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## JET Programme 20th Anniversary Commemorative Ceremony

Cathy Baranenko (ALT - Saitama Prefecture, Saitama-shi 2000-2003)

J L G C U P D A T E

As the winner of the 20th Anniversary JET logo contest, I traveled to Japan on Nov 22 to attend the JET Programme 20th Anniversary Commemorative Ceremony hosted by the Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations. More than 600 people gathered at the Okura Hotel Tokyo to celebrate JET's birthday. Among the participants were ministers of the host organization, CLAIR, ambassadors from over 40 participating countries, and JET alumni currently active in various fields both inside and outside of Japan. Most of all, I was fortunate enough to meet His Imperial Highness Prince Naruhito, who was present for the bestowment of commendations.



The Crown Prince making a speech

I felt very honored to have taken part in the JET Programme's birthday celebration. Looking back, it's been almost six years since Japan first introduced me to its culture. I realized I have been learning about this country for over a quarter of the JET programme's history! And although I am now

physically back at home, a tremendous part of my memories and thoughts are devoted to preserving the experiences I had while on JET. I still remember the year 2000 when I first landed in Narita. I recall stepping off the plane in the mid-summer heat along with 300 others being escorted into a world very much unknown to most of us. Six years later, I returned to Tokyo as a self-assured tour guide for my family, who came to support me at the ceremony.



Cathy receiving her award from CLAIR

Japan has become a second home to me since JET. The first thing I noticed upon descending the walkway from the plane leading to the terminal was a sign written in hiragana "okaerinasai (Welcome home)". I whispered back "tadaima (I'm home)". My association with Japan never stopped beyond JET. Maybe subconsciously I was always looking for a way to return the favor of having spent three rewarding years in Japan. That opportunity came when I found out about the JET logo design competition. Every JET participant has in various ways made lasting impressions on the programme, but to literally be able to leave a mark on it...is beyond what I have ever imagined.

The inspiration for the logo was essentially my mental representation of

what JET stands for. I would say that the ongoing theme of my life on JET can be summed up in 2 words: convergence and connections. "Convergence" means "the coming together of, the merging of groups that were originally different". "Connections", represents the "joining of, or linkage between culture, people, and the way of life". Our job description says we are in Japan to act as Assistant Language Teachers, but more importantly, we are there to connect with people of other cultures, to share our views of the world, to act as grassroots cultural ambassadors of our countries. On the logo, the youth placed inside the "J" represents Japanese youth and the adult on the "E" symbolizes the mentor/ teacher, i.e. the JET participant. I hope the logo, simplistic yet symbolic, is able to capture the essence of the exchange programme.



20th Anniversary Logo

The twentieth year marks an important milestone in the JET history. I would equate it to Japan's Coming-of-Age celebration, a period of festivities honoring JET's passage into adulthood, but also a time to reflect upon and assess the programme's accomplishment in promoting internationalization on the local level. I hope that with the new JET logo in place, all present and future JETs will be reminded of the programme's true purpose. The friendships and connections they cultivate today will last them a lifetime.



# How will American Federalism help in Japan's Goal to Decentralise the Administration of Government?

Seth Benjamin / JLGC Senior Researcher

## SPECIAL FEATURE

In the eighteenth century, the great English poet, Alexander Pope, in his *Essay on Man*, wrote the following:

For forms of government let fools contest;  
Whate'er is best administer'd is best.

Pope was well aware of the then current fight between king and parliament over English parliamentary supremacy. So, he reminded all, in the end, that government was the result of the actions of individuals, holding office as matter of trust. Therefore, it was how administrators governed that mattered.



President John Adams

It is interesting that John Adams, one of the most important American Founding Fathers, placed this quote prominently in his writings on the new American state government constitutions. To this day, Americans are most concerned with the behaviour of their political leaders rather than the form of government they live under. So, how will the American version of federalism help in Japan's goal of decentralising government administration? That is indeed a difficult question to answer simply and in such a short space, but two prominent aspects of American government can illuminate what should make decentralisation a success.

*Authority* and *Accountability* are the two words that permeate the relationship of governments to the people that elect them and to the relationship among governments in the American system: That is, authority to act and accountability for those actions.

