



JLGC

# News Letter

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JAPAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT CENTER (CLAIR, NEW YORK)

## A Greeting from Hiroshi Sasaki, the New Executive Director of JLGC

Hiroshi Sasaki / Executive Director

J L G C U P D A T E



**H**ello, I am Hiroshi Sasaki and I have recently been appointed the new Executive Director of the Japan Local Government Center in New York City. I have the distinct pleasure and honor of succeeding former Executive Director Shinji Hirai, who by the time you read this message will be the newly elected Governor of Tottori Prefecture. It has been 18 years since the establishment of the Japan Local Government Center in New York and during these years the organization has established a rich tradition of promoting international exchange and mutual understanding between Japan the United States and Canada.

I have worked for the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication for the past 22 years where I specialized

in drafting laws on local government decentralization and municipal mergers. Decentralization has been one of the more important reform issues in Japanese domestic politics. Despite resistance from members of the Diet and the national government; local government reform progressed gradually and steadily. I was pleased to be a part of this great reform movement which has improved the post war Japanese government system.

While serving as Deputy Director Of International Affairs at the Ministry of Home Affairs from 1996 to 1998, I managed the JET Program. During my tenure, the JET Program celebrated its tenth anniversary, with the Crown Prince and Princess of Japan attending. I am looking forward to meeting the JETs who have returned from Japan and I am interested in their current activities.

In addition to my work at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, I have also worked for three prefectures: Okinawa, Niigata and Gifu. Most recently, I served as the Deputy Secretary General of the Exchange and Information Department at CLAIR headquarters in Tokyo.

This is my second visit to the United States. I attended graduate school at Cornell University from 1989 to 1991. My college days in Ithaca were memorable for me and my wife. My young son who was but a mere child does not recall his short lived American life. Although living and

working in America will be starkly different from my student experience, I am confident that my family and I will thoroughly enjoy what America and New York City have to offer. I enjoy playing tennis and skiing. There are numerous and challenging ski areas in the United States and Canada and I look forward to visiting a few.

Finally, on behalf of the JLGC staff as well as myself personally, I would like to thank all of our friends and acquaintances who have made and continue to make our mission rewarding and successful.

Sincerely yours,

Hiroshi Sasaki



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



# Former Executive Director Shinji Hirai leaves JLGC to be Governor

Seth Benjamin / JLGC Senior Researcher

## JLGC UPDATE



Governor Hirai, in his new office in Tottori Prefecture

Recently elected Governor Shinji Hirai of Tottori Prefecture spent approximately seven months as executive director of the Japan Local Government Center (JLGC) in New York. In that short time, he managed to shape the future direction of the office. Arriving in June 2006 bristling with new

ideas about how to project the image of Japan and Japanese local government, Governor Hirai introduced himself to many of the leading representatives of American state and local government.

His belief that there was no substitute for going out and meeting people to learn 'first-hand' about the way in which American government operates has raised the profile of the Japan Local Government Center in the United States and Canada. The staff at the Center routinely goes out now to develop closer relationships with its American government counterparts. Another profile enhancing innovation Governor Hirai instituted, as executive director of JLGC, was to get the staff to increase its active participation with the associations that represent state and local

governments. This has resulted in a stronger interest in Japanese government activities by these associations, with the possibility of developing joint projects.

Internally, Governor Hirai focused the staff on the type of research it undertakes so that the office, and thereby governments back in Japan, can build up an expertise in many subject areas that are important for governments not just in Japan but also in the United States. This approach has led to a new type of research being undertaken that is more relevant to the specific issues facing the staff's own local government back in Japan.

All in all, Governor Hirai has left an indelible mark on CLAIR's New York office in the short amount of time we were privileged to have had him as the executive director.



# JETAA Toronto Members Appointed as Special Representatives for the "Visit Japan Campaign" at "Yokoso Japan Night"

Junichi Sawada / JLGC Deputy Director

## JETAA ACTIVITIES

On the evening of February 15, 2007, the Japan National Tourist Organization (JNTO) held their "Yokoso Japan Night" at the Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel. The event drew members of the JET Program Alumni Association (JETAA), Consulate General of Japan, Japanese representatives, educational staff, tourism organizations, airline representatives, and the media.

This year marks the 120th year since the establishment of a regular travel route between Vancouver, Canada, and Yokohama, Japan. The year 2007 is being called the "Canada-Japan Tourism Exchange Year" as both countries continue to work together to enhance tourism and interaction between them.

