



## We are JLGC!

### Executive Director

• **Hiroshi Sasaki** (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications): As executive director it is my job to effectively and efficiently manage JLGC while developing my staff to reach their maximum potential. It is also my responsibility to continue to encourage the promotion of international exchange and mutual understanding between Japan, Canada and the US.

### Director

• **Ryuichi Kohama** (Tokyo Metropolitan Government): Although I shall return to Japan as this JLGC News Letter goes to press, my two years living and working in the United States was fun and rewarding. I should like to thank everyone, especially the members of the JET and JETAA for making my stay in New York a pleasurable and memorable experience.

• **Toshiyuki Uemura** (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications): I reside in the multicultural city of Toronto. The citizens here in Canada have grappled with numerous challenges, and I have been able to see several alternative methods employed to tackle them effectively. These

methods are a useful reference for Japanese local governments experiencing similar challenges as well.

### Senior Researchers

#### • Seth

**Benjamin:**

Hello. I hail from 'Merrie Old England' where I worked for regional government. Coming to the US, I have worked for city, state and federal governments. Apart from the practical, I have an academic interest in political philosophy. I am glad to help all understand America.

• **Stephen Fasano:** As a Senior Researcher, I am responsible for researching the administrative and financial systems of American local governments. I am an editor of the JLGC Newsletter and assist the Japanese staff with overseas assistance requests from Japanese local governments. I help with the coordination of the Fellowship Exchange Program for Senior Executives and the Staff Development Programs.

• **Matthew Gillam:** I am responsible for implementing the summer internship program, supporting the JET alumni, and tracking Canadian affairs, besides sharing the workload with my colleagues in handling research and liaison work on behalf of local governments in Japan.

### Administrative Assistant

• **Laura Smith:** Hi, my job is to help our executive director and all the



Japanese staff. It has been my great pleasure to have known and worked for all of our previous executive directors. I greet many visitors who come to our office and I look forward to greeting you as well.

### Assistant Directors

• **Sho Nakazono** (City of Sakai): This year, I am the only assistant director who is working for a third year at JLGC. My main task is to implement the executive director's special projects and assignments. I am also in charge of managing the planning, and publishing of CLAIR Reports.

• **Junji Imada** (Shimane Prefecture): I am responsible for a unique project that introduces local Japanese cuisine to the US. JLGC will support local governments in Japan, as they exhibit many of their culinary delights! I believe you will enjoy the delicious and artfully presented Japanese food dishes.

• **Koki Kimoto** (City of Chiba): I am in charge of the staff development program at JLGC. I manage and coordinate the language training, public administration and guest speaker programs for our entire staff. If you come to NY, please drop by the JLGC. I'll ask you to be a guest speaker!

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• **Taichi Hanzawa** (Miyagi Prefecture): I am the JETAA guru! Hello to all the JETAA USA members! It is a pleasure to meet all the JETAA Canada members. I am also responsible for administering the office network and maintaining computers. Colleagues refer to me as the office geek, but this geek keeps their computers operating.

• **Ryoko Kobayashi** (City of Kawasaki): I am the editor of the JLGC Newsletter. I would like to hear your opinions, and ideas. Please no complaints! I also assist Japanese local governments who are enthusiastic about establishing relationships with their American and Canadian local government counterparts. So, please support our activities.

• **Fumi Saijo** (Tome City, Miyagi Prefecture): I am responsible for managing the CLAIR Fellowship Program. The program provides opportunities for senior staff from American and Canadian local

governments to learn about the Japanese local government system. During my time in New York City, I shall endeavor to support a diversity of grass-roots exchanges between Canada, the US and Japan.

• **Akiko Tanabe** (Tottori Prefecture): I am accountable for preparing and reviewing this fiscal years budget for JLGC. I am also responsible for managing research requests made by Japanese local governments pertaining to the administrative and financial systems of local governments in the US and Canada.

• **Chizuko Kawamura** (City of Hiroshima): My responsibility at JLGC is to serve as the liaison for JETAA USA. I am familiar with the highly popular and successful Japan Exchange Teaching Program (JET) but was surprised to learn that its alumni, JETAA is just as successful.