One of the features of the American system of federalism is the dual sovereignty of the state and federal governments. Actually, the federal

government has no original sovereignty, coming only as it does from the federal Constitution. As a result of this dual sovereignty, state governments have an enormous scope to act on behalf of their citizens. (Indeed, until the mid-nineteenth century, residents of a state were citizens of that state first and only then of the United States.) So, states have the authority to act on a wide range of issues, without any need to get approval from a 'central' government. The only limits on their activities essentially are to be found in the federal Constitution. One important piece of state government authority is the power to tax its own citizens: Not only the power to tax but the ability to determine what to tax and by how much.

Of course, in today's world, that clear delineation of responsibility between the state and federal governments is much blurred by the course of American history over the past two hundred plus years and, perhaps even more important, the interpretation of that relationship by the U.S. Supreme Court. Nowadays, many state programmes are heavily influenced, if not controlled, by federal mandates and other regulations. The U.S. Supreme Court has swung back and forth between supporting the states and the federal government at different times in the nation's history. The tension between the two levels of government is always real.

Nevertheless, the taxing authority is palpable to the average citizen. It has been, at various times, the source of 'taxpayer revolts', such as Proposition 13 in California in 1978, or Proposition 2 1/2 in Massachusetts in 1980. Precisely because of its effects, along with the taxing authority comes a very keenly felt accountability. State governments are very sensitive to the need to be 'accountable' to their citizens. In New Jersey, in 1990, for example, after the

then Governor pushed through a large tax increase, with the willingness of the majority party in the State Legislature, the citizens responded at the next election by voting out virtually every member of the majority party who did not hold a super-safe seat. The recent uproar by citizens all across the country over the *Kelo v. City of New London* ruling of the U.S. Supreme Court in 2005 has led many states to curtail the authority of their local governments to use 'eminent domain' procedures. Even competition among the states for economic development is vibrant, despite the recent attempt to 'harmonise' sales tax regimes.

All in all, it's the authority of the state governments and the concomitant accountability that gives American state and local governments their vitality, ingenuity, innovation and prospect for future progress. It is true that Japan's prefectures do not have the luxury of that independent authority. However that may be, decentralisation will succeed or fail on how much *real* responsibility will be placed on prefecture governments. In the end, just as in the American state governments, the ability of the prefectures to act on their own initiative (and, maybe, 'to make their own mistakes') and accept the consequences of their own actions will determine how they face the administrative challenges of the future.

What Alexander Pope understood, and American state governments have had, by and large, is the need for the very people who administer government services to be free to exercise the authority to make decisions in the interest of those they serve and then, at the same time, be held responsible for such decisions. There is no question that the talented staff of the prefectures is ready to assume such a responsibility. And, perhaps, the proposed Doushuu law will be the vehicle.



# Fellowship gives state, local officials the learning experience of a lifetime

Tim Anderson, Publications Manager, Council of State Governments Midwest



## GUEST COLUMN

**T**he population is aging and some of the young people are leaving.

Meanwhile, the financially-strapped local government is looking for new, innovative ways to invigorate the economy and bring attractive jobs to the area.

Sound familiar?

It probably does to the many state and local government officials in the United States and Canada dealing with those issues.

But as officials who participated in the 2006 CLAIR Fellowship Exchange Program found out, the same types of demographic trends and economic challenges are driving policy decisions thousands of miles away from home - in the picturesque Japanese prefecture of Shimane.

I was honored to be a part of that group of U.S. and Canadian officials who traveled to Shimane and Tokyo as part of the CLAIR Fellowship.

For all of us, it was the learning experience of a lifetime, both professionally and personally.



Delegates visited Panasonic Center

In Shimane, we saw first-hand some of the unique ways that government leaders are trying to build the region's economy. We visited a prefecture-led research park, for example, where the government itself is developing products for use by local businesses. That same facility also houses "small-business incubators," which allow budding

entrepreneurs from Shimane to get a competitive head start.

In our face-to-face meetings with prefecture leaders, we learned about new initiatives to market Shimane's local products to consumers throughout Japan and around the world. Those products include a unique type of oyster from the Oki Islands and the fish from stunning Lake Shinji.

We also had discussions with the mayor of Shimane's largest town, Matsue City, a municipality working to provide essential local services during a period in Japan marked by tight budgetary constraints and changing political conditions.



Mr. Hidetaka Matsuo Vice Governor of Shimane Prefecture greeted delegates

In Tokyo, officials in the nation's capital talked to us about some of those changing political conditions, which include a restructuring of the relationship between the federal and local government.

