

Myriad Leaves

JLGC Newsletter

March 2011

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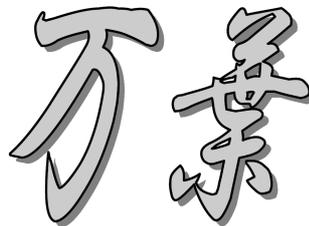
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Myriad Leaves is the English language title for the earliest collection of Japanese poetry, *Manyōshū*. It contains 4,516 *waka* poems, the last of which is dated AD759. There is uncertainty over the intention of the title: it could mean either 'Collection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

“Changes at... ...Myriad Leaves”

This will be the last regular printed edition of Myriad Leaves, although we will send out the newsletter on an ad-hoc basis. JLGC is changing the way it communicates to our partners and friends to web and blog based PR. We will still be sending out regular bulletins with details of our activities and research, and regularly updating our **website** with articles of interest on our **blog**, **Twitter**, and through the **enews** letter delivered straight to registered email addresses. All of these can be accessed via our website at www.jlgc.org.uk

Please visit to sign up and keep in touch and up to date with what is going on in the office. JLGC would like to thank all our contributors over the years for the articles contributed, and many thanks to all readers who have been in touch with their comments and advice on themes and articles.

Local Government in Japan Proposals for Radical Restructuring

Last Summer, proposals for the amendment of the Local Autonomy Law which include some fairly radical ideas on the internal organisation of councils were published. The law as it stands to this day (notwithstanding some minor amendments) was introduced in 1947 and decreed a uniform internal structure for all councils. This means that all councils have a directly elected chief executive (governor for prefectures, mayor for cities, towns and villages which are all together called municipalities) and an equally directly elected council which has no executive role. It is the mayor or governor who introduces the budget and heads the administration, so the role of the elected councillors is limited to approval or rejection of the budget, the introduction of bylaws, and scrutiny. However, the council has a vote of non-confidence to dismiss the chief executive, while the chief executive can dissolve the council and call elections before the end of the electoral term.

The system as it stands has come in for some criticism in recent years, on one hand regarding its uniformity which does not allow for any variation, and on the other hand regarding the power balance between the executive and the council. Demands for change have come from local government itself – for example, to allow councillors to be appointed to executive positions such as deputy mayors – but have also come from within

central government, which has written ‘localism’ and greater devolution on its flag right from the beginning. The proposals on internal council structures for a wide-ranging amendment of the Local Autonomy Law have been put together by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications and include five different models.

The first model aims for a stricter division between the executive and the mayor. It calls for an end to both the vote of no-confidence in the council, and the power to dissolve the council vested in the chief executive. It would give the council the power to convene meetings and strengthen its post-hoc scrutiny function, but leave the power to conclude contracts and appoint personnel entirely in the chief executive’s hands.

Then there are two models which aim at greater integration: one proposes that elected councillors can be appointed to specific executive functions, and one proposes a cabinet made up of elected members, chosen by the chief executive and approved by full council. However cabinet members would still have voting rights in council. The ‘executive cabinet’ model introduces ideas from the English reforms of internal council structures. A further model proposes a ‘management board’, on which not only councillors but also independent experts can serve. This board would take over agreements on contract and capital finance decisions from the full council. And lastly, a final model proposes an assembly in which either all residents can participate, or one that has at least a larger number of members than current elected councils and a more diverse membership, and in which the budget and important bylaws are discussed and decided. This assembly in turn elects a ‘secondary decision-making council’ which will deal with other business, including contracts and capital finance decisions.

It is proposed that councils can implement their chosen model by bylaw, which would function as an internal ‘autonomy charter’ or ‘basic bylaw’; and which would need approval through a citizens’ referendum or be supported by a two-thirds majority in the council. It remains to be seen in what shape or form any of these models will make it into the bill, which is slated to be introduced into parliament next year

JLGC Activities Kawasaki and Sheffield

JLGC Director Noboru Fujishima, Assistant Director Motoko Tsujii and Public Relations Officer Keith Kelly visited Sheffield City Council last September in support of a visit by Kawasaki City Mayor Takao Abe. The visit cemented the 20th anniversary of

the Friendship City relationship between Kawasaki and Sheffield, with the prospect of vibrant city to city links in the future on the grounds of economic cooperation and innovation partnering. The visit was organised by Sheffield City Council Economic Strategy Policy Officer Michael Hellewell and Manager of International Trade and Relations at Creative Sheffield Jo Lavan. Mayor Abe’s group was accompanied by a traditional Japanese music ensemble who performed in the Winter Gardens for the public. Another group in Sheffield with the mayor was the Kawasaki-Sheffield Friendship Delegation (a local citizens group) who attended various events at local schools and hospices, as well as the friendship renewal and signing ceremony with Mayor Abe and Lord Mayor of Sheffield, Alan Law, where there was also another performance in the mayor’s parlour by the ensemble as part of the ceremony.

