

# myriad leaves

DECEMBER 2005



Ise Shrine, Mie Prefecture (photo courtesy of Ise Shrine)

万葉

Myriad Leaves introduces Japanese local government and related issues to people working in local government in the UK. Its title comes from the earliest collection of Japanese poetry, and means "thousands of poems" or "thousands of leaves".

 *Season's Greetings  
to all of our Readers*

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## Local Government Initiates Non-Smoking Registration System for Restaurants

Since the early 1990s local governments in Japan have shown initiative in establishing non-smoking areas in city halls, on public transport, parks and other public spaces. The catalyst for many of these changes was the Health Promotion Law. This law, passed in May 2003, states that persons in charge of the management of facilities used by large numbers of people must endeavour to take necessary measures to protect users of these facilities from the dangers of passive smoking. In response to this, Iwate Prefecture in Japan has introduced a registration service whereby restaurants and cafes can apply online to register as either non-smoking or partially non-smoking establishments. The service helps to give restaurants a wider publicity across the prefecture as well as raise awareness of the dangers associated with smoking.

For restaurants that choose to become partially non-smoking the following rules must be adhered to:

1. Smoking and non-smoking areas must be clearly separated
2. Smoke must not spread to the non-smoking areas
3. Ventilation systems in smoking areas must be upgraded

## UNESCO Conference held by Aomori Prefecture

The Shirakami-Sanchi International Conference on World Natural Heritage (SICWNH), a three day conference on preserving UNESCO World Natural Heritage sites, was held in Aomori Prefecture from the 15th to 17th October. A fitting home for the conference being the home of the Shirakami-Sanchi beech forest, added to the UNESCO list in 1993 along with the Yakushima cedar forest. The conference took on special significance due to the adding this July of the Shiretoko Peninsula (situated in Hokkaido, northern Japan) to the list of World Natural Heritage Sites.

The Aomori Prefectural Government worked in collaboration with UNESCO to organise the conference which was attended by delegates from many different countries including China, Australia, India, and the United States.



Shiretoko Peninsula, Hokkaido

The conference ended with all representatives agreeing on and adopting a declaration which pledges efforts to conserve natural heritage sites by promoting cooperation between central and regional governments and local residents.

An example of this in action is the drive towards Eco-Tourism initiated by the Natural Environment Division of the Hokkaido Prefectural Government. Since becoming a World Natural Heritage Site in July the number of visitors to the Shiretoko Peninsula has increased considerably. This has in turn led to an increase in the fears that this will have a detrimental effect on the natural ecosystem.

UNESCO World Heritage sites in Japan	
UNESCO World Natural Heritage Sites (year added)	LOCATION
Shirakami-Sanchi (1993)	Akita, Aomori
Yakushima (1993)	Kagoshima
Shiretoko Peninsula (2005)	Hokkaido
UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Sites (year added)	
Buddhist Monuments in the Horyu-ji Area (1993)	Nara
Himeji Castle (1993)	Hyogo
Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto (Kyoto, Uji and Otsu Cities) (1994)	Kyoto Shiga
Historic Villages of Shirakawa-go and Gokayama (1995)	Gifu, Toyama
Hiroshima Peace Memorial (Genbaku Dome) (1996)	Hiroshima
Itsukushima Shinto Shrine (1996)	Hiroshima
Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara (1998)	Nara
Shrines and Temples of Nikko (1999)	Tochigi
Gusuku Sites and Related Properties of the Kingdom of Ryukyu (2000)	Okinawa
Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kiji Mountain Range (2004)	Mie, Nara, Wakayama

## Sakai City becomes Japan's 15th Designated City

From April of next year Sakai City, situated in Osaka Prefecture in western Japan will become the 15th Designated City in Japan. The decision was made by the Japanese government on the 21st October.

A city can be given this designation if it has a population of over 500,000 and is considered to be an area of major economic and industrial significance. Designated Cities are delegated a great number of the functions normally performed by the prefectural governments, which makes them almost on a par with the prefectures themselves.

