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# JLGC NEWSLETTER

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NOVI TOUR 2017

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# 1. Introduction of New JLGC Staff

Ryoji Sakurai, Assistant Director, Representative of Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department

Hello, my name is Ryoji Sakurai. I'm a police officer in the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department. I was seconded to Japan Local Government Center (CLAIR, New York) in April this year. The TMPD is the largest and one of the oldest

municipal police departments in Japan, with approximately 43,422 officers. The TMPD was established in 1874. It has 102 police stations with patrol officers and detectives covering the entire metropolitan area.

I have been in the TMPD for 23 years. I grew up in Fukuoka for 23 years. So I am a Half-Tokyoite and a Half-Fukuokan.

Today I'd like to introduce you to Fukuoka Prefecture where I come from. Fukuoka is also known as "Hakata", and they were originally two separate cities. Fukuoka is situated in the northern part of Kyushu, and the prefecture lies across from the Korean Peninsula on the Asian continent, with a strait in between.



## JAPAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT CENTER

3 Park Avenue, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor New York, NY 10016-5902 212.246.5542 office • 212.246.5617 fax www.ilgc.org JUNE 2017 issue #89

### **History & Culture**

Fukuoka was the first place in Japan to be exposed to the culture of the continent. A gold seal given by China as a gift in 57 A.D. was also discovered on Shikanoshima Island, located in eastern Fukuoka, which confirms there were communications in ancient times.

Ever since the government of Kyushu was set up at Dazaifu in the 7th century, Fukuoka has grown as the hub of the Kyushu region. The Mongol Empire, under the leadership of Kublai Khan, planned to take over Japan in the 13th century. This was the first time that the country had faced external pressure. Mongolia invaded the north of Kyushu in 1274 and 1281. The first invasion was compromised by severe weather conditions and poor planning and the sec-

ond invasion was also thwarted by severe weather and stiff Japanese resistance. Japan remained completely independent.

In 2015, the Miike Coal Mine and Miike Port in my father's home town were listed as parts of a World Cultural Heritage site.

The site bears testimony to the rapid industrialization of the country from the middle of the 19th century to the 20th century, through the development of the iron and steel industry, shipbuilding and coal mining. It testifies to what is considered to be the



first successful transfer of Western industrialization to a non-Western nation.

#### **EVENTS**

Hakata merchants first created the Hakata Dontaku festival based on a traditional celebration that started 830 years ago. The word "Dontaku" comes from the Dutch word "zondag", meaning "Sunday" or "holiday". Many local people join this festival on the 3rd and 4th of May. The main feature is the Dontaku parade, which stretches for 1,230 meters along Meiji Street, from Gofuku-machi to Tenjin, bringing a festival feeling to the entire city.

Hakata Gion Yamakasa is an event that announces the coming of summer in Hakata. This is a ritual event dedicated to Kushida Shrine, the grand tutelary shrine of Hakata boasting a history of over 770 years. When gorgeous Yamakasa floats are displayed at many places in the city on the 1st of July, the city of Fukuoka/Hakata becomes filled with the festive atmosphere of the Yamakasa Festival.





"Oiyama", which is held at 4:59AM on July 15th as the climactic event of the festival, announces the coming of real summer to the city of Hakata. The Hojoya Festival at Hakozaki Shrine in Higashi Ward is a famous autumn festival. It is held every year from the 12th to 18th of September. The approach to the shrine stretches for a kilometer, and is packed with 500 vendors and a steady stream of visitors. Hojoya was originally a shrine ritual meant to pay respect to every living creature and prohibit killing.



#### Food

#### Hakata Ramen

Hakata Ramen is a local ramen dish that features thin noodles in a thick, creamy pork bone soup, topped with slices of roast pork. Some of the best places to enjoy Hakata Ramen are the city's emblematic yatai food stalls.