JLGC Activities TMG Members Try out Boris Bikes

Members of the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly visited Transport for London this year to learn first hand about the operation of the Mayor of London’s Cycle Hire scheme. The six-strong delegation heard from TfL officials about the fundamentals and operation of the scheme, and how it benefits London’s sense of place and aims of a healthier and greener London.

Japan in the UK Yamanashi Brings Koshu Wine to London

Yamanashi Prefectural Government accompanied 14 wineries to London this year in support of efforts to market Japanese “Koshu” white wine, using the UK as a base for entry into the European market. This follows a very successful event last year where industry professionals were introduced to the region for the first time at events promoting the wine varieties as the ideal accompaniment to Japanese food such as sushi and sashimi, the wines being light and suited to food with a delicate and fresh taste.

The prefectural government is actively promoting the area as a wine region in collaboration with the Koshu of Japan Association (KOJ), a cooperative set up by wineries in the prefecture. Japan’s local authorities and regional government have a range of projects supporting marketing Japan’s regional produce and industries overseas, including traditional produce, as well as technology and manufactured goods.



JETAA International delegates, Edinburgh 2010

JETAA International 2010 Edinburgh

October 1-3 2010 saw the JET Alumni Association International Annual General Meeting (AGM) held at The Hub, Edinburgh, Scotland. The JET Programme has around 53,000 alumni who have graduated over the twenty years of the programme's existence. Internationally, around 23,000 alumni are currently registered to more than fifty Alumni Association (JETAA) chapters in more than seventeen countries. Once a year representatives from each country where a JETAA chapter is located and the JETAA International Executive Committee hold an annual general meeting to discuss their activities over the past year and exchange best practice case studies with other chapters, they also elect a new executive committee and create goals for the organisation as a whole for the coming twelve months.

The JET Programme and JETAA have attracted media attention over the past eighteen months as government budgets in Japan have come under pressure in the quest for savings. This year's AGM saw the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR) admitting that there was a need to convince skeptical Japanese tax payer that they are getting value for money from the JET Programme, and from funding its alumni association's activities. Thus, part of the meeting covered JETAA's drive to to communicate its value to its members, the JET Programme and the local community. In summer 2010 Japanese

ministerial visits to Sydney and New York to meet with the JETAA committees based there were presented with a presentation demonstrating 'our worth', and a list of prominent JET Programme alumni which had been assembled by former JETs over the social network LinkedIn.

These activities tied into another prominent topic of the weekend: marketing and web presence. The executive committee members were keen to bring the entire alumni association together under a united slogan and branding scheme. The slogan 'Bringing Japan Back Home' and the colour scheme of orange, black and white for chapter homepages and logos are both examples of the process of

aligning all the chapters into a single organisation. The previous year had also seen the unveiling of an official JETAA International logo to be displayed on all chapter homepages, linking to the international committee website:

Best practice case studies included a presentation from Singapore's country representative, Koh Yun, who gave an outline of the JETAA family's newest chapter. While small at only fifty five members, Singapore stressed that sustainability was one of their key aims along with visibility and participation. The model they proposed for working together with local Japanese organisations also allowed them to partake in community projects, such as cleaning up the local shoreline along with staff from the Japanese Embassy in Singapore. JETAA Singapore's presentation was hailed as being representative of the worth of JETAA and the opportunity it has to make a positive impact on its surroundings.

Unfortunately, due to budget cuts the finance for JETAA International's AGM has been cut for 2011. The meeting concluded with the representatives discussing in regional groups (the Americas, Europe, Australia and Asia) ways to continue regional cooperation at a lower cost. Ideas including scaling the AGM down to a regional level instead of an international one, and the possibility of switching to virtual meetings. Overall, the meeting was a positive one and coincided with the 20th Anniversary of our own JET Alumni Association here in the United Kingdom.