To coincide with becoming a Designated City, the Sakai City local government is planning to put a number of plans in place to help develop the running and administration of the city. For example, the "Free City Sakai Renaissance Plan" has been introduced which sets out initiatives to enhance cooperation between the public and private sectors in order to promote the development of more citizen focused local administration. It also aims to put in place long lasting administrative reforms to aid the future development of the city.

A number of further cities, including Niigata and Hamamatsu, are slated to become designated within the next few years.

### Designated Cities in Japan (year)

Kobe (1956)	Sapporo (1972)
Kyoto (1956)	Hiroshima (1980)
Nagoya (1956)	Sendai (1989)
Osaka (1956)	Chiba (1992)
Yokohama (1956)	Saitama (2003)
Kitakyushu (1963)	Shizuoka (2005)
Fukuoka (1972)	Sakai (2006)
Kawasaki (1972)	

**September** JLGc hosted the annual JET Returnees Reception in London

### September-November

JET Programme presentations took place in a number of universities around the UK. The presentations were held in collaboration with the Embassy of Japan.



JET Programme presentation at Swansea University

### October

#### SOLACE Conference

Shigeru Naiki, Director of JLGc, attended the SOLACE (Society of Local Authority Chief Executive and Senior Managers) Annual Conference, held from 18th-20th October at The Edinburgh International Conference Centre.

On October 31st, Director Naiki paid a visit to the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority and met with Ken Night, the Commissioner for LFEPA.



Director Naiki with Commissioner Night

### November

This years three Short-Term Local Government Trainees from Japan successfully completed their period of study in the UK. The trainees took part in a two week course at the Institute of Local Government Studies (University of Birmingham) and also enjoyed placements at Denbighshire County Council and Middlesbrough Council. We would like to express our appreciation to all organisations which supported this years programme.

This years Japan Study Tour was successfully held from 20th-30th November. The twelve participants from a variety of local government related backgrounds spent time in Tokyo and in Okayama finding out about local government in Japan.

## Performance Measurement in Aomori

by Irmelind Kirchner,  
Research and Policy Manager,  
Japan Local Government Centre



### Introduction

Performance measurement and performance management have been around for quite a while in the UK, while in Japan it still is a relatively new concept in the public sector. Although very highly developed in the private sector, it gained currency in central and local government only recently. It has been adopted as part of a slew of measures to modernise local government. Unlike in the UK, where performance management found its culmination in the introduction of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment, any measures that can be regarded as having performance measurement related aspects in Japan are wholly voluntary and introduced by local authorities by their own choice. They are regarded as managerial tools and as such very much in the ownership of the professionals; councillors will often not know any details about such schemes. Aomori Prefecture can stand as an example of schemes that have been introduced in Japan over the last years.

### Outline of Aomori

Aomori Prefecture is located on the northernmost edge of the main Japanese island, Honshu, and connected to the North island of Hokkaido by an undersea rail tunnel, the Seikan tunnel running underneath the Tsugaru channel, the narrow stretch of sea between Honshu and Hokkaido. After quite a number of amalgamations, this prefecture of roughly 1.48 million people (2000) has now 47 municipalities. The agricultural sector is very important in Aomori, in fact the proportion of the population employed in the first sector (agriculture/fisheries) is the highest in Japan. Aomori is the largest producer of apples and garlic in Japan.

The prefectural government has managed to reduce its budget considerably from its highest point in 2000; however its liabilities have continued to grow and the outstanding amount in 2005 was close to being twice the annual budget.

Governor Shingo Mimura (elected in 2003) emphasises a vision of Aomori as a "Society which creates good living conditions". The foundation for this vision is the "Plan for the creation of good living conditions", which the prefecture produced in 2004, part of which is also a performance management system. The plan aims to be a blueprint for getting to grips with the problems of the prefecture as well as developing a sustainable future.

