

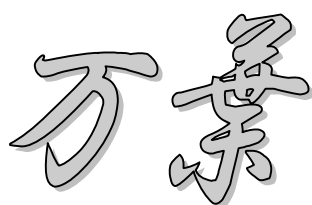
Myriad Leaves

JLGC News Letter

SEPTEMBER 2008



Autumn at Enko-ji Temple, Kyoto city (Picture courtesy of JNTO)



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'.

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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 1,788 municipalities.



Greeting from the new director: *Mr Noboru Fujishima*

Before arriving in London in early July 2008, I worked as a career civil servant in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications in a number of places in the public service of Japan (Tokyo, Hokkaido, Fukuoka, Wakayama and Mie) and was responsible for a many internal matters, such as regional broadcasting policy (covering CATV and community radio), pension fund management, the fire service, the police, research into and development of the lottery system, metropolitan planning, and election administration, as well as serving as a deputy mayor of Yokkaichi city. I have a good knowledge and understanding of Japanese public services and have many friends at both national and local level in Japan. This is my first posting abroad and I am very excited to have this opportunity to further expand my experience and make more new friends. When I was one of the deputy mayors of Yokkaichi city my colleagues and I worked on a new public management and budgeting system at the request of the mayor. As the concept of New Public Management has its origins in the UK, I am very interested in the present local government management-system and adopted policies. The UK has quite a flexible and dynamic system incorporating a trial-and-error approach which I believe works rather well in the public management area. I am convinced the experiences of UK local government, the good as well as the bad, can help to improve Japanese local government management. I am eager to learn more about the UK and hope to eventually transfer my knowledge and experiences to Japan. Of course I also would like to share my knowledge of Japan with the UK.

Finally, I hope to contribute to closer ties between UK and Japanese local government with the aim of improving the welfare of all citizens.

Noboru Fujishima, Director

Hello from Japan: Message from former director Shunsuke Mutai

It may have come as a surprise that I moved back to Japan so suddenly after a year. The truth is I have resigned from my role at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and returned to Nagano prefecture where I was born to prepare for an expected general election in the near future. From the 5th of August, I took up the role as head of the divisional office for the Liberal Democratic Party, the party of government, in the number two constituency of Nagano prefecture. As head of the office it is assumed that I will stand as a candidate in the election.

During my year in the UK, I was able to visit many local authorities and was grateful to be involved in all kinds of events around the 150th anniversary of UK-Japan relations. Thank you for all your great efforts. What I have learnt and experienced in the UK I think can play a great role in the advancement of local governance in Japan.

If you are in Japan, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me.

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Japan-UK Links: Gateshead's Japanese links strengthened

The Mayor of Komatsu in Japan has become the first-ever foreign national to be given the Honorary Freedom of Gateshead. The prestigious honour of Freeman of the Borough of Gateshead was bestowed upon the Mayor of the Japanese city of Komatsu, Toru Nishimura, as a symbol of the ever expanding ties between the two towns on Friday 20 June. Mr Nishimura is the first foreign national ever to be awarded the Freedom of Gateshead. The privilege is being bestowed upon Mr Nishimura, elected Mayor of Komatsu since 1997, for his work and support in building cultural and youth links between the children of both towns.

The Mayor of Gateshead, Councillor Maureen Chaplin, presided over the ceremony at Gateshead Civic Centre. The Leader of Gateshead Council, Councillor Mick Henry, presented Mr Nishimura with a painting and commemorative scroll. Councillor Henry said: "Gateshead's relationship with our Japanese friends has never been stronger. A large part of this strength is down to the commitment of Mayor Nishimura to our

highly successful youth exchange programme and it is very fitting that we award the highest accolade we can to Mayor Nishimura for his work. Speaking on his new status as the first person from outside the UK to become a Freeman of Gateshead Mr Nishimura said: "I am extremely surprised that I have been nominated to receive such a high honour as the Freedom of Gateshead Borough. When I saw the list of the people who have been bestowed with the Honorary Freedom of Gateshead and their extraordinary achievements, I asked myself if I deserved to be bestowed with such an award. I have decided to humbly accept the Freeman of the Borough Award as a sign of my wish that the friendship between Gateshead and Komatsu keeps growing stronger."