"Yokoso Japan Night" included a ceremony that appointed three members of the JETAA Toronto chapter as special

representatives for the "Visit Japan Campaign" (VJC). The executive director for the Japan National Tourist Organization, Toronto, Mr. Fumihiro Sampei, presented a plaque to the JETAA Toronto Chapter Chair, Ms. Amy Schindler, as well as gifts to two committee members. The "Visit Japan Campaign" began in 2003 with a goal of obtaining 10 million annual international visitors to Japan by 2010. It is one of many tourism promotional projects that are being implemented in Canada and Japan. In addition, two JETAA Toronto members, Mr. Glen Morales and Ms. Lianne Hodgson, gave presentations highlighting their teaching experience, as well as memorable aspects of their living and traveling in Japan.

Furthermore, former high school history teacher and current educational

advisor, Mr. Ken Noma, presented a seminar on "How to Make a Student Trip to Japan a Reality Today". Following him, A.Y. Jackson Secondary School music teacher Mr. Rick Wingfield gave a talk on his experience as a teacher coordinator.

The efforts of the JET Program and JETAA members have made a substantial contribution to the ongoing relationship between Canada and Japan.



Executive Director of JNTO Toronto, Mr. Sampei, Committee member Ms. Nishiyama, Committee member Ms. Nicholson, and JETAA Toronto Chapter Chair, Ms. Schindler holding the plaque at the ceremony



# Visits to North Olmsted and Denver

Keitaro Tanaka / Assistant Director

## J L G C U P D A T E

**B**uilding an effective network of strong partnerships with local governments and organizations in the United States and Canada is an important function of the Japan Local Government Center (JLGC). Since 1989, JLGC has initiated contact with hundreds of local governments and is dedicated to enhancing and strengthening these relationships. As such, in early February, Ms. Erena Niwa, Director of JLGC, and I visited two cities, North Olmsted, Ohio, and Denver, Colorado, to continue our affiliation with these cities.

The city of North Olmsted is located in northern Ohio near the Cleveland International Airport. Last July, the Honorable Thomas O’Grady, mayor of North Olmsted, was invited to Japan’s Ritsumeikan University as a guest speaker. Co-hosted by our headquarters, the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR), the theme of the event was “Think Globally, Act Locally” and Mayor O’Grady gave an interesting and informative lecture to an audience of

students, professors and local government officials. He spoke about his city and how it deals with global issues.

Our reciprocal visit to North Olmsted was made to express our appreciation to Mayor O’Grady for his participation at the event in Japan and to move forward in proposing a future relationship between the city of North Olmsted and JLGC.

We received a warm and hospitable welcome from Mayor O’Grady, community leaders and city officials. Also, we enjoyed the opportunity to exchange views and ideas about local administration and local economic development. We learned that local economic development has proven to be difficult for local governments in Japan and the United States.

Upon arriving in Denver, we visited the headquarters of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). NCSL and JLGC enjoy a long lasting and friendly working relationship. NCSL has participated in our CLAIR Fellowship Program by sending staff to Japan, and JLGC participates in many of NCSL’s activities.

Also during our visit, we met staff who had joined the CLAIR



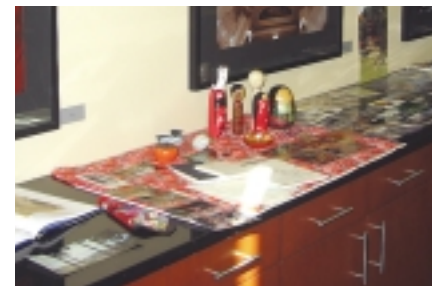
The Honorable Thomas O’Grady presenting a Proclamation to Director Niwa recognizing CLAIR’s work in fostering international understanding and cooperation among local governments.

Fellowship Program previously and who gave a presentation to their colleagues about their visits to Japan. They showed photographs of their experiences in Japan and exhibited their souvenirs. They also decorated the conference room in a Japanese motif, displaying a yukata (Japanese summer kimono) and Japanese traditional crafts. We enjoyed the display, realizing that the staff had a good time. It was a great opportunity as well for other NCSL staff, who may be interested in visiting Japan to understand our program. This visit has also helped to strengthen the relationship with NCSL.

\*



Ms. Judy Zello, Program Director of NCSL, and a past participant of the CLAIR Fellowship Program, describing her visit to Japan.



