

# myriad leaves

SEPTEMBER 2006



Choshi Electric Railway, Choshi City, Chiba Prefecture

万葉

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

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The Council of Local Authorities  
for International Relations  
Founded in 1988, CLAIR is a joint  
organisation representing Japan's  
47 prefectures, 14 designated cities  
and 2,715 municipalities.



## Eating in the Classroom

In recent years both the UK and Japan has seen an increase in the number of children heading to school without eating a proper breakfast. This can lead to health problems and excess snacking throughout the day on less healthy sugary foods. It also leads to problems such as poor concentration during lesson time.

One local authority in Japan has taken action in an attempt to combat this bad habit and to promote the importance of starting the day with a healthy and nutritious breakfast. The Board of Education in Misaki Town (Okayama Prefecture, western Japan) recently initiated a scheme whereby all primary and middle school students are offered breakfast once they arrive at school.

The aim of the scheme is of course to teach children of the importance of taking breakfast in the morning, but also to impress upon the children's parents exactly how vital it is to the healthy development of their children. This is the first time a Board of Education in Japan has taken the initiative in a matter of this kind.

Milk, yoghurt, and cheese is available to the students from when they arrive at school and is free for the children to take right up until the first mid-morning break.

The food on offer is all locally produced and thus the Board of Education is assisting the local agricultural industry at the same time as raising the nutritional standards of the town's children. With this new scheme already being deemed a success, it is highly likely that other local authorities will follow on from Misaki and introduce similar programmes.

## CLAIR Provides Emergency Information



The number of foreign residents living in Japan has increased greatly in recent years and with this a large number of local authorities are focusing on the provision of foreign language information to enable these residents to become accustomed to life in Japan as easily as possible. The Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR), recently announced plans to introduce a further level of foreign language support to foreign residents in Japan.

These plans came out of recommendations made in a report issued by CLAIR for the wider distribution of foreign language materials relating to the promotion of multiculturalism in Japan.

Japan is a country which is prone to a number of natural disasters such as earthquakes, as well as extreme weather conditions such as typhoons. It is in the area of support at times like this that the extra foreign language guidance is to be provided. CLAIR has set up a tool which can be used by local authorities in Japan which enables them to easily create foreign language notices for the benefit of foreign residents. The programme can create such notices in a total of six different languages (English, Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, and Filipino).

There are three tools in total and they are all available for download from the CLAIR website, as well as being available on a cd-rom.

### 1. Emergency Notice Creator

This tool allows local authorities to create notices such as the one above, in any of the six languages outlined above.

### 2. Translation of Mobile Content

This tool lets local authorities update their mobile phone websites with foreign language information. Many local authorities in Japan now have very detailed websites specifically created for use with mobile technology. This enables them to distribute up to the minute information (including that of natural disasters/adverse weather conditions) to the citizens of the area.

### 3. Announcement Tool

This tool enables the authority to create media files with foreign language announcements. These announcements can then be used in an emergency on wireless radios or via information cars through loudspeakers.

## Diabetes Action Plan

Much like the UK, Japan has seen an increase in its number of diabetes sufferers in recent years. In particular there has been an increase in the number of middle aged and elderly people suffering from Type 2 (adult-onset) diabetes. In an effort to both educate people as to the dangers of diabetes, and to prevent its increase a number of local authorities in Japan have been taking action.

The Chiba City government is taking the lead on initiating new health policy for its citizens. The "Chiba New Century Health Plan" will run from 2002-2010, and focuses on combating the increase in people suffering from diabetes. It is hoped that by 2010 there will be a significant decrease in the number of people with the condition.

A change in lifestyle is vital in preventing the onset of diabetes in later life and to this end in April of this year the local government put into action the "Diabetes Prevention Programme" which was initially conceived in 2004.

The programme will see a group of 80 diabetes sufferers take part in a year long exercise and health regime. If the results are favourable the programme will be seen as one beneficial way of preventing the onset of diabetes. Diabetes is a condition which at the present time 20% of Japan's male population either suffers from or are deemed potential sufferers from, and although not life-threatening in itself is closely connected to a number of more serious conditions.