But the CLAIR Fellowship was much more than a lesson in policy and government institutions.

The most unforgettable part of the learning experience, in fact, was getting to know the culture and people of Japan.

In Tokyo, we visited the city's oldest temple, toured the National Diet Building and spent time at a traditional Japanese garden.

In Shimane, we stayed at a Japanese-style inn (which included a traditional communal bath), walked to the top of a nearly 400-year-old castle, and got an up-close look at Matsue City as we traveled by boat along the castle's moat.

And then, there were the home stays.

For part of a weekend, we spent time visiting and staying with a local family in Shimane. By opening their homes, and showing us such kindness, these families left us with indelibly warm memories of Japan and its people

No CLAIR Fellow's home stay was the same, but we all returned to the group enriched by the experience.

The same goes for the entire trip. We were treated to a host of marvelous opportunities, all of which were managed flawlessly by the extraordinarily helpful and friendly CLAIR staff.

Our visit to Japan lasted a week and half.

We'll remember it fondly for the rest of our lives.



Delegates tried to make Japanese traditional sweets "Matsue Wagashi"



# “THE VOLUNTEER SPIRIT” - Citizen Participation in the City of Rye

Stephen Fasano / JLGC Senior Researcher

## JLGC UPDATE

The Japan Local Government Center held its New York Fall Seminar at the Whitby Castle in the beautiful city of Rye, New York on November 14, 2006. The seminar event, held annually, provides an opportunity for local Japanese government officials living and working in the United States and Canada to learn about public administration and how local governments make policy and administer services to their constituents.

residential community in a bucolic setting nestled along the shore of Long Island Sound in Westchester County, New York. The oldest permanent settlement in Westchester County it merged with other settlements in 1665 and took the name Rye after ancestors in Rye, England. In 1788, the New York State Legislature officially established the Town of Rye boundaries. For two centuries, Rye remained a secluded community. Land was cleared for

Legislature approved the Rye City Charter adopted by residents and on January 1, 1942, Rye became Westchester County’s sixth and smallest city.

In order to fulfill its mission, the government of the city of Rye operates under the Council-Manager form of government. An elected mayor and six council members form the legislative and policy-making body of the city. They adopt local laws and ordinances and control the raising and appropriation of funds. They appoint a full time City Manager to administer city departments and carry out their policies. The City Manager supervises and coordinates the work of the city’s seventeen departments.

Mayor Steven Otis and Councilman Duncan Hennes welcomed the group of Japanese government officials. Mayor Otis remarked: “... that there are over 100 volunteers serving on various boards, committees and commissions and although the Mayor and members of the City Council are elected they do not receive remuneration for their time, expertise and service to the city.”

Councilman Hennes stated: “... that a large percentage of the everyday work of city government is accomplished with the aid and assistance of volunteers.”

Assistant City Manager and City Comptroller Michael Genito serving as moderator for the event introduced Rye City Manager O. Paul Shew who spoke effusively about the need for citizens to



JLGC Executive Director receives key to the city from City of Rye Mayor Steven Otis.

Each year, the Seminar features a particular theme and this year’s subject focused on volunteers in local government and how citizens participate in providing essential government services. The volunteer theme was chosen to emphasize how important it is for residents to understand how government works by becoming involved in the activities of their government. Policies and major decisions are often implemented with the input of city residents. The city of Rye is a model for citizen participation and volunteers are the heart and soul of what makes their government function in an effective and efficient manner.

farming and grazing and docks were built on Long Island Sound to support the growing oyster industry. In the late nineteenth century, Rye experienced growth and change made possible by the modernization of transportation. By 1904, there were two schools, five churches, a library and a population of 3,500 residents.

The growing community became dissatisfied with the services of Rye Town and by special election on September 12, 1904, taxpayers voted to become the village of Rye. As the village developed the residents began to desire complete independence from the Town government and city status offered many advantages. In 1940, the New York State



Our host and facilitator, Assistant City Manager and City Comptroller Michael Genito



Chief Wickham greets JLGC Executive Director Hirai and Deputy Director Niwa.

actively participate in their government. “We need volunteers to function... and are fortunate to be blessed with talented citizens who unselfishly share their time and knowledge with the staff and elected officials.”

