

Myriad Leaves

JLGC News Letter

JULY 2008



Tanabata Star-Festival, Sendai City (Picture courtesy of the City of Sendai)



Myriad Leaves is the English language title for the earliest collection of Japanese poetry, *Manyō*. 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.



General:**Farewell Message from Director Mutai:**

Since July of 2007, I have worked at JLGC as director, but now have to suddenly and sadly return to Japan. In the space of a year I have had many rewarding experiences whilst working here. I would like to offer my thanks to all of you for your hospitality during this time. Please contact me if you are in Japan (BZK15415@nifty.com). Please make my successor, Mr Fujishima, feel as welcome - *Shunsuke Mutai*.

Japan-UK 150 Lectures:**Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen:**

On the 10th of July, JLGC and Robert Gordon University successfully held the first of three Japan-UK Memorial Seminars. The seminar, on the life and works of Thomas Blake Glover, featured fascinating talks by Professor Brian Burke-Gaffney of the Nagasaki Institute of Applied Science and Mr Kazuki Kusano of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Europe.

Professor Burke-Gaffney's speech examined the many industries Thomas Glover influenced including Japan's early shipbuilding, arms, mining and beer industries. He also touched on Glover's personality in an attempt to understand how he earned so much respect and influence during his time in Japan, especially in comparison to other Westerners.

Following this was Mr Kusano's speech on the history of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and the Nagasaki shipyards. He examined Thomas Glover's influence in Japanese shipping and also went on to explain the current and future prospects of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries around the world especially in regards to natural energy resources.

JLGC are extremely appreciative to all the people who helped make the Aberdeen seminar a success, especially Professor Burke-Gaffney and Mr Kusano.

There will be two more Japan-UK Memorial Seminars held later in the year. The next one will be in Medway on September 13th looking into the life of William Adams, the first Englishman to arrive in Japan and inspiration for the novel *Shogun*. The third seminar will be in Newcastle on September 22nd examining the life of Sir William Armstrong, an inventor, arms manufacturer, and shipping magnate who had a strong impact on Japan.

In addition to these three seminars, the annual Japan Day Seminar, "Regenerating Regions Through Partnership", will be held in Derbyshire on November 18th.

Japanese Lessons:

JLGC and the Japan Society are co-hosting Japanese Language Lessons (intermediate-level) every Thursday from 15 May to 17 July. The aim is to offer JETAA members,

members of the Japan Society and those who are interested in Japanese, the chance to develop their language skills. The classes are conducted by teachers from the SOAS Japanese Teacher Training Programme, and every lesson a speaker is invited from a Japanese company or a Japan-related organisation. The 12 participants learn polite Japanese expressions that are useful in business situations and then discuss various themes with the lecturers and speakers. Various guests so far have included, Mr Masaki Takahashi *JCCI*, Ms Mai Mizutori, *JICC*, Mr Sandy Sano *Japan England Insurance Services*, Mr Akihiro Tsuchiya *JOOST*, Mr Tetsuya Okuda *JNTO*, Ms Hiromi Uchida *British Museum/the Sainsbury Institute*.

Business Trip Report:**Bradford City Council**

On the 27th and 28th of May as part of office staff training, **writes Assistant Director Ryoko Matsunoshita**, I took part in a study placement at the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council in order to observe local authority processes. On the first day I received an explanation on affairs within the city and current policies being put in place within the city. On the second day, I was given the opportunity to visit a primary school and observe a youth meeting. It was a great opportunity to see projects dealing with current issues.

Business Trip Report:**EU Local Council Conference**

As part of our investigations into Local Government in Europe, **writes Assistant Director Toshihiko Takeda**, I attended the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional European Authorities on the 26th to the 28th of May.

At the meeting, two representatives from Japanese local authorities were invited to speak. First to give a speech was Nara Prefecture Governor Arai on the Chinese head of state's visit to the area as well as talking on the affect of globalization on local government in Japan. Mayor Kurada from Ikeda City (Osaka Prefecture) spoke about sister city activities, giving examples about links with countries such as China and Australia. After the talks, there were many questions from the other attendees from different countries in Europe.

Japan also works with the Council of Europe as an observer from Asia on Human Rights and as a leading democratic nation from the region. Besides Japan, the other four countries participating as observers are the USA, Canada, Mexico and the Vatican. As well as participating in all kinds of meetings, Japan is also cooperating in the Council of Europe programmes such as supporting democratisation in the countries of the former Yugoslavia

Tokyo Shortlisted for 2016 Olympic Games **one of the final four**

On 4 June 2008, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) shortlisted Tokyo and three other cities as Candidate Cities for the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games. TOKYO 2016 said in its press release: 'TOKYO 2016 is proud and delighted that the IOC has recognised its potential to host a unique Olympic and Paralympic Games at the very heart of Japan's capital, by confirming its status as a 2016 Candidate City.' IOC ranked Tokyo the highest or the second highest in ten categories (of all eleven categories) of the seven Applicant Cities.

