



JLGC

News Letter

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JAPAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT CENTER (CLAIR, NEW YORK)

Greetings from the Chairman of CLAIR

Michihiro Kayama
Chairman of the Board / Council of Local Authorities for International Relations



CLAIR UPDATE

The Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR) was established in 1988 to promote local-level internationalization in Japan. CLAIR uses its seven overseas offices: New York, London, Paris, Singapore, Seoul, Sydney and Beijing, to support the international activities of Japanese local governments. Selected staffs from Japanese local governments are dispatched to CLAIR's overseas offices to conduct research on matters such as public sector management, finance and administration at the local government level within these countries. The Japan Local Government Center, New York (JLGCNY) became the first CLAIR overseas office in 1989.

International exchange among local authorities has developed to such an extent that there are presently over 1,500 international affiliations between Japanese and foreign local authorities. There are more than 400 affiliations between Japanese and American local authorities, the largest such relationship in the world, and approximately 70 between Japanese and Canadian local authorities. These include but are not limited to new sister city relationships and various friendship agreements. The content of international exchange has also become increasingly diversified with a growing trend to implement projects that go beyond the traditional objectives of promoting international good will. For example, local authorities are engaging in international cooperation projects in the fields of technology and human resource development. Responding to these

developments, CLAIR is working to enhance its operations to meet and support the increased needs of local areas in Japan by strengthening networks among local international exchange associations and cultivating personnel to further the goals and objectives of internationalization.

Decentralization has advanced in Japan and local public organizations need to keep informed by gathering, analyzing and disseminating information about the systems and policies of local governments in foreign countries. In particular, American and Canadian state, provincial and local governments actively engage in efforts to share information that is beneficial to Japan. Japanese prefectures and local governments are also providing useful data and information to American and Canadian local governments. CLAIR is leading the effort to promote the exchange of information that will be mutually beneficial to all local governments. I believe that sharing experience and expertise across national borders will contribute greatly to the future development of local government.

The widespread popularity of the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme (JET) has contributed to its steady growth. The JET Programme is a project to promote language education and regional internationalization by inviting foreign individuals to work in local government organisations throughout Japan. JET was started in 1987 and will celebrate its 20th anniversary this year. CLAIR is enthusiastically working to improve upon the success of JET.

Throughout Japan today, you will find JET participants developing strong relationships with their local communities through foreign language education and international exchange activities. Recently, local governments are encouraging JET participants to promote international tourism by using their experiences and opinions about local tourist attractions.

After completing their time on the Programme, many former JET participants use their experiences in Japan to continue building stronger relations between Japan and their home countries. Also, for local governments in Japan former JET participants are a valuable bridge to other countries. Several of these local governments are working to create databases and are asking their JET participants to sign up with them so they can share opinions and ideas on international exchange, as well as other government policies.

The overseas Japan Local Government Centers in seven countries promote and provide information about the JET Programme as well as assist in the recruitment and selection processes. CLAIR is supporting the development of networks to foster effective links with approximately 18,000 JET alumni.

I would like to express my gratitude for the assistance CLAIR has received over the years. We will continue to work toward achieving your expectations and to contribute to the progress of internationalization. CLAIR appreciates your continued support and encouragement.



New Orleans: No longer so big, nor so easy

by Matthew Gillam / JLGC Senior Researcher

SPECIAL FEATURE



Homes near the 17th Street Canal breach

The Gulf Coast hurricanes Katrina and, to a lesser extent, Rita have left behind not just years' worth of rebuilding, but also years' worth of analysis as to what went wrong with the preparedness, response and recovery efforts for these clearly foreseen disasters. Among the several countries that have sent teams to observe the government response, Japan has been extremely interested in understanding how federal, state and local governments have dealt with these events, and in what lessons can be learned that will strengthen Japan's own disaster response capabilities.

As one element of Japan's research into the Gulf Coast storms, a group of five staff members from JLGC, led by Mr. Kozo Aoyama of the Urban Policy Institute in New York, traveled to New Orleans in January to observe the damage to the city and to Biloxi and its environs, and to meet with officials from the police and fire departments and the New Orleans Emergency Operations Center.