County Legislator Judith Myers spoke about her experience starting out in government as a volunteer. “Serving as a volunteer, I believe is the best foundation for working in government.”

Dr. Brian Nickerson, Director of the Michaelian Institute for Policy and Management at Pace University formally opened the morning session by introducing Japan Local Government Center’s Executive Director Shinji Hirai. Mr. Hirai graciously thanked Rye city officials for hosting the group of Japanese government officials and gave some introductory remarks before exchanging gifts of friendship with Mayor Otis.

The morning session featured a slide show presentation of the departments, boards, committees and commissions that use volunteers to assist Rye city with administering local government services. City planner Christian Miller highlighted the volunteer effort in community planning. Planning and zoning boards require quite a bit of volunteer time and effort in reviewing development proposals to

ensure their conformity with local laws. He said “... when a community is designing or updating a comprehensive plan, the circle of volunteers is broader often involving many citizens in subcommittees studying land use, housing, conservation, recreation, transportation, public services and other community needs.”

Police Commissioner William Connors

outlined the use of volunteers to assist with traffic and crowd control during festive events and emergency situations. City Naturalist Chantal Detlefs briefly spoke about the volunteer activity that has helped propel the Rye Nature Center into self sufficiency and Recreation Commission Superintendent Bill Rodriguez talked about how the youth and senior citizens have assisted in the development of recreation programs.

After a salubrious lunch served in the banquet hall of historic Whitby Castle, the afternoon session featured a tour of the Milton Point fire house. Established in 1903, the Milton Point fire house has successfully undergone restoration. Chief John Wickham conducted a presentation that described the organization and structure of the Rye Fire Department including its use of volunteer firefighters. Rye city is unique in that its fire services are comprised of paid and volunteer firefighters. The Rye Fire Department has approximately 50 volunteer firefighters. Volunteer firefighters undergo training and fight fires as well as equip vehicles and operate fire fighting apparatus. They are an integral and vital component of the fire department. These brave men and women who serve and protect their community exemplify the volunteer spirit encountered in many locales in the United States and experienced by Japanese local government officials in the city of Rye.



JLGC staff touring the Milton Firehouse in the City of Rye



# Three-Month Study Program Opens the Door to Broad Range of Possibilities

Shinya Hasegawa

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

I wish the term of the CLAIR Short-Term International Study Program was longer than three months. It's my honest feeling before participating in this program because if the period is longer I could visit many more sightseeing spots, however, the main purpose of this program was not sightseeing but to study English and overseas local administrative systems.

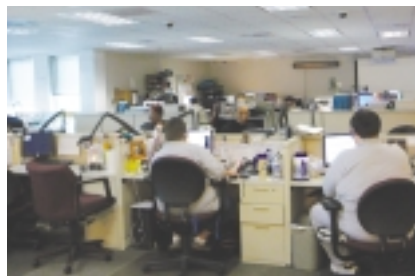
In terms of language training at a language school in Arlington, Virginia, I learned not only English, but also the way Americans ask a question immediately if they have doubts and what they don't understand. However, it was difficult to ask a question quickly because I wasn't used to this custom and even if I wanted to ask a question, I couldn't understand exactly what the teacher said and I didn't know how to express myself accurately using my own words. What I felt was that there was a vicious circle to improve my English skills. If I hesitate to start a conversation, there is a risk of conversation break-down. If there is a risk of conversation break-down, my English skills won't



With language school classmates

improve. If my English skills don't improve, I will be hesitant to start a conversation.

The keys to breaking this spiral are to be positive and have confidence. Even though I don't have enough confidence to speak English, it is important to speak to someone positively. I tried as much as I could to speak positively after I noticed this fact. Such positives encourage me to try to speak more confidently and confidence makes me positive.



In a 311 call center

Secondly, I would like to discuss local administrative systems.

What impressed me the most is the process of accountability for citizens through the "311" call center and CITISTAT in Baltimore city. The "311" call center is a system that allows citizens to dial "311" when he or she wants to obtain information regarding services provided or to voice a complaint about his or her city. The purpose of this system is not only to deal with complaints from citizens, but also to improve services, to manage administration efficiently and to increase government transparency and accountability. This information is compiled

and recorded for use by CITISTAT to assess whether the problem was dealt with adequately and quickly by the appropriate department.