JETAA @ 20 Photo Competition - winners announced

Representatives from JETAA UK, CLAIR and the Embassy of Japan met in London in 2010 to pick the winning entries for the JETAA @ 20 Photo competition. Receiving over 50 entries in total, some of which were to exhibit at the JETAA International Conference in Edinburgh in October 2010, and at the 2011 UK AGM in Birmingham. The winning scenic photo: "Misaka Toge" (right, above) was taken by Matt Young. Matt's photo is a view of Mt. Fuji taken from Misaka Toge which is "behind" Mt. Fuji beyond Lake Kawaguchi. The winning "internalisation" photo (below) was taken by Clare Lunk. In Clare's photo Rebecca Hillis (CIR) is shaking hands with local Kishiwada Danjiri Participants in 2006.



Topic **Disappearing local government – Britain and Japan**

Chris Game, Institute of Local Government Studies (INLOGOV), University of Birmingham

Kyoto City Hall



Let me start, as if I were a councillor, with a declaration of personal interest. I like Japan, including many features of its local government: the constitutionally guaranteed local autonomy, the enhanced powers of designated cities, the use of petitions and local referendums, and, inevitably as a UK observer, the range of local taxes and sources of investment funding. I admire too the genuine Japanese interest – so effectively demonstrated by CLAIR and the JLGC – in alternative ways of ‘doing’ local government, and their readiness to learn from other countries’ practices. But I do occasionally worry – when I see them selecting different signposts from those I would choose.

For instance, with three-quarters of Japan’s municipal assembly members being elected as Independents, I try hard to signpost to Japanese visitors the positive contributions party politics can make to local elections – in stimulating interest and participation, clarifying issues, enhancing accountability – but they mostly remain politely sceptical. Instead, they display what to me is an unhealthy degree of interest in the signposts pointed at our highly centralist regimes of performance management – and in the increasing scale of our ‘local’ government that makes such central direction feasible.

In that last sentence, ‘local’ is in so-called ironic quotation marks – my suggestion being that the adjective no longer serves as an accurate description for some of the governmental units created in England’s latest local authority restructuring. This article will briefly describe that restructuring and its effects, explain my concern about the disappearance of genuinely local government in the UK, and draw some comparisons with municipal mergers in Japan, particularly the Great Heisei Consolidation of recent years.

Both Britain and Japan punctuate their local government histories with major structural reorganisations, and the parallels are closer than is sometimes realised. Japan’s modern local government system is conventionally dated back to the Great Meiji Consolidation and accompanying legislation of 1888-90. 71,000 towns and villages were

merged into an administrative system of 15,800 municipalities; the still surviving prefecture structure was established; and elected municipal assemblies were introduced, headed, in towns and villages, by elected mayors.

Victorian Britain also had its thousands of both multi- and single-purpose local government bodies – parishes, school boards, highway and sanitary districts, poor law unions – albeit alongside a growing number of elected municipal boroughs. There was no Great Salisbury Consolidation, commemorating that era’s Conservative-led coalition Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, but it was his government’s legislation, also from 1888, that created Britain’s comprehensive and democratised structure of county borough, county and district councils.

In Japan, mergers continued steadily through to World War II – prompted by growing urbanisation and latterly by the industrial demands of the war itself – but it was the post-war boosting of municipalities’ educational and social welfare roles that led to the 1953-61 Great Showa Consolidation, which cut the nearly 10,000 municipalities to under 3,500. Many felt that British local government too was already overdue for a major consolidation, but, apart from Londoners, they had to wait until the reorganisation of 1972-74, which reduced 1,827 councils to 521 and created for a few brief years a virtually nationwide two-tier structure.

When the most local tier of principal councils reaches an average population size of 120,000 – a dozen or more times the scale of most Western European local governments (see Table 1) – it might be supposed that there is little scope left for further enlargement. Not in Britain’s case: the Great Unitary Consolidation started within the decade.

In the early 1980s the Thatcher Government decreed that the two-tier systems created by previous Conservative administrations for Greater London and the six English metropolitan counties needed ‘streamlining’. The seven top-tier councils – all, at the time, under Labour control – were abolished, leaving the 33 London boroughs and 36 metropolitan districts as unitary or all-purpose authorities.

The streamlining, managerialist mantra gained converts, across the political spectrum: councils are service providers first, local governments second; two tiers are wasteful and confusing to the public; bigger is more efficient, and therefore better – always. John Major’s Conservative Government was certainly convinced, and in the 1990s attempted to extend the supposed efficiencies of unitary local government across the whole country. In Scotland and Wales, where ministers could impose their preferred solutions, two-tier structures of 65 and 45 councils were replaced by 32 and 22 unitaries respectively. England was more problematic. More consultation was required, the Government’s parliamentary majority was minimal, and, when the Conservatives left office in 1997, only 46 additional unitaries had been introduced, leaving three-quarters of non-metropolitan English residents in their still two-tier counties. Even so, as shown in Table 1, the average population of Great Britain’s ‘most local’ councils was now 145,000.