• **Kazuaki Nakajima** (Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department): I

organize the CLAIR Mail News and Business Report which summarizes JLGC events and activities to CLAIR headquarters in Tokyo. As a police inspector, I am interested in comparing the American and Japanese police systems as well as better understanding emergency management and disaster planning.

• **Shinya Abe** (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications): I am responsible for managing the budget at JLGC. Also, I plan to attend government conferences to gather information about new and progressive policies in the US and introduce them to local government officials in Japan.

• **Yuko Nishida** (Izumo City, Shimane Prefecture): I am the project manager for the Short Term International Study Program and the JLGC Summer Internship Program. I hope to continue promoting JLGC programs as the vehicle to enhance further the good relationship between the US and Japan.

**JETRO NY**

**T**he Japan External Trade Organization

(JETRO) is a government-related organization that works to promote mutual trade and investment between Japan and the rest of the world.

We are helping foreign companies to set up offices in Japan quickly & cost effectively by providing expertise, resources, and industry connections. The strength of JETRO is that because we are an independent agency of the Japanese government, we are able to provide many of our services for free to our qualified clients. Every year, over 1,000 firms take advantage of JETRO's support and services, with more than 100 companies successfully setting up a Japanese office. Japan may be viewed as a gateway to Asia for many businesses, one of the world's largest economic markets, offering foreign companies an opportunity for major growth in revenue and profit. The JETRO Business Development team offers a wide variety of business support services to facilitate market-entry and office set-up in Japan.

Learn more about JETRO on our website at [www.jetro.org](http://www.jetro.org)

• **Help U.S. companies establish a presence in Japan.**

JETRO provides free market entry information and supports foreign companies to successfully enter and expand in the Japanese market. Since JETRO is an independent agency of the Japanese government, we are able to provide many of our services for free to qualified companies, including market information, temporary office space, and business partner matching, each designed to encourage thriving relationships between American companies and Japan.

• **Help U.S. companies find Japanese business partners.** When expanding a business in Japan, companies often begin with a Japanese partner who knows the market, has a developed network and understands the business environment. JETRO provides U.S. companies with opportunities to meet potential Japanese partners through business matching programs at major trade shows.

JETRO New York is here to help you grow your business. Please feel free to contact us to discuss your future success in the Japanese Market!



**JETRO (Japan External Trade Organization) New York Office**  
1221 Avenue of the Americas, 42 Floor, New York, NY 10020  
Phone: 212- 997-0400 / FAX: 212-944-8808



# Volunteering at the Maryland Municipal League Annual Convention

RYOKO KOBAYASHI, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, JLGC



Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley (left) with newly elected MML President Craig Moe, Mayor, City of Laurel, MD

The Annual Convention of Maryland Municipal League (MML) was held in Ocean City, Maryland, from June 28th to July 1st. The MML was founded in 1936 and represents 157 municipal governments and 2 special taxing districts throughout the state of Maryland. The local governments attending the convention aimed to share best practices and ideas, and network with each other. They welcomed State Governor O'Malley, Lieutenant Governor Brown and several state officials as well as about 1,700 people from 122 municipalities. The majority of attendees were mayors and council members. The average populations of participating municipalities were about 5,000. This population seemed small to me, however, officials representing these undersized local governments were very enthusiastic about learning from each other.

Various workshops were conducted during the convention on topics such as; risk management, and "green" building codes. Many workshop speakers heralded from Maryland's municipalities. In fact, mayors gave lectures on their successful practices. The workshops were informative not only to Maryland local government officials but also to people learning about American local

government practices such as myself.

I was particularly intrigued by the "Academy for Excellence in Local Governance." This is a voluntary training program designed to help local government officials, especially newly elected officials. Certification is provided by the University of Maryland upon successful completion of

the nine core courses and five electives. It was fortuitous that workshops at the convention featured five core and seven elective Academy subjects, thus allowing people to earn credits. For those wanting to attain certification, an application form was distributed during the first 20 minutes of each workshop so attendees could document their attendance and receive due credit. The collaborative partnership between the University of Maryland and the MML allows for this type of continuing education in the field of local government. I believe this idea could be applied in Japan.

