

# Myriad Leaves

## JLGC Newsletter

July 2010

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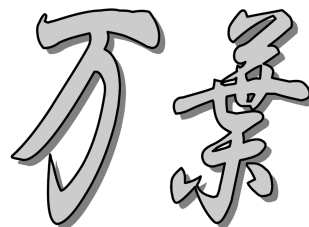
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**Myriad Leaves** is the English language title for the earliest collection of Japanese poetry, *Manyōshū*. It contains 4,516 *waka* poems, the last of which is dated AD759. There is uncertainty over the intention of the title: it could mean either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

## JLGC Research Trip University of Potsdam, Brandenburg

University of Potsdam



*Cooperation with Institute of Local Government Studies at Potsdam University formalised*

Now that the new financial year has started, JLGC is stepping up its work on updating its publication on local government in Germany. After seven years, it needs a thorough update as well as a better focus on recent developments, particularly where similarities between Japan and Germany exist. This time, we have secured the cooperation of KWI, the Institute of Local Government Studies at Potsdam University and will also work with individual researchers, both Japanese and German, in making this a useful handbook for practitioners in Japan. Apart from a basic introduction to how the state functions and what role local government fulfils within both the European and the German context, it will focus on topics such as local government's response to demographic change and the emerging regional cooperation through city regions and other forms of joint working, explain local finance, and look at developments in citizen participation and direct democracy. Most of this can be done via telephone and email, but a recent visit to Potsdam to sign a year-long cooperation contract provided a useful opportunity to confirm the working relationship and to discuss the work in more detail.

## JLGC Research Decentralisation and Local Governance

JLGC Research Manager Andrew Stevens participated in the first ever course in Decentralisation and Local Governance organised by the Decentralisation and Local Self-Government Committee of the United Cities and Local Governments organisation (of which CLAIR is a member).

The course, delivered by the Polytechnic

University of Catalonia, attracted more than 60 participants from around the world, including staff and elected members of country local authority associations. The diploma course covered both the nuts and bolts specifics of local autonomy matters and a more theoretical discussion around current and future trends in local governance.

Modules on the course included 'Decentralisation, governance, political leadership and democratic participation at the local level'; 'Public management, financing and decentralisation'; 'Territorial strategic planning in the context of decentralisation and economic promotion instruments' and 'Coordination between government levels, social cohesion and provision of services'. Andrew was awarded his diploma by the committee for his project around Singapore as city and nation brand.

The course was established by the committee as part of its work to introduce capacity towards promoting decentralisation and local governance globally as an integral component of functioning democracy. It also provided a forum for discussion of best practice and knowledge transfer as part of global reflection and dialogue on the basis of regional diversities.

The course was organised and directed by the Barcelona Provincial Council in its capacity of Executive Presidency of the Decentralisation and Local Self-Government Committee of United Cities and Local Governments, while the content was delivered by the School of Professional and Executive Development of the Polytechnic University of Catalonia in the city.

Andrew and other JLGC staff were also able to visit the organisers in the city as part of the March 2010 European Summit of Local Governments.

## JLGC Activities Visit to Gateshead

Assistant Directors Mamika Kambayashi (seconded from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications) and Motoko Tsujii (seconded from Kobe City Government) spent one week away from the confines of the London office with long term JLGC partner local authority Gateshead Borough Council, as part of annual staff training for Japanese staff during their stay in the UK. Gateshead which has long standing links with Komatsu City, Ishikawa Prefecture, has regularly hosted JLGC staff researching public service provision in the UK, and has a full programme of exchanges with Komatsu for student educational visits at its heart, as well as staff exchanges between the councils. The familiarity with Japan at the council was felt by JLGC staff during their visit and plan for

all to see in the displays of Kutani porcelain in the Mayor's Parlour and corridors of the town hall, the Japanese Garden in the city and the warm reception given to them by the Japanophile staff at the council.

