

myriad leaves

DECEMBER 2007



M-Wave, Nagano City. One of the arenas that was built for the Winter Olympics in 1998

万葉

Myriad Leaves is the English-language title for the earliest collection of Japanese poetry. 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'.

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The Council of Local Authorities
for International Relations
Founded in 1988, CLAIR is a joint
organisation representing Japan's
47 prefectures, 17 designated cities
and 1,817 municipalities.



JETAA

Over the past few months, JLGc have been meeting with representatives from the 7 JETAA Chapters in the UK and Ireland. These meetings have often been very informative and have allowed JLGc to really see how these former JET participants are using their funding to further promote ties between the UK and Japan.

On September 21st, JLGc held the 21st JET Returnee Reception at the University of London. This coincided with a Careers Information Day organised by the JETAA UK branch to help the returnees find employment using the skills they acquired whilst in Japan. October 15th saw a similar reception in Dublin.

JETAA Wales Chapter

By Charlotte Evans (Chair)

The JETAA invited Mr. Mutai and colleagues from JLGc to climb Pen-y-fan, the highest peak in South Wales should he wish. Sure enough, a plan was formed and early this month Mr. Mutai, together with his young companions Kazuko and Keiko, came back to Cardiff. After a morning sampling the delights of the bus and a quick detour into Merthyr Tydfil, we finally converged at the Storey Arms car park at noon on October 20th. It was beautiful day; a crisp, blue cloudless sky, the sun shining, and the green rolling hills covered only by sheep and the occasional hiker. We set off up the steep path, which leads directly east from the main road up to the summits of Corn Du, and then onto Pen-y-Fan. After an hour or so our appetites got the better of us and we took a lunch break on a rocky outcrop sheltered from the wind. In true Japanese hiking style, Mr. Mutai produced from his backpack several cans of deliciously chilled Carlsberg, which we gratefully shared between us. After the break we pushed on to the top of Corn Du (873 metres) and after stopping to admire the breathtaking panorama of the Brecon Beacons we then continued to make the ascent to the top of Pen-y-Fan (886 metres). The view from the top was truly spectacular and we were rewarded for our efforts by the sheer beauty of the mountains. We spent the rest of the afternoon making our own circular route around the caldera, which involved a certain amount of adaptation of the trekking notes that we had and a lot of faith from our Japanese companions. We all enjoyed the day immensely and hope to do something similar again next year.

The Wales chapter has only been set up for a few months but so far we've organised an inaugural picnic, a trip to the Millennium stadium to watch Japan play Wales in the Rugby World Cup and the hike up Pen-y-Fan. In the future we hope to organise Japanese cookery classes, karaoke events and other, informal outings such as trips to see Japanese theatre or films should they come to the Cardiff/Wales area. Should anyone want to get involved or get in touch, please contact jetaawales@yahoo.co.uk



JLGc representatives and members of the JETAA Wales Chapter in the Brecon Beacons

GENERAL:

Between October 17th-19th, the 7th annual meeting for Deputy Directors posted in overseas offices took place at the London headquarters of CLAIR. The Deputy Directors were lucky enough to attend a lecture by the former Economist editor, Bill Emmott, titled 'Asia's New Power Balance' amongst other things. On October 19th, a meeting was held at the embassy about the forthcoming 150th Anniversary of the Anglo Japanese Treaty of Amity and Commerce next year.

JAPAN STUDY TOUR 2007:

From November 11th-20th, JLGc sent 10 representatives from local government and related organisations to Japan to participate in this year's Japan Study Tour. They spent a few days in Tokyo being briefed on the differences between local and central government in the UK and Japan, and then the remaining days in Shimane Prefecture, in the west where they learnt about local food strategies and promotion as well as experienced a school lunch.

VISITS:

The last few months have been a busy time for JLGc and the Director in particular as he makes visits around the country.

The end of August saw an interesting visit to Dublin City Council to introduce them to the JET Programme and speak about mutual interests.

SPEAKER SERIES:

On August 31st, Professor Emeritus Hirofumi Itou, President of the Local Public Finance Council in Tokyo gave us a lecture about the German Fiscal Transfer System; on September 9th, Mr. Tetsuya Kodama, Head of Origination III at Deutsche Securities in Japan was kind enough to speak about the Recent Developments in Banking in Europe; the International Capital Market Trends and the Public Sector (in particular local government debt); and finally on November 21st, Dr. Peter Smart from Robert Gordon University gave us a lecture about Human Resource Management in UK Local Government.

September:

On September 15th the Director made a trip to the Medway Festival, and on the 19th, he visited Westminster City Council where they discussed the Olympics and crisis management. The 25th saw him at Bracknell Forest and Bracknell Town Councils where they discussed issues facing the area and local councils. They also discussed possibilities of strengthening the network with former Japan Study Tour (JST) participants. In the same day, JLGc made a visit to Panasonic Europe Ltd., to discuss the possibility of involvement in the Japan Day Seminar (JDS) given their association with Cardiff. From the 28th until the 1st saw a trip around Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Melrose in the Scottish Borders.