London learns from the Japanese Capital: Slice of Tokyo to Give West End a Boost

Crossing one of London's busiest intersections is set to be made easier following a £4million Japanese inspired makeover which will allow shoppers to walk across Oxford Circus diagonally for the first time. Taking a lead from Tokyo's famous Shibuya crossing, renowned for allowing people to cross with ease, Oxford Circus is set to get all its existing barriers and street clutter ripped out, and remodelled to allow pedestrians the freedom to move around quickly - and for the first time diagonally - across the Circus.

Cllr Danny Chalkley, Westminster City Council's Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, said: "We want to make it as easy as possible for the 200million visitors a year who come to the West End to get around on foot, and looking to Japan for ideas makes perfect sense. The parallels between Shibuya district and the West End are stark, apart from both locations being hugely popular, they are also important fashion and entertainment areas. 9 out of 10 visitors to London come to the West End so we have a duty to ensure that it continues to be the world's top shopping destination in 2012."

How Oxford Circus will look after the changes
(Picture and text courtesy of Westminster City Council)



Topic

Reforms to VAT in Japan

The Regional Share

By Nobuki Mochida, Professor of Economics,
University of Tokyo



Few books and articles have been written in English tracing the history of local VAT in Japan. This article highlights the origin of the tax. Japan introduced a multistage value added tax at the national level in April 1989. At the same time, Japan established a consumption transfer tax (shohijoyozei) that transfers a set percentage

(20 percent) of the national consumption tax to prefectures on the basis of objective standards such as population and number of employees. Later, a new coalition government made up of three parties (the Liberal Democratic Party, the Social Democratic Party of Japan, and the New Party Sakigake) abolished the consumption transfer tax in the tax reform of 1994 and established a new local consumption tax at the prefectural level in its place, which has been in place since April 1997.

Japan's local VAT is the product of a compromise between the origin principle and destination principle. The former Ministry of Home Affairs (now the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications) had advocated a 'benefit principle', saying that public services of local government at each stage of distribution contribute to the production of goods and services to be purchased by the final consumer. The ministry therefore argued that local VAT should be assigned to the prefecture of origin. On the other hand, the Ministry of Finance argued that local VAT should be assigned to the prefecture of destination since local VAT is a surcharge on national VAT. As a result of debate, the local consumption tax was established as a product of an "add-and-divide-by-two" compromise between two philosophies.

Japan's local VAT is very close to the Harmonised Sales Tax (HST) currently employed in the three Canadian Atlantic provinces since 1997. An outline of the local VAT is as follows: all prefectures of origin levy the tax, with a uniform rate of 1 % ; under normal circumstances self-assessment and payment will be made to the prefectures, while in the interim self-assessment and payment will be made to the central government tax offices; tax revenues are subsequently assigned to each prefecture on the basis of aggregate consumption statistics in order to reflect the destination principle; after interregional allocation, each prefecture transfers one-half of the tax revenues to municipalities within its jurisdiction based on the size of population and number of employees. In this way, while local governments of origin have the authority to tax, tax revenue is later assigned to local governments of destination, based on final consumption related statistics. In the short time since the birth of the local VAT, tax revenue has already reached JPY 2.5 trillion (£13.5billion) per year (FY2005). As a result, the tax now ranks number two behind enterprise tax on corporations in terms of revenue.

For the past decade, we have listened to a wide range of opinions and ideas about local VAT and how it should be changed for the future. The following provides highlights of the key themes and issues identified. One of the attractions of local VAT is that it is evenly distributed across the regions. The prefectural tax should be more stable than central tax and more evenly distributed among jurisdictions. However, it heavily depended on corporate taxes which are volatile and unevenly distributed among those jurisdictions. Therefore, it is desirable to assign VAT to the local government. The coefficients of

variation for the prefectural Inhabitant tax and the local VAT are 0.28 and 0.09, respectively. Here the coefficient of variation means standard deviation is divided by the mean. Thus, local VAT is relatively evenly distributed across the regions in terms of per capita revenue. In fact, the official report of the tax advisory commission stipulated that "local VAT promises to be a stable and evenly distributed tax in the 21 century."