Tokyo, which last held the Olympic Games in 1964, aims to hold its second games after 52 years. If it is successful, it will follow the London 2012 Games, which will be 64 years after the last London Games, held in 1948. The Japanese government, united in full support of the TOKYO 2016 bidding campaign, sincerely hopes to bring the 2016 Olympics to Japan.

The bid schedule as a candidate city is:

February 2009; Submission of the Candidature File to the IOC. March – May 2009; Visits to Candidate Cities by the 2016 IOC Evaluation Commission. 2nd October 2009; Election of the host city for the Games of the XXXI Olympiad in 2016 by IOC Evaluation Commission (in Copenhagen)



Topic

Reforms to Corporate Enterprise Tax

By Seiki Kimura, Assistant Director, JLGC
Translated by Jason Buckley

The increasing disparity in financial capacity of local authorities and the need to strengthen the financial base of local authorities and protect regions against impoverishment is becoming a pressing issue in Japan. In addition, to encourage further devolution and enhance funding sources in local areas – the basis of devolution – reforms aiming for an evenly distributed stable local tax system are under way. In accordance with this plan and as a temporary measure until the tax system (including consumption tax) is fundamentally reformed, a restructure of local tax in 2008 resulted in the establishment of *local corporate special tax* and the *local corporate special tax transfer scheme*.

In contrast to the United Kingdom, corporate enterprise tax and corporate inhabitants' tax (hereafter called the *two corporate taxes*) in Japan are taxed at local government level (i.e. by prefectures and municipalities). Corporate enterprise tax is levied on corporate earnings, and corporate inhabitants' tax is made up of two components – a levy according to the size of a company, combined with a surtax on corporate tax (national tax).

Although tax revenue from the two corporate taxes flows to areas outside of where a company's headquarters are located through needs-based allocation, it is still influenced by the number and size of businesses in a prefecture. The proportion of industry throughout all 47 prefectures in Japan shows heavy concentration in the greater Tokyo, greater Nagoya, and greater Osaka areas. Tokyo has an especially large share at 16.8%, followed by Osaka prefecture at 7.3%, Aichi prefecture at 6.0%, and Kanagawa prefecture at 5.7% (Ref 1). Assuming a national average of 100 per capita, tax revenue for the two corporate taxes would be highest in the Tokyo metropolitan area at 262.9 and lowest in Nagasaki prefecture at 42.8 (Ref 2) – a difference of approximately 6.8 times. For local tax revenue – again assuming a national average of 100 per capita – the highest would be in the Tokyo metropolitan area at 180.9, and the lowest in Okinawa prefecture at 57.7 (Ref 2) – a difference of approximately 3.1 times.

Within the large disparity in local tax revenue per capita, disparity in tax revenue raised by the two corporate taxes stands out. Accordingly, *local corporate special tax* and the *local corporate special tax transfer scheme* were established as an immediate measure to correct this disparity.

The first step will see a modification in corporate enterprise tax. Half of the revenue from corporate enterprise tax will be transferred from local tax to national tax, and will be known as *local corporate special tax*. The prefectures will conduct the assessment and collection of local corporate special tax, expected to be approximately 2.6 trillion yen (£13 billion) (Ref 3), and the tax collected will be nationalised. Local corporate special tax will commence on the 1st of October 2008.

The *local corporate special tax transfer scheme* is the system

for passing on to the prefectures tax revenue collected by central government as local corporate special tax. The amount of money transferred will depend on the population and the number of people in employment in each prefecture. The local corporate special tax transfer scheme will commence from April 2009.

This system where taxes imposed on corporations are pooled by central government and distributed to the regions is similar to the Business Rate in the United Kingdom. Under this system in Japan, when taking into account the overall reduction in corporate enterprise tax revenue and the income of the local corporate special tax transfer scheme, there will

be certain prefectures which will obviously see a decrease in tax revenue. According to the original preliminary calculation based on 2006 financial year tax revenue, the Department of Internal Affairs and Communications forecast that tax revenue will decrease in seven prefectures. For example, tax revenue is expected to fall by 326.8 billion yen (£1.6 billion) in the Tokyo metropolitan area over one year, 43.3 billion yen (£217 million) in Aichi prefecture, and 22.2 billion yen (£111 million) in Osaka prefecture. An increase in tax revenue is expected in 40

prefectures, including an increase of 48.4 billion yen (£242 million) in Hokkaido prefecture, 31 billion yen (£155 million) in Saitama prefecture, and 19.6 billion yen (£98 million) in Chiba prefecture.