CITISTAT is a combination of the words city and statistics, and a meeting is held every two weeks to monitor whether or not all departments are working efficiently. Agency or bureau heads have a CITISTAT meeting with a CITISTAT team which is organized with the mayor, deputy mayors, and key councillors. All citizens can share their views at this meeting.

The bureau or agency has to submit data to the CITISTAT team days before each planned meeting. The data covers a broad range of information and input over a two-week period. If any problems are pointed out, the associated departments are required to submit a solution and plan at the next meeting.

To summarize, the chief aim of the "311" call center is to formulate a policy and the main purpose of CITISTAT is to expedite implementation, monitor and, if need be, respond to public sector evaluation and queries.

I was fortunate to visit many organizations in the U.S. besides Baltimore. Generally, it is difficult to compare which system is superior or efficient, that of the U.S. or Japan. But both countries main goal is to provide a fair and helpful administrative service to its local citizens. The efforts and achievements of Baltimore city were beneficial for me in this respect. Whether I

can utilize the experiences and knowledge I acquired in the U.S. in my next role remains to be seen; hopefully yes. Although my stay in the U.S. has ended, the CLAIR Short-Term International Study Program continues and hopefully my views and the information obtained over the last three months will assist local government authorities in some way.

### Itinerary of the CLAIR Short-Term International Study Program 2006

- Aug. 18 .....Travel to New York
- Aug. 21 - Aug. 22.....Opening session and orientation at Japan Local Government Center in New York
- Aug. 23 - Sep. 15.....Travel to Arlington, VA
  - All-day language training.....[ Stay hotel ]
- Sep. 18 - Oct. 6 .....All-day language training 3 days a week
  - Meetings and site visits in Washington D.C. area rest of the week .....[ Stay host family ]
- Oct. 10 - Oct. 13 .....Meetings on state government (Austin, TX).....[ Stay hotel ]
- Oct. 16 - Oct. 20 .....Meetings on municipal government (Boulder, CO) .....[ Stay hotel ]
- Oct. 21 - Nov. 3.....Individual Internship (2-week internship in municipal government(s)) .....[ Stay host family ]
- Nov. 6 - Nov. 10 .....Independent travel (I went Vancouver, Canada and Oakland, CA) .....[ Stay hotel ]
  - (meeting with municipal government(s) or organization about own theme)
- Nov. 13 .....Closing session at Japan Local Government Center in New York .....[ Stay hotel ]
- Nov. 14 .....Travel to Japan



# THE 2006 NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES “CONGRESS OF CITIES AND EXPOSITION”

Stephen Fasano / JLGC Senior Researcher

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



The National League of Cities (NLC) held its 2006 “Congress of Cities and Exposition” in Reno, Nevada. NLC is the oldest and largest national organization representing municipal governments throughout the United States. Its mission is to strengthen and promote cities as centers of opportunity, leadership and governance. The Congress event serves as NLC’s annual convention and offers a broad range of learning opportunities. The conference is unique in that it partners with a host city to develop educational programs which allow the city to display its accomplishments.



NLC President Bart Peterson and JLGC Executive Director Shinji Hirai

This year the host city was Reno, “The Biggest Little City in the World”. More than 3,500 attendees representing

1200 cities, 48 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico were treated to an array of lectures and discussions on important and timely municipal issues.

The opening general session featured Henry Cisneros as the keynote speaker. Mr. Cisneros served as the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development during President Clinton’s administration. A former mayor of San Antonio, Texas and past president of the NLC, Mr. Cisneros is recognized as the first Hispanic-American mayor of a major U.S. city. During his tenure as mayor; he helped rebuild the city’s economic base and spurred the creation of jobs through massive infrastructure and downtown improvements. Mr. Cisneros currently serves as Chairman of CityView, a community building company dedicated to producing workforce homes in the central neighborhoods of America’s urban areas.

Focusing on why affordable housing is important to restoring the economy, Mr. Cisneros stressed that it is a basic function of local government to provide affordable housing. He stated that cities need to think comprehensively about implementing housing initiatives and to concentrate on “smart growth”. He listed many tools that city

governments are using to create affordable housing such as tax increment financing and employer benefit programs.