#### **Mentaiko**

Mentaiko is a common Japanese food that can be found nationwide accompanying rice or alcohol, used as filling for rice balls, or as a seasoning in pasta dishes. Mentaiko, the spicy version of salted cod roe, is famous in Fukuoka, where it originated by way of Korea.



#### Motsunabe

Motsunabe is a local hot pot dish typically made up of beef or pork tripe, cabbage, garlic, chives and red peppers in a soy sauce or miso based soup. The inexpensive, slightly spicy stew is usually cooked at the table on portable burners and served together with a bowl of rice. Noodles or additional rice may be added to the leftover soup in the pot at the end of the meal to finish the dish.



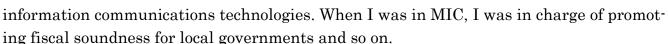
#### **More Information**

https://www.jnto.go.jp/eng/regional/fukuoka/index.html http://www.welcome-fukuoka.or.jp/english/ http://www.japan-guide.com/

# Kaori Kurauchi, Assistant Director, Representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

Hello, everyone.

My name is Kaori Kurauchi. I have been assigned as a new assistant director at JLGC since this April. Originally I come from Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC). MIC manages the fundamental framework of Japan, including administrative management of the national government, administration and financial systems of local governments, fire services administration, disaster management and

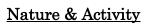


I was born and grew up in Hokkaido which has a number of attractions. Today I'd like to introduce you to some of them.



Hokkaido is the northernmost island as Japan, it is approximately on the same latitude of Boston. Its area covers more than 20% of the total land area of the country of Japan.

Even in humid Japan, the weather here is generally mild throughout the year. In the rest of Japan, there are rainy or typhoon seasons, but nor in Hokkaido! On the other hand, we can see a huge amount of snow in winter.



Hokkaido has magnificent nature such as the Shiretoko peninsula that is a World Natural Heritage site. During summertime, you can go trekking to the mountain and enjoy alpine plants, or river rafting and paragliding in the sky. During wintertime, it is highly recommended to experience outdoor activities in the snow, especially skiing and snowboarding. We have excellent powder snow



owing to the cold air that blows in from Siberia over the Sea of Japan from the North West bringing with an abundant amount of moisture. Our ski resorts are found in great locations including hot springs, so you can also enjoy the pleasure of hot baths after skiing or snowboarding.



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#### Food

Hokkaido is surrounded by the Pacific Ocean, Sea of Japan, and the Sea of Okhotsk. So, fishing is one of major industries in the region and Hokkaido's fresh and quality seafood is well-known all over Japan. It includes crabs, sea urchin, salmon roe, scallop and also seaweed. Not surprisingly, you can eat delicious sushi in Hokkaido. However, you had better note that some seafood may not be available during certain seasons. In other words, you can enjoy different seafood all year around. So, sushi tells you what season it is!



## 2. Our Visit to the City of Novi, Michigan

### Sayaka Mochizuki, Assistant Director, Representative of Yamanashi Prefecture

We new staff members at JLGC and our Executive Director visited Novi City in Michigan from May 30th to June 2nd. This study tour has been hosted by Novi City since 2008 and this year marked the 10th time our staff has trained there. Novi City and JLGC have had close ties ever since the former city manager, Clay Pearson, was a participant on the "CLAIR Fellowship Exchange Program", which has been affording senior state and local government officials in the U.S an opportunity to experience first-hand Japanese government administration.

During our four-day stay, we had a chance to visit a lot of places and Novi staff guided us everywhere. I'd like to introduce some of these here.

On the first day, we started at the Novi Civic Center. The city manager, Pete Auger, gave us an easily-understandable explanation about American local government and Novi City itself. After the presentation, Novi staff members took us on a civic center tour. There are government offices and some public spaces like dance rooms, an auditorium and more. I was impressed by the center, which is not only serving citizens as an administrative building but also as a place where citizens can gather for many reasons.