Most members of the group arrived in New Orleans on Tuesday morning, January 17th, and promptly took off for Biloxi to look at the damage to the Gulf Coast and to meet with officials from the Biloxi Fire Department. David Roberts, Director of the Biloxi Fire Department, met with the group, along with Deputy Chief Kirk Noffsinger and Battalion Chief Joe Boney. A lot of the damage in Biloxi came from the high winds, but they were also hit by the storm surge that devastated so much of the coast. Despite their best efforts, communications were knocked out and the department's efforts to prepare for such an emergency were largely overwhelmed.

The entire group met on Wednesday morning with several members of the New Orleans Fire Department. Superintendent Charles Parent joined the meeting part way through, after coming directly from a meeting with government officials to discuss the future of the NOFD. The superintendent and his staff spoke

movingly and in detail about the difficulties they faced during and after Katrina, and frankly evaluated the strengths and weaknesses in their preparation and response to the storm and flooding.

After this, the group drove around the city to take a look at the main levee breach sites and get a feel for the scale and power of the forces that overwhelmed the city. The first stop was the Lakeview district, where the 17th Street Canal gave way, putting many areas underneath more than ten feet of water. Next was the London Avenue Canal breach, where most of the surrounding neighborhood looked like it had been hit by a mudslide. Some members of the group were approached by a woman who had lived near the breach site and who had come back with a friend to make a video documentary of the damage. There was also at least one family that had cleaned out the mud from their house and was quietly and determinedly hammering the frame of the house back together. The flood waters had obviously blown out the front wall after pouring in through the back, which directly faced the levee. The woman was very friendly and glad to see officials trying to learn about what had gone wrong, even if they were not from her own government. The family, on the other hand, was obviously very unhappy to have outsiders around, intruding on their privacy. The final stop was the



Meeting with Superintendent Charles Parent Center and his men at the New Orleans Fire Department

Lower Ninth Ward, which looked like it had been hit by a bomb. Cars were mangled and compacted into blocks of scrap, houses were torn apart and scattered, and the area immediately in front of the breach had been largely scoured clear of trees and buildings.

Later that afternoon, the Japanese Consul General in New Orleans, Mr. Masaru Sakato, and some of his consular staff gave a presentation on their experiences during and after the evacuation of the city, along with invaluable background information on response and recovery efforts. Staff members were forced to carry on operations from Baton Rouge and Houston for several weeks, until the consulate could be reopened.

Chief James (Jimmy) Scott and his aide, Lieutenant Lisa Marie, met with the group on Thursday morning and talked about the (well publicized) problems faced by the NOPD and their experiences in the weeks following Katrina as they conducted search & rescue and security operations in the 1st District, which includes the French Quarter and the Garden District. As with the Fire Department, they were forced to commandeer boats and do the best they could without any communications with even their neighboring districts. A quick visit to the Superdome showed it to be almost completely repaired and ready for service, with no hint of how rancid and foul it had become in the days following the flooding of the city.



Chief James Scott discusses operations in the 1st District



The London Avenue Canal breach

After this, there was an informal lunch meeting with several emergency management professionals currently working at the Emergency Operations Center for the city. Even though they were not in place during Katrina, they provided a valuable view into how the city had set up and run its EOC prior to the storm, and how recovery efforts are proceeding in the wake of the lessons learned.

Even though it was a very quick visit to the Gulf Coast, members of the group were able to gather invaluable firsthand information on the ways in which emergency planning can be overwhelmed and on what things are absolutely vital in responding to disasters in an urban environment like New Orleans. Recurring messages in the discussions emphasized the need for

region-wide evacuation and response planning, and the necessity of establishing what is basically a military type of comprehensive response operation, including providing for security, electricity, logistics, triage, delivery and distribution of food and supplies, and reliable communications.



The Lower Ninth Ward



Trendsetting Dessert from Japan: Wagashi; Traditional Japanese Sweets

by Hidenori Umebayashi / Assistant Director of JLGC

SPECIAL FEATURE

A wonderful exhibition of Japanese traditional sweets known as *wagashi* was held in a Japanese restaurant in New York City on January 30, 2006. Hosted by “The Project of ‘New Matsue Kashi’” and the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), the event was attended by 150 people including buyers, celebrities and the food press corp. This was the second *wagashi* event to be presented to the people of New York City.