During my attendance at the MML Annual Convention, I assisted MML staff register attendees. Maryland Municipal League executive director Scott Hancock kindly offered my services as a volunteer. As a former CLAIR Fellow, Mr. Hancock has a very good understanding of JLGC and knowledge of Japan because Kawasaki City where I work has a sister-city relationship with the city of Baltimore. Also, Kanagawa Prefecture where Kawasaki City is located is the sister-state of Maryland. So, I felt right at home!



MML Executive Director Scott A. Hancock with Assistant Director Ryoko Kobayashi

I was able to experience the frenetic work environment during the registration process. My job was easy because a voluminous and detailed "Staff Do-List" was distributed to all staff members before the convention and workshop envelopes had written instructions to guide us. These well-organized instructions made the convention run smoothly. I also helped in setting up and monitoring various workshops. I was surprised that several mayors and council members helped MML staff as volunteers. Imagine working side by side with a city mayor! They were friendly and spoke freely about their towns and cities, and how they benefit from being members of MML. I shall never forget the relationships and friendships I made during my work as a volunteer at MML.



Helping Out at MML registration



# JETAA Wants You!

TAICHI HANZAWA, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, JLGC

The ninth annual JETAA Canada National Conference was held in Toronto, from May 29th through May 31st. Delegates from seven Canadian JETAA Chapters, the Country Representative and volunteer staff from JETAA Toronto attended. In addition to the JETAA members, three delegates from JLGC and five delegates from the Consulate-General of Toronto attended.

Steven Horowitz from JETAA New York was the keynote speaker. His expertise is in professional outreach and development. I believe that exchange between Canada and the United States has been active. Last year, both Country Representatives attended each others national conferences.

Various agendas were discussed at the national conference. Recruitment and maintaining activities were priority topics. Progress in information technology such as; Face Book and Twitter are now used liberally by many JETAA Chapters as a recruitment tool to attract new members.

JETAA Chapters offer "preparation seminars" to departing JET's giving them fruitful information about how to survive in Japan from a practitioner's point of view. Chapters also conduct "career forums" helping newly returned JET's with information to assist them with their careers and help them better understand the local job markets. An integral part of each JETAA Chapters public relations and marketing efforts is to promote Japanese culture within their communities by holding events such as; tea ceremonies, playing KOTO and learning about Japanese cooking and cuisine. The "Guidepost," a billboard of information, highlights JETAA activities and programs for new JET's as well as JET alumni.

JETAA passion for their work is contagious! They are proud of having been a JET participant and love Japanese "furusato" (where they stayed as a JET). JETAA members have a wealth of experience and knowledge to

offer. They are precious assets for Japan. If you were a JET participant and have not yet joined JETAA, please check the website of your nearest

Chapter. All that you need to do is locate "JETAA" and where you live, then click and you are there!



Members of JETAA Canada

## JET Program 2009 New Participant Numbers

	2009			2008		
<i>Consulate General of Japan</i>	<i>ALT</i>	<i>CIR</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>ALT</i>	<i>CIR</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
<b>United States</b>	<b>826</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>851</b>	<b>1,072</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>1,108</b>
United States (DC)	64	1	65	87	5	92
Anchorage	4	0	4	4	1	5
Atlanta	38	1	39	52	1	53
San Francisco	65	2	67	87	1	88
Seattle	41	2	43	47	4	51
(Spokane)	(9)	(0)	(9)	(11)	(0)	(11)
Chicago	133	6	139	175	7	182
Detroit	35	1	36	62	2	64
Denver	40	0	40	38	1	39
(Salt Lake City)	(6)	(0)	(6)	(8)	(0)	(8)
Nashville	33	1	34	37	0	37
New York	102	2	104	117	3	120
Hagatna, Guam	3	0	3	1	0	1
Houston	41	0	41	64	2	66
Portland	36	1	37	41	1	42
Boston	52	2	54	64	3	67
Honolulu	21	1	22	31	1	32
Miami	17	1	18	25	1	26
Los Angeles	101	4	105	105	3	108
(Phoenix)	(19)	(1)	(20)	(16)	(0)	(16)
<b>Canada</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>201</b>
Canada (Ottawa)	16	0	16	27	1	28
Calgary	24	1	25	21	2	23
(Winnipeg)	(4)	(0)	(4)	(10)	(0)	(10)
Toronto	66	1	67	67	3	70
Vancouver	41	1	42	41	3	44
Montreal	22	0	22	25	1	26



