and foreign local authorities. Over half of these affiliations are with the USA (434 affiliations), China (313 affiliations) and



Korea (108 affiliations). The reasons behind this come from Japan's historical and geographical background. Likewise, many local governments in the UK are twinned with European countries.



The number of local authority affiliations between the UK and Japan are listed in the chart:

One UK local authority is interested in establishing links with Japanese local government. That local authority is

in Japan. They have already created links with other European islands, enabling discussion via email of common problems and solutions. They would like to learn about the issues dealt with by Japanese local government in small and remote islands. In addition to a technical/administrative link, they would like to expand to take in educational fields such as student exchanges. Currently we are disseminating information about Orkney Islands Council to Japanese local government through our publications and website. We hope some Japanese local governments are interested in making a link with Orkney Islands Council.

London on a map, we can get there in just 3 hours by plane. Likewise, the relationship between Orkney Islands Council and JLGC is strong despite the distance between our offices.



1. JLGC Director Shigeru Naiki with Chief Executive, Alistair Buchan
2. Orkney Islands Council staff and representatives from JLGC
3. Orkney Islands Council Buildings

## Local authority affiliations between the UK and Japan

	Local Government in Japan	Affiliated Counterpart
1	Beppu-shi (Oita)	Bath and North East Somerset
2	Mikawa-machi (Ishikawa)	Boston
3	Toyota-shi (Aichi)	Derbyshire, Derby, South Derbyshire
4	Yoichi-cho (Hokkaido)	East Dunbartonshire
5	Kyoto Prefecture	Edinburgh
6	Murata-machi (Miyagi)	Flintshire
7	Kuga-cho (Yamaguchi)	Flintshire
8	Komatsu-shi (Ishikawa)	Gateshead
9	Yokoshuka-shi (Kanagawa)	Medway
10	Ito-shi (Shizuoka)	Medway
11	Otari-mura (Nagano)	Ottery St. Mary
12	Maizuru-shi (Kyoto)	Portsmouth
13	Kawasaki-shi (Kanagawa)	Sheffield

# feature

## COOL BIZ

### What's "Cool Biz"?

Cool Biz has been introduced by the Ministry of the Environment in Japan, to tackle global warming by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Under this campaign, employers are encouraged to let their workers dress casually, as air conditioners are set at 28°C (82°F), quite a few degrees over the average room temperature. The "cool" in the title refers to the dressing casually, not the temperatures. This year summer temperatures in Japan often rose higher than 35°C, and despite this unbearable heat most Japanese office workers feel obliged to keep their jackets on due to convention.

Such energy conservation policies have been preceded by local authorities and seem to have a long history. Some local authorities started their energy-saving campaign during the 70's oil crisis era, and many more begun their campaigns after the agreement of the Kyoto Treaty in 1997 which intends to curb global warming.

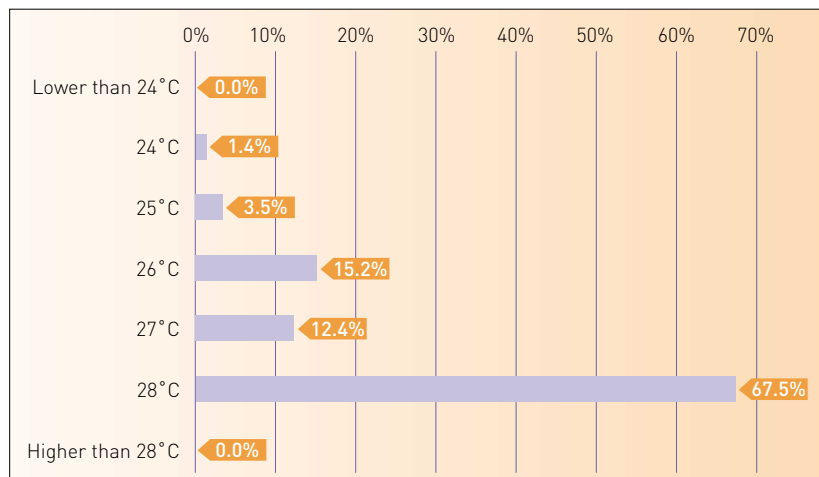
On 1 June, many male workers arrived at their offices without ties and jackets. Many of them appreciated being able to dress less formally, but some were not so enthusiastic as it could be considered impolite for them to meet their customers without ties.