Participants being treated to taste a variety of wagashi.

But this was more than a mere social gathering as representatives advertised their wares and marketed products. Public relations were in full swing as many kinds of new products were showcased by Matsue city producers for the exhibition. The Japanese sweet master craftsman from Matsue showed off his proficient skill in preparing *wagashi*. A patissier from a famous restaurant in New York also attended, and the two pastry cooks from Japan and America prepared *wagashi* together.



Mr. Itame, master craftsman is making wagashi.

The *wagashi* event was made possible by the support of the Japanese government. The members of the project working with patissiers in New York City produced delicious Japanese sweets for New Yorkers.

Matsue *wagashi* is not only a delicious sweet but it can be artfully designed and beautiful to the eye. *Wagashi* goes well with Japanese green tea and the combo is healthy. The exhibition provided an opportunity for people in New York to appreciate real traditional Japanese sweets and to better understand the local traditional food culture of Japan.



Patissier Sam Mason is preparing a new style wagashi.

I regard the new *wagashi* from Matsue as an instrument to further international exchange by examining food cultures of local areas in Japan. Japanese sweets are not known by many Americans. Sushi and sake once shared the same fate. I believe however, that *wagashi* has enough potential to pique the taste buds of the American people. As Sushi and sake became familiar to the American palate, I expect that the new Matsue *wagashi* will become just as ubiquitous on American dessert menus.

► *Wagashi* is good for you!

Wagashi is low in calories, cholesterol free and contains no animal fat. The main ingredient, bean paste is not too sweet, and it satisfies the hunger craving. The beans and agar that comprise *wagashi* are rich in fiber. *Wagashi* contains many of the essential vitamins and minerals that constitute a healthy diet. *Wagashi* fits into any type of diet!



Handmade “new wagashi”

► *Wagashi* as art!

The people of Japan have always loved and admired the scenic seasonal changes and the resulting unique fruits and flowers. This devotion is expressed in the artistic beauty of *wagashi*. The beautiful forms and colors created by the *wagashi* artisans are sophisticated works of art.

New wagashi is a cultural product of Matsue city, the capital of Shimane Prefecture. Matsue city is renowned for Matsue Castle, beautiful parks, and for preserving historic sections of the city in the Edo period style. Lafcadio Hearn, the author of *Kwaidan*, was one of the people enamored with the city. He later introduced to the world the Japanese traditional culture. Tourists can imbibe on green tea and Japanese seasonal sweets, while they enjoy the quietude and mysterious atmosphere of a Japanese tea house. I recommend you visit Matsue and enjoy *wagashi*.

• For more information:

<http://www.matsue.jp/wagashi/>



Ibaraki Prefecture is located in the northeastern part of the Kanto region, which roughly occupies the central area of the Japanese archipelago. The distance of the prefecture to the nation's capital, Tokyo, ranges from 30 to 150 km. The city of Mito, the capital of the prefecture is about 100km from Tokyo. The distance from Narita Airport, Japan's international gateway, to Tshukba Science City is 40 km. Ibaraki-ken comprises an area of 6,095 km², and the population in 2005 was approximately 2.99 million.

Blessed with a typical Pacific coast climate, Ibaraki receives rain from spring to autumn, while in winter there is dry air and sunny skies with a northwesterly seasonal wind. The weather is generally mild throughout the year, and climatic anomalies are relatively rare. Since the prefecture is located at the meeting point of Japan's northern and southern climates, it is known as the southernmost or northernmost habitat for an abundance of flower and insect species.

► **One of the Three famous...**

Kairaku-en Park located in Mito city is one of Japan's three greatest gardens, Kairaku-en is known for its plum blossoms. Built in 1842 by Mito's ninth feudal lord, Nariaki Tokugawa, the garden is filled from late February through March with visitors

who come to experience the brilliant color and fragrance of nearly 3,000 plum trees.