# JETAA in the Big Apple and Beyond

MEGAN MILLER, PRESIDENT, JETAANY

Often cited as one of the most active chapters in the world, the Japan Exchange and Teaching Alumni Association of New York - better known as JETAANY - has served JET "graduates" for decades. JETAANY was informally founded shortly after the 1988 kickoff of the JET program itself and was officially organized several years later as an incorporated non-profit with executive leadership roles. In 2007, JETAANY achieved 501c3 tax-exempt status.

Early activities included mostly informal gathering such as happy hours and loosely organized outings, as well as the annual softball tournament. Today, JETAANY has blossomed into a bevy of cultural, social, and professional experiences that extend well beyond the occasional *enka*.



Bon-Odori Dance Class

## Cultural events

What is it that you miss most about Japan? Is it the relaxing swirl of steamy onsen waters around your shoulders? Or perhaps it's the cool feel of tatami below your feet contrasting with the warm touch of a bowl of macha against your fingertips...

Before you ask - yes, there IS an onsen in New York! We made this lovely discovery last year, and now the onsen outing has become another annual tradition. We also host an annual sake tasting event - this year we leveraged our JETAANY network by holding it at Bao Noodle, a Manhattan restaurant owned and operated by JET Alumnus Chris Johnson. In recent years we have organized a Japanese dance class, a "roll

your own" sushi event, a Japanese cooking class, and tea ceremonies at the Urasenke tea house in Manhattan. Taking advantage of the plethora of museums on NYC, we have arranged private tours of museums hosting Japan-related exhibits and shows.



JET Alumni Author Showcase

## Professional Events

In addition to re-creating those natsukashii-for-Japan moments, one of our foremost goals is to assist JETs and JET Alumni with their career development. Annually, we partner with the Japanese Government on their initiatives, such as the Pre-Departure Seminar for Departing JETs and the Career Forum for newly returned JETs. Each June, the Pre-Departure Seminar is honed and refined by alumni to bring the best assistance and information possible to the newly selected JETs departing for Japan. In October, the Career Forum and Welcome Back Reception invites newly minted JET Alumni back into the fold. These JET Alumni-led sessions include a resume development workshop, a career panel, and a "meet the recruiters" session. The evening is capped off with a sushi- and sake-laden reception hosted by the Ambassador.

A marquee event that has really put JETAANY on the map is our annual Meishi Exchange. Each year between 50 to 100 JET Alumni, Friends of JET (FOJ), and recruiters gather together to network, job hunt, recruit, and just have a great time. More recently, we have established several career groups, kicked off by the "WIT"

Group (Writers / Interpreters / Translators). This initiative has expanded rapidly into an extensive resource for JET Alumni: JETWit.com, led by JET Alumnus Steven Horowitz. Additional groups include a Music Group, a Teaching Group, a New Moms Group, and coming soon an Artist Group. This March JETAANY and JETWit.com hosted a highly successful author event, showcasing several JET Alumni authors and their work, with book sales and a reception following.



Softball, 2008

## Social Events

Sometimes, it's important just to have a little fun. But even our "social" events tend to pack a two-fisted punch by incorporating networking opportunities and culture experiences along with the laughs. Happy Hours, New York Harbor Cruises, Nihongo Dake Dinners, Quarterly Meetings, Softball Tournaments, *Bonnenkai*, *Shinnenkai*, and the like all offer a chance for alumni to expand their networks and leverage all that JETAA has to offer.