JLGC staff were kindly given talks and presentations on various subjects such as Comprehensive Area Assessments by the Chief Executive's Office, Legal and Corporate Services, Customer Services, Democratic Services, Corporate Finance as well as looking at the role of the Election Team. This was a good opportunity for JLGC to see how UK local authorities work, some especially interesting with no equivalent counterpart in Japanese local government in some instances. We would like to offer our deep thanks to Gateshead City Council for the valuable time that they gave and for hosting again this year.

## JLGC Activities TMG Visit to London

JLGC's Senior Advisor Nobuharu Hikiba, seconded from Tokyo Metropolitan Government, escorted a group of assembly members from Tokyo's elected Assembly around London for a tour looking at how the UK supports people with mental health issues, and how local authorities support them in the community. The Tokyo Seikatsusha Network Party of the TMG's Assembly is a small political party that promotes citizens rights within the capital, and were in the UK to look at measures against discrimination.

The visit included talks and presentations by staff at the (former) DCSF, the Greater London Assembly, Westway Development Trust and Rethink which help everyone affected by severe mental illness such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and depression recover a better quality of life. The key focus of the visit was looking at how this organisations worked with others to provide medical treatment and support to people needing primary care and primary support for those effected so that they can still live with their families. Other discussions took place over how services started at the organisations, how to assess the needs of individuals against those of their families, and the structure of the relationship between the different stake holders involved.

Other issues that the group also looked at when they were in London were supporting young people in getting jobs and skills, and the relationship between NPOs and charities working with local and central government. JLGC would like to offer deep thanks to all those who offered their valuable time to host us and the assembly members from Tokyo.



## JETAA UK at 20 Two Decades On...

2010 marks the twentieth anniversary of the UK JET Alumni Association (JETAA-UK) **writes Neil Taylor, JETAA UK Chairman.** Over the last two decades, JETAA has sought to provide assistance, advice and support to former participants of the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme. It has also endeavoured to maintain and develop grassroots cultural links with Japanese organisations and promote the JET Programme and similar educational exchanges between the United Kingdom and Japan. JET was established in 1987 with the primary aim of promoting internationalisation in Japan's local communities by helping to improve foreign language education and increasing mutual understanding between the people of Japan and other nations. Two former initiatives – The British English Teachers (BET) scheme, established in 1978 exclusively for British University Graduates, and the global Monbusho English Fellows (MEFs) Programme.

Tony Stevens returned after two years in 1989. He recalls that in "those days some parts of the programme were a bit haphazard, but the exciting thing was that it was all new and unfolding before our very eyes." Whilst working for the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) in London on his return, Tony set up the UK Alumni Association with the assistance of an

organising committee comprised of other former JETs.

Approximately 50 British former JET Participants attended the inaugural meeting of JETAA-UK at the Embassy of Japan on 28th April 1990. In the early days of the organisation, close ties were formed with a similar alumni group of former BET participants with both associations collaborating on an annual Japanese festival in Battersea Park. It was pivotal in supporting returning JET participants in reintegrating back into life in the UK and finding employment during the recession of the early nineties. Indeed, Tony recalls "I used to get employers ringing me up directly and it was a time of lots of opportunity - booming Japanese economy and hardly anyone in the UK who could speak Japanese". The newly formed JETAA also played a significant part in the rapid expansion of the programme in the UK through its input into the recruitment process and pre-departure orientation. In the two decades since its establishment, 95,000 people have participated on the JET Programme, including 17,500 from the United Kingdom. The majority of participants are placed in elementary, junior and senior schools as teaching assistants, with others fulfilling roles as Coordinators for International Relations (CIRs) in local governments and boards of education.