Kashima Shrine in Kashima city is one of eastern Japan's three most famous shrines. Reputedly founded in 660 B.C., the



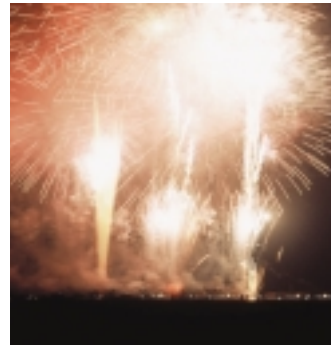
Kashima-shrine



Fukuroda Waterfall

shrine complex includes a brightly colored main building that was built with a donation from Hidetada Tokugawa, the second Shogun of the Edo era. The shrine also exhibits a straight sword that has the distinction of being the only object in Ibaraki to be designated as a national treasure.

The Tsuchiura National Fireworks Competition in Tsuchiura city is one of Japan's most famous fireworks events. It is held annually on the first Saturday of October over the Sakura river. Pyrotechnical experts from all over the country gather to compete at this spectacular event, filling the night sky with massive sweeps of color.



Tsuchiura National Fireworks

Fukuroda Falls is renowned as one of the three greatest cascades in Japan. It is approximately 120m in height and 73 m in width. The power and grace of this scenic wonder is impressive throughout the year.

► **Ibaraki's International Exchange Initiative**

Internationalization is flourishing throughout Ibaraki Prefecture. Ibaraki is close to Tokyo and to Narita Airport, Japan's key international facility. Tsukuba Science City, a world-class center for research and development, also nurtures considerable international relationships. The trend is gathering speed too, thanks to the hosting of the 2002 FIFA Soccer World Cup.

The prefecture and various municipalities are striving to develop international exchange programs in order to create opportunities for Japanese and overseas citizens to interact. In the process, we will deepen our international awareness and understanding.

Exchange activities are found in the private sector as well, facilitated by international publications and volunteer Japanese language education. In this regard, the Ibaraki International Association was founded in 1990 to provide cooperation and support for such activities.



In accordance with our basic philosophy: "Ibaraki keeping in step with the world," we are constantly promoting communication and cooperation with countries around the globe.





CLAIR

The Council of State Governments Holds Its Annual Forum in Wilmington, Delaware

by Seth B. Benjamin / JLGC Senior Researcher

J L G C U P D A T E

At the end of the year, usually in December, the Council of State Governments (CSG) holds its Annual Trends and Leadership Forum. In 2005, it was held in Wilmington, Delaware. CSG is the one state government association that includes in its membership all of the branches of state government; that is, legislative, executive and judicial. Accordingly, CSG's president represents the executive branch (in 2005, it was Governor Ruth Ann Minner of Delaware) and its chairman represents the legislative branch (in 2005, it was Nevada Assembly's Lynn Hetrick).

This year's Forum was important for another reason as well. It coincided with the publication of the second edition of a new cutting-edge report on the future for state governments. Originally released as *Trends in America: Charting the Course Ahead*, in June 2005, CSG introduced an updated or second edition at the Annual Forum, called *Trends in America: Navigating Turbulence to Success*. The report addresses the ten most powerful 'change drivers' that will have an impact on the future of the United States; some of which are aging, immigration, interstate competition, globalisation, privacy and security, managing natural resources and federalism. All of these issues were discussed at the Annual Forum.

A unique aspect of the Forum is the manner in which CSG organises its



Governor Minner of the State of Delaware welcomes everybody to Wilmington.

meeting structure. Each subject area is covered by a committee or task force and will assemble at least three times during the Forum. First, the group will discuss in an informal way the emerging trends that are relevant to the subject. Then, usually the next day, the discussion is more formally presented in what is called a business meeting. Finally, the committee or task force will discuss and vote on policy recommendations for the states. This format allows as many interested parties to be heard as is possible, given the time constraints. Indeed, in the emerging trends discussion non-committee members are encouraged to participate.