Office workers heading for their offices without ties and jackets



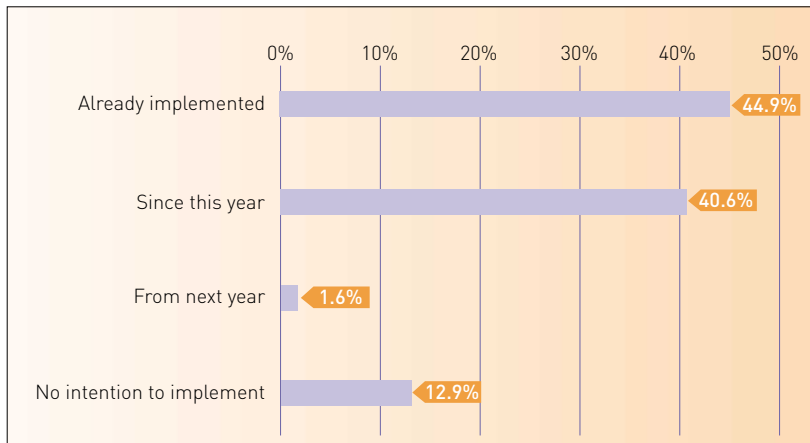
However, "Cool Biz" seems to have been rather successful, especially considering the numerous previous attempts to get Japanese office workers out of their ties and jackets during the summer months.

### This summer, at what temperature was your office air conditioning set at?



According to a survey of Japanese companies conducted by Nippon Keidanren, 62% of offices have turned up their air-conditioners to 28°C.

### If you have a casual dress policy, since when has it been implemented?



85% of Japanese offices have encouraged employees to dress without jackets and ties, with about half of them starting as a result of this year's campaign.

There have been some unexpected but positive side effects to the campaign. Although retail sales in Japan have been suffering from a downturn in consumer spending, the Cool Biz campaign triggered a rise in sales of short-sleeved shirts. Some

The Kyoto Treaty, which requires Japan to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 6% and the EU countries by 8%, was brought into effect on 16 February 2005. To reach this target national and local governments in Japan are not only trying to encourage the business community but households too to be eco-conscious to save energy and reduce emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>.

Workers dressed casually in the office



“cool” styles can be found on the Ministry of the Environment’s web site and some fashion designers recommend wearing shirts with button-down collars as the collars stand straight without ties, therefore keeping a neat and formal appearance without ties.

#### What's next?

## WARM BIZ

With the Cool Biz campaign gaining popularity this summer, the Ministry of the Environment announced that they will be launching a new campaign this winter called “Warm Biz.”

The concept is similar to Cool Biz, only this time office heaters will be set at 20°C (68°F) and office workers are encouraged to wear warm clothes.

According to the Ministry, turning the heater down by just one degree in winter can save 4 times as much energy as setting air conditioners one degree higher in the summer.

**Gunma Prefecture**

**Population: 2,034,000**

**Area: 6,363km<sup>2</sup>**

Gunma Prefecture is situated near the centre of the Japanese archipelago, in the northwestern part of the Kanto Plain. It is an inland prefecture, approximately 100km northwest of Tokyo. The shape of Gunma, surrounded by five other prefectures, is said to resemble that of a crane in flight.

The prefecture is blessed with a rich variety of nature from mountains to the marshlands of Oze national park, and many lakes and rivers. The seasons can be appreciated here, from the vivid green marshes in spring to beautiful foliage in autumn. One of the marshlands, Ozegahara, is approximately 8km<sup>2</sup> in size, and another, comprising a lake noted for its clear waters, at 2000m above sea level, is the largest highland marsh in Honshu. Visitors will be delighted by the rare fauna and flora, and breathtaking scenery.

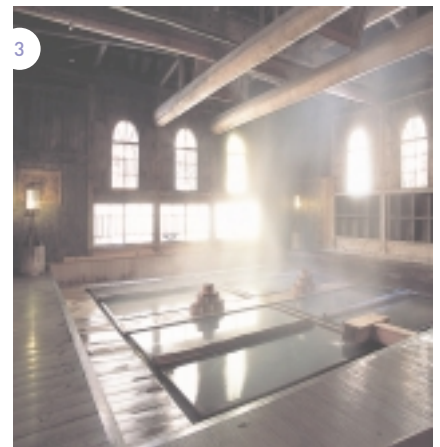
Many hot springs can be found throughout the prefecture. Kusatsu is one of Japan's most distinguished hot spring resorts. Although these resorts are equipped with modern facilities, they retain traditions unique to Kusatsu, including ryokans (traditional inns) with long histories, and practices such as 'Jikan-yu' (taking hot spring baths for medical treatment). In winter the resorts are also busy with skiers.

With regards to industry, the silk industry developed at the end of the Edo era, and the central government set up the Tomioka Sericulture

# Gunma – From Marshlands to Hot Springs

Institution in 1872, in order to produce high quality silk for export to European countries. After the Second World War, as Japan's economy began to develop, Gunma Prefecture also experienced remarkable economic growth, centred around industry and commerce. In order of volume of manufactured goods shipped, Gunma's major exports are: transport machinery (26.1%), electrical goods (24.9%), and machinery (10.4%).