TABLE 1 The varying scale of local government	Pop. mill.	Lower-tier or most local councils		Total councillors	Citizens per councillor
		Number	Average population		
France	64	36,682 Communes	1,750	515,000	125
Spain	46	8,115 Municipios	5,620	65,000	700
Germany	82	12,339 Gemeinden	6,650	198,000	400
Italy	60	8,101 Comuni	7,400	97,000	600
Netherlands	16	441 Gemeenten	37,280	9,600	1,700
Denmark	5	98 Kommuner	56,040	2,500	2,000
EU 27	499	90,782	5,530		
Gt. Br. (1975)	55	456 Districts, etc.	121,000	25,500	2,150
Gt. Br. (2006)	59	407 Districts, etc.	145,000	21,500	2,750
Gt. Br. (2010)	60	380 Districts, etc.	158,000	20,130	3,000
Japan (1999)	127	3,232 Municipalities	39,000	62,500	2,030
Japan (2010)	128	1,727 Municipalities	74,000	34,000	3,760
Japan (?)	128	1,000 Municipalities	128,000	(?)	(?)

	2010			1972 Councils		2010 Councils		Lost 1972-2010		
	Area kms ²	Pop. '000	C'llors	No.	C'llors	No.	C'llors	Councils	C'llors No.	C'llors %
Bedfordshire: BEDFORD CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE	479 710	153 241	37 66	13	411	3	151	10	260	63
Cheshire: CHESHIRE EAST CHESHIRE WEST and CHESTER	1,554 907	356 324	81 72	33	889	4	269	29	620	70
CORNWALL	3,552	524	123	28	854	1	123	27	731	86
DURHAM	2,228	492	126	23	713	2	179	21	534	75
NORTHUMBERLAND	5,031	307	67	22	618	1	67	21	551	89
SHROPSHIRE	3,202	289	74	15	507	2	128	13	379	75
WILTSHIRE	3,265	450	98	26	694	2	157	24	537	77
Totals/averages			744	160	4,686	15	1,074	145 (91%)	3,612	77
JAPAN – municipalities	Average			3,392 councils	63,000 c'llors	1,727 councils	34,000 c'llors	1,665 (49%)	29,000	46
	217	73	20							

Some of the new unitaries would have defied almost any definition of 'local'. East Riding (Yorkshire) and Herefordshire covered over 900 and 800 square miles (2,330 and 2,070 sq. kms.); Bristol's population was around 400,000. But the Labour Government wanted bigger still, and on April 1, 2009 English local government underwent what ministers proudly called its biggest single-day shake-up for over 40 years. 3.2 million citizens, hitherto governed, and allegedly confused, by 7 county and 37 district councils and their 2,065 councillors, had their lives simplified with just 9 unitary councils and 744 councillors to represent their interests and deal with their concerns – see Table 2. Or, as proudly proclaimed by, of all people, the Minister for Local Government, they now had 35 fewer councils and 1,321 fewer councillors than they had yesterday. Add in the 1972-74 reorganisation, and they had lost, in under four decades, 145 councils and 3,612 councillors – which seems remarkably careless, and remarkably undermining of local democracy.

As shown in Table 2, the Labour Government's particular contribution to the consolidation saga was the 'whole-county' unitary. The case for any scale of unitary local government is contestable. Both common sense and empirical evidence suggest that the relationship between local authority size and optimum performance will vary greatly across the hundreds of different council services. One size cannot possibly fit all services equally efficiently. But, even if you believe fervently in merging a two-tier county-district system into unitaries, there is still the choice of whether the new unitaries should be the existing districts, amalgamations of two or three districts, or the counties. At one time, Labour had favoured district unitaries. The Major Government sought combinations of districts. The Labour Government in 2008/09 chose, in the main, whole-county unitaries – several of which are larger both in area and population than a quarter of the world's sovereign states: country-scale 'localities' represented and governed by a few dozen unsalaried and supposedly part-time councillors.