October:

JLGc attended the NALC conference (the local councils' annual conference) between the 5-7th, and the SOLACE conference in Cardiff from the 9-11th, and found it particularly useful in making contacts in preparation for the JDS. JLGc was also represented at all the major party conferences this year.

The 18th saw a visit to Tunbridge Wells where Mr. Ueda, Senior Managing Director for CLAIR, and JLGc staff discussed local government issues in the council, the UK and Japan. That evening, the Director gave a speech at the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation regarding Local Government and the Regions in the UK and Japan.

The weekend of the 20th saw an unusual excursion to the Brecon Beacons with the Wales Chapter of the JETAA for a bit of hiking and discussion about how the new chapter will function.

On the 22nd, JLGc took a trip to SEEDA (South East England Development Agency) to inform JLGc staff of the role and history of Regional Development Agencies and the evolving regional agenda of the current government with regard to the agenda in Japan.

JLGc visited Manchester City Council on the 24th, to gain a more in depth knowledge of the recent congestion charging bid. We were also given the opportunity to meet with the education department to hear about the improvements that had been made to the government's Every Child Matters strategy and how Manchester ensure that all children receive the education they deserve regardless of background and personal/family circumstance.

On the 25th JLGc visited Birmingham City Council to receive a presentation on the regeneration efforts that are in effect at present and the future architectural ideas and visions for the city.

The end of the month saw a courtesy visit to Market Harborough District Council where the Director discussed local government issues in the council such as parishes with the Chief Executive. They also took the opportunity to meet a JST participant from Leicestershire County Council.

November:

On the 1st of November, JLGc made a trip to Cardiff City Council and the university to discuss the upcoming Japan Day Seminar. The 1st also saw a visit to Mrs. Carol Smith, Head teacher of Cardwell Primary School, Woolwich. As the school is situated in one of the most deprived and ethnically diverse areas of South East London, we were given the opportunity to see and hear first hand how Mrs. Smith had turned the school around. By using the simple starting point of mutual respect and understanding, the team have excelled and created a community within the school that supports not only the pupils but their families as well.

On the 9th the Director went to the Greater London Authority with Mr. Washizawa, Mayor of Nagano, the 19th back to Cardiff for more discussions about the JDS, and finally the 13-17th a trip to Germany, a research trip to look into the issue of 'shrinking communities', and a meeting with the German JETAA.

topic

'Broader and Closer' Japanese Local Government in the Midst of Decentralisation

By Shunsuke Mutai, Director, JLGC
Translated by Claire Harris

Basic Structure

Japan has a two-tier system of local government; the population of Japan is roughly twice that of the UK, and these people live in 47 prefectures and 1,800 cities, towns and villages. Local self-government is protected by the Constitution. The theory of autonomy is legally guaranteed.

The structure of the local authorities is different from the UK in the sense that a governor or a mayor is directly elected as head of each prefecture and municipality for a 4 year term. Local councillors are also elected, however, they do not serve on executive committees, but rather their function is to monitor and check the operation of the authority.

The prefectures are responsible for integrated government administration of a multi-municipal area, their main work including the delivery of compulsory education, the wage burden of junior high school teachers, the police force, providing and maintaining the infrastructure, attracting business, and the development of residential areas.

Municipalities are primarily responsible for the welfare of their areas: the government endorsed health insurance system, and the establishment and management of junior and junior high schools amongst other various tasks.

The responsibilities of central and local government are inter-related. Taking the example of compulsory education, the municipality builds and maintains infrastructure, the prefecture pays the teachers' wages, and central government contributes 1/3 to the wage cost. This means central government discharges some duties whilst maintaining control over the area by granting subsidies. In this way, the system adopted by central government works easily nationwide where national government is not directly responsible for the services.

The source of revenue for local authorities comes from various taxes such as the individual residence tax, the property tax, the local consumption tax and enterprise taxes. On top of that, the government provides transfer funding called Local Allocation Tax (LAT) and other subsidies and local governments also issue local bonds to help make up the deficit.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications is responsible for overseeing local government affairs, submitting bills regarding local authority governance to the Diet, taking care of national diet elections, and most importantly, estimating the sum of the necessary amount of LAT and distribute them to each authority.

Decentralisation

Thus far, power had been very much centralised, however local decentralisation began in the 1990s. So far, the result of the transfer of power has been an attempt to demolish the hierarchical system between central and local government, the relaxation of existing controls, and the transfer of tax revenue. Despite some strong opposition from individual ministries, central government transferred the burden (some £12 billion) of income tax (national tax) to the local residents' tax.