Behind the scenes of all of these activities is our best asset - a competent and dedicated Executive Committee fully supported by our Board of Directors. Also critical to our success are strong partnerships with both the JLGC (CLAIR NY) and the Japanese Consulate. And finally, we would be nothing without our 1300-member roster of unique and skilled alumni that enable the organization to constantly grow, evolve, and be successful. To all of you - *otsukaresama deshita!*



# Democracy in Action - The Open Town Meeting

STEPHEN FASANO, SENIOR RESEARCHER, JLGC



Town Manager, Andover Board of Selectpersons and the staff of JLGC

On May 25-26, staff members of JLGC, the Osaka City Chicago office and the Consulate-General of Japan in Boston visited Andover, Massachusetts to meet with town officials and observe a traditional open town meeting. The two day event, the first of four JLGC Seminars held during the fiscal year, allows Japanese government officials living and working in the United States the opportunity to better understand the traditions and practices of American local government.

The town of Andover is located in Essex County in the northeastern part of the commonwealth of Massachusetts, approximately 23 miles north of Boston. Originally settled in 1636, the community was incorporated in 1646 as the Town of Andover, named after a town in England where many of its settlers had come from.

Andover is known the world over for being the home of one of the oldest and prestigious independent secondary



Andover Board of Selectpersons greet Director Kohama

preparatory schools in the United States, Phillips Academy. Academy alumni include such notables as former President George H.W. Bush and former Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, Oliver Wendall Holmes Jr.

The patriotic song America was written in 1831 by Samuel Francis Smith while attending the Andover Theological Seminary. Andover is often referred to as the "Home of America".

Andover is known for its forward thinking government, committed to quality, responsiveness and service. Town Meeting, which is generally unique to New England, serves as Andover's legislative body. It offers all registered voters of the community the opportunity to participate in the major decisions of the Town. Town Meeting is facilitated by an elected Town Moderator, who is responsible for appointing a nine member Finance Committee, which in turn is responsible for advising Town Meeting on all matters brought before it.

The purest form of governing is practiced in an open town meeting. In use for over three hundred years and still to this day a proven and valuable means for citizens to voice their opinions and directly effect change in their communities and neighborhoods. The town meeting is the distinguishing feature of town government in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and is sanctioned by the Commonwealth's constitution, which dates

to 1780:

*The people have a right, in an orderly and peaceful manner, to assemble to consult upon the common good: give instruction to their representatives, and to request of the legislative body, by way of addresses, petitions or remonstrance's, redress of the wrongs done them, and of the grievances they suffer \**

Simply described, an open town meeting is both an event and an entity. It is a gathering of the town's eligible voters and those voters may vote on all matters.

After meeting with Andover town's elected and appointed officials, the Japanese attendees observed a strategy planning session among the Board of Selectmen and Town Manager before entering the open town meeting. The Town Meeting focused on the town's fiscal year budget. Town Meeting was well attended and many members spoke for and against individual budget items.

The open town meeting concept is known in Japan but is not practiced. Efforts to forge grass roots democracy mechanisms in Japan including active citizen participation may still be in the formative stage; however those who attended Andover's continuing experiment of democracy in action were affected by what they saw and heard.

\* Zimmerman, Joseph. "The New England Town Meeting - Democracy in Action". Praeger Press, 1999



The citizen legislature votes at Town Meeting



# Accommodating Growth and Cultural Diversity in Will County, Illinois

LAND USE DIRECTOR SHARES STRATEGIES WITH JAPANESE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

Japan and Will County, Illinois have more in common than many would realize. That's what the county's Land Use Director, Curt Paddock discovered after his speaking engagement at JLGC.

After being introduced to Assistant Directors Koki Kimoto and Ryuichi Kohama, staff at JLGC attending the annual Illinois Municipal League Conference in the fall of 2008, Curt Paddock continued corresponding with Mister Kimoto and Kohama and was subsequently invited to speak to Japanese local government officials living and working in the Greater New York City Metropolitan area.