Japanese traditional crafts on display in the conference room



# A Japanese Exchange Trip: Experiencing Cultural Differences and Similarities

Wendy Lee Parker / Assistant Executive Director for Risk Services, New Hampshire Local Government Center



## GUEST COLUMN

*Last fall, the National League of Cities selected Wendy Lee Parker, Assistant Executive Director for Risk Services at New Hampshire Local Government Center (LGC), as one of nine individuals to participate in the 2006 Fellowship Exchange Program with Japan that took place November 5-15. Sponsored by the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations, the Fellowship Exchange Program is a Local Government International Exchange and Cooperation Seminar that has afforded senior executives from state, provincial and local governments of the United States and Canada the opportunity to visit Japan and learn about Japanese public administration since 1993. Over 10 days, participants attend lectures, take part in workshops and visit local government offices, where they are exposed to the workings of Japanese government. The exchange visit also features a home stay with a local family, which immerses each visitor in the daily life and culture of Japan. What follows is an abbreviated firsthand account of the exchange program experience.*

Imagine my excitement when I learned that I was to be a 2006 National League of Cities Japan Fellow sponsored by the Japan Local Government Center—an arm of Japan's local governments that works to share information with state, county and city officials in the United States and Canada. My first thought was that I had a lot to learn about a very different culture in six weeks! Off to the bookstore I went to purchase books about Japan's culture, etiquette and a CD to learn some common Japanese words and phrases. Before long, I was on my way to Tokyo for an experience of a lifetime. Planned activities included a few days of learning about Japanese local government practices in Tokyo and then a visit to the Shimane Prefecture (State) and City of Matsue.

### ► Friday-Sunday, November 3-5

My first scheduled stop took place on Friday, November 3, in Los Angeles where I met the other CLAIR Fellows. We gathered for a nine-course extravaganza dinner and a tour of Little Tokyo. This dinner gave us our first taste of traditional

Japanese cuisine. The next day it was sayonara Los Angeles!

### ► Monday, November 6

Upon our evening arrival, we were escorted to a welcome reception and dinner. The reception was for the United States/Canada group plus other delegations traveling from Australia and China. The reception's presentations were all spoken in each speaker's native language and then translated into Japanese, English or Chinese, as appropriate. The Chief Administrative Officer of Markham, Ontario, Canada, John Livey—the "senior" member of our group—was assigned the responsibility for providing formal welcomes on behalf of our group at that reception and throughout the trip. The rest of us smiled and bowed quite a bit.

### ► Tuesday, November 7

Tuesday was spent touring Japan. One of our first stops was the Diet, Japan's capital building. Construction of the Diet began in 1920 and was not completed until 1936. There are two, three-level chambers consisting of the House of Representatives and a House of Councilors, plus a nine-story central tower. The tower's main entrance is only made accessible for His Majesty, the Emperor, on the tower's annual opening day, as well as for state guests on official visits and newly elected members on convocation day of the first session following their election. All other times, members enter the tower's wings independently where there are attendance boards located. The central hall was beautiful and reminded me of our nation's capital. Its stained-glass ceiling and windows had detailed murals representing Japan and the four seasons. Everything used to build the Diet, with the exception of its room keys and raw glass used to design the windows, was made in Japan.

We then spent time at the Edo-Tokyo Museum and visited the Hama-rikyu Gardens. These gardens were created in the Edo period and then almost fully destroyed in the Great Kanto earthquake and World War II. In 1946, they re-opened after the Imperial Family presented them to the City of Tokyo. Modern skyscrapers surround the traditional gardens that showcase a duck pond, a 300-year-old pine tree and Nakajima-no-ochaya—a formal teahouse. We participated in a traditional tea ceremony and were coached on the proper way to drink the tea: turn the cup two-and-a-half times to the left before, and three times to the right after, sipping. Our day of touring ended with a trip to the Panasonic Center where their products were showcased. The main exhibit was an Eco and Ud house-

Eco, for coexistence with a global environment, and Ud for developing a universal design. In the Panasonic world, it is believed that the design of a house and the products it includes increase the quality of life and minimize any environmental impact to the home's surroundings.

### ► Wednesday, November 8

On Wednesday, we flew about 750 miles northwest to Matsue City, in the Shimane Prefecture, where our group spent the next few days meeting with local government officials and experiencing a two-night stay with a host family. About 20 minutes into the flight, we were directed to look out of the windows to see a stunning view of Mt. Fuji, which appeared as though you could reach out and touch it.