It is a phenomenon that must strike many observers from, say, the European countries featured in Table 1 as extraordinary. However, it should be noted that, while these latest mergers were certainly launched and driven by government ministers, the actual proposals on which they ruled came from the local authorities themselves – without the heavy financial incentivising needed to propel Japan's Great Heisei Consolidation.

Japan's third wave of mass municipal mergers started in 1999, well before the arrival of whole-county unitaries, and in some ways it has been, if no more rationally planned or evidence-based than Britain's unitarisation, at least a less extreme process. In other ways, though, it has gone even further – though nothing like as far as was initially intended. In 2000, the Government set a symbolic and hugely ambitious target of reducing the then 3,232 municipalities to 1,000 within five years (see Table 1). In the event, with 'help' from central and prefectural government and some substantial tax sweeteners, particularly to small municipalities, 1,821 was reached by 2006, following which a new Municipal Merger Law was

	Number of municipalities/ most local level of principal councils			Population		
	1950	2010	% change	Highest ('000)	Lowest	Average
Denmark	1,390	98	-93	500	2,058	56,000
Japan	10,520	1,727	-84	3,600	200	74,000
UK (Gt. Britain)	2,060	407	-80	1,000	35,000	150,000
Netherlands	1,010	441	-57	750	113	37,000
Germany	4,160	12,339	-49	3,400	5	6,600
Spain	9,210	8,115	-12	3,130	6	5,500
France	38,000	36,682	-3	2,130	0	1,730
Italy	7,780	8,101	+4	2,550	33	7,320

enacted and by April 2010 the number was down to 1,727.

Municipality numbers had declined by almost a half, mainly during the Consolidation. So had the number of assembly members – with the result, shown in the last column of Table 1, that Japan's citizen-councillor/assembly member ratio is now higher even than Britain's. Both ratios ought surely to trouble any democrat, but some of these overall figures can be misleading, for this last consolidation was strikingly uneven in its impact, affecting western Japan and rural areas far more than the east and urban areas. In Hiroshima and Nagasaki prefectures, for example, the number of municipalities fell by over 70%, but in Tokyo and Osaka by less than 4%.

A similar caution is needed in respect of the population size of municipalities, as shown in Table 3. The Heisei Consolidation took the average municipality population to well over 70,000 – higher than in all major western European countries apart from Britain. But Table 3 also shows at least one very small municipality having escaped intact. Aogashima (2008 population: 198) is actually a remote island village – as unique in its way as the six villages in north-east France, destroyed in World War I, but conserved as unpopulated communes as a testament to those who died. Unique, but less extremely exceptional than might be supposed – for, even after Heisei, there are still around 200 municipalities with populations of under 5,000, a quarter under 10,000, and over two-thirds under 50,000.

The extreme exception in Table 3 is clearly Great Britain: just five 'local' authorities over 50,000; none – excluding the *sui generis* Isles of Scilly and the City of London Corporation – under 35,000. Many Japanese municipalities resisted the pressures to merge and lose their identities, as, over the years, have their counterparts in much of southern Europe – recognising that there are other modes of inter-municipal cooperation short of full-scale amalgamation. The French have *communautés*, the Spanish have *mancomunidades*, and the Japanese have their several and often longstanding systems of wide-area administration. In the post-Heisei era, these are likely to grow in importance – and perhaps this time we in the UK should be doing the learning.



Topic

Japan and China — a New Local Relationship *JLGC Assistant Director, Miho Shikano, seconded from Gifu Prefecture*

In Japan as the effects of a low birth rate and the ageing of society continue, and the sluggish economy lingers on, a contraction in the domestic consumer market is anticipated. Japanese local authorities are focusing on exchange with councils overseas, in order to expand and create new markets for Japanese foodstuffs, driving up the existing export of high quality agricultural products and supplies, as well as inviting tourists to come from abroad to visit Japan for sightseeing, and spend money in the regional economy. Neighbouring China which has become the world's second largest economy, exceeding Japan in GDP, is now the key to improving Japan's economic growth and consumer trends.

From ancient times China has had a cultural and historical influence on Japan, and although recent diplomatic ties have been strained, local based exchange is flourishing. Local government international exchange policy is becoming more and more based on sister city relationships and linked cooperation. Japan's sister city links began in 1955 when Nagasaki City linked with the US city of St Paul. By the end of January 2011, there were 338 sister city collaborations with China, American links being the next highest number.