### Performance Management as implemented by Aomori Prefecture

Long-term planning has long been a feature in local government in Japan, which is obliged by law to publish 10 year plans in regular intervals. The "New Long-term General Plan for Aomori" was devised in 1997, the last in a long line of plans begun in 1962. The 1997 plan was meant to last until 2006 as a 10 year plan. However, it was superseded in 2004 by the creation of the "Plan for the creation of good living conditions" which further developed previous themes. The introduction of this new plan provided the opportunity for the adoption of a form of performance measurement. Aomori Prefecture developed its own concept of performance measurement, which has five component parts: the "policy marketing" concept, policy evaluation, project and service evaluation, evaluation of public enterprises and evaluation of research projects and organisations. These five separate activities relate to each other in a hierarchic fashion: policy marketing is at the top, due to the fact that through this process of consultation and co-operation with the citizens the overall shape and thrust of prefectural activities is being determined. The next level is policy evaluation, which takes place within the administrative structure under the overarching goals set by the policy marketing approaches. At the basis are evaluation of projects, administrative activities and services, and slightly separated out are the two areas of evaluation of research projects and organisations and evaluation of public enterprises.

### The "policy marketing" concept

The most interesting aspect of Aomori prefecture's approach is the development of this concept. It tries to combine aspects of marketing – researching a potential market and promoting a product accordingly – with benchmarking; setting goals for achieving certain targets to improve the lives of the citizens. It is based on the assumption that by clarifying the needs of the citizens, appropriate policies can be developed, for which in turn targets can be set, and decisions made as to what actors need to pursue what actions.

The idea was initially mooted by a group of young officials who were aiming to develop a system of more efficient prefectural government, and it was then fully developed by an independent commission composed of academics, officials and citizens.

The first "Policy Marketing Handbook" was published in 2000, based on the following actions:

1. A poll of 5000 Aomori residents, to discern the needs and aspirations of the citizens.
2. Following on from these results and through the use of focus groups, four policy targets were set which express the nature of the society which is aimed at (safety and security; connectedness between people as well as with the area; self expression and realisation; appropriate tax burden)
3. Determination of 27 areas which need to be looked at for the realisation of the above targets (eg, can medical and social services be accessed from all areas within the prefecture easily, can older people continue to live in the environment they feel comfortable in until their death; are there enough possibilities to obtain education according to one's interests and abilities; is the cost of accessing medical and social services appropriate; can people on lower incomes also participate in life-long learning and sports activities; among others.)
4. Setting of 66 performance indicators in those areas
5. Determine the current position of those performance indicators to enable measurement of improvement
6. Agree "numerical goals" for those performance indicators which should be reached through the actions of different actors; these were separated into 8 groups: individuals and families, communities and voluntary organisations, schools, private sector, municipalities, the prefecture, the national government, and other actors. Furthermore, it was determined which of those actors need to contribute to the achievement of those goals.

It becomes clear that this is not a purely administrative scheme trying to measure the performance of the administration. This is a very ambitious undertaking that seeks to improve the lives of the residents in Aomori. Because the aspirations and needs discovered in the first poll cover so many areas, it necessitates close co-operation of many actors – the local government itself, central government as well as the private sector and the developing voluntary sector; and there is the need for individuals and families to understand that they also have a role to play: not all desired outcomes can be achieved by outside actors alone. The concept is explained and put into use through workshops and meetings in many different parts of the prefecture, and every year until 2005 a new version of the handbook was published. All the performance indicators and the actions taken by managers flow from this concept, and in this respect there is a participatory element to the process. However, the other components of the performance management are conducted separately from this and do not necessarily link into it, making the process in its entirety a management-based system.

**Irmelind visited Aomori in September for a 10 day research trip.**

### Aomori City

The capital of the prefecture is the city of the same name, which has adopted its own performance management system, independently of the prefecture. This system is called the "local government management system" and run by a dedicated office. It is close to the concept of performance management as used in a British context, as it is very tightly linked to the budgeting process and its aims are increased efficiency and value for money.



The shape of the administration aspired to is described as: financial and organisational management on the basis of inspection and control, which aims for the most effective outcomes to be achieved with the least expenditure in the pursuit of citizens' increased welfare and the development of the city.

The local government management system has three explicit goals:

1. financial and organisational management emphasising aims and outcomes (clarification of goals from the citizens' viewpoint);
2. Continuous improvement (effectiveness + efficiency + economy = pursuit of quality services delivered speedily and economically);
3. Establishment of an independent, truly participatory society commensurate with devolution.