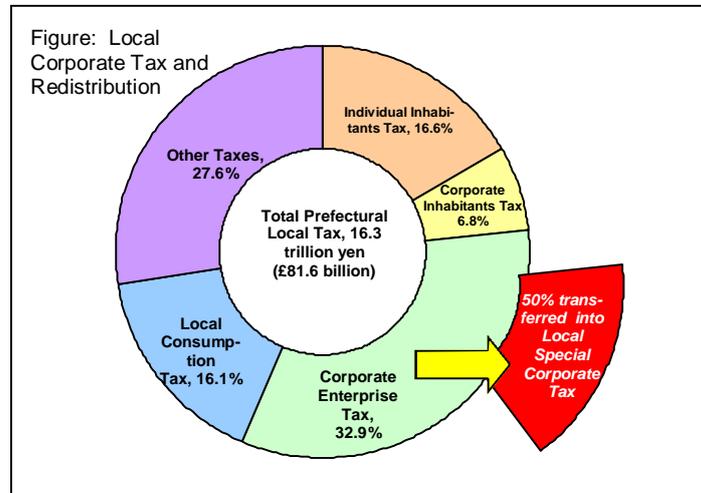
Those prefectures facing a reduction in tax revenue initially opposed this measure, saying that they would be unable to meet the administrative demands of large cities with increasing daytime populations. By maintaining that leaving whole areas to become impoverished might lead to decline throughout the entire country including the larger cities, the government was eventually able to persuade these prefectures into agreement.

The disparity in tax revenue among regions will be somewhat reduced by this tax amendment, but it is only a stopgap measure until fundamental reforms of the tax system (including consumption tax) are carried out. This is because such a system which diverts tax through central government and then redistributes it throughout the regions does not sit well with the principles of devolution.

There are also currently strong calls from local authorities for the transfer of consumption tax revenue to the regions by turning a larger part of consumption tax into local consumption tax. Consumption tax is considered to be relatively evenly distributed country-wide and even resistant to economic downturns. Presently consumption tax (a national tax) is set at 4%, plus 1% for local consumption tax (local tax). In the hope of further propelling devolution the government is striving to increase local tax sources through the expansion of local consumption tax. The fact that local corporate special tax will bring in the same amount of revenue as local consumption tax marks the first stage in increases of the local consumption tax.

References:

- (1) From the website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Bureau of Statistics, "Distribution of Business among the Prefectures", 2006
- (2) Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, "White Paper on Local Finance", 2008
- (3) Calculated at £1 to 200 yen



The Rural Push for Tourism

Strategies to revitalise rural Japan

By Keith Kelly

Japan is a land rich in culture, history and natural beauty. Historically it has had a vibrant and well developed tourist industry within the country, having a wealth of tourist sites, many now with World Heritage status, connected efficiently to a fast transport system. In recent years, there has been a move away from solely focusing on the internal tourist market to looking at ways of bringing in more visitors from abroad. This has seen concrete plans within local and central government in terms of developing the market and targeting foreign visitors into Japan, not only for economic reasons, but also through seeing tourism as an arm of foreign relations. Until recently, the main cities of Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka have been the main destination points for tourists coming from overseas, but with visitors from abroad being seen as an opportunity for economic redevelopment, the regions are taking charge of the issue and putting in plans of action ahead of measures at the central government level. Japan is now seeing an opening up of the regional tourist hotspots, popular in the home market, and now looking for business from abroad.

With Japan's famously fast and reliable *shinkansen* (bullet train), these are becoming easier to access by independent travellers, and compared with rail travel in the UK (especially when comparing value for money in relation to reliability) Japan is a relatively cheap country to travel around. A season ticket like the Japan Rail Pass costs only ¥28,800 (£136) for seven days unlimited travel on all JR trains, including all but the very fastest shinkansen. You could get from Hachinohe in the northernmost of Honshu, the main island of Japan, to Hakata in the far west in about 8 hours (on similar UK train passes for overseas visitors, in this time it would cost you *at least* twice as much to travel half the distance).

This year sees the setting up of the Office of Tourism falling under the umbrella of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport. With tourism now being highlighted by central government, and together with the move to more autonomy within the regions of Japan, prefectural governments have also been independently pro-active ahead of the setting up of the new agency in efforts to increase visitors from abroad. Three prominent examples of prefectures stepping up to the plate are Fukushima, Niigata and Shizuoka.

Fukushima Prefecture Strategic Tourism Office will bring together currently separate prefectural departments for tourism, airports and the prefectural produce strategy team, under the direction of the prefectural office for policy planning and airports.



Odakyu Romancecar from Tokyo to Hakone Yuzawa near Mt Fuji, Kanagawa Prefecture (@JNTO)

Niigata Prefecture has a similar restructuring, bringing together the offices of policy planning and tourism promotion, with additional staffing, into an office of tourism. Shizuoka Prefecture sees the reorganisation of the promotion of industry unit and the tourist convention office into a new tourism office, divided into two component promotional and policy sections, plus additional staff for the promotion of the prefecture amongst visitors from outside Japan.