However, the current system faces several challenges. First, future tax assignment should be decided by taking the allocation of responsibility into consideration. VAT rate is now four percent for central government and 1 percent for local government respectively, but 29.5 percent of central VAT is reserved for the funding pool of fiscal equalisation. The ratio of central to local VAT revenue is 56.4:43.6 consequently. Looking at the expenditure side, the ratio of central to local government in social welfare expenditure is 57:43 in FY2006. This corresponds exactly with the division of VAT revenue. If local government were to play a more important role in social welfare, the share of local VAT needs to be raised so as to reduce the vertical fiscal gap and to strengthen own local revenues.

Second, flexibility in setting the tax rate will give an incentive to local authorities to expand their tax bases. Subnational government works best when citizen-voter-consumers residing in particular jurisdictions pay for what they get from the public sector. However, current local VAT is imposed at a uniform rate; this hinders local autonomy by setting the tax rate centrally. Contrary to traditional wisdom, we have verified in recent work (see reference) that it is possible to allow local government to set rates of VAT independently, within the framework of a revenue-sharing arrangement. To do so, however, requires some changes in the current systems: (1) jurisdiction of origin should impose local VAT on the 'final sales' rather than the 'central VAT liability.' Even if each jurisdiction levies at variable rates, the input tax credit mechanism can work well; (2) tax revenues should be allocated among jurisdictions on the basis of 'revenue potentials' rather than 'final consumption'.

Third, allocation criteria should be improved, aiming to fairly reflect final consumption. Tax revenues are now allocated among prefectures based on designated statistics, including the Census of Commerce and the Survey on Service Industries. The precondition for this allocation is an assumption that final sales in the jurisdiction of destination can be measured successfully by the designated statistics. Local specific consumption statistics comprise three components: retail sales (the Census of Commerce) and business income gained from final consumer (the Survey on Service Industries), population size (National Census), and the number of employees (Establishment and Enterprise Census). Under the current allocation formula however, the discrepancy between local specific consumption statistics and the real picture is not trivial. There are several reasons: local specific consumption indices are derived from designated statistics which cover only 60 percent of final consumption; the remaining 40 percent of the revenue pool is distributed among prefectures on the basis of a crude proxy, such as population and employees; the current formula focuses on 'place of purchase' rather than 'place of consumption'.

For exactness, it is ideal to derive final consumption from an interregional input-output table, as the Harmonised Sales Tax employed in Canada does. Until the interregional input-output table is designated by the government and matured in Japan, an alternative package should be adopted: (1) exempt deductions from final sales in designated statistics; (2) the removal of a share based on the number of employees; (3) an increase in the weight assigned to population and a decrease in the weight assigned to designated statistics.

[Reference]

Mochida, Nobuki (2008) *Fiscal Decentralization and Local Public Finance in Japan*, Routledge, London, Chapter5.

Tokyo 2016 - The bid for the Olympic and Paralympic Games

By Maki Ishida, London 2012 Olympics researcher, seconded from Tokyo Metropolitan Government



The Tokyo 2016 Olympic "Musubi"

Tokyo bids for 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games In August 2005, one month after the International Olympic Committee (IOC) announced London as the host city for the 2012 Olympic Games, Tokyo governor Shintaro Ishihara expressed his willingness to have Tokyo bid for the 2016 Games. A month later he informed the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly and the people of Tokyo and Japan of his decision. This marked the start of

Tokyo's bid to host the 2016 Games which draws inspiration from the successful London bid.

Governor Ishihara outlined in a speech why it is important for Tokyo to host the Games saying, "not only are environmental problems a common theme for the whole world in the 21st century, but so too are the various issues that emerge with aging populations and the advance of urbanisation. To overcome these difficulties, it is essential for the whole world to share a common sense of crisis. The Olympics could provide a key opportunity for this as a venue that unifies the people of the world through sport. As the first city in the world experiencing these challenges on a large scale, Tokyo has been implementing forward-looking policies to deal with them. Against this background, and coupled with its experience of both the bright and dark sides of modern civilization, I believe that Tokyo is the city best fit to provide the world with a solution to these problems utilising the opportunity offered by the Olympics."

There are two important points in the Tokyo bid. The first is to provide people with dreams and aspirations through sport. The second is reviving the global environment by proposing a new urban model. Tokyo is a huge metropolis facing various challenges. The governor's speech reflects the positive intent of Tokyoites to overcome these challenges and to contribute to the rest of Japan, and therefore to contribute to the sustained growth of the world. The plan for the 2016 Olympic Games in Tokyo was made with these positive intentions in mind.