The programme went through a lengthy period of preparation with an initial committee being set up to look into the best ways to move forward. A questionnaire relating to lifestyle and health was sent to over one thousand citizens and this

information helped to form the basis of the programme. This is the first programme of its kind to be run by a local authority in Japan, and if it is a success it is likely to be repeated in a number of wards around the city.

## jlgc news

### Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

On the 30th May members of staff of the JLGC went to Strasbourg to attend the annual Congress of Local and Regional Authorities held by the Council of Europe. The Governor of Fukushima Prefecture, Mr. Eisaku Sato, was invited to give a presentation on behalf of the National Governors Association of Japan. He spoke about current issues facing Japanese local government. This was the first time a representative of Japan had spoken at the event.



For the second year running the JLGC set up a booth at the LGA Annual Conference and Exhibition, held at the Bournemouth International Centre from the 4th-6th July. The booth was a great success, with a large number of people showing a keen interest in the work we do.



This year's three Short-Term Local Government Trainees from Japan arrived in the UK at the end of August. They will take part in a two week course at the Institute of Local Government Studies as well as work placements at host local authorities around the UK.



The Short-Term Local Government Trainees talk to JLGC Director, Shigeru Naiki.

# feature



## Hokkaido – doing things differently

By Andrew Stevens,  
Government Relations Manager,  
JLGC

The island of Hokkaido is the largest off the mainland and the largest prefecture among the 47 that make up Japan.

Sitting to the north of the main island of Honshu, Hokkaido neighbours several island groups attached to Russia (including the disputed Kuril Islands) and was home to the Ainu people, who from their indigenous origins were assimilated into Japanese society through inter-marriage.

Known alternatively as Ezo and Ezochi, the island was incorporated into the nascent Japanese state during the Meiji Restoration of the 1860s.

Its unique status was further emboldened by the proclamation of the Ezo Republic in 1869 by disaffected elements of the Japanese military who rejected the Meiji Restoration and created Japan's first functioning democracy and only republic, though a

lack of international recognition and the subsequent reoccupation saw its demise, with the island being placed under the auspices of a colonisation commission.

Governed by the Hokkaido Land Agency until after the Second World War, the island then emerged as a local government on an equal footing among the 47 elected prefectures created under the emergence of the modern local government system in 1947.

Today Hokkaido is Japan's pre-eminent agricultural centre, leading the production of rice and fish produce.

It enjoys a reputation in Japan for its individualism, where many residents do not enjoy entrenched local family links and indeed come from all over Japan to live there, an all too rare aspect compared to elsewhere in the country.

Its capital Sapporo, Japan's fifth largest and a designated city (one with some prefectural powers), is also highly modern in its construction and outlook, serving as the centre of the island's service sector and the famous Winter City which hosted the Winter Olympics of 1972.

The city itself, which has evolved along a planned gridline, is highly liveable and well constructed, with a combination of a rubber-tyred elevated metro and streetcar system adding to this.

The entertainment district of Susukino is comparable to that of most major capital cities in the world and adds to the overall vibrancy and rich culture.

To hear the local claims of a depressed regional economy or high crime rate in the city would be risible to many with experience of deprived localities in comparable regional cities in Europe and North America.

However, both Sapporo and Hokkaido have had to grasp the nettle of public sector reform according to both the priorities set by national government and their own local circumstances.

In order to balance its books, Hokkaido Prefectural Government has embarked upon a raft of reforms that go beyond both national government directives and the pace elsewhere in Japan.



1. Moerenuma Park (Higashi-ku, Sapporo). Opened on July 1st 2005. Designed by world famous sculptor Isamu Noguchi
2. Odori Park, running through the centre of Sapporo City
3. Sapporo Tower
4. Tokeidai (Clock Tower), Sapporo City. Built in 1878, and protected as an important cultural property

In February this year, the prefectural government agreed an overarching Masterplan to underscore its reform efforts and supersede all previous reform programmes.

Unlike elsewhere in Japan, where the bureaucrats enjoy vast influence and power, Hokkaido's Liberal Democratic Governor Harumi Takahashi (herself a former civil servant) has a strong role in both devising and supervising the implementation of policy.

Public sector employment in Japan is highly prized for its job security but Hokkaido has had to obtain a reduction of 22% of its personnel, achieved mostly through outsourcing.