Over 5,000 former participants of the programme are members of the JETAA-UK and can take part in events organised nationally and locally by our six regional chapters in London, the Midlands, Wales, North West England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Our annual activities include hosting a Careers Information Day for returning JETs, promoting Japan at the annual Spitalfields Japanese festival in London, promoting the JET Programme at universities and organising local pre-departure events for future participants. Alumni groups have also been established internationally. There are active chapters in sixteen countries

including the USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. Representatives from each of these countries meet each year to share valuable ideas on events and alumni initiatives; exchange best practice in fostering and maintaining grass root cultural linkages; and to collaborate on an international effort for our nominated charity, Room to Read. To coincide with the twentieth anniversary of the UK Alumni Association, this year's International Meeting will be hosted in Edinburgh by JETAA Scotland in the autumn. In addition, JETAA-UK is planning a series of anniversary initiatives to tie in with this special event.

One way JETAA-UK is celebrating its significant twenty year milestone, is with the launch of a new logo. Our website has also recently undergone a redesign and relaunch. The site facilitates dialogue and collaboration between prospective, current and former UK JET participants and other relevant organisations. Amongst the many features is an online calendar of Japanese cultural events hosted by a variety of UK based organisations, forums and local chapter information.

Jetaa.org.uk is currently hosting a 'JETAA UK @ 20' photo competition, an initiative open to all Alumni members to encourage them to share their memories of both the JET Programme and the work of the Alumni Association over the last twenty years. The competition is structured into three categories and short listed entries from each category will be exhibited at a reception and Ceilidh this autumn as part of the JETAA International Meeting in Edinburgh. The website will also be used as part of an ongoing project to collate a montage of memories from the UK Alumni Association and its activities over the last two decades.

Two decades on, JETAA-UK is continuing to fulfil a valuable role in bringing together former JET participants in supporting and fostering local grass root cultural linkages, and enabling them to promote the JET programme within their local communities. For more information about JETAA-UK, please visit us at [www.jetaa.org.uk](http://www.jetaa.org.uk)

*The JET Programme represents one of Japan's greatest initiatives in the field of human and cultural relations. Its expansion shows the Japanese Government's commitment to the Programme and overwhelming support for the scheme at a local level.*

*There are 2 positions available for UK graduates on the JET Programme: Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) and Coordinator for International Relations (CIR). In 2009, around 120 ALT and 6 CIR positions were filled by graduates from the United Kingdom.*



Top picture, JETAA Embassy reception 1990; picture above, JETAA UK AGM Cardiff 2010

## Learning to Live Beyond Growth in Japan's Shrinking Regions

Dr. Peter Matanle, National Institute of Japanese Studies, University of Sheffield

Following the evacuation to the countryside in the wake of Japan's devastation in World War II, depopulation re-commenced in remote rural areas in the early 1950s. In the 1960s and 70s, rural decline and depopulation were officially recognised and regeneration initiatives aimed at restoring growth began to be implemented by local authorities. Despite this, shrinkage has continued and steadily expanded, and many factors appear to be conspiring against a possible stabilisation of Japan's regional economy and society. Long-term structured out-migration to metropolitan areas; low fertility and population ageing; disintegrating familial and community relations; widening regional fiscal and economic inequalities; loss of local identity due to municipal reorganisations; abandonment of residential and business properties, decline in the quality of the built environment and damage to the natural environment, are just some of the difficulties currently being experienced in Japan's 'shrinking regions'. Indeed, these factors are as much causes of depopulation as they are consequences, as residents seek an exit from communities that appear to be collapsing around them, resulting in a renewed cycle of out-migration and ageing.

Rural decline in Japan has often been presented within the overall context of the country's rapid modernisation whereby the negative regional impacts of urban industrial agglomeration and spatial differentiation in economic development are considered to have been more than offset by the absolute increases in living standards within the nation as a whole that have accompanied the expansion of the post-war economy and society. However, with the recent onset of a national population decline, the continued concentration of activity in the capital region and the entrenchment of a low-growth economic regime, rural shrinkage is deepening and broadening in the 21<sup>st</sup> century such that some settlements are disappearing altogether, and similar experiences are coming to be felt in regional towns and cities. Indeed, some scholars have argued that Japanese society will have to adjust to long-term economic contraction and that depopulation and its outcomes may be replicated even in some of the poorer inner wards of Tokyo itself.