This method of transferring fund collection from central to local government is part of the 'Trinity Reform' Policy. Central

government reduces the amount of subsidies, thus freeing national government of the burden of equivalent expenditure. By utilising this, national tax is transferred to local tax, and increasing the tax responsibility of local government should lead to more control of local expenditure by local inhabitants. At the same time, by reducing the annual expenditure of both central and local government the total sum of LAT is also reduced.

The Changing Size of Local Authorities

The independent committee charged with studying the systems of local government, proposed a number of examples meaning that the number of prefectures would be dramatically reduced, and the country would be divided into about 10 administrative areas rather like states. This movement would take away the concentration of power from central government and disperse it throughout the country. The process of amalgamation has started with the number of municipalities already reduced from 3200 to 1800 in 7 years, although the proposed mergers of the prefectures is still in the exploratory stages.

The amalgamation of the prefectures is being driven by the amalgamation of the municipalities. Even though the process of amalgamation is inevitable because of Japan's decreasing population and the need to maximise the efficiency of

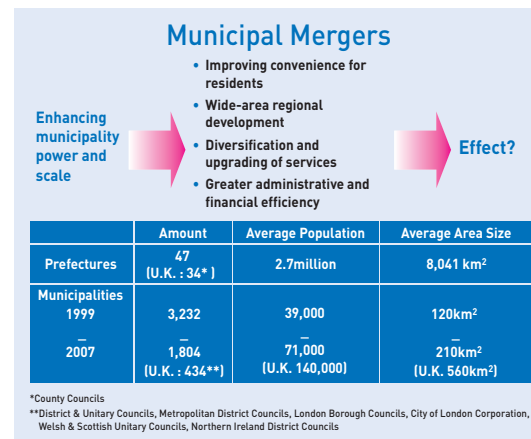
services, the number of people in opposition to reform is large. That administrative services are failing is an obvious part of the problem. The recent election demonstrates that mergers have been perceived rather negatively in Japan. Some experts say that the conservative foundation of the LDP has weakened as a result, because the number of councillors in rural areas has been reduced, and the party's position as a whole has been greatly undermined.

Regeneration of Local Communities

Unlike the UK, Japan does not traditionally have a large immigrant community, although there are some immigrant areas in Japan established both before the war and as a recent result of globalisation. However, building communities is necessary for tackling issues such as the declining population, the low birth rate, and the aging population. Japan is a very traditional society and there are self-governing associations throughout the country. The municipality mergers have made people aware of the need for these grass-roots associations. There has been a re-invigoration of community involvement: householders have joined committees and traditional 'public services' like road and irrigation channel cleaning, and litter collection is now again being done by members of the community. The spirit of volunteerism is on the rise, and such community activities have been re-awakened, and the party in power (the LDP) is now thinking of introducing laws to underpin these sorts of activities and cooperation.

However, the participation of younger people in these community activities is something very important. Where neighbourhood associations are active we now find the involvement of the younger generation. The ministry is working with these local bodies to develop IT and other projects to keep this generation informed of civic developments.

For more information about this area, please contact us.



Guest Article

Our Study Tour to Japan

By Michael Burton, Editor, The MJ

Japanese restaurants and food shops are sprouting in British towns and cities like mushrooms such is the growing fascination with this ancient civilisation. With 2008 being the 150th anniversary of Anglo-Japanese relationships there has never been a better time to visit the islands.

For local government managers and councillors there is of course the opportunity provided by the annual Japan Study Tour organised by the Japan Local Government Centre each November. These study tours are a brilliant opportunity to immerse oneself in Japanese culture as I know having attended one myself.

I joined 10 officers and one councillor on the 2005 study tour for what proved to be the trip of a lifetime. Indeed after spending 10 days together every day and evening many of us became firm friends and we still meet up regularly for reunions.

Our trip was ostensibly to look at the impact of information technology on public services with the visit being divided between Tokyo and the provincial city of Okayama three hours by bullet train from the capital. In practice it was not only a study of local government but also a rare chance to savour the country's culture and its people since the trip also included a weekend staying with a host family, a night at a traditional Japanese inn, a *ryokan*, and of course an evening of karaoke.

The visit began in Tokyo, a city of skyscrapers, which contrary to the film 'Lost in Translation' or indeed 'Blade Runner' (which was inspired by the capital's nightspot district of Shinjuku) does not feel in any way alienating. The city has a colourful street life with traditional markets and is much safer than most western cities. Indeed on the day of our departure some of us got up at 5am (after a late night!) to visit the famous fish market.

The Japanese are extremely courteous and bowing is essential, as is the correct presentation of one's business card (held out between both hands) and also the offering of gifts. Mind you, quite what our various hosts made of the town hall bios, mouse mats and city maps they received from us is another issue.