Outsourcing in Japan is still in its infancy and could be said to go against the prevailing culture of local government, where the local state was a trusted delivery agency by the public.

While some staff and labour unions have opposed the idea, the public on Hokkaido are said to be either indifferent or in favour at this stage.



The first wave of outsourcing commenced in 2006, in library and museum management, council drivers and telephony.

All prefectures were requested to submit their reform plans to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications this year to demonstrate their compliance with the centre's drive for efficiency and decentralisation (the so-called 'Trinity Reforms') and Hokkaido's was praised for its embrace of tough financial discipline and willingness to go beyond

the minimum level of reform, with several other prefectures visiting the island to learn from it.

Hokkaido is also hoping to be an early adopter of regional government in Japan, the on-going discussion around decentralisation to regional blocs of prefectures known as *doshusei*, and has lobbied the Diet (parliament) for the ability to assume more responsibility for government services on the island while decentralising further to the newly-merged municipal governments.

Sapporo City has also willingly embraced radical reform and hopes to obtain the support of local citizens through more transparent budgeting.

The city has pursued several waves of administrative reform since 1972, not least because of its relative low economic potential compared to other designated cities elsewhere in Japan and high dependency on central government grants through the local tax dispersal scheme.

Having first identified increased efficiency as a policy goal in 1998, the city council has embarked upon a series of reforms.

Since his election in 2003, Fumio Ueda of the Democratic Party of Japan, has sought to enlist local citizens in his efforts to balance the books at city hall, publishing an array of accessible literature to promote awareness around securing value for money and reduced expenditure.

Specifically, the city has secured efficiency gains by the outsourcing of landfill sites, snow-clearing, school meals and retail management on the city subway system.

Reductions in staffing levels have gone beyond their target of 900 posts to the tune of 1,700, mainly through early retirement and scrapping new recruitment.



As well as the mayor, the city is governed by a 68 member city assembly, where the Liberal Democratic Party is the largest party represented.

Like the mayor's transparent budgeting process, the city assembly is also aiming to increase awareness of its work through active engagement on the internet.

Though this is hardly ground-breaking by standards elsewhere in the world, the city assembly's innovative children's website to promote awareness of both the assembly's work and child welfare issues could be seen to be, and this is possibly another example of how Hokkaido stands apart from the rest of Japan.

Andrew participated in a recent CLAIR training programme to study Hokkaido and Sapporo City



# Choshi City

By Yuko Koike,  
Assistant Director,  
JLGC



Choshi City is located in Chiba Prefecture and surrounded by the Tone River and the Pacific Ocean. It is about 100 km from Tokyo. To the south is Bybugaura Cliff, and to the east, the Kimigahama Beach. Inland, there are flatlands along the Tone River. The southwest area is on the Hokuso tableland, while the eastern region is covered with gentle rolling hills. Choshi City came into being as the 2nd city in Chiba Prefecture on February 11th 1933. It is a city with flourishing fishing, agriculture and tourism industries. The coastline of the Suigo-Tsukuba Quasi-National Park Choshi Peninsula is extremely varied, with numerous bays and cliff areas. It attracts a great deal of attention as a marine resort.

## Sightseeing

For sight-seeing visitors to Choshi, the greatest charm of this port town lies, no doubt, in the natural beauty of its coast lines. Cool in summer and warm in winter, Choshi abounds in a large variety of delicious seafoods fresh from the neighbouring waters.

**Cape Inubo** : Cape Inubo juts out into the Pacific Ocean and is strewn with many rocks of fantastic shapes chiselled by the wind and waves. A 110 year-old milk-white lighthouse stands gracefully at the tip of the cape against a grand spectacular background of the Pacific Ocean and its surging waves breaking over coastal crags. Taking a walk along the footpath tracing the shoreline, visitors can enjoy a breathtaking view of the mighty waves breaking on the rocks. The historic lighthouse was first used back in 1874. It was built with the help of a British engineer named Richard Henry Brunton. Some disagreement arose between Brunton and Japanese engineer Takamasa Nakazawa, over the bricks to be used in the construction. Finally they decided to use Japanese made bricks combined with foreign engineering.