“Congress of Cities and Exposition” at Reno-Sparks Convention Center

Mobile workshops were an integral part of the convention and Reno showcased a number of recent achievements and success stories. Reno rediscovered the value and beauty of the Truckee River which runs through the heart of downtown and built an aesthetic and commercial oriented river walk. The Reno Transportation Rail Access Corridor (ReTRAC) program lowered the old railroad tracks into a 33 foot trench and created new rail lines and overpasses to move people and vehicles more quickly through the downtown area. Regional collaboration was exhibited through the creation and operation of the Regional Public Safety Center and the preservation of Lake Tahoe, Nevada’s “Jewel of the Sierra”. The restoration and revitalization of Virginia City is underway thanks to the efforts of the Virginia City Convention and Tourism Authority partnering with small businesses and large corporations to market tourism.

Continuing a history and tradition dating back to the early years of this century, the 83rd Congress of Cities reinforced the concept that the NLC is a vital organization that serves its member municipalities with information to assist mayors and council members to lead their communities in an ever changing complex world.



# Welcome to Gifu - A Growing City of Development, Tradition and Comfort

Keitaro Tanaka / Assistant Director of JLGC



Logo of Slow Life Promotion

## CORE CITY



Panoramic View of the City of Gifu

The City of Gifu, capital of Gifu Prefecture, is located at the geographic center of Japan. A former castle-town known in the 1500's as Inokuchi, it came under the rule of the warlord Nobunaga Oda who popularized its name as "Gifu". In 1995, the City of Gifu became a Core City (Chukaku-shi). Core City status gave the City of Gifu additional power. In 2006, the City of Gifu merged with the Town of Yanaizu. This unification increased Gifu's population to over 420,000 and expanded its size to approximately 203 square kilometers.

### ► Gifu City Tower 43 - A New City Landmark

Gifu's landscape is now changing dramatically. "Gifu City Tower 43", is a new 43-story building that is going up next to Gifu station. It is scheduled to be completed by autumn of 2007. Gifu



Gifu City Tower 43 (completion drawing)

City Tower 43 will be a complex structure that features commercial and residential facilities, including senior housing. The roof will have a public space so everyone can enjoy the 360 degree

panoramic view of Gifu City. The tower will become a new city landmark.

In addition to Gifu City Tower 43, various projects are currently underway around Gifu station, including elegant pedestrian elevated walkways and new commercial buildings that were completed recently. Revitalizing the area around Gifu station will create a new and charming identity for the City of Gifu.

### ► Cormorant Fishing (Ukai) - A Historic Tradition

Cormorant fishing on the Nagara River has a history of over 1,300 years. Cormorant fishermen skillfully handle the 12 cormorant birds that catch *ayu* fish with their sharp beaks. The sight of the Cormorant fishermen at work on the river creates a profound visual image. Gifu fishermen are specially certified by the Imperial Household Agency, and every year they present the first catch of *ayu* fish to the Emperor.

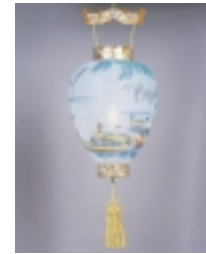
Besides Cormorant fishing, Gifu is rich with traditional crafts, such as "Gifu Chochin (lanterns)", "Gifu Wagasa (Japanese umbrellas)" and "Gifu Uchiwa (fans)". These traditional crafts remain important to the City of Gifu.



Cormorant Fishing

### ► Slow Life City - Creating Value

The City of Gifu is promoting



Gifu Chochin (lantern)

itself as a "Slow Life City" similar to the lifestyle concepts of "Slow Food" in northern Italy and "Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability (LOHAS)"

popularized around the northern Pacific area in the United States. The "Slow Life City" program is not just about "Slow Food" which encourages some changes in the local diet and promotes enjoying long meals with family and friends, but also incorporates the concepts of "Slow Industry" which encourages residents to pay attention to and cherish traditional crafts using natural materials and craftsmanship; "Slow Education" which emphasizes spiritual well being and longevity; and "Slow Tourism" typified by Cormorant fishing, a practice which presents tourists with a historic and seductively timeless example of traditional Gifu culture.

With its new diversity and eclectic charm, visitors can experience a rich and hospitable city in which all can enjoy the development, tradition and comfort of Gifu.

For more information:

Gifu City Government

<http://www.city.gifu.lg.jp/c/19110106/19110106.html>

Photo credit/Gifu City Government