Arriving in Shimane Prefecture, we checked into a traditional ryokan or Japanese-style inn. They come in all sizes and are found throughout Japan. A stay at a ryokan is highly recommended to all foreign visitors. It offers the opportunity to experience Japanese-styled rooms with a tatami floor and low table. Before dinner, we had an opportunity to enjoy a Japanese-style bath, which is communal but, luckily, gender separated. We were fortunate that this particular bathing experience had water directly supplied from a hot spring. It was quite a unique experience! We then enjoyed a traditional Japanese dinner, tasted some local sake and slept in traditional Japanese style using a futon spread out on the tatami floor.

### ► Thursday, November 9

On Thursday, our group visited the Shimane Institute for Industrial Technology where the Prefecture has done a tremendous job of creating a business incubator for small, high-tech companies and a business park, providing land and infrastructure for these companies. In addition to the meetings, we took a class in classic wagashi candy making and also toured Matsue City from a boat while traveling on the Horikowa River. The boat dropped us near Matsue Castle. While walking to it, we were able to visit an original Samurai residence. Matsue Castle was breathtaking. The view from the top was spectacular and included all of Matsue City, plus surrounding mountains and Lake Shinji-ko.

### ► Friday, November 10

On Friday morning, we visited city officials from Matsue City where we exchanged gifts with the Mayor. The Japanese local government system has a strong Mayor structure with no City Manager-type positions. The Mayor discussed recent challenges of merging

several independent cities into Matsue City and how they have tried to integrate infrastructure services with the least amount of disruption to residents of all old cities and Matsue City. He said one of the main challenges was raising sewer rates in cities merged into Matsue City so they are comparable with the rates charged to existing Matsue residents.

We later toured the Rihaku sake factory. The company's president explained that sake purchases in Japan are on the decline while about 20 percent of company sales are to the United States and increasing annually. Our next stop was the Adachi Museum of Art. Its stunning traditional Japanese garden has been voted the best of its kind in Japan four years running. The tour ended as we participated in hands-on experiences of two of Japan's traditional industries: weaving and indigo dyeing.

We then made our way back to the hotel to be picked up by our host families. I was matched up with Yuki Mishiro and her family (parents and grandmother). A Shimane Prefecture employee, Yuki is a veterinarian who tests cows and pigs before they are slaughtered for human consumption. She has been working with the Prefecture for six months and plans to continue studies next year to expand her skills and get a position in genetic studies. Yuki's family lives in a traditional Japanese home in Izumo, about one hour from Matsue City; it has been in her family for generations. Yuki, who spoke beginner English, used dictionaries and other resources to communicate with me. She did an exceptional job and made me feel very welcome.

Upon arriving at Yuki's home, I was introduced to her entire family as we sat down for a formal dinner of delicious *sukiyaki*.

#### ► Saturday, November 11

The next morning we headed out for a day of sightseeing. I visited where Yuki worked, touched the Sea of Japan, lunched on *tacoyaki* (pastry with octopus, suction cups still attached), toured the Hinomisaki lighthouse (160 steep steps in stocking feet) and visited the Izumo Taisha Shrine dedicated to the God of Happiness and Marriage. That evening, we dined out at a sushi fast-food restaurant. I tried just about everything but the raw horse. At the end of the meal, the cashier added up the number of plates in front of each of us and calculated the bill accordingly.

#### ► Sunday, November 12

After breakfast on Sunday, I said goodbye to my host family. Yuki's mother prepared a thoughtful goodbye message for me in English. It meant a lot to me that she

took the time to prepare and deliver it in my native language. Yuki and I set out for another day of touring before she returned me to Matsue City. We saw a traditional Japanese model home, a local hot spring and visited Matsue Vogel Park where we viewed an extensive owl display and a large collection of rare birds and flowers. We arrived back at the hotel for our final goodbyes. Yuki presented me with a letter that indicated her pleasure in being able to host my visit. She indicated that there were three happy things she will remember from my visit: I talked actively to her, my smile, and that I enjoyed myself. She hopes to visit me in America and appreciated my kindness and friendship. I felt the same way. Yuki and her family welcomed me into their home, shared their lives and helped me understand the cultural differences and similarities we have. This is an experience I will never forget.