**Hatsuhinode: The First Sunrise of the Year** : Many Japanese go to observatories in high-rise buildings or head to the mountains to see the first sunrise of the year, called hatsuhinode. With their hands folded, they pray with the sun.

Cape Inubu in Choshi, is a famous spot for people living in the Kanto area to see the first sunrise of the year. Here, the earliest sunrise on Honshu (the main island of Japan) can be seen at 6:46a.m.

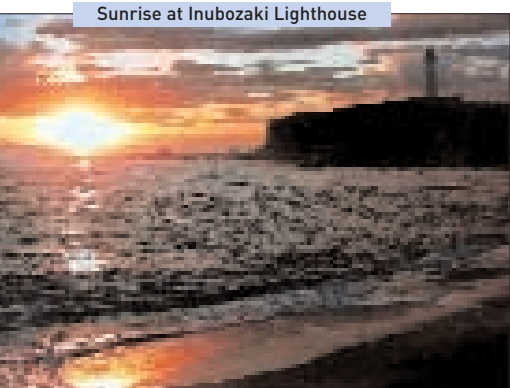
**Bybugaura [The Straits of Dover of the Orient]** : The huge waves from the Pacific Ocean pounding the foot of the cliffs are a magnificent sight. Along a 10 km stretch of the coastline from Na'arai in Choshi to Cape Gyobu-misaki are 40 to 50 m high cliffs which have earned the area the name "The Straits of Dover of the Orient".

**Choshi Electric Railway** : Choshi Electric Railway has played an important role as a symbol of Choshi. It was established over 70 years ago, and is very popular with tourists to the region. It has contributed to the culture of the area, its industry, and to the promotion of Choshi as a tourist destination.

**Fish Market** : Choshi is one of the leading fishing ports in Japan and boasts a high annual catch of fish. Due to both cold and warm water currents merging offshore, the sea region serves as an excellent fishing ground. Choshi is a bustling port where many ships can be seen constantly coming and going, with fish being brought directly into the fish market through the Choshi Fishing Port.

**Yamasa and Higeta Shoyu Factories** : Besides being a base for fishery and fishery related industries, Choshi is famous for its soy-sauce manufacturing industries which date back over 300 years. Yamasa and Higeta are the most representative of these today.

Owing to the warm winter, cool summer, and high humidity which are essential natural conditions for making soy sauce, Choshi is well known as one of the largest soy sauce producing places in Japan. Also, superior water transportation facilities along the Tone River placed Choshi as an important halfway point for ships carrying goods to Edo (modern day Tokyo) in olden times.



Sunrise at Inubozaki Lighthouse



Bybugaura Cliff



Choshi Fish Market

## Cotswolds Goes Japanese

With a view to increasing the number of Japanese tourists to the area, in 2001 Gloucestershire Tourism launched a Japanese language website to promote the Cotswolds. In its initial stages it was supported by the Regional Tourist Board which was the Heart of England Tourist Board at the time. The site received the support a number of surrounding Cotswold areas such as Bath and Stratford-upon-Avon, both extremely popular destinations for Japanese tourists.

Since its launch five years ago the website has more than achieved its aims. It was awarded the "Best Website" award at the Heart of England, England in Excellence awards, and was runner up at the National England in Excellence awards. With the site appearing on a number of search engines, each year has seen a consistent increase in the number of visitors to the site.

There are a number of attractions in the Cotswolds which Japanese visitors enjoy heading to when they are in the UK. The area has a vast number of manor houses and gardens which are always popular. Kelmscott Manor, the home to William Morris, is one of the places of interest to Japanese tourists, being associated with the Arts and Crafts Movement. Other areas of interest include Hidcote Manor Garden, famous for its beautiful gardens, and the picturesque villages of Upper and Lower Slaughter and Bibury.

The site offers detailed information in Japanese about the many areas worth visiting, as well as hotel and restaurant information. It also provides information about tour companies in the area, and outlines sample itineraries to give people a hand in planning their visit to the Cotswolds.



## about jet

This year sees the 20th anniversary of the start of the JET Programme, and to commemorate this CLAIR launched a contest to find a new logo for the programme.