By being staged in the heart of a mature urban metropolis the Tokyo 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games will be a world-first for the world's largest event. Venues will be organised into two highly compact, overlapping zones – the Heritage Venue Zone and the Tokyo Bay Venue Zone – making up the Tokyo Olympic Park. The two zones will contain venue clusters which, for the first time in Olympic history, will be themed around and integrated with major urban features to promote a unique Games experience. The Heritage and Tokyo Bay Venue Zones will overlap at the Musubi Cluster – the very heart of Tokyo and of the Olympic Games – which will contain the Olympic Stadium and the Athletes Village. Over 95% of all venues and athletes will be based within an 8-kilometer radius inside the Tokyo Olympic Park. Travel time from the Athletes Village to any venue within the Olympic Park will be less than 20 minutes. The Olympics in Tokyo will be surrounded by corridors of water and greenery establishing a harmony between nature and urban life. Of the 31 venues, 21 (68%) are existing, of which several were originally built for the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games – a clear demonstration of the power of Olympic Legacy.

On the 4th of June 2008, the IOC shortlisted Tokyo and three other cities from a group of seven as candidate cities for the 2016 Games. Tokyo was ranked highest overall in its evaluation of these seven cities. Immediately after the candidate city

announcement, TOKYO 2016 unveiled a major new feature of its bid – the 'Musubi Promise'. The musubi is a traditional Japanese knot that celebrates the uniting of different elements of life and it is hoped that TOKYO 2016 will unite the many different aspects of life within Japan, the Olympic Movement, and around the world such as old and new Japan, heritage and innovation, Green for 2016 and beyond, the Games and city life, and youth with sport. In effect, TOKYO 2016 will unite the world.

The logo of the TOKYO 2016 Olympics bid integrates the five Olympic colours with colourful and decorative knotted strings. The logo expresses the principles that underpin both the Olympic movement and Tokyo's bid to host the Games of the 31st Olympiad and Paralympic Games in 2016 – the creation of new values, the pioneering of a harmonious coexistence between cities and the natural global environment, and a lasting legacy for future generations. The musubi represents the blending of sport and culture, cities and the natural environment, the present and the future, heritage and innovation, Japan and the world. As a result of the tremendous effort and cooperation of local governments throughout the UK, the 2012 London Games will bring great and lasting benefit to the UK and the rest of the world. Tokyo wishes to emulate London's success and win the bid to become the host city of the 2016 Games.

The bid schedule is as follows:

- February 2009: Submission of the candidature file to the IOC
- March to May 2009: Visits to candidate cities by the 2016 IOC Evaluation Commission
- 2 October 2009: Election of the host city for the Games of the

Below: Plans for the Tokyo 2016 Olympic site



Guest Article

My Japan Study Tour



*Cllr. Brian Silvester
The Worshipful the Mayor of Crewe &
Nantwich, starting a series by past participants*



Participating in the Japan Study Tour is certainly highly recommended. However, participants must be prepared to return with at least some of their pre-conceived ideas of Japan, its government, economy, people and geography changed. I attended for the second time in 2003 and the structure of the programme was very much the same as the first time in 2000. Day one is taken up with keynote speakers on the chosen theme which in 2003 was "the effect of internationalisation on local economies". The day started with a long two hour lecture on the structure of local government in Japan. It was no surprise to learn that some issues are universal – in Japan also there are conflicts between national and local government over-funding and over-spending. Also, small municipalities are being "encouraged" to amalgamate, which may increase efficiency but there is the danger that the new creations are too big to be truly seen as local government. It is also important to ensure that residents are given the chance to have their say before any decisions are made.

The second day was devoted to workshops which allowed for very worthwhile interaction between the delegates and the speakers. However, as expected we did come across some language and communications barriers.

After Tokyo we clambered onto the shinkansen (bullet train) for the next part of the tour and headed for the historic Nara prefecture. The bullet train is everything you expect – unfailingly punctual, comfortable, safe, and of course, very fast (200mph).



Before you visit Japan you imagine that its economy is super efficient. After all, it produces world beating cars, mobile phones, computers, and audio equipment. This is of course true, but having the chance to see the inside workings of Japanese organisations we also witnessed unexpected inefficiency. It was quite clear that there was an overstaffing problem in the public sector, and grandiose public schemes like museums are evident everywhere you go. At one point we even had quite a bit of trouble purchasing tickets for a coach tour – one piece of paper exchanged for another and so on until we finally obtained our elusive tickets.