Gunma Prefectural Government is applying for the Tomioka Sericulture Institution to be recognised as a world heritage site by UNESCO. It was the biggest silk factory in the world in its time, and a historical landmark, being one of the first signs of the industrial revolution in East Asia. Although silk production is no longer a principal industry in Gunma, the brick walls of the Sericulture Institution have been carefully preserved.



1. Summer fireworks over the capital Maebashi
2. One of many skiing resorts
3. Hot springs

## Letter from a JET

*Eddy Jones, a primary school teacher from Cardiff, currently works as a Coordinator of International Relations (CIR) and Prefectural Advisor (PA) in the Prefectural Government Headquarters in Nagano. Aside from his teaching duties he is involved in a number of twin-school curriculum projects between primary schools in Japan and overseas.*

Many JETs feel a sense of culture shock when they first arrive in Japan. As Prefectural Advisor (PA) I have to be ready to deal with such difficulties, as well as the ongoing concerns of 180 JET ALTs. The bulk of the PA workload comes over the summer months, organising the return of ALTs to their home countries at the end of their contracts, and preparing for the arrival of their replacements. Once the work related to the orientation of the new arrivals eases off, I can return to dealing with routine issues as they arise, and shift emphasis to my work as a CIR.



CIR work ranges from school visits and speeches, to taking part in local festivals. One highpoint would be Nagano's hosting of the Special Olympics World Winter Games. I worked with the NHK camera-team as an interpreter-interviewer, and met participants from all over the world. It was magical to see the smiling faces of the Ugandan floor-hockey team as they received their gold medals, wearing soccer shirts borrowed from a local high school because their kit had been lost in transit. Even the cameramen were crying.

Some weekends, I join the intriguingly named the 'Multicultural Symbiosis Team', which holds workshops to ensure that international citizens can access local services. Nagano has a large population of non-Japanese residents, the largest group being second or third generation descendants of Japanese emigrants to Brazil. A particular issue is the

*JET = Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme  
ALT = Assistant Language Teacher  
CIR = Coordinator of International Relations  
PA = Prefectural Advisor*



situation of school age children. For parents where with limited command of Japanese, home-school communication is often difficult. At present, around 10 thousand non-Japanese pupils nationally are not in school.

I also spend a part of each week assigned to Governor's Office. This involves translation and research work for Gov. Yasuo Tanaka, a flamboyant novelist turned politician and major media figure who has a glass-walled governor's office to symbolise the transparency that he hopes to bring to politics. As I work in a corner of the room, the governor is often filmed by TV camera crews observing from outside. I am still not used to turning on the evening news and seeing myself lurking in the background of some film report or other, being filmed unawares.

And when I need to escape from work, then I take time off and ride my mountain bike deep into the mountains north of Nagano City. As the city grows smaller behind me, I can leave my workplace worries behind.

## about jet

The JET programme was set up by the Japanese government 18 years ago, 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)

# Yosakoi Festival

In the summer months, many festivals are held all over Japan. There are quite a number of festivals now sharing the name "Yosakoi", but the original festival began in 1954 in Kochi and this year marks its 52nd anniversary.

177 teams and nearly 20,000 people participated in the Yosakoi Festival in Kochi this year. Teams consist of groups of friends or work colleagues, but can have up to 150 members, who dance along to the distinctive rhythm, keeping the beat with *naruko* (clappers). The dancing itself can be improvised but it must fit in with the Yosakoi rhythm. Music and costume vary hugely among teams: some teams wear traditional outfits, and other wear very unique costumes.



Yosakoi is said to mean "Come at night!" and is thus a call to all citizens to take part. The festival was created to revive the economy after WWII, and has since spread throughout Japan. Now the Yosakoi festival in Sapporo, in the far north of the country has become the largest of them all.

## TRAINING PROGRAMME IN JAPAN

The Local Government Officials Training Programme (LGOTP) invites local government officials from all over the world to Japan as "trainees" to gain knowledge and technical skills in their field of interest.

Training programmes begin with orientations and Japanese language courses, and then move on to specialised training at Japanese local authorities.

The training programme generally lasts from 6 to 10 months and recruitment for next year's trainees will start in November 2005.

The selection of participants for the LGOTP is primarily based on the requests of local governments in Japan.

If you would like more information about the programme, please contact us: [mailbox@jlgc.org.uk](mailto:mailbox@jlgc.org.uk)

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.

## JET Orientations

The 2005 JET Programme Pre-Departure Orientations were held in London and Edinburgh in early July. Almost 400 new JETs took part in these orientations and were provided with a wealth of useful information before leaving for Japan.

The orientations consisted of various themes including the role of the JLGC (CLAIR) in the programme, the Japanese education system, classroom teaching, basic Japanese language courses and Q&A sessions with former JETs. These two day orientations offered an opportunity for participants to get to know each other well and to share their motivation for going to Japan.

By the time you read this, the new JETs will already have arrived at their destinations and will have begun working in Japan.



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Issue 48