The following actions should be undertaken by the city as a whole and its employees in the pursuit of these goals:

1. Those implementing services and projects must evaluate their efforts in regard to their usefulness to the citizens and pursue improvement
2. All activities undertaken by city hall should be looked at completely afresh in order to improve them
3. Reform and improvements should be continuous
4. Aims of services and work carried out should be explained in an easily understandable manner
5. Strengthen the decision making function that takes strategic decisions
6. Reform of the culture of the organisation (emphasis on outcomes and speed, always keeping the cost factor in mind) and training of the workforce

The general cycle under which this work is undertaken can be described as the Plan-Do-Check-Action cycle. The evaluation process in Aomori has five different components:

1. Policy evaluation
2. Work and project evaluation
3. Financial evaluation
4. Inventory of all duties
5. Services evaluation

The evaluation cycle takes place across the whole organisation – everybody will have to fill in or contribute to the evaluation forms which are then used in the process of determining next years budget, leading to an immediate reflection of the evaluation outcomes in the budget, therefore fulfilling the function of performance management.

**Mie Prefecture**

Population: 1,870,907

Area: 5,776km<sup>2</sup>

Mie Prefecture, centrally located on Japan's chain of islands belongs both to the Kinki Region, with Osaka at its centre, and the Chubu Region with Nagoya at its centre. The prefectural capital of Mie is Tsu which is roughly 2.5 hours from Tokyo, 1.5 hours from Osaka and Nara, and 50 minutes from Nagoya.

From ancient times, Mie has been a place full of exuberance being home to the huge Ise Shrine, the sanctuary where the ancestral kami (deities) of the Imperial Family are worshiped. In olden times people from all over Japan would congregate at the shrine. Worshipers heading to the shrine, merchants with goods and carriages heading east to Tokyo and west to Osaka, administrators and artisans all flourished at what was a culturally exciting time in Mie.

The focus of Mie Prefecture in olden times were the nineteen historic highways which ran through the area. These were a focal point for travelers to meet and exchange ideas and cultures. Even now there are many stories waiting to be discovered. The landscape alongside the historic highways has changed a lot over the years but the remains of the houses and shops which made up the main



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# Introduction to Mie Prefecture

by Tomoe Murayama, Assistant Director, JLGC

thoroughfare can still be seen in some areas. The Mie Prefectural Government initiated a project in order to encourage people to explore the history and heritage of their local area. The prefectural government distributed walking maps and other information, set up education programmes, and opened up some private buildings holding collections of traditional local products and works to the public.

One of the most famous people to have been born in Mie Prefecture was the great haiku poet of the 17th century, Matsuo Basho. He travelled a great distance all over Japan by foot whilst making stops to compose his haiku. Haiku poetry is a form of traditional Japanese verse composed of three unrhymed lines of five, seven, and five syllables. They traditionally invoke an aspect of nature or the seasons. The wonderfully evocative haiku poems written by Basho illustrate his love of nature and his understanding of the things we all share as human beings. For 10 years now the Mie Prefectural Government has run a successful national haiku contest, and has worked hard to promote haiku in schools. Mie is very proud of its great history of haiku poetry and the people are aware of the importance of education and the handing down of this legacy to the next generation of children.



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If you were to drive along a road near to the small rural town of Kiwa, situated in the southern part of Mie, a sign reading "Memorial for the British Captives" would no doubt catch your eye. During the final years of the Second World War some 300 British captives were sent to work in this copper mining town. The Kiwa annals tell us that the local people very much respected the way in which the British behaved there, showing a great deal of pride and dignity despite the harsh conditions.

Japan is divided into 47 prefectures, which are similar to counties in the UK. Each issue will feature a different prefecture.