Under national depopulation it is no longer possible for all areas of Japan to grow simultaneously; if one settlement grows in size it is a certainty that another will have to shrink in order to compensate.



Sake producers from Sado Island marketing their produce at the annual Niigata prefectural Sake festival in Niigata City in April 2009. (Photo courtesy of Peter Matanle)

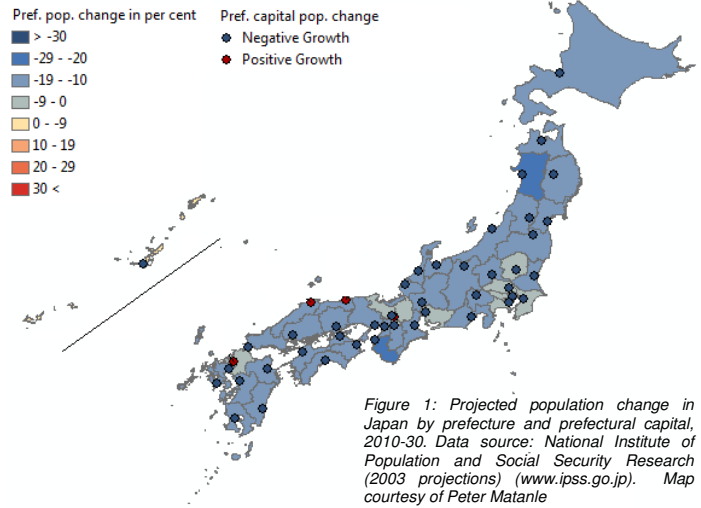


Figure 1: Projected population change in Japan by prefecture and prefectural capital, 2010-30. Data source: National Institute of Population and Social Security Research (2003 projections) ([www.ipss.go.jp](http://www.ipss.go.jp)). Map courtesy of Peter Matanle

Indeed, policy makers agree that the majority of Japan's settlements will shrink in the coming years, and only a very small number will either remain stable or will expand. Figure 1 displays projected population growth rates for Japan's prefectures and prefectural capital cities for the period 2010-30, showing that only one prefecture (Okinawa) and four prefectural capitals are scheduled to grow in size over the coming decades. With this in mind it is becoming clearer among residents of Japan's regions that nearly all communities will continue to shrink, whatever is done in an attempt to revitalize them. It is certain, therefore, that the idea of returning to growth, if that is what revitalization means, is now an unattainable and unrealistic objective for nearly all of Japan's regional areas.

Japan, of course, is by no means the only country in the world that is facing a future with a smaller and older population. Among larger European countries, Germany, Italy, Poland, Russia and others have been experiencing regional shrinkage and, like Japan, some are entering a period of national depopulation. Furthermore, developed countries such as Japan, Germany, and Russia also bear a heavy responsibility for environmental change within and beyond their own national borders in terms of their contributions to greenhouse gas emissions, threats to biodiversity, and the release of toxic wastes. These problems are expanding rapidly and present increased risks to the calm and peaceful continuation of our way of life.

Although each country's circumstances are naturally going to be different, there is much to learn from each other in how to face these new and challenging circumstances. Hence, rather than worrying about shrinkage as a problem to be solved by measures oriented towards re-establishing growth, and resulting in ever greater environmental risks, what if it were possible to turn depopulation into an advantage to be embraced?

Actually, this is already happening on a small scale in Japan and elsewhere. Although we do not know yet for certain whether it is a trend that is significant enough to have a big impact on development, there are signs that some people are taking up the notion of 'living beyond growth' in order to live more responsibly; by both reducing their consumption and reorganizing the way they live within a shrinking society and economy. Examples of this are many, but I will just relate three from my own research in Sado Island, Niigata Prefecture.