JLGC periodically presents guest lecturers who are professionals in their field of study or work to talk about how local governments in the United States deal with problematic or controversial issues.

Mister Paddock's presentation was entitled, *Rapid Growth and Increasing Cultural Diversity: Land Use Challenges for Will County, Illinois*. He poignantly iterated that Will County is rapidly growing; the ethnicity of the new population is changing, with the two largest incoming groups being Hispanic and Asian. He stated to the Japanese local government officials in attendance:

*"We don't often stop to think about how our local zoning is a reflection of cultural preferences"*

He went on to cite specific land use issues that Will County is struggling with that revolve around culture; such as Mexican rodeos, a proposed Hindu Temple in Homer Township, and a rural site where Muslims wish to slaughter livestock as part of their religious observances.

*"These are important cultural practices*

*to each of these groups, but the zoning and often residents who do not share or understand their new neighbors' cultures and traditions, may not see it the same way."*

Immigration into the United States poses significant challenges for all levels of government. Illinois and Will County have not been immune to an influx of immigrants. Interestingly, Japan has a shortage of young workers and must deal with the immigration of foreign laborers. Certain occupations and jobs are being filled by workers from Southeast Asian nations creating similar challenges for Japanese local governments. The Japanese officials in attendance wondered how Will County government establishes contact with the leadership of the ethnic groups, among other issues. Mister Paddock basically said that it is still a work in progress and local governments must attempt to reach out to these diverse ethnic groups to learn more about their traditions and culture.

The relationship between JLGC and Will County will surely continue. There are myriad possibilities for staff exchange, sharing of information and joint research endeavors that could be undertaken in the near future.

For more information about Will County Land Use Department please visit their web site at [www.willcountylanduse.com](http://www.willcountylanduse.com)



**Curt Paddock, MPA, AICP, CEcD**

Curt Paddock is the Director of the Will County Land Use Department. He has served in this capacity for nearly four years and is responsible for all County operations addressing long range planning, economic development, zoning, engineering, storm water management, floodplain administration, wetland preservation, building safety inspections, property maintenance code enforcement, development permit issuance, historic preservation, neighborhood revitalization, solid waste management and recycling operations. He oversees a staff of sixty and administers an annual budget which exceeds \$15 million.

Prior to his service with Will County, Mr. Paddock has served in similar capacities as both administrator and consultant with local government jurisdictions throughout the Midwest region of the United States. He has also served as an administrator and faculty member at several universities and colleges. His teaching and research have been in the fields of public administration, urban studies and leadership.

Mr. Paddock received a Bachelor of Arts, magna cum laude from Westminster College and earned the degree of Master of Public Administration from Missouri University. Mr. Paddock is currently pursuing his doctorate in Leadership Studies at Indiana Wesleyan University. He has received professional certification from both the American Institute of Certified Planners and the International Economic Development Council.



# Hometowns of New JLGC Staff

## Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

Employees	About 5,200
Area Size	
Transportation from Major City	From Tokyo station By Subway : 5 minutes



© MIC

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) is responsible for wide-ranging fields, such as creating an efficient national administrative system, supporting local governments, promoting better information and communicating technologies.

Today, more Japanese people are interested in reforming the public administration system and concerned about community affairs. The MIC is trying to create more efficient systems throughout Japan. Although the MIC is one of the national ministries, it promotes local empowerment and helps delegate authority from the national government to local governments. It encourages diversity and cultural enrichment throughout Japan.