Up until the 1980s Japanese sister city collaboration which had previously been focused on America saw the development of different kinds of links with south east Asia, in particular with China and South Korea. In recent years the focus of local government exchange has been on the basis of sport and culture, but we then saw a change in the acceptance of trainees for technical study and scholastic exchanges in economic fields, with the result that diverse long term relationships and

projects were planned. As well as this, the connections are not just between local governments, but also at the citizens level with the objective of deepening China and Japan's friendship; within the prefectures there are Japan-China societies involved in projects such as reciprocal visits and schools based correspondence such as picture exchanges for children's paintings and continuing overseas student exchanges. Chinese citizens also spend time in Japan cultivating the grassroots basis of exchange and deepen mutual understanding.

Business Support in China

Aichi Prefecture, where Toyota Motors also has its headquarters, is where automobile related industries are at the heart of the manufacturing concentrated in the area. The prefecture has a sister council relationship with Jiangsu Province, north west of the City of Shanghai. Aichi Prefecture together with Jiangsu Province entered into a memorandum in October 2008 concerned with strengthening the economic relationship between the two, and continues to cooperate in assisting the development of advanced business, intellectual property rights and environmental protection. In December 2008 Aichi Prefecture set up a support desk in Jiangsu Province as a point of assistance for advancing the business interests of companies going from the prefecture to China. The objectives of economic exchange with China are based on linking Aichi's development with China's dynamism and growth. As Japanese business develops throughout China, Japanese local authorities (principally prefectures and designated cities) are establishing premises there to assist SMEs and support their growth. The prefectural offices promote cooperation between sister cities as well as gathering the latest data provided by experts on local markets for use by Japanese business. They also have an increasing role in promoting the attractiveness of direct trade, as well as tourism in Japan, and are helping build markets for specialist products.

Shanghai has most offices set up by over twenty local authorities, including Osaka Prefecture, Yokohama City (Government Designated Ordinance, a special city status), Aichi Prefecture, Shizuoka Prefecture and Fukuoka Prefecture with an established office in



the city. Others are in Beijing, Dalian, Tianjin, Hong Kong and other major cities. The relationships with industry are strong, and there are even regional banks from Japan with representative offices which arrange for local businesses from the prefectures to be supported financially in overseas activities. There was a higher number of offices in Shanghai before 2004, when the numbers peaked and then fell, but recently the number has been climbing back up as offices are established to support business specifically. In October 2010, Kyoto Prefecture Government set up a Prefecture Support Centre in China in cooperation with Kyoto Chamber of Commerce. At the Shanghai Industry Support Centre the director has been contracted after gaining much experience in the local market and representing Japanese industry there. The business centres help with support at exhibitions and with negotiations, cooperating with leading businesses in developing markets for their products. The business centre was also established and opened as a point for goods from Kyoto Prefecture to be displayed; manufactured goods, traditional arts and crafts and regional specialities are displayed at the centre which acts as a showroom. Also, to support SME manufacturers within the prefecture with developing business in China, Saitama Prefecture also opened the Saitama-Shanghai Business Centre.

CLAIR's Role

The CLAIR Beijing Office established in recent years has been helping local authorities' with their economic activities, for example support on business trips to China, who have been putting much effort into projects such as tourist promotional activity and market expansion for regional produce, at tourism exhibitions and environmental technology expositions.



	Country	Prefecture	Municipality	Total
1	USA	24	410	434
2	China	34	304	338
3	Korea	9	125	134
4	Australia	6	100	106
5	Canada	1	69	70
6	Brazil	11	46	57
	United Kingdom	1	12	13
	Other countries	46	398	444
	Total	132	1,464	1,596

Other events promoting tourism include seminars held at Chinese schools to teach the appeal of travel in Japan on school organised field trips, with Japanese schools inviting their counterparts to travel to Japan for youth exchange. The aim is twofold as it also targets fostering an affinity with Japan for future repeat visits and tourism.

The JET Programme, which is facilitated by CLAIR in Tokyo (JLGC's parent organisation) recruits participants from China, and in 2010 there were 62 CIRs (Coordinators for International Relations) and 3 ALTs (Assistant Language Teachers). The reason why there are so many recruited from China as CIRs is that they are recruited from friendship cities, employed at the prefectural headquarters in Japan, or in local authorities' international exchange departments and engage in promoting exchange activities, with the result that friendship city activities has now become a major role for JET. CIRs hold Chinese language lessons and cultural seminars for citizens in the prefecture in order to help deepen relations between communities in the two countries. Further, in recent years local authorities have been putting much effort into directly attracting tourist from China, and CIRs produce and translate tourist information material and assists Chinese travel companies on familiarisation trips and with translation, promoting the attractions of the area, and this is another area where local authorities exchange activities are becoming a major focus. As part of Japanese local authorities' policies to make them more internationally focused, as well as deepening cooperation, CLAIR receives overseas staff to research local government in Japan. In 1996 it established the *Local Government Officials Training Programme*, looking at general local finance and administration, the environment, education, tourism, agriculture and economic cooperation. This covers a lot ground and considered to be a high value programme which contributes to mutual development. Up to 2010, 938 people have participated in the programme, with 415 of them from China.