The contest was open to all current and former JET Programme participants, and over 150 entries were received. The winning entry was sent in by Cathy Baranenko from Canada, who worked as an ALT on the JET Programme from 2000-2003.

CLAIR Tokyo is planning a number of events to commemorate the 20th anniversary, and we'll be reporting on these in a future issue of Myriad Leaves.

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

### JET Returnees Reception

It has been a busy few months for the JET Programme. Firstly, the 2006 JET Programme Pre-Departure Orientations were held in London and Edinburgh in early July. Almost 300 new JETs took part in these orientations and they were provided with a wealth of useful information before leaving for Japan. By the time you read this, the new JETs will have already arrived at their destinations and will have begun working in Japan.

As one set of JET participants head out to Japan, so another group return to the UK. Every year the JLGC hosts the JET Returnees Reception to welcome the returning JETs back to the UK. This year's event was held on the 22nd September at the University of London Union. It was a great opportunity for the newly returned JETs to reminisce about their time in Japan and it is hoped that they will maintain links with Japan for many years to come.

JET Returnees Reception



### JAPANESE LANGUAGE WEBSITE

Does your local tourist board have a Japanese language website? Are they planning to launch on in the future? If so we'd love to hear from you. Please get in touch with us at [mailbox@jlgc.org.uk](mailto:mailbox@jlgc.org.uk)

[www.the-cotswolds.org](http://www.the-cotswolds.org)

With thanks to Gloucestershire Tourism



# JLGC Staff Work Placements

Every year the new staff at the JLGC take part in work placements at local authorities around the country. This year, new arrivals Ken Fujino (seconded from Tokyo Metropolitan Government) and Kazuko Sunami (seconded from Okayama Prefecture) headed to Carlisle City Council, and Tandridge District Council.

## Carlisle City Council by Ken Fujino

From the 26th-30th June I was lucky enough to have a work placement at Carlisle City Council. Since arriving in the UK in April I had only really seen London, therefore this work placement was a chance for me to see a different region of the UK. I had heard that back in January Carlisle was hit by large flooding, however, on visiting the city I saw no signs of any damage caused by this. As I found out later this was as a result of the massive collaborative effort of the council and



the people of Carlisle. The revitalisation of the city after the flooding formed part of 'Carlisle Renaissance', an ambitious plan for Carlisle's long term development.

During my five day work placement, as well as spending some time in a number of different council departments, I was also able to visit the local council assembly rooms, and a number of local museums. I also had the great pleasure of meeting the Lord Mayor of Carlisle, who made time to talk with me and inform me about some of the recent developments that have been made in the area.

I found my time in Carlisle to be of much use for it gave me the opportunity to see a UK local authority in action with my own eyes. It is my aim now to build on what I learnt in Carlisle and further my knowledge of local government in the UK through my work at the JLGC. I would like to express my gratitude to all of those who took the time to meet with me in Carlisle, and helped to organise the many visits that I was able to take part in.

## Tandridge District Council by Kazuko Sunami

For our second week of work placements we visited Tandridge District Council. My first impression was of a lovely green area full of outstanding natural beauty. On the first day of my placement we met with the Chief Executive of Tandridge District Council, and were given a presentation about current issues facing UK local government, as well as a detailed explanation about the everyday work of Tandridge District Council.

After this we were given the opportunity to meet with the heads of a number of council departments, where I heard about such things as town planning, the legal and committee service, IT, and public-private partnerships. We were also able to visit a number of council facilities where I saw the council in action first hand.

I was particularly interested in finding out about the efforts being made in town planning. In Tandridge the emphasis is being made on development that is environmentally friendly. In Japan, when a family wishes to add an extension to its home, they must apply for permission to do so at the local town hall. However, unlike in Tandridge, there is no requirement to take the opinions of those living close by into account.

During my placement I gave presentations to staff of Tandridge District Council on topics such as municipal mergers in Japan, and my impressions of the UK. I was grateful for the interest shown in Japan by all of the people I met at the council. The work placement gave me the opportunity to not only learn more about local government, but also to learn about the UK in general, its culture and traditions. I am extremely grateful to everyone in Tandridge that welcomed us and showed me such great hospitality.



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

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

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



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