Our time in the capital was filled with briefings, at the offices of the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR) which organised the trip, at various ministries, Tokyo City Council, (including a presentation on how the authorities were prepared for an earthquake), the



The 2005 Japan Study Tour Participants outside the National Diet in Tokyo

National Diet (parliament) and the Panasonic Centre. Many of the issues Japanese councils face are similar to our own, including reorganisation because they have been reducing the number of municipalities. Japan's local government system is two-tier, divided into 47 prefectures and previously 3200 municipalities, reduced to 1800. Some taxes to fund the municipalities are collected locally and the Government has been trying to reduce its subsidy to councils.

On the public holiday, which fell during our time in Japan, we organised our own expeditions, in my case a day out at Mount Fuji with three colleagues. The day after, we took the fabulous bullet train to Okayama. There we met the governor of the prefecture, which has an annual budget of £3.5bn, and the assembly speaker, visited the local city library and its new computerised shelf-filling system as well as a high school, an 'incubation' centre to nurture new businesses and the main hospital.

All of us were intrigued to see how Japan managed to have well-funded services without a budget crisis. In fact there is a problem of an ageing population and escalating health costs while the town hall head count has been declining. Indeed council managers have recently been taking pay cuts, an unheard of prospect in the UK where salaries for executives are heading upwards, not down. One council chief executive told us that his budget was funded a third by central government, a third from local taxes and a third from borrowing. Pensions also face a crisis because council staff, like the private sector, can still retire at 60 and as we all know the Japanese live to a great age thanks to their healthy diet. Some 20% of Japanese are over 65 and the figure is expected to rise to 38% over the next few years.

Over the weekend each of us was billeted with a local family in their own home. In my case I was given the spare room and slept on a tatami mat, having always to remember to remove my shoes on entering the house. My charming host, an English language teacher, even organised a party for my benefit. I felt very much at home and even walked one of the guests back to his nearby flat at midnight!

It was an extremely jolly reunion when our study tour participants all met up again on the Sunday night for dinner (in an Italian restaurant) and a boisterous round of karaoke. Most of our meals had been Japanese, with sushi, teriyaki chicken and pork and tempura washed down with beer and occasionally sake but all of them recognisable to a western palate. For our last night however we stayed in the *ryokan*, slept on tatami mats and dined on real Japanese cuisine followed by a visit to a local bar for beer, sake and cuttlefish.

It was a wonderful trip. My thanks to CLAIR and the JLGC and I know, speaking on behalf of my colleagues, that we came back from Japan as its most enthusiastic ambassadors.

Japan Study Tour 2008

The Japan Study Tour (JST) is an annual event offering the opportunity for a few officers from local government and related organisations 10 days in Japan to learn about how central and local government work, as well as learn about a theme in greater depth. If you would be interested in going on the tour next year, please email us at JST Participation mailbox@jlgc.org.uk.

Did you go on the Japan Study Tour? If you did, we would like to hear from you. JLGC is considering starting an Alumnus for former Japan Study Tour Participants and we would be grateful for your participation. Write to us at JST Alumnus mailbox@jlgc.org.uk stating the following: which year you went, who your fellow participants were, the destination, and outcomes together with your name, address, affiliation and organisation.

Many thanks.

topic

An Education in Eating: Japan's School Lunch System

There has been much in the British press over recent years and months discussing the pros and cons of school lunches, not only in relation to quality, but also in the fight against obesity. Certainly, years ago at primary school the plate was piled high with such delicacies as Shepherd's Pie and cabbage, stew and cabbage, and so on. Later in secondary school this changed to a buffet style lunch where the only real choice was what to have with the chips. Things have improved in the UK, but there is still some way to go before we meet similar standards as in other countries.

The introduction of school lunches for 6-12 year olds in Japan was started primarily after the war when the US gave food aid. Happily, with the passage of time the quality of the food has improved and the school lunch is altogether a more slick business. In primary and junior high schools with their own kitchens, strict health and hygiene standards prevail, including the testing of stool samples from workers or anyone entering the kitchens. Many have their own nutritionists holding the same status as teachers, who prepare a monthly menu for the children to take home and show their parents. Each meal is thought out and balanced to exacting standards with nutritional, calorific, vitamin and protein values written on the menus. Should a child be allergic to an ingredient on the menu the parent is then able to provide a substitute, but in general everyone eats the same lunch.