#### ► Monday, November 13

On Monday morning, our exchange group met a final time with our hosts from Shimane Prefecture. We discussed about 20 pre-submitted questions in the three hours allocated for our meeting. The Prefecture struggles with an aging population and young people who move away and do not return. It is focusing on building upon its technological roots (the founder of Sharp Electronics is from the area), agriculture, fish production and cultural tourism. A challenge I found with these meetings was their formality. Interaction was very controlled and did not allow a lot of opportunity for the exchange of ideas. I believe we all left Shimane Prefecture impressed with their hospitality and with a newly acquired appreciation for the challenges facing Japan's local governments-many of which are the same challenges local governments face in New Hampshire and around the United States.

#### ► Tuesday, November 14

Four of us hearty souls met in the hotel lobby at 5 a.m. to take a taxi to the Tokyo fish market. Our interpreter told us to be careful since the market is quite busy in the morning. This was an understatement! There were trucks, wagons, small vans, wheelbarrows and forklifts zooming around in the dark. The market is huge, and foreign pedestrians are not given the right of way; in fact, several times we had to jump out of the way to avoid being hit. From watching the rituals of judging which tuna is going to be bid on and seeing which is hauled away to viewing the wide variety of fresh fish available for purchase in the market's many booths, it was more than your senses could take in and hard to believe this happens

every day of the week.

#### ► Final Reflections

As I reflect on my trip to Japan, from a local government prospective, it was impressive to see how well government services are delivered. It appears that most local municipal services-including roads, transit, and public safety services-are delivered efficiently and effectively. Japan's use of technology is also impressive along with its dedication to creating new technologies and sharing this information with private sector business. This creation of technology-based work opportunities is especially critical for the Shimane Prefecture due to its rural location. Active strategic plans are also important for keeping their young people within the Prefecture.

Finally, I was struck by the hospitality of the Japanese people in general and from my hosts at the Japanese Local Government Center, Shimane Prefecture and the City of Matsue. They were always friendly; even strangers in the subway would stop and ask if you needed assistance when you looked lost or confused. One thing that takes getting used to is the Japanese do not have the same "personal space" that we have in the United States. They stand and sit closer to each other and visitors than I felt comfortable with from my cultural viewpoint. At first this can be interpreted as pushy, but you soon learn that it is not the case. It is just a different cultural norm.

Overall, the experience provided me with the opportunity to not only meet new people but, to try new foods, traditions and activities that were sometimes outside my comfort zone. I am very thankful for having had this opportunity and look forward to sharing my experiences with others.



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# Japan's Changing Demographics

Matthew Gillam / JLGC Senior Researcher

JLGC RESEARCHER'S EYE

Japan is changing. It is still the land of hardy, aging farmers, legions of men and women packing into trains every day going to and from work, stylishly rebellious youth hanging out downtown in their latest neon-lit fashions, and kids on their way to school with their uniforms and *rando-seru*. But the farmers are gradually dying off, and their children have moved away to the cities for better jobs. There are fewer people in the age group that heads off to work each morning - although you couldn't necessarily tell it from the crowds. Young people are just as likely to drive to the mall or go cruising, like their American counterparts. There are fewer children than ever, and school enrollment is steadily declining. And, in one of the biggest changes, many more faces in the crowd belong to non-Japanese.

Many trends are converging, as they are around the developed world, to create a situation in which Japan must adapt to an aging and declining population that is increasingly urban (or suburban) and increasingly dependent on social welfare programs for support. In 2005 Japan's population declined for the first time, down 0.02 percent from 2004 to a total of 127.76 million. Of these, 21 percent were 65 years of age or over. People in the 15 to 64 year old age group declined to 65.3 percent of the population. This group peaked at 69.5 percent in 1990 and has been dropping ever since. The marriage rate has dropped markedly since the 1970s and the divorce rate has crept higher, with far-reaching implications for household size and the overall social safety net. Japan's fertility rate, at 1.25 percent, is well below replacement rate, and children 0 to 14 years of age account for only 13.6 percent of the population. This number declined fairly steadily over the 20th century as families had fewer children and people started living longer.

In 1975, 3.3 percent of all

households were headed by someone 65 years or older. By 2005 this number had reached 17.7 percent. Rural areas closer in to major cities are overtaken by new development, while more remote areas struggle to maintain their economies, traditions and social fabric as their young people move away for better, more exciting prospects elsewhere. Older downtowns in many areas are dying as businesses move to new, more spacious and car-friendly developments further out.