Following the center tour, we visited the police headquarters. As it was the first time for most of us to enter a police station, we felt a little bit nervous, but they kindly explained about the features of the building. They took us to the examination division, the investigation division, the communications division, and some other offices. The communications division was run by 2 or 3 people and they respond to emergency calls from all of Novi City, and, surprisingly, when they receive a fire or medical emergency call their average response time is 18 seconds.

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The second day, we visited Novi High School. They guided us around their campus while presenting a school summary and we learned how hard students work on academic learning and activities, studying independently. Also I was shocked at the richer facilities than Japanese schools generally have. For example, there is a TV studio where students broadcast news each day all by themselves. I could see how the diligent school support and wonderful facilities encourage students to be much more autonomous.

On the third day, we had a Detroit tour. Our image of Detroit was completely different from reality - the city was very clean and beautiful. They are promoting the re-development of the area surrounding Comerica Park, and there are the baseball stadium, football stadium and hockey stadium which is now under construction. We could still find some rundown areas in the suburbs, but many young parents have moved to the downtown in recent days.

On the last day, we visited Providence Hospital. It has 7 Japanese staff members because of the large number of Japanese residents there. What was the most impressive for me was the obstetrics and gynecology ward. Each room doubles as a mater-



At Comerica Park in Detroit

nity room so pregnant women can give birth in their own room. Also it offers the patients a meal service like room service. This means patients can have whatever meals they want whenever they like, so they can be more comfortable and stress-free.

During our visit, I was totally able to understand how Novi City makes efforts to deliver quality services to residents. I believe it is why Novi City has a diversity of residents, not only

from the local area but also from foreign countries, including Japan.

We appreciate all that the City of Novi has done for us with their kindness and hospitality during our stay. Novi was wonderful. Through this study tour, we could have really great experiences. We hope our close ties get deeper and deeper for years to come, and we'll certainly visit Novi City again.



Providence Hospital

## 3. Japan Day 2017 @ Central Park

Kotaro Kashiwai, Representative of Matsue City, Shimane Prefecture



Japan Day @ Central Park 2017 was celebrated on May 14th. Now in its 11th year, the festival gave New Yorkers the chance to experience Japanese culture and it gave Japan the chance to say "Thank you, New York".

As if that rain-soaked Saturday was a lie, the sun came out on Sunday morning. Events kicked off at 8:00 a.m. with the "Four-mile Japan Run" with more than 4,800 runners, and visitors lined up at the activity tents, open from 9:30 a.m., to learn about Japanese culture, try Japanese calligraphy and origami crafts, paint their faces like kabuki actors, dress in yukata, and more. Lines also formed in front of the food tents which offered free samples of mouthwatering Japanese cuisine, such as okonomiyaki (Japanese pancakes), gyoza, onigiri (rice balls) and Japanese snacks as well as plenty of cold bottles of tea.

Eight staff members from the Japan Local Government Center (JLGC) volunteered at the Yo-Yo Fishing tent, which was jointly hosted by JETAANY and Japan Society. The rule of Yo-Yo Fishing is quite simple: hold a paper string with a "fishing hook", which is made of paper and metal, and pluck a balloon out of water before the paper gets damp and breaks. Some of our staff members distributed the "fishing hook" to visitors in the line and explained in English how to fish for the balloons, but explaining how to fish in English was very difficult.



Yo-Yo balloons

We considered how to explain it in an easy way for visitors to understand and tried to explain as simply and quickly as possible with the help of JETAANY members. Children, teens and parents all played, some repeatedly, and made a line of more than 150 feet at times.

We also had a good chance to speak with many members of JETAA at this event, so we tried to communicate with them and were impressed by their volunteer spirit and affection for Japan.

The Yo-Yo Fishing tent hosted over 4,000 visitors. Every time I spotted a balloon in the crowd, I felt satisfied to be able to help to make Japan a little more attractive for New Yorkers and grateful to JETAANY and the Japan Society, which gave me such a great chance to introduce Japanese culture to New Yorkers.