Ms. Murayama was seconded to JLGC from Mie Prefecture in 2004

1. The house where Matsuo Basho was born (photo courtesy of Iga-Ueno Cable TV Ltd)
2. Historical sightseeing map
3. Memorial for the British Captives, Kiwa

ROLL OF HONOUR			
Sgl	Hunt James	Prv	Drew John
Prv	Ravden Conrad	Fus	Williamson Albert Bell
Prv	Johnes Leonard	LC	Morris Harold
Prv	Lambeth Albert	Prv	Barber Kenneth
Sgl	Walker Albert	Prv	Einer Sydney
Prv	Dunlop John	Sgl	Griffin Henry
Dr	Walters Frederick	Sgl	Rogers Robert
LC	Root Gordon	LC	Thompson FL

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## Letter from a JET

Alexandra Potter,  
Coordinator for International Relations (CIR)  
Yamaguchi Prefecture

When applying to become a CIR on the JET Programme, I had lots of ideas about what sort of things I might end up doing if I did indeed get the job. Perhaps I would be translating all day, maybe I would be interpreting for government officials, I would probably be giving talks about the U.K. to local residents. As it turns out, my job in Yamaguchi Prefecture entails all that, and even more. In fact, I think that out of all the CIRs I know throughout Japan, my job is the most varied. There are probably many reasons for this, but I think the main ones have to be that I work in the international division at kencho (the prefectural government), which seems to be the first place people come when they want to get in touch with a foreigner, and Yamaguchi is a small prefecture with a great history of, and interest in internationalisation, that only has a few CIRs, which means we're in high demand.



Recognising that I didn't come to Japan to teach English, my office are quick to explain to people who call up wishing to book me to work for a day that I speak Japanese, and usually work in Japanese. The people who call up hoping to borrow me for a day are extremely varied. Most of the talks and presentations that I give are well covered in the local press, so people

who see those often call up to find out more about me and what I do. PR and making myself available are very important parts of my job. This means that I regularly do anything from nursery school visits, during which I interact with the children in a stress-free way (i.e. only teaching them English words if they ask me to), to translating and interpreting, and back to cookery classes for the elderly.

As I have always been a keen cook, I am more than willing to hold cookery classes. Despite the bad press that British food receives over here, my cookery classes are always very popular. There's something rewarding to think that there are probably a few Japanese businessmen sitting down to a meal of shepherd's pie and apple crumble this evening! I believe that food is an easy way of breaking down boundaries between people, and a fun way of getting to know a different culture.

JET = Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme  
CIR = Coordinator of International Relations



I've had toddlers hanging star biscuits on Christmas trees, disabled high school students tossing pancakes on Shrove Tuesday to be eaten with lemon juice and sugar, and OAP's tucking into lemon meringue pie in the summer sun. These experiences, coupled with the explanations I give about U.K. culture, and the pictures I show, have introduced these people to a part of U.K. culture, in a way that is more interesting than me simply telling them about it. Hopefully it has also helped to dispel the myth that British food isn't very good!

I have several projects planned for the next few months, including reports on various areas of Yamaguchi Prefecture, aimed at encouraging, and hopefully assisting foreign residents to travel in this area, and an international photography competition to celebrate the beauty of Yamaguchi. One of the best things about my job is that I get to coordinate events and hold classes in the things that I am interested in. Hopefully this means that some of my enthusiasm will rub off on other people. Events such as cookery classes, and film showings are fantastic ways of introducing a new culture, because not only are they enjoyable, but they are something that I am interested in, and allow me to enjoy some of the things I miss from home, which is an important balance to keep when living and working abroad.

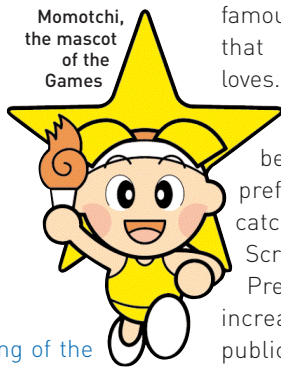
Alexandra Potter

# about jet

The JET Programme was set up by the Japanese government in 1987, with the aim of promoting grass-roots international exchange. The programme enables local authorities in Japan to employ young people from countries all over the world, to work in foreign language education, sports education, and promoting international exchange at the community level. In 2004 over 1000 participants from the UK joined the programme. The programme is administered by CLAIR in Japan.