Of the six remaining sake producers in Sado, two now buy much of their rice directly from their employees – many of whom own small holdings and farm rice part-time – rather than from wholesale suppliers. They have also asked their employees to grow organic rice. Organic sake is selling well in Japan's metropolitan areas and as an overseas export. Buying directly from employees helps to maintain social stability within a depopulating region, and producing organic rice helps to increase sake sales as well as aiding in the conservation of a natural environment that is best suited to the re-introduction of the Toki, or Japanese crested Ibis, since Sado is the home to the breeding programme for this critically endangered species, whose main source of food is in and around muddy rice paddies.



One of Japan's last remaining original growth temperate rain forests is in Sado Island, and tourism leaders are working hard to both protect their natural heritage as well as use it for sustainable tourism development. (Photo courtesy of Peter Matanle.)

In a second example, the Sado tourism association has begun organising weekend tours to one of the last remaining original growth temperate rain forests in Japan, located in the northern part of the island. Numbers are limited in order not to damage the sensitive ecosystem, and the tour is unusual in Japan since tourists must trek on foot, set up camp, and sleep in tents, before proceeding into the forest proper the next day; a far cry from the days of large tour groups travelling by bus and only stopping at view points for photos and souvenir hunting. Rather than seeking to attract as many tourists as possible, the tourism association and Sado City government want to attract fewer people who will each stay a little longer but encounter a greater range of experiences. This places less pressure on community resources and the natural environment, but also helps to maintain a more stable and sustainable tourist industry year round.

In a third example, local business leaders are coordinating their activities to reduce waste, reuse and recycle materials, and develop innovative business ideas that enhance community stability and sustainability, contribute to improving the quality of the natural and living environment in Sado, and provide better and more loving care for the elderly residents in the island. One such initiative is the establishment of Sado's first ever post-secondary educational institution, a vocational college teaching, among other things, environmental management, traditional architecture and crafts, and long term care for the elderly. These social and environmental entrepreneurs hope that the island's society can one day become an example for others in Japan's rural



A lecturer shows off the new investment in teaching equipment for traditional crafts, in this case ceramic arts, at the newly opened NSG vocational college in Sado Island. (Photo courtesy of Peter Matanle)

regions to follow, and contribute to Japan becoming a pioneer in coping successfully with the difficult combination of problems associated with depopulation, societal ageing, and environmental change. Rather than seeking to initiate and lead such efforts, local governments for their part need to acknowledge and support these social and environmental entrepreneurs, as well as learn from their experiences. As the map in figure 1 shows, shrinkage will certainly continue to broaden in the future to include larger urban settlements. Despite data that project nearly all of Japan's cities experiencing depopulation by 2030, these

'shrinking cities' are most likely to be regional centres of under 1 million inhabitants, rather than the larger metropolitan regions, and the early evidence suggests that some of these have already begun to shrink. Under this scenario, the experiences of Japan's rural communities in adjusting to and even embracing shrinkage may be useful for residents in regional cities too, as they grapple with the realization that, rather than struggling in vain to re-establish growth, effective management of the outcomes arising from shrinkage may be the most constructive response to prevailing circumstances.

Such an approach needs to begin with an acknowledgement that, by itself, depopulation need not bring with it only negative consequences. It can, for example, provide opportunities for the spatial reconfiguration of the built environment and, assuming consumption patterns also change, shrinkage may play a part in mitigating human impacts on the natural environment. At best, shrinkage may present regional communities with the occasion to rethink the way they organise their affairs, to develop new and alternative sets of objectives, and to enact a move beyond the current growth-first regime towards ways of living that prioritise socio-environmental stability and, even, sustainability.

Although depopulation undoubtedly presents Japan's regions with some real difficulties, I remain optimistic, and I believe my research demonstrates that these challenges are not insurmountable. Several residents in Sado and elsewhere in rural Japan have already acknowledged and accepted shrinkage as an established fact for their communities and have begun to consider and in some cases act out, a life beyond growth. In other words, I believe that rural residents are in increasing numbers engaging in bottom up and spontaneous approaches to rethinking their ways of life, dispensing with the idea of expansion as the primary organising principal in society and, instead, are positively and by necessity starting to embrace the prospect of living and working within a shrinking region. We can only begin to imagine the transformative potential of such a development should these notions begin to gain general currency across Japan's urban areas, and beyond.