These are all examples of a trend at the prefectural level within Japan to take responsibility to actively promote the area from a local level, *direct* to the tourist. Japan's abundant natural beauty combined with a highly developed tourist industry, in place by the high standard demanded by the home tourist market, makes Japan a more and more attractive destination despite the long flight from London to Tokyo. This is further accelerated by the strength of currency against the yen, making Japan now cheaper than ever as an appealing tourist destination.

These prefectures with similar action plans are now using the internet as a medium with which to get visitors into Japan. All English language websites offer examples of why Japan and the particular area are such an attractive destination for tourists from the UK; *Fukushima – Travel Guide* (http://www.pref.fukushima.jp/kanko/e_index.html) offers information for the rural prefecture's sights and tourist spots, with details on the area's history, local points of interest, restaurants and hotels, with links for bookings. Fukushima is located on the Pacific coast, 60-90 minutes by super-express north of Tokyo on the Tohoku Shinkansen line. *Enjoy-Niigata* (<http://www.enjoyniigata.com/en/index.html>) offers information on the region's tourist spot for the agricultural region famous for its food, ski resorts and *onsen* (hot-spa resorts) for this prefecture located on the Sea of Japan, only 1 hour away from Tokyo on the shinkansen. *Shizuoka Guide* (<http://www.shizuoka-guide.com/index.asp>) offers a plethora of information on this region, close to Tokyo, well known for green tea and as the gateway to Mount Fuji.

With the coverage surrounding the impending G8 Toyako Summit, the northern island of Hokkaido is promoted at various levels to foreign tourists. Already an increasingly popular destination for snow lovers from Australia, and world renowned for the quality of its powder snow, Hokkaido is also a firm favourite amongst Japanese tourists who are passionate about good fresh food and the great outdoors. Hokkaido is the most northern of the Japanese islands, and itself a single prefecture, the largest prefectural area in Japan, and particularly popular with the domestic tourists as a summer destination for those wanting to escape the oppressive humidity of Tokyo and the Kanto region surrounding the capital in the summer. "*Hokkaido Gururi-tabi*" website (<http://www.visit-hokkaido.jp/en/>) offers comprehensive information on what is on offer in the prefecture. Hokkaido prefecture has formulated comprehensive plans with targets detailing the level the prefectural government wants to raise numbers by, as well as detailing how this figure will be achieved.

The Prefectural planning document states the aims of the project to run for five years with the following targets: raise levels to 1,100,000 visitors by 2012; 50% of visitors returning within five years, country specific marketing campaigns, monitoring region specific marketing in relation to variations in numbers by country and implementing foreign language provision for non Japanese speakers. Airlines and hotel associations have also been consulted in the formulation of these targets by local government.

This is one example of policy similar in a growing number of the prefectures, all pointing to a comprehensive campaign at local and central government level, underlining the view of tourism as a key economic regenerator for the Japanese regions, and as an important element promoting international relations for the country. It's an interesting time to travel in rural Japan, so when will you go?

Guest Article

Visit Japan Campaign

A novel experiment in opening up Japan

By Tetsuya Okuda, Director,
Japan National Tourist Organisation (London)
Translated by Jason Buckley/Keith Kelly

It has been 150 years since Japan open its door to the world after more than 200 years in national isolation during the Edo period from 1603 to 1868. Since its reopening, Japan has participated in international activities and become part of the world, but is now trying something new through its efforts to bring in more international visitors. In 2003, the prime minister at the time, Junichiro Koizumi, heralded the start of the Visit Japan Campaign (VJC) with a goal to double the number of international visitors to Japan by 2010.

In the 21st Century, a country's *soft power* (intelligence, culture, knowledge) is often just as important and influential as *hard power* (military and industrial strength). With its rich nature, traditions, culture, cutting edge technology, *anime*, video games, vibrant youth culture, and more importantly, clean, safe and friendly society, Japan is aiming to be a primary destination in international tourism.

The main reasons Japan is now promoting itself as an international tourist destination are to strengthen its *soft power* and build strong relations with other nations, re-energise the economy, revitalise regional areas, and enrich Japanese people's quality of life through exchanges with people of different backgrounds.

The Visit Japan Campaign targets 12 specific markets – Korea, Taiwan, China, the United States, Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Thailand, Singapore, France, and Germany. In each of these countries there is a JNTO office that provides information and travel material on Japan both online and in print, and supports companies whose business relates to travel to Japan. As a result of these efforts, the number of visitors to Japan increased from 5.2 million in 2003 to 8.4 million in 2007, and continues to grow.

In 2007 there were 220,000 visitors from the UK, the largest number from Europe. However, market research into the UK revealed the following five characteristics: 1. Japan is well known as a country but it is not highly recognised as a tourist destination; 2. there is a misconception that Japan is the most expensive country in the world; 3. the main reason for visiting Japan is to experience traditional culture; 4. most visitors spend their time in big cities like Tokyo and Kyoto; 5. 95% are from England.

JNTO is dealing with these market characteristics in a number of ways. Firstly, to make people more familiar with Japan and increase the likelihood that people notice Visit Japan material, JNTO has been holding a number of events, including ones that take advantage of the current popularity of Japanese food. In addition, JNTO offers sales support to travel agencies that deal in Japan-related travel.