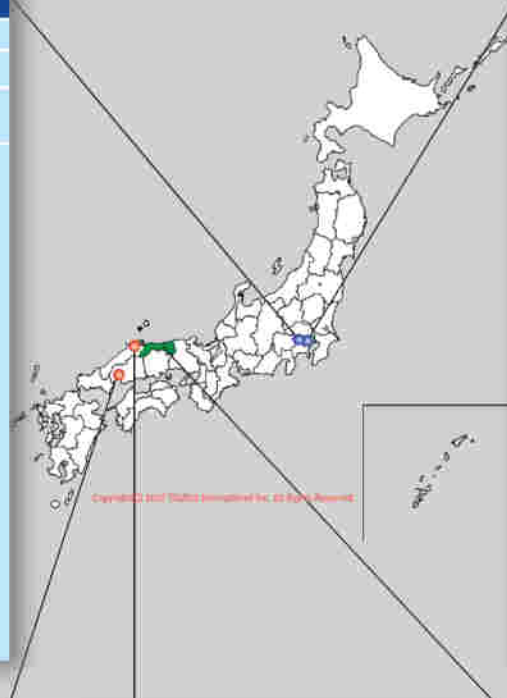
## Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department (TMPD)

Population	12,000,000
Area Size	2,187 km <sup>2</sup>
Transportation from Major City	From Tokyo By Subway : 5 minutes



Tokyo, Japan's capital of some 12 million people, is one of the largest cities in the world. Maintaining the peace and order of this city and safeguarding the life of everyone who lives and works there is the work of men and women of

the KEISHICHO, the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department. Founded in 1874, The TMPD, with a staff of more than 42,000 police officers and about 3,000 civilian personnel manages 101 stations. The TMPD is committed twenty-four hours per day to ensure that its residents can live and work peacefully without fear of crime or accident.



## Hiroshima City

Population	1,100,000
Area Size	905.13 km <sup>2</sup>
Transportation from Major City	From Tokyo By Shinkansen (Bullet Train) : approximately 4 hours By Air: 1 hour and 35 minutes From Osaka By Shinkansen (Bullet Train) : 75 minutes



Hiroshima, internationally known as a city dedicated to peace, is located in the center of Western Japan and has a population of over 1.1 million people.

The urban areas of the city arose from its destruction by the atomic bombing on August 6, 1945, through the tireless effort of its people and with generous support from around the world. You can enjoy two UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Hiroshima: A-bomb Dome in Peace Memorial Park and Itsukushima Shrine on Miyajima Island located in neighboring Hatsukaichi City. Hiroshima will offer you a good opportunity to think about world peace and the experience of Japanese tradition.

Sister City	Honolulu (Hawaii, USA), Montreal (Canada)
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## Izumo City, Shimane Prefecture

Population	147,245
Area Size	545.48 km <sup>2</sup>
Transportation from Major City	From Tokyo By Air: 90 minutes



Izumo is the birthplace of Myths and Legends in Japan. "Izumo Taisha" is known as the shrine where the god of invitations to beautiful encounters is living and where all the gods throughout the nation gather in October of the lunar calendar to discuss encounters between females and males. Thus, many people visit there and clap their hands to ask for their happy future. Izumo has various tasteful and nutritional foods. Izumo Soba noodle is one of the famous dishes. The buckwheat and its outer layer are ground together giving the noodle its dark color, strong flavor and high nutritional value.

Sister City	Santa Clara (California, USA)
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## Tottori Prefecture

Population	594,000
Area Size	3,500 km <sup>2</sup>
Transportation from Major City	From Tokyo By Air: 1 hour From Osaka By Express: approximately 2.5 hours



photo by Ryo Hashimoto

Tottori Prefecture is located in the western part of Honshu, the main island of the Japanese archipelago, in the northeastern part of the Chugoku region. It is a long and narrow prefecture, spanning approximately 120 km east to west and between 20 and 50 km north to south. The northern part of the prefecture faces the Sea of Japan, bordered by a beautiful coastline decorated with green pines and white sand, including the Tottori Sand Dunes. To the south lie the Chugoku Mountains and the greatest peak in the region, Mount Daisen. Within the diverse topography of these mountainous areas, there are three major river basins in which open plains have formed. The prefecture's central cities, Tottori, Kurayoshi, and Yonago, have developed in these three basins. The prefecture's climate is relatively warm and displays brilliant changes between the four seasons, with mostly good weather between spring and autumn and snowfall in the winter. Moreover, because it suffers few typhoons and other natural disasters, Tottori truly has gentle climatic conditions.