These domestic changes mean fewer workers, less tax revenue coupled with more demand for health care and long term care services, increased need for costly infrastructure to service more densely urban populations in and around a few major cities, and pressure to give more support to working families and the elderly and disabled.

Japan has remained hesitant to open itself to large numbers of new immigrants, as many other countries have done to boost their populations. Even though the number of foreigners living in Japan has been steadily increasing for decades, as of 2005 the total number of legal foreign residents stood at 2.0115 million, or 1.57 percent of the total population. (It is important, though, to remember that perhaps a quarter of these are actually "*zainichi*" Koreans or Chinese, who may have been born and raised in Japan.) For comparison, Canada's foreign-born population accounted for 18.4 percent of the total population in 2001 and continues to rise steadily. In the US, the number is around 12 percent, legal and illegal. Even in the EU, which is more like Japan in consisting of countries not traditionally built on immigration, the overall percentage is 4.4 percent of total population. Still, the concentration of recent immigrants in several major urban areas in Japan often strains services and goodwill. In the Tokyo metropolitan

region, 17 percent of the overall population is non-Japanese, but the situation is different in each ward. Some smaller cities also have relatively large populations, like Oizumi, Gunma Prefecture, where 16 percent of the population is non-Japanese. The entire country continues to wrestle with deep, unresolved issues of cultural identity and practical accommodation that go to the heart of public policy.

Requests to CLAIR's overseas offices for research and support are driven by issues in Japan, and we at JLGC, New York are often asked for information on coping with various aspects of demographic change. Topics we have worked on include: Universal design and accessibility for the elderly and handicapped; Partnerships, tax increment financing and other innovative ways to provide infrastructure and services at lower cost to taxpayers; Revitalization strategies for areas in decline; Interpretation services for hospitals and other public services; And roles played by non-citizens in the public sector.

Faced with an aging, shrinking population, Japan is on the leading edge of demographic changes occurring throughout the developed world. It is always interesting and rewarding to be involved in efforts to cope with these changes by helping to develop new strategies and policies for the Japanese. We hope that, ultimately, Japan's experience will prove useful to people around the world.



# The New Hamamatsu City: Taking Advantage of Cultural and Ethnic Diversity

Yoichi Takimoto / International Affairs Division, City of Hamamatsu (Former Assistant Director of JLGC)

CORRESPONDENCE FROM FORMER JLGC STAFF

My experience working at the Japan Local Government Center in New York for two years has proven to be an asset. When I lived in New York, I felt that the vitality and energy of the city came from its cultural and ethnic diversity. Now, back at home working and living in Hamamatsu city, I can truly appreciate the importance of cultural and ethnic diversity.

Hamamatsu city is located between Tokyo and Osaka. Major industries in Hamamatsu are car manufacturing, musical instruments, textiles and optical electronics.

Hamamatsu has a population of about 820,000 including over 31,000 registered foreign residents. Hamamatsu also has the largest population of Brazilians, over 19,000, in Japan. The number of registered foreign residents, especially from Latin America has increased rapidly.



Japanese Language Class

Due to a labor shortage caused by rapid economic expansion, the Japanese government amended the Immigration Control Act to allow Japanese descendants to return home to work intending to alleviate the labor shortage using temporary workers. However, these foreigners have settled down, and their families have come to join them as well. This gap between the government's expectations and reality has caused problems for foreign residents and local communities. Japanese systems and laws, especially in the field of labor, health insurance and education, do not address the needs of foreign residents.

Hamamatsu is renowned as the

home of world-famous companies. These companies cover a wide range of industries and provide a multitude of working opportunities encouraging immigrant "newcomers" to work in Hamamatsu.



Hamamatsu Samba Festival

Hamamatsu is pursuing many avenues to help foreigners adjust to living in Japan including: providing information and counseling in foreign languages, offering opportunities for Japanese language study, establishing classes to assist foreign children's learning and promoting exchange events in areas with high concentrations of foreigners. Hamamatsu city is not alone as other Japanese cities face similar problems.

In 2001, Hamamatsu and other cities with a large "newcomer" population founded the Committee for Localities with a Concentrated Foreigner Population (CLCF). This committee which began with 13 members has now reached 22 members as of 1 Apr. 2007.

The CLCF has recommended

proposals to the central government in various areas related to the "newcomer" population including a support system for Japanese language programs at schools, a medical insurance system and an overhaul of labor standards.