Lake Toyako, Hokkaido Prefecture (©JNTO)



Information in English and other languages is a key part to improving visitors' experiences in Japan (Picture ©JNTO)

This has seen the number of such travel agencies in London increase from a mere 30 prior to the launch of the Visit Japan Campaign to over 130 today.

The *Affordable Japan* pamphlet compares prices between the UK and Japan, showing that Japan is actually somewhat cheap in comparison, and the *Cool Japan – Fusion with Tradition* campaign promotes contemporary Japanese culture. JNTO is also working in partnership with local authorities in Japan to attract British tourists into regional areas, including a campaign over the last two years to promote ski tours. Finally, JNTO is attending as many travel-related events as possible throughout the entire UK in an attempt to attract more visitors from outside England.

The Visit Japan Campaign is now in its 6th year and new VJC promotions are currently being developed. The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, which is also responsible for tourism policies, will be expanded to include an Office of Tourism. It is hoped that this expansion will strengthen ties with the countries that are targeted for the tourism campaign, and give more support to organisations that work with the VJC, especially regional authorities that receive international visitors. Also, while looking at a continued increase in international visitors from the twelve traditional markets, the VJC will also start to target India, Russia and Malaysia, all of whom have large potential as emerging markets.

The VJC will also attempt to increase the number of repeat visitors to Japan, and provide visitors with more choice in what they can do. A number of projects aimed at increasing the level of satisfaction of international visitors are being undertaken throughout the country. One such project is to improve signage and information displays to make it easier for international visitors, whether they be from Asian or Western countries, to travel on their own. Another project will see the use of cash cards and other such services internationalised so international visitors can travel freely without feeling restricted.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of Japan-UK relations and as can be seen in this newsletter, JLGC are planning a number of exchange programs involving UK and Japanese local authorities. JNTO will also be undertaking a number of projects to introduce Japan and develop Japan-UK relations, so we would be honoured to work with local authorities around the UK. JNTO would also like to continue its support for the JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching) Programme which JLGC is involved with. The JET Programme gives people throughout the UK a fantastic opportunity to experience life in Japan.

Finally, please take a look at the Visit Japan and JNTO websites:

<http://www.visitjapan.jp/>

<http://www.jnto.go.jp/>

<http://www.seejapan.co.uk/>

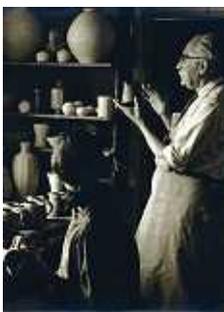
I am sure that Japan would be a wonderful place for you to visit this commemorative year.

UK-Japan Relations

Bernard Leach

Father of Studio Pottery

By Julia Twomlow FRSA,
Director of the Leach Pottery,
St Ives, Clore Fellow 2004-05



'In a world of pots we have been messengers between cultures on opposite sides of the world...'

Bernard Leach to Shoji Hamada

Bernard Leach is widely acknowledged as the father of studio pottery. It would be fair to say that Leach's deep relationship with Japan was the single most important influence in his life and work; indeed the friendships he built there continued throughout his life. In 1966, at the age of 79, Bernard Leach was awarded the Order of the Sacred Treasure Second Class, the highest non-national award in Japan. Eleven years later, just two years before his death, the Japan Foundation awarded him the Japanese equivalent of the Nobel Prize, showing that the affection and respect he held for his adoptive country were mutual.

Bernard Howell Leach was born in Hong Kong in 1887. His father was a lawyer and Leach's mother died at his birth. Brought up by his maternal grandparents who were missionaries, Bernard Leach spent the first four years of his life in Japan before returning to Hong Kong to live with his father and stepmother in 1891. In 1897 he was sent to England for schooling; a homeland he had never seen before. His artistic skills were evident from an early age, particularly in drawing, and in 1903 he enrolled at the Slade School in London to pursue his chosen path as an artist. His stay at the Slade lasted only one year, cut short by his father being diagnosed with cancer of the liver. The young Leach went to be with his father in Bournemouth and made a deathbed promise to his father to give up art and take up a career in banking.

However, Leach could not forsake his true leanings and in 1908, aged 21, Bernard Leach enrolled himself at the London School of Art and resumed his art studies, studying etching under Frank Brangwyn. A year later, he moved back to Japan to start a new life, making friends amongst a group of progressive young Japanese art lovers who called themselves Shirakaba. The foremost of these was Soetsu Yanagi, commonly held now to be the founder of the Mingei (folk art) movement in Japan.