Tourism

Throughout China, the larger cities like Tokyo and Osaka, as well as tourist hotspots like Kyoto are well known, but interests in the regions is growing and Hokkaido in particular is well known. With the filming of a Chinese romantic comedy filmed on location there, after becoming a massive hit the region become renowned in China for its beautiful scenery. Hokkaido also has many hot spring resorts and promoting this with the famous cuisine of the island saw a huge increase on tourist visiting from China.

Otaru City in Hokkaido has helped contribute to the set up of costs of introducing the China UnionPay Card debit system, improving convenience for Chinese tourists, the most widely used debit system in the People's Republic of China. The local authority contributed 50% of the set up costs in financial assistance to hotels and businesses in the city introducing the system.

Further, advanced medical treatment, hot springs and cuisine are being tied together for packages catering to the needs of Chinese consumers as a tourist product. "Medical tourism" is appealing to Chinese tourists and a strategy for Japanese local authorities looking to reinvigorate the local economy. In Fukushima Prefecture which has direct air links with Shanghai, medical facilities within the region are cooperating with the prefectural government in planning medical treatment consumer testing groups, where for example one group of seven Chinese tourists were invited to Koriyama City. The group were able to receive advanced cancer screening at a hospital there, and then able to go on and enjoy the attractions of the region. Fukushima Prefecture plans to appeal to wealthy Chinese consumers by considering the opinions of the participants from this focus group, just one example of looking to cash in on China's increasing global importance.

At the 2010 Shanghai Expo, 25 prefectures from Japan set up exhibitions in order to deepen exchange with China, displaying the attractions of the local authority region to the world. Situated in the centre of Japan, Gifu Prefecture is targeting China with websites in Chinese and inviting prominent journalists to event meetings. In the second half of October 2010, in cooperation with tourism and the agricultural goods industry the prefectural government held a "Gifu Day" at the Japanese Hall of the Shanghai Expo, promoting resources and produce as the "Gifu brand". The "Gifu Presentation" event was held in Shanghai for media companies and local tourist agencies, and an event for local produce where 23 companies and organisations market tested goods with sales of apples, saké, knives, towels,



mineral water and so on. In particular the reaction from consumers to tourist products exhibited at the department stores was good, resulting in the best sales result from this one particular campaign. Gifu Prefecture is analysing and evaluating the results of this promotion and is planning in earnest in order to raise exports to and the number of visitors from China.

In 2007 trade based on import and export meant that China for the first time overtook America as Japan's biggest trade partner. It is vital to continue with economic activity targeting China as the biggest market partner, to revitalise regional economies while continuing to deepen mutual understanding through Japanese local government's friendship activities. It can be said that the trump card for regional economies when it comes to recovering from low growth is developing tourism and through raising tourist consumption. This in turn creates demand for regional produce and has direct economic effects and establishes new employment. Developing agricultural and finished goods can be seen as a way of protecting the farming communities of regions by developing their produce for overseas visitors.

However, there were large scale demonstrations against Japan in 2005 and 2010 in China; despite Japan and China being geographically and culturally close, values and business culture are not the same. Japanese local authorities must ensure continued development of promotion, research and marketing is adequate and a clear strategy is adopted, and local government needs to forge broad cooperation in its initiatives by involving the whole region.



Japan Local Government Centre

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

CLAIR

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

**15 Whitehall, London
SW1A 2DD
United Kingdom
Telephone: 020-7839-8500
Fax: 020-7839-8191
E-mail: mailbox@jlgc.org.uk
www.jlgc.org.uk
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Japan Study Tour 2010: Tokyo, Kyoto and Environmental Policies

Tim Walker, Head of Waste Management,
Belfast City Council

JST 2010 group enjoying some Kyoto hospitality



I'd forgotten how fascinated I'd been with Japan. When I was younger, I wrote to the Japanese Embassy and I remember the excitement when I subsequently received an envelope stuffed full with maps, trade catalogues and such-like: I vividly remember blue-tacking the map of Japan above my bed. Shortly afterwards, my uncle gave me a Japanese "happi" coat which I wore for many years although, now, it seems to have shrunk with the passing of time...