The local authority pays for the electricity, equipment and labour, and subsidises the cost of the meal. Parents pay a nominal sum (less than £2) for each meal. The ingredients are locally sourced with local specialities and seasonal dishes taking priority over western foods, and each child's meal is prepared to government standards to include 33% of the daily calorific intake, 50% of calcium, 40% of protein, vitamins and mineral intake, and only 3g of salt. The success of the Japanese school lunch system is probably due to the way in which the Japanese eat. A standard meal will consist of a bowl of rice, soup, a portion of meat or fish, vegetables and a dessert that will more often be either fruit or yoghurt. The key difference is in the preparation. Japanese food uses a limited number of stocks and sauces, so the best way to prepare the food is from scratch. Thus for us in the UK, shortcuts involving processed or pre-prepared sauces and food can lead to uncontrolled amounts of sugar and salt as has been recently publicised. Controlling the nutrients and vitamins requires food to be prepared as it was before these labour-saving sauces and tins were commonly substituted for vegetables and a knife.

The importance of the school lunch in Japan isn't only in providing a well-balanced meal to fight obesity and provide a good source of nutrition, but also it is used as a teaching aid.

Some schools have a special lunch room, but generally the food is professionally prepared, but put on trolleys and

taken to each classroom at lunchtime. The children in the class rotate as dinner monitors and wear white coats and face masks. All the children wash their hands and then line up to receive their meals. They are encouraged to eat in silence, but since the teacher eats with them, they learn essential lessons in table manners, culture, using chopsticks and recycling packages and leftovers. The milk the children drink comes in either a carton that each child washes out and flattens ready for recycling, or a glass bottle that is washed and recycled. The children are also encouraged to eat all the food on their tray. The dinner monitors take responsibility for clearing up the classroom after lunch before going outside to play.

Many Japanese special days and holidays have unique food associated with them, rather like roast turkey is to Christmas. For example, March 3rd is Girl's Day, and so *chirashizushi* (raw fish served on rice) is the dish of the day. By linking special holidays or recognised days in this way, it connects the school children to the sense of what it is to be Japanese as well as passing on the culture.

While the food has tended to be always Japanese, in recent times western food like spaghetti and French bread has been introduced to add variety to the diet. In areas with a high ethnic Korean population such as Osaka, Korean food is frequently served.

There has been a small but noticeable trend of some parents not paying the fees for the school lunches. Of course the schools do not refuse the child a meal, but the problem of such debt soon mounts up and now threatens the school lunch system in some areas. Without question, some parents have fallen on hard times and genuinely cannot pay for the food, but more often, a number of parents don't feel obliged to pay for the lunches – it is seen as something the school should provide for the child rather than a service which must be paid for. There is a new phrase which has entered Japanese: *monstaa oya* (the monster parent). It specifically means the parent who causes trouble for the school on little or no grounds and non-payment of lunch fees is one area which is increasing.

Even though giving children well-balanced school meals has undoubtedly helped to keep obesity at bay in Japan, the fight is not over yet. In fact it is getting worse. Although the levels of obesity are still remarkably low compared to other developed nations; the problem is on the rise. Some factors such as, there are more working mothers now who rely on processed, pre-prepared food; more children attend after-school clubs and cram schools, which mean they eat later and snack between meals and there is a growing tendency to eat high-fat foods as well as eating in restaurants more often that are contributing to this first world problem of obesity.

In this climate, the well balanced, well structured and well thought out nature of the Japanese school lunch system is more important than ever.

More Information in the UK:

www.yearoffoodandfarming.org.uk

www.letsgetcooking.org.uk

www.defra.gov.uk/farm/policy/sustain/procurement/index.html

Education Reform in Japan Reforming Teacher Management

By Toru Murase, Deputy Director, JLGC

Traditionally many Japanese have had a fervour for education. The educational system formally started in the Meiji Period in 1872, but before then many ordinary children had been going to small private schools called *terakoya* (which numbered around 15,000 in Japan during the early 19th century), or *han* schools which were run by the local feudal government.

More than 70% of the people of *Edo* (Tokyo) were said to have had some schooling. As a lot of the population could read and write, many books for ordinary people were published, and the literacy rate was the best in the world at over 90% in 1900.

The present constitution established after World War II requires the right to be educated, and therefore established compulsory education. In 1947, the Fundamental Law of Education was enacted and this launched the foundation of education in order to promote Japan's redevelopment as a peaceful, democratic and cultured nation. The law improved the national educational standard, and was the driving force for the redevelopment of Japanese society after the war. Despite this, many people have recently insisted that the Japanese education system is not performing as it was intended.

Such problems as violence, truancy, bullying or social withdrawal (*hikikomori*) by pupils are all considered to be social problems. According to research by the government, violence in schools between students has increased considerably from the late 1980s until 2000; the number of violent incidents committed by students in 2000 was about 35,000. After 2000, it has been decreasing but the number of incidents between pupils at primary schools has shown an increase – 2,000 in 2005.

Truancy is defined as circumstances in which pupils do not, or cannot go to school either because of illness or economic reasons, but also for some psychological, emotional, physical or social reason. The number of truants who were absent 30 days a year or more increased from 6,700 (0.47% of the total number of students in Japan) in 1991 to 13,900 (1.23%) in 2001.