Leach's introduction to the world of ceramics came at a raku party where he and other guests were invited to decorate pre-made pots. Shortly after, he and his friend Tomimoto were introduced to Shigekichi Urano (Kenzan VI). By 1918 Bernard Leach had established his first pottery at Abiko on Yanagi's estate, producing raku, earthenware, stoneware, and porcelain. He was regularly exhibiting his own work and had built himself a reputation in Japan as a thoughtful and sensitive artist potter. In 1919 the pottery at Abiko burned to the ground, everything was lost except for the pots in the kiln. However, the situation was saved by an invitation from the Viscount Kuroda to set up a new pottery in the Viscount's estate also providing experienced potters to assist him. Thus Leach's last year in Japan was a great success and the technical quality of the pots he made during this time exceeded what he had achieved before. A review of his final exhibition in Japan refers to the '2000 pieces (of pottery) which have been turned out from Mr Leach's kiln in Azabu since his last show was held.' An exceptional number of people visited the exhibition and record sales were recorded. To mark his departure from Japan his friends published a booklet entitled *An English Artist in Japan* with tributes by Yanagi, Tomimoto, Kishida and Ryusei. Yanagi wrote 'I consider his position in Japan, and also his position in his own country, to be pregnant with the deepest meaning.' In 1920, after 12 years in Japan, Bernard and Muriel Leach with their

five children set sail for England, accompanied by friend and fellow potter Shoji Hamada.

The Leach family and Hamada headed to St Ives in Cornwall. On the invitation of local philanthropist Frances Horne, Leach and Hamada were to set up a pottery in this small Cornish fishing port. The pottery was initially an independent branch of the St Ives Handicraft Guild, which belonged to Mrs Horne. Leach, with Frances Horne's help, purchased a strip of land by a fast flowing stream on the upper outskirts of the town. Hamada and Leach, with the assistance of local workmen, built a pottery studio and cottage. In 1923, after some short-lived attempts to construct their own wood-burning climbing kiln, they enlisted the help of a professional Japanese kiln-builder who built a three-chambered Japanese climbing kiln on the site. This kiln remained in use until the 1970s and is now a scheduled monument, being the first of its sort to be constructed in the West.

In 1929 Yanagi visited St Ives and in 1934 Leach returned to his beloved Japan for a lecture tour at Yanagi's invitation. During this time he researched his landmark work *A Potter's Book* which was first published in 1946. This seminal book was to influence generations of potters across the world.

In 1938, the Leach Pottery, under his son David Leach's direction, started standard ware production; the making of quality table ware at affordable prices. During the war period production was allowed to continue at the pottery as part of the war effort. Assistants at this time included conscientious objectors such as the artist Patrick Heron. This was to be the mainstay of the Leach Pottery during the war and post-war years.

In 1951, the World Craft Conference was held at Dartington Hall in Devon. Leach's presence there was overwhelming. The thirty six lectures, talks and demonstrations reflected the Leach definition of world crafts, exploring the polarity between East and West. Leach himself lectured that the concerns of contemporary craftsmen are 'the discovery of what roots are'. He said that these roots were discernible in England and Japan 'two countries, protected by a band of water ... the repositories of the cultural context of the continent behind'. At Dartington Leach was again united with his old friends, Yanagi and Hamada; Yanagi was lecturing on Japanese aesthetics and Hamada demonstrating. Leach described himself in this role as 'a kind of link or courier between English and Japanese potters in the interchange between our preindustrial traditions and theirs.' Shortly after Dartington, the trio embarked on a world tour.

Through the last two decades of his life, despite his age and failing sight, Bernard Leach produced a remarkable body of writing based on his thoughts and experience of pottery and the relationship between East and West. In 1962 he published *A Potter in Japan* and in 1962 was awarded a CBE. His international reputation was now firmly established with exhibitions in Japan, Scandinavia and the USA, and worldwide with numerous publications. In 1966 he published *Kenzan and his Traditions* and was awarded the Order of the Sacred Treasure Second Class. In 1974, now aged 87 and having lost his sight, Bernard Leach was awarded the Japanese equivalent of the Nobel Prize by the Japan Foundation. 1977 saw a major retrospective of his work held at the Victoria and Albert Museum. In his final work, *Beyond East and West* published in 1978, he concludes 'I have seen a vision of the Marriage of East and West, and far off down the Halls of Time I heard the echo of a child-like voice. How long? How long? Farewell' B.L.

Bernard Leach died in St Michael's Hospital, in Hayle, Cornwall on 6th May 1979. In Japan, Leach continues to be revered as a westerner who tried to understand Japanese art and culture and as an artist. For Yanagi, Leach's influence on Japanese art was profound, declaring what would be equally true across the world as it was in Japan, 'those who wanted to be potters found a leader in him'



Introducing JETAA Regional Chapters' Activities

JETAA Midlands—Last Year

The UK Midlands Chapter of JET Alumni Association writes *Lynne Davis* has been going since 1998. We have several hundred members and usually hold about five or six events per year which have included:

- **Pre-departure event:** Every year we hold an event to which we invite the newly-appointed JETs who are just about to depart for Japan, so that they have a chance to ask any questions that they haven't already had answered, this year we're also putting together a handout. In the Midlands this event normally takes the form of a meal at a Japanese restaurant. Last year we had a very special event: a **sake workshop** led by Philip Harper, who is the only non-Japanese Master Brewer in Japan and also a British JET alumnus.
- **Ramble:** One of our committee members has undertaken to organise a country walk, probably in the Shropshire area, in late summer/early autumn.
- **Tatton Park:** Two years ago we had a guided tour of the famous Japanese garden at Tatton Park in Cheshire. A return visit is planned for this autumn.
- **Taiko workshop:** This is a perennially popular event that we have run several times in the past. We book the services of Joji Hirota to give us a highly interactive introduction to the art of taiko drumming. Great fun for young and old alike!
- **Japanese cookery night:** One of our members' husbands is a professional chef, and last year they hosted a Japanese cookery event which we are planning to repeat in early 2009.
- **Japanese cinema night:** In the past we have been able to avail ourselves of the facility offered by an arts cinema in Leicester to request that a particular film be shown, subject to the purchase of a certain number of tickets. We are planning to either do this again or organise a film showing at an alternative venue.

Besides organising these events, we hope to develop stronger links with local Japan societies, by inviting their members to join in with our events and reciprocating by attending some of theirs.

Other events include a kimono night, a "Go" workshop, an outing to a taiko concert at Birmingham's Symphony Hall, and various Bonenkai/Shinnenkai and other events at Japanese restaurants. If any readers are interested in joining us for any of our events, please drop us an email at midlands@jetaa.org.uk.

JETAA Wales Walk: From Miyazaki to the Vale of Glamorgan

On 12 July, writes *Peter Willis*, Treasurer, JET AA Wales will be hiking along a beautiful stretch of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast between Llantwit Major and Dunraven Bay, in the picturesque Vale of Glamorgan, just a stone's throw from the capital of Wales, Cardiff. Former JET participants will be joined by JLGC representatives along with local Japanese residents for what promises to be a great day out.

Tourists normally bypass this part of South Wales on their way to The Gower peninsula or Pembrokeshire, but the Vale of Glamorgan offers some of the most dramatic coastline in the country including a gem of a beach at Dunraven Bay. The coast is a site of special scientific interest and characterised by dramatic, clearly stratified sandstone cliffs and breathtaking views.

It is largely the countryside along this coast and the nearby Brecon Beacons, which first attracted me to Wales. I arrived back from Japan in 2006 and returned in search of a new Japan. I had been blessed with living in the idyllic prefecture of Miyazaki for three years and had utterly fallen in love with the natural environment around my home in Miyazaki City: the beaches on the city's doorstep, the twisting mountain roads unfrequented by traffic and the forests full of shrines, waterfalls and pristine gorges. I yearned to find a place that provided the quality of life available in that sunny city.

Looking to find a "British Miyazaki", I came upon Cardiff after exploring a number of different cities within close proximity of the coast and countryside. With a population of a little over 300,000 Cardiff is almost identical in size to Miyazaki. It's a mild part of the country with a certain unhurried charm, which reminded me of "Hyuga jikan." It's also a largely flat city, which means it's a great place to get about by bicycle—another slice of Japan, which I was determined not to let go of. Cardiff possess the Taff Trail—a bike route, which winds all the way from Cardiff Bay to the Brecon Beacons. This reminded me of the bike path I used to follow from the centre of Miyazaki along the Nichinan Kaigan to Cape Toi some 100km away. Even here, a remarkable similarity with the coast outside Cardiff can be found. Just as Aoshima is famous for its surfers and oni no sentakuita (Devil's washboard) so the rocks along the heritage coast have been carved by unrelenting tides resulting in bizarre geometrically uniform rock formations which the Welsh surfers dodge in search of the perfect wave.



Glamorgan Heritage Coast (Peter Willis)

The 150th Anniversary of The Anglo-Japan Treaty of Amity and Commerce

Japan-UK Memorial Seminar Medway, September 13th, 2008

This year is the 150th anniversary of The Anglo-Japan Treaty of Amity and Commerce. To celebrate this, JLGC will be holding a series of seminars about how the relationship has changed and developed over the 150 years with speakers from both Japan and Britain. These seminars will be in Medway (September 13th) and Newcastle (September 22nd) in 2008.

In addition to these seminars, the annual Japan Day Seminar "Regenerating Regions Through Partnership" will also be held in Derbyshire (November 18th, 2008) as one of the Japan-UK Memorial Seminars.

The next seminar, held in Medway on September 13th, 2008, will look into the life of William Adams, the first Englishman to arrive in Japan and inspiration for the novel *Shogun*. The following seminar will be in Newcastle on September 22nd examining the life of Sir William Armstrong, an inventor, arms manufacturer, and shipping magnate who had a strong impact on Japan. This event is free to attend, but registration is necessary via email mailbox@jlgc.org.uk F.A.O.:J-UKMS. Please include your name, address, organisation, affiliation and whether you will attend the seminar, reception or both events.