Last year while reading a Spring edition of Local Government News, I came across an advertisement from the Japanese Local Government Centre seeking candidates for its local government exchange and co-operation seminar, due to take place in Tokyo and Kyoto that summer. After getting the necessary approvals from my Council, I was off.

Eleven hours of flying time and a short bus ride later, we arrived in Tokyo where the temperature was in the early 30's, we were introduced to Toshi and Rika our ever-friendly stewards, and Mariko, our charismatic translator and the rest of our small group. Dinner that first evening was full-on; the jetlag and hunger meant there was a certain tension in eating but quite quickly each of us managed to master chopsticks.

The next day, the seminar started with a bang. By 9.30 we were all at the Shinagawa Power Station and, following an interesting presentation on electricity production in Tokyo of which Shinagawa is one of several facilities and which included how district incinerators contributed to the grid, we had a tour of the facility. It was one of the hottest summers on record and the temperature remained in the high 30's with humidity at or above 75% most of the time in both Tokyo and Kyoto (in fact, after visiting Kyoto, our return to Tokyo felt cool).

The next day we heard about the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR) and how it

represented each of the prefectures and municipalities in Japan, and had a brief opportunity to see some of Tokyo's highlights. The next day, we all met up early to travel by *shinkansen* from Tokyo to Kyoto, a distance of 513.6 kilometers, taking 140 minutes... exactly! Following arrival in Kyoto there followed a couple of intense days of meetings, briefings and visits in and around Kyoto in some amazing settings with Mayors and senior officials during which time we moved from our hotel to a traditional *ryokan* (or travelers hotel) where we had our first experience of *onsen* or traditional naked sauna/bathing. I don't do it justice but, having had one, I think the whole group agreed we'd happily do same again given the opportunity.

The next day, we went to see the *Carbon Minus* project – the local production and application of biochar to capture carbon and manage waste. The enthusiasm and knowledge of our host was both impressive and infectious – even in the heat. This was followed by another expansive and delicious meal.

For the culmination of this week's work, and before we went our separate ways for the weekend to a number of host families, we had a stroll through some bamboo forests – which was a chance to get out and see some of the beautiful scenery but it was hot and we all enjoyed an ice cream and some cold tea when we arrived back at the bus.

On our return to the hotel in Kyoto, we unpacked, repacked and departed for what all of us thought was a really engaging part of our seminar – a chance to spend a weekend with a host family and to see and do our own thing. For me, there followed a whirlwind weekend of temples (the city has 17 UNESCO World Heritage Sites), museums which displayed an amazing array of the culture and craft of Japan, eateries of

various types – all of which were cracking. I cannot think of a better way to get beneath the skin of a city than with local knowledge, I learnt the tea ceremony, I played the *koto* and I got to practice the "proper" protocol for entering a temple. Too soon the weekend was over and we bade farewell to our generous hosts and returned to the embrace of our group. Monday morning, we walked to our meeting with the Kyoto Prefecture officials – one of the hottest yet most striking walks I've had to any meeting.

This meeting was a chance for us to reflect on all we'd learnt about local government and environmental services to date during our seminar and from previous research and to develop our understanding through an open-ended question and answer session. Several hours later, we had to call a halt to what was a lively and stimulating session in order to catch the return shinkansen to Tokyo.

On arrival in Tokyo, for the first time during our visit, we had unsupervised free time to explore, go shopping, or whatever: it felt weird. There was a briefing on biochar that afternoon at the British Embassy which I went to. It examined the Carbon Minus project and compared the performance from this trial with other schemes underway elsewhere. The discussion was around how the British and Japanese could work together to commercialise the opportunity for carbon capture, waste management and soil improvement – fascinating stuff. Later that evening, after each of our personal adventures, we all met up for our final dinner together. So ended one of the most interesting, stimulating and thought-provoking work-related experiences I've had to date. I learnt to see several environmental problems from a new perspective, I made friends, I had some challenging culinary experiences and it left a lasting mark on me. Would I do it again, you bet, it was "subarashii".

Details of the 2011/12 Japan Study Tour will be posted in late 2011. The full version of Tim's article can be seen on JLGC's website at: www.jlgc.org.uk/en/japanstudytour.html



The Kyoto International Conference Centre – where the CO2 Kyoto Protocol was signed