Bullying at school drew the attention of the public and has been considered a serious social problem after a bullied student murdered his tormentor in 1984 and then committed suicide in 1986. Statistically the incidents of bullying have decreased, but there are thought to be many unreported cases. In addition, bullying over the internet is increasing.

According to a 2003 report by the OECD, PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) testing reveals that Japanese students still do well under international comparison, although many people claim that motivation for learning has decreased. Education is of course necessary for

the development of a healthy, well-rounded child, and there is some concern that parents are not socially educating their children at home or in the community. Therefore, this deficit means that children do not develop affection and a sense of gratitude for society or others, or love their family and friends. By attending school, and with the support of the parents, children learn to communicate, participate in various activities and experiences, and therefore build character.

Many measures to solve the issue of bullying and education reform have been tried, but many people think that a drastic change is needed to solve the problems.

The British government started education reforms in the 1980s and it has shown steady results. The Japanese government has tackled reform of education as well, and the Fundamental Law of Education was amended in 2006. The amended law defined the purpose of education, made clear the responsibilities of central and local government, strengthened the local education system and presented basic concepts for teachers, parents and communities to achieve better coordination in education. There was particular reference to improving the quality of teachers by stipulating the strengthening of the teacher-training system, and maintenance of proper working conditions.

Japanese primary and high school teachers have to hold a teacher's license. Until now, this license is without a time limit. Aside from a few, most Japanese teachers possess the necessary skills for teaching, and they also need to gain skills and knowledge to cope properly with current developments in teaching. A new system of licensing has been introduced to maintain good teaching levels. Licenses will be limited to 10 years, and after that, the teacher has to gain additional training. If the teacher's abilities have been questioned, an educational expert, a medical professional and the parents will be called upon to judge and if after additional training the teaching does not improve, then it is likely they will be dismissed.

The working hours of the Japanese teacher don't appear to be any longer than those in other countries, in fact, in an international survey by the Japan Teacher Union (2007), Japanese teachers actually did about 18 hours less per month than their American or French counterparts. However, the Japanese teacher has to do many other things aside from teaching. An example might be the instruction of students in clubs, voluntary or student council activities and other activities at the school. Their other responsibilities include mealtime manners, participation in community events or parent activities, and finally careers guidance or supplementary lessons. Consequently, the average overtime is over 2 hours a day according to research by the government, but overtime wages are not paid. A teacher who makes a more serious effort in his job will therefore bear a heavier burden, and this effort should be fairly rewarded. As a result, the number of supervising teachers increased and a system of personal evaluation reform was introduced to evaluate the efforts of teachers to treat quality teachers well, and to improve the overall quality of teachers.

Japan Day Seminar • Cardiff • February 7th, 2008

The Japan Day Seminar will be held in Cardiff on February 7th, 2008. The theme is the Challenges of Regeneration and Redevelopment for Local Authorities, which continues our rolling series of seminars on devolution throughout the UK. **Christopher Hood** (Cardiff University) will chair, and speakers from Wales include, **Gareth Hall** (Welsh Assembly Government) and **Byron Davies** (Cardiff Council). Other speakers are **Director Mutai**, **Dr. Naofumi Nakamura** (Tokyo University) and **Conrad McDonogh** (Panasonic Manufacturing UK Ltd).

The seminar will run from 13.30-17.20 at City Hall, and a reception will be held at the National Museum, Wales between 17.30 and 19.00.

This event is free to attend, but registration is necessary at mailbox@jlgc.org.uk F.A.O.: JDS. Please

include your name, address, organisation, affiliation and whether you will attend the seminar, reception or both events.

Please apply by January 21st, 2008.

“The Welsh Assembly Government is delighted that the Japan Local Government Centre will be holding its Japan Day Seminar in Wales in 2008 and looks forward to this strengthening the links between Wales and Japan.”

“As the capital city for Wales, Cardiff is playing its part in forging important links between Wales and Japan, and it is a great honour to welcome the Japan Local Government Centre to Cardiff. Cardiff Council looks forward to working closely with Japanese colleagues, and helping to build even stronger bonds between our two nations.”



UK-Japan Relations

William Adams (Miura Anjin)



By Takeya Sato, Assistant Director, JLGC

Next year, a series of events to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Amity and Commerce is planned by the British Embassy and British Council under the name of 'UK-Japan 2008'. In this series of articles, we are shining the spotlight on persons who prompted exchange between Europe and Japan. Starting the series is a notable British man who was probably the first man to set foot in Japan: 'The Blue-eyed Samurai' William Adams (Japanese name 'Miura Anjin').