Having said all this, the Japanese were unfailingly friendly, polite and helpful. There is no visible crime and bicycles were not locked and were still there when the owner came back! One thing that really impressed me about Japan was the cleanliness. Even in the busiest railway or subway station in Tokyo there was no litter to be seen. I have tried to introduce such high standards to Crewe and Nantwich. For example, one idea that I brought back and introduced into Crewe and Nantwich was to install recycling bins in town centres. In the towns we visited recycling is made much easier through having these public recycling bins available, where the public separate rubbish into plastic, steel, aluminium and paper and deposit into the appropriate different coloured bin. Before we introduced this idea, waste in Crewe and Nantwich was not sorted at source at all – it all went into the same bin. However having the waste sorted at source is a lot more efficient and cost effective because the public does the sorting themselves. It also draws the public's attention to the need to recycle and is an example for them to do it when they are at home. Japan is a fascinating, different, beautiful place, and I would recommend you to visit if you can. Japanese people could not be more friendly and helpful and you will return with memories that will last your life time.

Cllr. Brian Silvester, 2000 and 2003 participant

What is the Japan Study Tour?

The Japan Study Tour is an annual programme which aims principally to promote mutual understanding between Japanese and UK local government. JLGC invites applications from senior level staff of British local authorities and associated bodies, to join this ten day study tour to study the current condition and issues related to Japanese local government. Each year's study tour focuses on the following:



- *Observing Japanese public management systems in action.*
- *Studying and discussing specific services in small group sessions.*
- *Experiencing daily family life with a short home stay.*



By exchanging information and engaging in debate regarding the current condition and issues of local governments, the Japan Study Tour functions to make people more aware of the state of local governments in Japan and abroad. In addition the Local Authorities Program held in a host Japanese local government

*can also provide overseas participants with an initial step to future exchange. Firstly the group visits Tokyo to learn about the workings of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, and other related sites in the area. After this the group travels to a region of Japan to observe local authorities and their work; meeting their Japanese counterparts and visiting facilities relevant to the theme of the tour. This part of the tour also includes a short home stay, offering the opportunity to learn first-hand about Japanese culture through a taste of real family life. For more details and to register interest for 2009, please contact **Jason Buckley** on 020 7839 8500 or email buckley@jlgc.org.uk*



UK-Japan Relations

Charles Rennie Mackintosh

William Hardie, author and Mackintosh specialist.



Image ©Annan Gallery

The architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928) was one of those rare artists, like Picasso, who are nourished rather than influenced by others' work. Thus, Mackintosh (especially in his earlier designs) looked with keen interest at a variety of styles – Scottish vernacular, Elizabethan and Italian architecture, the Arts and Crafts of William Morris and his followers – in creating his own. No style, probably, was more important to him than the arts and crafts of Japan. Or to be more accurate, the Japanese aesthetic. One should be wary because, for example, a traditional Japanese interior is sparsely furnished, and Mackintosh was a very original designer of furniture. And Japanese proportion is determined by the humble *tatami*, which is 1:2, whereas Mackintosh used (as Gregh and Page have shown) a very different system, that of the Golden Section, which is 5:8 and determines Mackintosh's most important domestic commission, *The Hill House*. Mackintosh appreciated above all the sparseness of Japanese design.

It was the painter and aesthete Whistler who had said in his *10 O'Clock Lecture* that "The story of the beautiful is already complete – hewn in the marbles of the Parthenon – and brodered, with the birds, upon the fan of Hokusai – at the foot of Fujiyama". From the time of the Meiji Revolution in 1868, Japan devoured Western ideas as voraciously as the Italian courts of the Renaissance had been inspired by the ancients. But the tide was to flow swiftly in the opposite direction. Already Whistler was in Paris in 1856 "when Braquemond 'discovered' Japan in a little volume of Hokusai, used for packing china, and rescued... After that Braquemond had the book always by him". Van Gogh famously used a print by Hiroshige as the basis of one of his own paintings.

Having studied in Japan Mortimer Menpes, Whistler's pupil, adopted wholesale Japanese temple style for the inside of his London house in 1896. That this was all red lacquer and gold seems not to have troubled him. It would have troubled Mackintosh, who used plain timber banding and plastered walls, as in the Japanese *yashiki* (country mansion), in his early domestic masterpiece *Windyhill*, built two years later.