Unfortunately, the government's response to these efforts has been extremely slow, and at present very little has changed. A few policies, however have recently been reexamined.

The "newcomer" issue that Hamamatsu is facing will become a national issue in the near future. Foreign residents play important roles in our community and in the economy of Hamamatsu. The diversity of Hamamatsu residents creates a new and unique culture. I believe that we can create a richer and better community through social cohesion based on the mutual respect and understanding of different cultures and values.



## Changes in the Number of Registered Foreign Residents in Hamamatsu

Nationality	1990	1994	1998	2002	2006
Brazil	1,457	5,920	10,086	12,111	18,548
Philippines	470	794	912	1,780	2,460
Korea (N. & S.)	2,040	2,001	1,720	1,585	1,701
China	284	568	1,028	1,322	2,474
Peru	17	639	827	1,382	2,226
Others	480	939	1,459	2,215	3,363
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,748</b>	<b>10,861</b>	<b>16,032</b>	<b>20,395</b>	<b>30,772</b>
Total Pop.	533,516	561,074	577,174	593,899	817,548
Foreign Pop. %	0.89	1.94	2.78	3.43	3.76

Current as of 1 April 2006



# Kitakyushu “A Snapshot of an Evolving City”

Seiko Kubo / Assistant Director of JLGC

## DESIGNATED CITY

It can be said that the city of Kitakyushu stands at the crossroads where past meets future. Located at the northern point of Kyushu Island, Kitakyushu is midway between Tokyo and Shanghai. Kitakyushu features a long variegated coast line and a rich natural environment. Approximately four hundred years ago, the geographic area that was to become Kitakyushu City prospered benefiting from good land use and proximity to the sea. It became the center of government and commercial activity on Kyushu Island. In 1901, the first government operated steel works facility, Yawata Iron and Steel Works (now Nippon Steel Corporation, a private entity) was built in Japan providing impetus for industrial development in the area.



*Kokura Castle and Summer Festival*

Today, Kitakyushu serves as a gateway to Asia and a strong and important industrial base for Japan. In 2006, the Kitakyushu Airport was constructed and in a short time was operational with international flights to Shanghai, Guangzhou and Vladivostok. Domestic routes include Okinawa prefecture and fifteen daily flights to Tokyo.

Modern Kitakyushu is comprised of three distinct areas; the Mojiko area, the Castle Town Kokura area and the Yahata Higashida area. The Mojiko area

contains beautiful European style buildings with distinctive architectural features such as the Mojiko Station, a national historic landmark that is still in operation. Another unique building is the Old Moji Mitsui Club which served and accommodated travelers and visitors including Doctor and Mrs. Albert Einstein. The deep port of Moji which opened in 1889 handles incoming and outgoing shipping traffic.

Kokura Castle is known for the magnificent cherry trees that surround it. The Matsumoto Seicho Memorial Museum named for Seicho Matsumoto a renowned author of crime novels is located in the Kokura area. Also tourists can enjoy a wide variety of shops and lodging available there.

The Yahata Higashida area is the home of Space World, the world's first space theme park offering numerous attractions, museums and activities for adults and children. Adjacent to the park are the Museum of National History and Human History, and the Environmental Museum where Kitakyushu's success in overcoming pollution can be viewed and studied. The Kitakyushu Innovation Gallery and Studio which opened April 2007, supports and showcases creative innovations using new technologies.

Kitakyushu continues to develop highly advanced technologies such as robotics and service industries that include efficient distribution of automobile parts and tourism. It is still actively involved in recycling and reducing the waste stream, an initiative that began in 1997 with a project called “Kitakyushu's Eco-Town”. Generally thought of as an industrial city, Kitakyushu prides itself as a service oriented metropolis that has all the

accoutrements such as delicious local cuisine, nostalgic exotic streetscapes and historical and cultural wonders.



*Tanga Fish Market*

Surrounded on three sides by water, Kitakyushu is blessed with an abundance of fresh seafood. Tourists can enjoy blowfish and other seasonal varieties of marine life. The mountains are covered with lush forests and wild animals. A cable car ride at sunset to the top of the mountain yields a spectacular view of the lights below.

It is easy and fun traveling in Kitakyushu, an international city with guides and brochures available in English. Kitakyushu can provide you with many opportunities so come and see for yourself what Kitakyushu has to offer.

Please visit the Kitakyushu Web site for tourist information:

**[www.kcta.or.jp](http://www.kcta.or.jp)**