William Adams came to Japan at the beginning of the Edo Period (1600-1867). He was born in Gillingham, Kent and lost his father at age 12. He was apprenticed to a ship builder in Limehouse and learnt shipbuilding and carpentry. After entering the Royal Navy in 1588 he fought in the war against the Spanish Armada under Sir Francis Drake. After that, he got wind from a Dutch sailor that a Dutch trading company was looking for experienced sailors for a voyage to the Far East, so Adams went to Rotterdam and joined the fleet as pilot major. That marked a watershed in his life.

The voyage was made by a fleet of 5 ships, although the only ship which achieved the goal in sailing to the Far East was the one Adams was on, the 'Liefde'. After casting off from Rotterdam on 24th June 1598, one by one, the ships fell to miserable fates: seizure by the Spanish fleet, war with the natives, bad weather or sinking. After nineteen months at sea, the 'Liefde' finally drifted ashore to Japan on 16th March 1600. Of an original 110 crew, only 24 had escaped death by scurvy and dysentery during the severe voyage.

The surviving pilots were initially incarcerated in Osaka, but Adams's skills as a carpenter, mathematician and pilot major appealed to *Tokugawa Ieyasu*, the future *Shogun*. After becoming *Shogun* in 1603, Tokugawa called Adams to *Edo* (modern Tokyo) and appointed him as a diplomatic adviser and interpreter.

Adams requested to return to Britain during his life in Japan a number of times, but his wish was never granted. Before long, he was required by the *Shogun* to build a ship in order to demonstrate his knowledge and experience. He directed the building of a galleon which was the first western vessel in Japan. The village where he completed the vessels was to become what is now Ito, and the city has commemorated this with a small park, the 'Anjin Memorial Park'. Inside the park they have erected a bronze statue honouring his achievements and commemorating the 400th anniversary of ship building in Japan.

For these accomplishments, the *Shogun* promoted Adams to be his direct retainer and thus the first foreign (western) Samurai. He was given a feudal tenure and the Japanese name 'Miura Anjin'. The surname, 'Miura' derives from the Miura peninsula where Adams had his fiefdom and 'Anjin' means a pilot or a navigator. Thus a Kentish man born in Gillingham became the 'Blue-eyed Samurai', and took charge of diplomacy, international commerce, measurement, and the supervising of naval affairs in the *Tokugawa shogunate*. It is because of his efforts that the English East India Company and Dutch East India Company were given authorisation to trade with Japan in those days.

1. The memorial to William Adams in Ito.
2. A Ceremony for Miura Anjin at Yokosuka.

They built English and Dutch trading posts in Hirado, Nagasaki. As you may be aware, the *Tokugawa shogunate* effectively closed Japan to trading, but Hirado was the only port to allow international trading over the 200 year period from 1616 to 1854.

Adams had great influential power over the Japanese government while the *Tokugawa shogun Ieyasu* was alive, but after he died in 1616 and the government embraced the *sakoku* policy (closed door policy) and Adams was gradually driven into a delicate position. By and by he moved his base to Hirado, at first working as a member of the English East India Company, later becoming an independent trader, the owner of the Red Seal Ship. Here Adams carried on foreign trade with countries in Southeast Asia. In the end, he was infected with malaria and died in Japan at the age of 57 in 1620.

In accordance with his will, he was laid to rest on the coast which faces the ocean spreading out to his homeland. Meanwhile, another monument had built for him and his Japanese wife in Yokosuka where he had his fiefdom. Today, the area around the monument has developed into a park.

A relation of William Adams in Gillingham established twin city relationships with Yokosuka and Ito in 1982. Since the authorities have merged to become Medway, they have also taken on the responsibility for the twinning link. These three cities often organise student exchanges and home stays, and the relationship is flourishing.

Yokosuka is a harbour city which has some similarity to Medway concerning its geographical location: located at the entrance to Tokyo Bay, it developed as a military port. Ito is famous as a resort town near the capital. Thus the 'Blue-eyed Samurai', William Adams created a link and became a bridge between the two countries over 400 years after his death.

In Gillingham, the 'Will Adams Festival' has taken place every September as a memorial to his birth and providing good opportunities for international exchange. This year, many Japanese students and volunteers joined the festival on 15th September and demonstrated Japanese drumming and their skills in martial arts.

The Japanese cities are setting up similar festival as well. Ito organises the 'Ito Anjin' festival every August, this year between 8th and 10th. During the festival, ceremonies, parades, and drumming battles are watched and the festival is crowned with 13,000 fireworks. On the other hand, in Yokosuka, a festival, which honours the memory of 'Miura Anjin', is held every April in the park where his monument is located. On this day, citizens get together in the park and remember the man who came all over the way to Japan while enjoying the cherry blossoms. This year, the British Ambassador, the Dutch Ambassador, the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Japan) and the Mayor of Medway were invited to this festival.