Japonisme took hold quickly in Glasgow. The Glasgow painters Edward Atkinson Hornel and George Henry lived in Japan for eighteen months in 1895-1896, and while their paintings have the look of north Europe about them, they attempted to capture Japanese life. In Hornel's case several of his compositions are Hiroshige – derived.. A mantel in a studio used by 'the Boys' is decorated with Japanese prints, and the Mackintoshes seem likewise to have had Japanese woodcuts. In one of his earliest buildings, the small *Ruchill Street*



Drawing Room in The Mackintosh House. © Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow

Church Hall, Mackintosh seems to lift a Japanese *torii* (an arch to a shrine in Japan) and deposited it in Glasgow where it has become a side door entrance. It is painted green though, not the invariable red!

Born in the same year as Mackintosh, Frank Lloyd Wright unlike the Glasgow architect actually went to Japan, where he had two important public commissions – for the Imperial Hotel and for Jiyugakuen School, both in Tokyo – and a Japanese pupil, the distinguished architect Arata Endo. But perhaps Oscar Wilde had a point and there was really no need to go. Mackintosh was able to consult illustrated books by Edward Morse and particularly by his fellow-Glaswegian the brilliant Dr. Christopher Dresser.



Entrance to Glasgow School of Art © CRM Society

In no building was Mackintosh more visibly thinking of Japan than in his most famous work, *Glasgow School of Art*. On the outside the School of Art is faintly reminiscent of Maybole Castle and Fyvie to the south and east. Montacute House is discernible in the treatment of the north, front elevation; and the west side is *nonpareil*. But there are "Japanese" details both inside and outside, and although used sparingly, these are employed to startling effect. There is in stained glass a pair of door windows which are ostensibly roseballs but resolve themselves as the eyes of a warrior or an actor in a *kabuki* play. This looks

like quotation, perhaps from a woodcut by Kunisada. Less attributable but of overwhelming importance is the timber ceiling of the main room in the School, now called the Mackintosh Gallery, whose lofty beams and trusses evoke the snow-roof of a traditional Japanese merchant's workshop. Here the wooden beams – in a typical example of Mackintosh symbolism – are reminiscent of bows as in archery. This idea is continued in the extraordinary use of wrought iron railings on the exterior to add further symbolism. On the north, main, side the railings are also like so many bows and arrows preparing to shoot distinctly floral-looking arrows into the community. Kimura-Sensei has proved that Japanese *mon*, heraldic seals, were the basis of part of the design. On the west side, the last to be built, the railings are immensely tall, emphasising the defensive rôle of the School, and protecting the main Lecture Theatre, the Library, and the School of Architecture, which are located on this side of the building.

These architectural details show Mackintosh in japoniste mood. Two early works on paper continue this vein. *O Tree* is a pencil study which is of Japanese format (it occupies two pages of a sketchbook) and has the honorific "O" in its title. *In Fairyland* is a finished watercolour in which the girl-subject (in a manner a little like that of the Mackintoshes' friend the stained-glass designer David Gauld) seems merged with the flowers which surround her. She is unmistakably wearing *nemaki*, a light summer kimono.

Later Mackintosh is less Japanese. But after the great Exhibition of 1968 which began a huge revival of interest in his work and that of his immediate circle, Japan has played an important part in Mackintosh's critical fortunes, vying with New York, Toronto, Paris and London to collect his work. (With the collections at the University, the School of Art, and Kelvingrove Museum, Glasgow already possesses an unrivalled representation of Charles Rennie Mackintosh). In Japan, the Museums of Toyota and Hida-Takayama have been especially active collectors of Mackintosh, and several contemporary Japanese architects have been influenced by him. The most famous example is probably Isozaki Arata's *Marilyn* where the film star's name is given to a chair design by Mackintosh.

JET Programme/JETAA

New Participants Starting Summer 2008

JET pre-departure orientation

This year 180 new Assistant Language Teachers (ALT) and 4 Coordinators for International Relations (CIR) from the UK have departed for Japan. The JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching) Programme is one of the largest international exchange programmes in the world with more than 50,000 participants since it began in 1987. The aim of the programme is to promote language teaching in schools and promote local internationalisation.