#### Author Information

Peter Matanle is a sociologist and Lecturer at the National Institute of Japanese Studies, School of East Asian Studies, University of Sheffield. He is the author of various books and refereed articles on Japanese society, including a forthcoming co-authored book on *Japan's Shrinking Regions*, which is scheduled for publication by Cambria Press in the USA in early 2011. His professional biography can be found at:

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## Aichi Prefecture Celebrates Biodiversity and Culture Heritage through International Events

Keith Kelly,  
JLGC Public Relations Officer

Aichi Prefecture HQ, Nagoya



rubbish tip. Nagoya citizens reduced their landfill waste by 60% in response to the threat, and the balance between industry and the environment is a topic of constant debate in the Prefecture.

Building on the success of the Aichi Expo of 2005, Aichi is pushing for recognition on the world stage as a host for international events, with the holding of two global forums this year in a effort to internationally identify Aichi with the environment and the arts: the COP10 International Forum on Biodiversity and the inaugural Aichi International Triennial Arts Festival.

Masaaki Kanda, Governor of Aichi and Chairman of the Aichi-Nagoya COP 10 CBD Promotion Committee commented "Thousands of participants from around the world, including government representatives, will meet to discuss ongoing and emerging issues in each country, seek feasible solutions, develop an international framework, and explore other effective strategies for the conservation of biodiversity. This conference promises to be profoundly significant for both current and future generations".

2010 will be a big turning point for the convention on biodiversity. At the COP6 meeting in 2006 held in The Hague, Holland, 2010 was marked as the target year for a drastic reduction in the current velocity at which biodiversity is being lost. At COP10 the focus of discussions will be the how well the targets have been met and the direction of future policy. The eyes of the world will be on Aichi Prefecture and on it's capital the city of Nagoya.



Aichi Prefecture with its capital Nagoya is located in the Chubu region of central Honshu on the Pacific coast, and is the fourth most populous urban area, and third largest incorporated city. Nagoya, where the head quarters of the prefectural government are based, is one of Japan's major ports along with Tokyo, Osaka, Kobe, Yokohama, Chiba and Moji. The surrounding Chukyo Metropolitan Area is Japan's third largest urban area. As of 2000, Chukyo Metropolitan Area has 8.74 million people, 2.17 of which live within the city of Nagoya itself.

Toyota Motor Corporation has made its home in the prefecture, and Toyota City itself, less than an hour away from Nagoya, has had a long standing relationship with Derbyshire and the City of Derby. With Toyota Motors UK a major employer within the county at Burnaston,



the company itself also has strong links with the local community through activities with schools and colleges in the area. Apart from Toyota, Aichi Prefecture is also home to many other major industrial and manufacturing industries and as such the prefecture is a production powerhouse, providing 70% of Japan's trade surplus in 2003, and was Japan's fastest growing region, faster even than Tokyo in 2005-2006 with a population growth of 7.4%.

With the local economy having such a heavy reliance on industry it is not surprising that environmental issues are a concern for locals, and as this is the case there is a strong local support for green issues. Plans for the Aichi Expo of 2005 had to be radically altered after the planned exhibition site was the target of strong local protest against destruction of local woodland and wildlife. While it is ironic that protests were held against the holding of an event with "Nature's Wisdom" as a theme, citizens of Aichi have always been wary of developments in the prefecture, and a prefecture-wide campaign saw a radical change in attitudes to rubbish when the Fujimae flat wet lands of the Nagoya coast were threatened with being developed into a

Nagoya cityscape





Nagoya-jo Castle



Aichi Arts Centre

Many warm-up events have been held in the year leading up to the 2010 Triennial. In March the exhibition "Animals in AAC – the world of Mizawa Atsuhiko" used traditional techniques for carving animals out of camphor wood to create a display of lively animal shapes in the Aichi Arts and Crafts Centre for all generations, the old and the young, to become familiar with modern art.