For further information please visit the JET programme website: [www.jetprogramme.org](http://www.jetprogramme.org)

# The 60th National Sports Festival



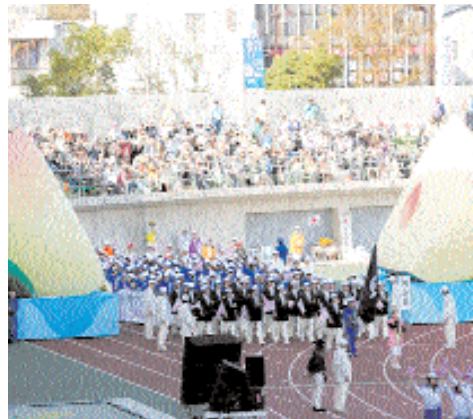
Momotchi, the mascot of the Games

famous children's fable set in Okayama that everyone in Japan knows and loves.

It was important for the event to be supported by the citizens of the prefecture and therefore the catchphrase "Two Million Strong Scrum" (the population of Okayama Prefecture) was thought up to increase support from the general public. A great many people volunteered to help out and many families allowed athletes to stay in their homes during the event.

This year saw the holding of the 60th National Sports Festival in Okayama Prefecture. The National Sports Festival is an annual event which has been held in Japan since 1946. Every year it is hosted by a different prefecture and this year it was the turn of Okayama Prefecture in western Japan. The event is split into two parts, with the Summer Games held from the 9th-13th September, and the Autumn Games held from 22nd-27th October. The event aims to promote sport and regional exchange as well as to raise health awareness amongst the people of Japan.

Okayama held the event this year for the first time since holding the 17th event in 1962. Preparations for the event were begun way back in 1989 when Okayama learnt that it had won the right to hold the event in 2005. Okayama Prefecture has the nickname "The Land of Sunshine" because it enjoys the highest number of clear days in Japan. Therefore when thinking of a name for the Sports Festival there was only one choice: "Land of Sunshine Okayama Sports Festival". As a mascot the character Momotchi was created based on Momotaro (Peach Boy), the



Scenes from the Opening Ceremony of the Games

The four themes in the organisation of the event were:

1. Simplicity and originality
2. Universal Design and the maintaining of the environment
3. The promotion of the culture and history of Okayama Prefecture
4. The use of IT

Following on from the National Sports Festival the 5th National Sports Games for the Disabled was held in November

and this was also a major success. The holding of these events has left Okayama with a large number of high quality sports venues and given the area a better transport and access system. It has also left the people of Okayama with great memories that they'll keep with them forever.

With thanks to the Okayama Prefectural Government

The Japan Local Government Centre is the UK office of CLAIR – the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations. Founded in 1988 with the support of Japan's Ministry of Home Affairs, now the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, CLAIR is a joint organisation of local authorities, working to promote and provide support for local internationalisation.

With its head office in Tokyo, CLAIR has branch offices in each of Japan's 47 prefectures and 14 designated cities, and also has 7 overseas offices – in Beijing, New York, Paris, Singapore, Seoul, Sydney and London. Each overseas office is responsible for a specific area; the London office covers the United Kingdom, Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden.

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



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Issue 49

## MY TIME AS A VOLUNTEER FOR THE NATIONAL SPORTS GAMES FOR THE DISABLED



During the National Sports Games for the Disabled I volunteered as an assistant to provide sign language information to the competitors. There was always something going on in the stadium

and new announcements were being made all of the time. It is of course vital that the competitors are aware of all

the decisions being made by the referee's. The translators all understood the importance of their role and worked tirelessly to communicate every ounce of important detail. It was extremely rewarding for all of the volunteers to be able to share in the joy of the victors through the use of sign language. The National Sports Games for the Disabled held in Okayama Prefecture was a truly memorable event for all involved.

**Hiroko Endo**

### Message From New Editor of Myriad Leaves:

Having joined JLGC as Publications Officer in October of this year, I am very much looking forward to working on future issues of Myriad Leaves. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me with any comments/suggestions for upcoming issues. **Richard Kelner**