Of course, those attending were treated to some thought-provoking keynote speeches. Top billing was given to Louis Freeh, now vice-chairman of MBNA America Bank, which is the largest independent credit card issuer, and who was formerly the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) from July 1993 to June 2001. He spoke about the balancing act governments must undertake between privacy and security, especially in today's world, after the attack of September 11th, 2001, in New York and Washington, DC. In a telling remark, Freeh reminded the audience, "there is more data collected by credit bureaus than in any police files". Americans have accepted a loss of some privacy but only where they have seen a compelling reason to do so. Later, U.S. Senator Joe Biden (D, DE), who is the ranking member on the U.S. Senate's Foreign Relations Committee, gave a spirited talk about the challenges and opportunities in the global foreign policy arena. The next day, Daniel Pink entertained the participants with a thoughtful but humorous discussion of what the future labor force is likely to resemble. He took as his theme the fact that the 'information age' was now giving way to what he called the 'conceptual

age'. That is to say, he warned the state leaders that our education system was going to need to re-tool itself to deal with the enormous rise in competition from developing countries. Competency will be a necessary condition of our workers in the future but it will not be a sufficient one. Jobs involving routine will eventually disappear from the United States as other countries develop a larger middle class to fill these jobs. Even white collar jobs, including legal work, that can be automated will no longer be insulated from competition. The blossoming of the Internet is perhaps the main source of such automation. The future will look the brightest for what he called 'right-brain thinking' - artistry, empathy and inventiveness will be the key to continued economic success. He encouraged the states to consider these factors in designing policies that cover the whole range of services provided to their citizens.



Mr. Pink describes for state officials how to live in the new 'Conceptual Age'.

Not all was work. The Forum was a good opportunity for staff from the Japan Local Government Center to catch up with old friends, make new ones and participate in the various evening social events. Perhaps, the highlight of the evening social events was a performance by the Capitol Steps, a satirical revue. This group, who calls Washington, DC, its home, takes a light-hearted approach to politics and government in general. It was a chance for the participants to have a good laugh at their own expense.



A Message from 2006 New JLGC Assistant Directors

J L G C U P D A T E

Seiko Kubo

Hello! My name is Seiko Kubo. It is a pleasure to meet you. I'm originally from the Kitakyushu City Office. I'm delighted to introduce the City of Kitakyushu while living and working in the United States and New York City.



Located midway between Tokyo and Shanghai, Kitakyushu has thrived as a gateway for trade with Asia since ancient times. Today, Kitakyushu's population of 0.9 million continues to reap the benefits of proximity to the Asian continent.

Kitakyushu is an international city of technology, rich in waterfronts and greenery, with a warm and friendly atmosphere. Japan's first steel mill called Yawata Steel Works was established in Kitakyushu in 1901. Since then industrial growth has expanded rapidly and Kitakyushu continues to play a major role in Japan's industrial development.

For example, new industries such as the automotive industry in and around the Kitakyushu area are booming. The Toyota Company's new engine manufacturing plant strategically located near the New Kitakyushu Airport began operation last December. The New Kitakyushu Airport just started on March 16th, 2006!!! It's an extremely busy airport that includes international flights and airline companies have enthusiastically embraced the airport.

Kitakyushu is much more than business and industry and offers the traveler and visitor many conveniences including fresh sashimi, delicious local cuisines, and nostalgic exotic streetscapes.

Please feel welcome to visit Kitakyushu.

Thank you.

Keitaro Tanaka

My name is Keitaro Tanaka and I am the first person from the City of Gifu to work at the Japan Local Government Center (JLGC) in New York City.



The City of Gifu is one of the major cities in central Japan. It prides itself with being harmonious with nature. Gifu City's Nagara River is famous for cormorant fishing; an ancient fishing method that catches Japanese sweet fish by using twelve tamed cormorant birds. I assure you it is worth seeing!

I am interested in the field of public management as practiced by state, provincial and local governments in the United States and Canada. My specific research will focus upon collaboration between the public and private sectors. This has been a trend of local governance in Japan for years. I have heard that there are a lot of progressive and unique approaches in both countries. During my stay in New York, I would like to learn about various case studies.

I am not a stranger to New York. I visited on two other occasions and although my stays were brief they were enjoyable. For my work at JLGC, I shall live in New York for two years with my wife and daughter. I know this will be a precious experience for me and my family. I look forward to meeting a lot of people and enjoying new experiences while living and working in New York City.

Thank you.