Before departure for Japan, Predeparture orientation was held at London and Edinburgh Universities. On the 2nd and 3rd July 134 ALTs and 4 CIRs took part in London, while 34 ALTs took part at Edinburgh University on the 7th and 8th of July. During the induction, important notices before departure, explanations about

working in Japan, useful information for living in Japan, as well as easy Japanese lessons were provided. The participants' expectations about living and working in the country grew while getting a good grounding in what would be expected of them.

On the 10th of July, the annual JET Pre-Departure Reception was held at the Embassy of Japan in London, co-hosted by the Embassy and JLGC. Here the new JETs about to depart on their adventures in Japan were able to talk to former participants about their experiences on the programme. JLGC was represented at the event and we had the opportunity to hear the views of past and present participants alike. It is hoped that JET participants will act as a bridge between the UK and Japan while getting the most of living in Japan.



The Total Number of JETs from Selected Participant Countries:

Year	UK	Ireland	France
2008	440	78	18
Germany	US	Canada	Australia
17	2681	529	276

Source: CLAIR, 2008

For more information about the JET Programme, please visit:
<http://www.jlgc.org.uk/en/activities/jet.html>

JETAA Activities



Cliffs on the Jurassic Coast

On the 12th of July, JLGC staff members joined JETAA Wales for a walk on the Glamorgan Heritage Coast. 6 staff from the London office, including former Director Mutai making his last visit to a JETAA Chapter, arrived in Cardiff to meet former JET Programme participants as well as Japanese students studying at university in Wales. After a jiko-shokai (self-introduction) the group headed

off along the coast, stopping off at a very Harry Potter-esque school for a packed lunch and a few photos, before continuing on along the beautiful cliffs, looking over the Bristol Channel from which the north Devon and Somerset coasts can be seen. The weather was mostly blue skies and warm sun, but a little unpredictable towards the end making descending and climbing one steep ravine a challenge in the wind and rain but the pint of the local Brains ale was all the more appreciated at the end of it. JLGC staff and the chapter executive then went on for a meal and exchange of opinion on how to support JETAA Wales in the future. JETAA Wales is a new chapter. Thanks from the JLGC staff who accepted and took part on the invitation from JETAA Wales for a very enjoyable trip go.

The JET Programme Alumni Association (JETAA) was created in 1989 with the purpose of supporting the JET Programme and through its activities promoting a broader and deeper understanding between Japan and the countries participating in the programme. Worldwide with 50,000 alumni this is maybe the largest growing alumni association in the world, now seeing members in two generations with past participants seeing their children join as alumni.

Japan—UK 150 Anniversary Diplomatic Relations' Celebratory Events

Japan Day Seminar – Matlock, Derbyshire – 18th November 2008

The Japan Day Seminar is an annual event hosted by the Japan Local Government Centre in partnership with a host UK local authority to raise awareness of Japan and Japanese local government and provide an opportunity for participants to exchange ideas. This year's seminar will be held in **Matlock, Derbyshire in collaboration with Derbyshire County Council, on the 18th of November**, under the theme of **Sustaining Regeneration through Partnerships in the Changing Economic Climate** and will explore the role of local authorities when working in partnership with private enterprise and other organisations in regenerating the local economy. This year also sees the 10th anniversary of the link between Toyota City, Derbyshire County Council, Derby City Council and South Derbyshire District Council which was based on the establishment of Toyota Motor's operation in the county, which has become one of the region's major employers.

Professor Robin Hambleton of the University of West England, Bristol, will chair the seminar. Speakers on the UK include **Phil Hope**, Regional Minister for East Midlands, **Nick Hodgson**, Chief Executive of Derbyshire County Council, and **Andy Sawford**, Director of the Local Government Information Unit. Speakers on Japan include **Dr Peter Matanle**, Lecturer, University of Sheffield, **Clive Bridge**, Corporate Affairs Director, Toyota Motor Manufacturing UK, and **Noboru Fujishima**, Director of the Japan Local Government Centre.

The seminar will run from 1:30pm to 5:10pm on the 18th of November at County Hall, Matlock, and will be followed by refreshments. It will be free to attend but registration is necessary. Please register by the end of October by emailing mailbox@jlgc.org.uk indicating your name, address, organisation and affiliation.