Further information about the seminars in September will be given in the next issue. We will also update the information about these seminars on our website in July. Please visit www.jlgc.org.uk/.



Editorial

Japan Aims at Worldwide Disaster Prevention

By Toru Murase, Deputy Director, JLGC
Translated by Jason Buckley

On the 14th of June this year an earthquake struck the Tohoku district of Japan affecting Iwate and Miyagi prefectures. As of the 23rd of June 12 people are dead, 10 are missing, and 353 are injured. Falling rocks and landslides accounted for many of the deaths and there were also cases where people died in traffic accidents after leaving their houses frightened, and people fishing in rocky areas falling into the sea.

In the aftermath of this earthquake both the swift response of authorities and Japan's renowned state-of-the-art technology (the country-wide instantaneous warning system known as J-ALERT and emergency earthquake warning system) was the focus of much attention.

The emergency earthquake warning system analyses an earthquake's time lag detected at observation points near the epicenter and provides emergency workers and the general public information such as the strength of tremors throughout the country. Earthquakes, particularly strong ones, can take from several seconds to almost a minute to arrive. This system ensures that people are able to take shelter, deal with fires, and find a safe place to stop their car before the earthquake strikes. It came into use for high-level users such as emergency services, railroad companies, and local authorities in 2004, and was officially introduced to the general public in October 2007. Information on the June 14 earthquake reached Sendai city, Miyagi prefecture, more than 10 seconds before the first major tremor.

J-ALERT is a satellite-based warning system that allows the Fire and Disaster Management Agency to automatically send out warnings and updates on tsunamis and earthquakes to residents.

These systems make it possible for residents to be informed of an emergency more quickly and were used very effectively in the Tohoku earthquake where the Fire and Disaster Management Agency was able to set up the disaster countermeasures office at 8:23am, the same time that the earthquake struck. The emergency earthquake warning system, which predicts the size of an earthquake's tremors across the country, was able to judge that tremors would be big enough to raise the alarm. Fire brigades were then immediately dispatched to locate collapsed houses, keep watch, and help residents take refuge.

The fire and rescue team's use of helicopters was also worthy of attention. In mid-morning on the 14th rescue helicopters from neighbouring prefectures flew out to affected areas at the request of the Fire and Disaster Management Agency. The first rescue helicopters to take off did so a mere one hour after the earthquake struck, and by 1pm 140 ground rescue units and 13 rescue helicopters from 14 prefectures had been dispatched.

Thanks to the use of helicopters people trapped in vehicles and overturned buses as well as those isolated from roads being cut off were able to be rescued and taken to safety. From the 14th to the 17th of June a total number of 51 helicopters were dispatched rescuing 167 people 164 rescued on the 14th alone. A further 400 people were rescued through other means.

Rescue operations must be carried out within 72 hours of a disaster so it is believed that this fast response minimised many of the potential casualties.



Damage to roads, picture from Kurihara City, Miyagi Prefecture.

Japan has seen many devastating earthquakes in its time, including the Great Kanto Earthquake 85 years ago that killed 140,000, and the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake 15 years ago that killed over 6400. There is also a likelihood of another devastating earthquake in the future.

It is impossible to prevent earthquakes from occurring, but through the cooperation of all levels of government there has been continued research into and improvement on systems to reduce earthquake damage and quickly and effectively deal with earthquake victims. Countermeasures are also being individually undertaken for areas thought to be most at risk from an earthquake.

Citizens are provided with the necessary information and knowledge to deal with an earthquake and houses and public buildings are being made more earthquake resistant. Efforts are also underway to highlight the importance of volunteers, not-for-profit organisations, and businesses at the time of a disaster and plans based on the anticipated damage of an earthquake are being drawn up so rescue organisations have something to work with before actual damage is confirmed. This anticipated damage takes into account not only the size of an earthquake but also the characteristics of every plot of land, house and building in the country.

Japan's rescue operations are not only limited to within Japan. On the 12th of May a 7.9 magnitude earthquake struck Sichuan province in China. According to the Chinese government as of the 23rd of June 69,000 are confirmed dead, 350,000 are injured and over 17,000 missing.

After the earthquake struck the Japanese government offered to send out an international disaster relief team. This was declined at first by the Chinese government but was subsequently accepted on the 15th of May, and on this day and the following a search and rescue team was dispatched. The relief team was unable to properly conduct rescue operations due to the delayed start, but worked all night collecting dead bodies. On the 20th a medical team eventually replaced the rescue team who headed back to Japan.

This type of quick and proactive response was greatly appreciated by the Chinese people and in an opinion poll taken in China 84% responded saying they had a positive image of Japan a significant result for a country with a history of anti-Japanese sentiment. Japan, which frequently suffers from earthquakes, is considered by many to be the best in the world in earthquake response and hopes to become known as the world's fire chief.

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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