There was also "In the Little Playground – Hitsuda Nobuya and his surrounding students" which saw the bringing together of 200 both old and new works by former Aichi Prefectural University of Fine Arts and Music teacher Hitsuda Nobuya and his students. Nineteen of his students have made names for themselves on the world stage, including Nara Yoshimoto (who held a successful exhibition in 2008 at the Baltic Exchange in Gateshead), Sugito Hiroshi and Morikita. Aichi Prefecture feels the holding of the Triennial is significant in recognising such a wealth of local talent and internationally successful artists.

In October last year a build up event in the city, the "Chōjamachi Project 2009", was opened in the Chōjamachi District. Artists produced works reflecting on conversations with local residents and discussing the history of the area. Street floats created by artists for the local festival "Ebisu Matsuri" were also displayed as part of the festivities.

New artists are being added to the line up all the time, and mediums are varied from traditional to the use of new technology media. At the time of writing over 100 artists will be exhibiting their works in the project which hopes to shed an international perspective on Nagoya using cutting edge art and techniques, celebrate the city using its parks,



8.21→10.31

Aichi Prefecture is also marketing itself as a centre of cutting edge culture and new art with the first Aichi Triennial being held between the 21st of August and the 31st of October 2010. Plans are already under way for the next Triennial to be held in three years time in an attempt to push the event as a major international festival of the arts, to use the Triennial as a long term project to promote the region. Aichi Prefecture's indigenous traditional creative industries, known as monozukuri (a philosophy of arts and crafts) centred around Nagoya, as well as international success for graduates of Aichi Prefecture University of Fine Arts and Music form the backdrop to the start of the Aichi Triennial.

The highlight of this year's event is an exhibition by Kusama Yayoi, one of 80 artists showing works at the international arts and crafts forum. The themes in her art are varied, but not only is she an internationally acclaimed artist but a strong element of her work is the environment. One of her pieces sold at Christies New York in Nov 2008 set a record for a work by a living female artist, going for \$5.1 million. There will be Kusama Yayoi works produced specifically for the Aichi Triennial to be displayed to the world for the first time. The forum is also being opened to the public so that young and upcoming

artists have the opportunity to contribute, with high expectations of exciting and novel works.

As well as art itself, dance, music and various stage performances will also be central to the Triennial with specially commissioned productions making use of both the exhibition space amongst the art on display and the hall and art gallery of the Aichi Arts Centre (ACC) where the Triennial activities and exhibition will be centred.

The exhibition will culminate in a live performance which is to unfold in the Nagoya City Art Gallery and outside in the Chōjamachi district of the city as well as the ACC.

Chōjamachi district underneath the walls of Nagoya-jo Castle, owned by the Tokugawa clan of whom the first Shōgun Ieyasu Tokugawa is one of Aichi's most famous figures, was the centre of life in the Edo period (1603 to 1868). In the post war period it developed into one of the three great centres of the Japanese textile industry. The live performance will see a unique public spectacle unfolding, a mix of dance, drama, music and art from the Triennial in a traditional Japanese "matsuri" summer town festival, following the medieval grid system in which the streets and lanes of this historic area are laid out.

Also during the Triennial period, there will be a project called "Kids Triennial", where children will be able to create and experience performances. By having many children taking part in the triennial, the organisers hopes to foster a sense of appreciation for the arts by giving children the opportunity to interact with the real thing.



Chojamachi



Nagoya City Art Museum

## Editorial

# Japan's Public Sector Cost Review

## JLGC Director Noboru Fujishima, translated by Phillippa Harvey

The concept of "Jigyō shiwake" is currently receiving a lot of attention in Japan. Roughly translated it means something along the lines of 'public services classification', vague in English but even when seen in the Japanese, its meaning has not generally been understood until now.