Yoshihiro Hirokawa

Hi, everyone. My name is Yoshihiro Hirokawa. I'm a researcher in the National Research Institute of Fire and Disaster located in Mitaka City, Tokyo, Japan. My special area of interest is mechanical engineering, especially, the strength of material, nondestructive testing and numerical analysis. Our group analyzes and evaluates damage incurred by facilities such as oil storage tanks caused by seismic ground motion using numerical analysis and/or field testing. Our work supports and adds to the body of knowledge that exists concerning previous damages caused by major catastrophic events. While working at JLGC, New York, I would like to investigate and research the architectural and mechanical technologies used to combat and prevent damages caused by serious fires, floods, storms and natural events in the United States and Canada.



I would like to do many things in New York. I enjoy jogging and look forward to walking and running in Central Park. I am sure that my initial impressions about life in the Big Apple will be different from my experiences in Tokyo where I jogged around the Imperial Palace. Furthermore, I would like to meet and talk with many people, to learn the culture and language of America step by step.

Thank you.



Hokkaido, 1995-1997

by Jennifer Jakubowski

JET A A C T I V I T I E S

That my welcome back to the small-town Hokkaido was every bit as warm and fun as I imagined it would be came not at all as a surprise. These were, after all, some of the most giving and down-to-earth people I have come across in all my years of travel and living abroad. These were, after all, the same adventurous and fun-loving people who dragged me to the top of a mountain in the middle of the night, taiko drums and sake in tow, to ring in the dawn of the New Year. This was, after all, the same group that ended up dancing with lampshades on their heads when we had all (over?!)-indulged in spirits together in the wee hours of a stormy winter's night. And these were, after all, the same fine folks who stood in front of their office building upon my departure waving a huge American flag, shouting "Bonsai!" with tears streaming down their faces as I drove off into the horizon to start the next chapter of my life.

So, no, the fact that a visit back after 10 years to this countryside haven I used to call home was absolutely charming and full of gut-splitting laughter and nostalgia of the most splendid kind did not at all come as a surprise.



Former colleagues in Shihoro-cho (Hokkaido)

What did, however, surprise me was the fact that one of the highlights of my trip to Japan came in a most unexpected form: the 14 other contest winners. When I received word that I

was on my way back to Japan, compliments of Kintetsu International Travel (thanks again!), naturally my mind raced ahead to a long-overdue reunion with Japanese friends and former colleagues. While that part of the trip was truly wonderful, I was pleasantly surprised by the few days I shared with the rest of the award recipients in Toyko. It was nothing short of inspiring to see a collection of young Americans who have given grassroots diplomacy a phenomenal name and have painted, with their hands, minds and hearts, a strikingly optimistic picture of the future of Japanese-American relations.

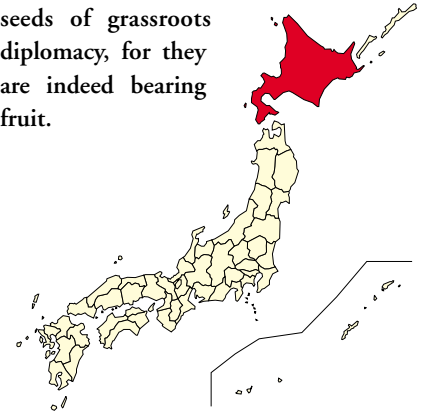


Former supervisor (Inomata san) and one former colleague (Onodera san)

Not only was I struck by the creative and intelligent ideas outlined in the winning essays, but I was greatly moved by the value they placed on their experiences in Japan and the emotional - and in many cases, professional - investments that these individuals have made in Japan since participating in the JET Program. Whether in the form of continued friendships, professional engagement with Japan (insert sales pitch for self(!): for your cross-cultural training needs, contact me at bridges_to_japan@yahoo.com!), or

even writing a play about Japanese-American relations, it is clear that the opportunity for Americans to spend time in Japan has produced the intended effect: enhanced relations between the two countries.

Sadly, it's easy these days to be cynical about changing the world one person or one idea at a time. But a wave of optimism deluged my life while I was in Tokyo this past December, an omiyage to bring home even finer than sake. May we continue to plant the seeds of grassroots diplomacy, for they are indeed bearing fruit.



The Sakura, or cherry blossom, is Japan's cherished national flower. Special Hanami parties and excursions are held during blossom time each year.

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