Editorial

Post war policy in Japan, and Regional Housing Corporations

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translated by Keith Kelly

Post WW2 housing policy in Japan can be broadly divided into three different phases. The first of these was the post war period of great housing shortages, the next period from 1970 when there was sufficient housing but the expectations in quality had risen, then the period up to now from 2000 marking the importance of meeting consumer driven market trends in providing housing stock and the rising need for suitable housing for a maturing society. In the period following from the 1950s, The Housing Loan Corporation financed soft housing loans, mainly to public housing corporations providing council housing to those on low incomes, principally The Japan Housing Corporation providing housing in the large urban areas, then in 1965 to the newly founded local Housing Supply Corporations targeting the provision of housing for middle income earners. This article will explain post war housing policy and the history of one of the four big housing strategies behind the housing corporation strategy, The Local Housing Supply Corporation.

Housing Corporations were established as local public bodies by limitation on the basis of the Regional Corporate Housing Provision Law in order to resolve the problem of the inability of private developers to cope with demand, workers having insufficient savings for the acquisition of their own homes and lack of stability in housing finance, all in the middle of the rising need to promote housing maintenance and homeownership in the regions as well as the large urban areas. Currently there are 57 of these housing corporations throughout the prefectures of Japan, as well as 10 operating within the cities. In accordance with public housing law, the aim is to set up the housing corporations in ensuring "focused efforts throughout areas with considerable lack of housing, to deliver funds to workers with need of housing and, with the practical use of other funds, to offer the supply of residential land so that group housing is provided in a satisfactory residential environment, with stable residential living and an increase in social welfare provision". At first in order to accomplish this objective, the sponsorship of a system called "reserved property purchase" (tsumitate bunjou) was the main focus in carrying out this policy, where within a previously agreed time period the home buyer would systematically deposit payments on the basis of targets, at the end of which the deposit mechanism, the actual deposit, the accumulated interest as well as other funds from finance organisations join together, and ownership of the property is transferred to the occupier. In addition to this, public corporations would also be involved in general residential property, large apartment construction, urban redevelopment projects, the reclamation of building lots, as well as broad roles in prefectural and municipal housing management.

In order to attain the objectives of the established goals, the public corporation concentrated their powers on providing good quality and inexpensive "affordable" housing. However, during the 1990s with the collapse of the financial bubble many

problems came to a head. In particular the depreciation in the value of land due to the bursting of the bubble economy, as well as the deterioration of a great many publicly managed housing corporations holding onto a lot of unsold property. In addition to this, due to the fact that this great number of public corporations had relied heavily on the local authorities for management, and that the downturn in economic conditions meant a cut in finances for the local authority, dark clouds began to hang over this system of semi-governmental corporate management and planning, and the existence itself of the housing corporations. Currently since 2003 housing corporations in Hokkaido, and in 2004 Nagasaki and Chiba prefectures, have come into special arbitration. Also, up until 2005, it was only possible for bankruptcy to be cancelled or for break up of the housing corporation by the Minister for Land, Transport and Infrastructure, but the law was changed and self-dissolution is now possible. It has already been decided that this will happen in Aomori, Iwate and Fukushima prefectures.

A Japanese estate—Takashimadaira "Danchi" in Tokyo city



Compared with 1960, and the establishment of housing corporations, Japanese society has seen a drastic change in its structure, for example a low birthrate and ageing population causing depopulation as well as many changes in the shape of family structure and the diversification of social values. Also, looking at the current narrow sphere of the housing industry, with many business people on the housing market, the demand for new housing plots has significantly decreased. For public corporations the supply of housing needs to conform to current trends in the low birth rate/ageing population, on top of seeking guarantees of a stable management base. Here there is a need to propose housing, in particular for older people, the installation of disabled-access facilities, housing with adequate width, as well meeting the tastes and needs of a diverse new generation of citizens. And bringing all these together, as well as on the points of cost and environment, changing the pattern of demolishing and rebuilding housing with a short service life, making previously built housing stock earthquake proof to current standards, asking to what level renovation should be used, are all becoming big subjects. Reacting to current trends in society, we are seeing the start of housing corporations beginning to propose new and original housing such as plans for environmentally sustainable housing which effectively uses

natural energy, and housing designed around connecting the regeneration of local communities together with addressing the need for sheltered housing for the aged while at the same time providing innovative multipurpose urban spaces that reinforce community cohesion in the context of a rapidly changing society where different groups have different needs.

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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