More Information:

Medway Council www.medway.gov.uk/

Yokosuka City www.city.yokosuka.kanagawa.jp/e/

Ito City www.city.ito.shizuoka.jp/ito/08english/08english.html

Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Adams_%28sailor%29



Editorial Public Transport that Works

8.5 million commuters use public transport every day in Greater London. Commuters tend to think of the service they receive as, if not good, then certainly acceptable; the better of two evils at least. Certainly, there are frequent complaints about delays, overcrowding, cleanliness, and cost, but hey! At least it gets you from A to B quite efficiently (most of the time).

36 million commuters use public transport daily in Greater Tokyo. Commuters tend to think of the service, if not excellent, then show us something better! The trains are rarely late, they run every couple of minutes during peak times, the cost is reasonable (and usually funded by the employer rather than the individual), and the Japanese are quite good at squeezing onto full trains.

Both countries' systems have their supporters and dissenters. The London tube system although old, dirty and subject to frequent breakdowns, changes of information mid-journey and industrial action is far simpler to understand and navigate between one train line and another. Its maps are iconic and it has the prestige of being, if not the best, then at least the most comprehensive public transport system this country has to offer.

Because of its size, volume of traffic and variety of different rail operators, in Tokyo the reality of navigating between one end of Shinjuku Station, (the world's busiest at 3.31 million commuters every day) and the other proves to be difficult not only in trying to avoid walking into other people, or being herded towards an exit en masse, but in finding the right train line or indeed the right exit.

Busses in Japan, too, are vastly different from here. OK, finding the bus you want, where it goes, and the particular requirements according to the operator aside, once you are actually on the thing, it isn't so difficult provided you are able to hear the announcements. Assuming you are outside the flat-rate area, on boarding the bus, you take a ticket which has a number printed on it. At the front of the bus is a board where the number corresponds to the fare. When you get to your stop (all conveniently named and announced) you look at the board and give the driver the correct fare. This system works extremely well if you know it, the problem is getting to know it.

Outside the capitals of both countries, are the regional rail networks. The best known of these, the Japanese shinkansen (bullet train), is unparalleled in terms of the frequency of its high speed, long distance service, but also has a number of other uniquely

Japanese qualities. On returning to the terminal, the passengers disembark and a hive of activity begins. There are cleaning ladies in smart uniforms waiting at each door; they go in 2 to a carriage and turn all the seats round (to face the direction of travel) replace the head rest protectors, empty all the bins and vacuum all in the 5 minute turn around time.

The ticketing system for train journeys is vastly different from here. For most journeys (unless travelling by Green Car – 1st class or by high speed express, like the shinkansen) there is one fare. You look at the board printed above the banks of ticket machines, find your destination (if you can read Japanese) and underneath it is the price. Put your money in, press the right price, and hey presto your ticket is printed. This you put into the automatic barrier and pass through. If you travel further than the paid fare, or have bought the wrong ticket, you need only pay the difference rather than being punitively punished.

The information given on the platform is excellent and the different rail lines (and trains) are colour coded to make reading the maps easy. The station signs tell you which station is immediately before and after as well as where you are now, and a helpful jingle lets you know when the doors of the train are about to close.

Finally, the whole system is clean, air conditioned and heated even without Big Brother watching you. There is very little litter, practically no graffiti and people obey rules of courtesy – even when being pushed into a carriage by an over-zealous, uniformed and gloved railway employee.

The over-crowding during peak hours has its own set of problems, not least discomfort. *Chikan*, or touching someone in a sexual way, is something which train companies have been attempting to tackle, although the introduction of women only carriages is a double edged sword. By segregating women, those who choose not to enter the women only carriages (or physically cannot as it is too full) are seen as at least accepting, if not wholly consensual of this unwanted attention. It removes the responsibility for this from men, who commit the crime to women, who should make sure they are safe. It doesn't solve the problem but merely hides it from view. It is, however, notoriously difficult to identify the person who may be touching you in a train where bodies are in such close contact and where each person studiously avoids another's eye. In fact, NHK (the BBC of Japan) has recommended that women should hold things over their bottoms, carry a rolled

up a newspaper with which to slap the offending hand if they ever find themselves in that situation. There will always be a problem with false accusations, but in general the numbers of real cases outweigh the false claims. However, society appears to accept the problem without dealing with the root cause.

On the whole, the public transport system in the Greater Tokyo area is fantastic. Our English infrastructure is old and under funded, and although Manchester City has pledged to improve their public transport network before introducing the congestion charge, more cities and areas within the UK really need to look at how the public transport systems can be improved if we really are serious about tackling climate change, carbon emissions and the overall health of the nation.

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 17 designated cities, and also has 7 overseas offices – in Beijing, New York, Paris, Singapore, Seoul, Sydney and London. Each overseas office is responsible for a specific area; the London office covers the United Kingdom, Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden.

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



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