Coined by the non-profit Japanese think tank "Japan Initiative" (Kōsō Nippon), the word has been used since 2002 to refer to evaluation of the work by public bodies. It is often translated into English as 'budget screening'.

In practice, the process follows a certain order. For each central or local government project the evaluation first of all looks at every point listed in their budget. It is then decided if each budgetary point is necessary for the project, and if so to whom the work is currently allocated (for example asking if it is a private or public group, if it is national or local government). The next step is to look at the project from an outside perspective, from the perspective of the public. Finally, discussions with the relevant local government staff put the project into one of the following categories: national, prefectural, municipal, private or unnecessary.

This budget screening is being undertaken by outside experts with no position of authority within those bodies under scrutiny, and the results of the evaluation are presented as a report without the recommendations being binding. Ultimately what to do with those findings is, naturally, down to the head of the public body involved and the Diet. However, there is an obligation to publicly announce any reforms being considered from the points brought up in discussions, and to announce how the organisation will respond to the results from here on. The whole process is undertaken by a group of 10 to 20 people over a period of one to two days.

This practice is gradually spreading, currently from local government to the central government ministries themselves. Under Prime Minister Hatoyama's new DPJ government of August 2009, the financial resources necessary to enact the policies set out in his new administration's manifesto were to be secured through abolishing current projects, and then finally by putting every government ministry under the scrutiny

of budget screening.

Three working groups from the Government Revitalisation Unit, which were set up under Hatoyama's Cabinet Office, undertook the task beginning on the 10th of November 2009, with each group consisting of two members of the Democratic Part of Japan (DPJ) and around 15 to 20 outside experts.

There were low expectations of public interest in the screening process as it was originally meant as a professional service review, but several Japanese television networks took up the topic as a big news story, reporting on it in detail while the discussions were broadcast live on the internet. On top of this, the scenes of the "screeners", former television stars-turned-politicians who are now DPJ party members, shouting down the bureaucratic elite during the discussions were very popular with viewers and began to draw a lot of attention.

On the one hand, you could say budget screening increased public awareness of the various administration processes being carried out in Japan and was thus enlightening, heightening the interest of the Japanese people, who are generally quite apathetic towards politics and administration. However, on the other hand, the screeners, those members of the Diet and the outside experts involved in the process were not always experts in the political policies they were investigating. Thus they did not fully understand either the complex backgrounds or the long term issues or effects, and this created problems with decisions being made based only on intuition.

One example of this was the budget cut for scientific funding due to the screeners

not understanding the importance of the research; once the meeting finished there were strong criticisms from many Japanese scientists. There were also heavy criticisms from Japanese Olympic medalists at a press conference in reaction to the decision to reduce funding after questioning the Olympic Committee's budget, in particular the need to fund minor sports

There was further criticism from the ousted LDP, denouncing budget screening as "a public execution" while questioning the ability of the Ministry of Finance's Budget Bureau to propose refining services as well as the advice given through the sorting process. Despite all the negativity from media commentators and academics surrounding the core meaning of budget screening and the trend it indicates, there was candid advice in regards to the technique and the time taken to complete the process. There were also questions raised over the screeners' knowledge of what they were working with and their general manner during discussions.

However, spurred on by the criticisms of many ordinary citizens, the government continued with its work, targeting independent administrative institutions in April 2010, then in May targeting public services corporations. Even the parent organisation of JLGC, the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations had not only its overseas offices' establishment and management under the microscope, but also the JET Programme.

The government says that budget screening is not the 'abolition' of programmes but "readjusting the allocation of roles between national and regional bodies while re-examining what 'regional collective opinion' is for those programmes. The next step from this will be a review of the programmes examined and a review of the current burden on local government".

Taking all this on board, JLGC is also currently preparing for future budget cuts and will examine how to make ourselves a more effective institution in all it does from now on.



Japan Local Government Centre

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

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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