



# JLGC NEWSLETTER

Japan Local Government Center (CLAIR, New York)

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## *1. Career Forum and Welcome Back Reception for JET Participants*

CLAIR New York (Japan Local Government Center), the Consulate General of Japan in New York, and the JET Alumni Association of New York, co-organize the Career Forum and Welcome Back Reception for JET returnees every year. This year it was held on October 26th at the Nippon Club. Seven JET returnees, including people who returned to New York the previous year, attended the Career Forum and learned basic job search information from their "Sempai" JET alumni, such as how to write resumes and handle interviews.

After that, panelists from various fields, like publishing, graduate education, interpreting or translation, and international relations talked about their careers and gave some



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advice. Following that, attendees and companies in fields like manufacturing, food, media, and research, as well as temporary employment agencies and foundations gave brief “elevator pitches” to each other. It was a first step for the JET returnees to live again in the US, so we hope this forum was helpful for them to find a job in the near future.

After the Career Forum, we had the Welcome Back Reception with Japanese organizations, companies, and Kenjin-kai people, at the same venue. At the beginning of the reception, Ambassador Kanji Yamanouchi gave some welcome remarks for JET returnees. Then, Mr. Yoshihiro Akagi, Executive Director of CLAIR New York, made a speech and talked to everyone about the importance of JET participants’ activities for grassroots exchange.

After that, Mr. Andy Shartzer, who is the president of the JET Alumni Association of New York, told returnees that they might face reverse culture shock, which he called “JET lag”, because they are not the same person they were before JET. If so, Sempai JET alumni’s experience can be helpful. In addition, all returnees introduced themselves and talked about some of their memories of Japan.

During the reception, all participants enjoyed talking about Japan and their new life in New York, while enjoying Japanese foods. At this reception, we could talk with some JET returnees and felt that they love Japan very much even after coming back to the US. We believe these returnees will also take a part in building the relationship between Japan and the US through their work and activities in JETAA.



## *2. Introduction of New JLGC Staff*



### **Kokoro Arima**

**Assistant Director, / Representative  
of Kobe City, Hyogo Prefecture**

My name is Kokoro Arima from Kobe City. It lies in the western part of Japan called Kansai and has the sixth-largest population. It has flourished as a port town throughout the ages.

Since joining Kobe City government, I first worked in the Welfare Department, Public Assistance Division. There, I was like a “case worker”. I had about 100 “clients”, who



included families with and without children, single people, those with jobs and no jobs, and homes and no homes. Generally, my clients had insufficient income to pay for food, housing, clothing or other necessary expenditures. I visited them to help them with job opportunities, advise them on finances, and assist them with government forms, especially applying for assistance. My second job was in the Human Resources Department.



Today, I'd like to introduce some of Kobe's attractions to you.

### About Kobe

The name Kobe, literally "God's Door", was derived from the original name "Kanbe", the family protecting the god of Ikuta Shrine, in the heart of the city. Kobe began to thrive as a city when the port opened up to the Western world back in 1868 and a foreign settlement was located there up until 1899. Ever since the opening of its port in 1868, Kobe has blossomed into a thriving cosmopolitan city, incorporating Western customs, cultures and industries.

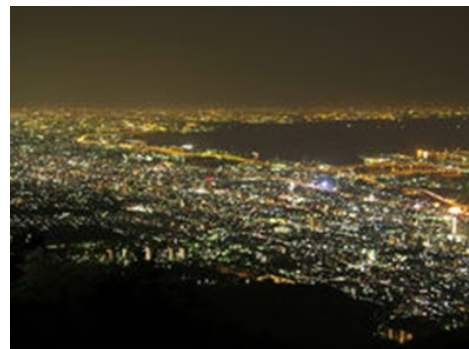


### Arima Onsen

With a history of over one thousand years, Arima Onsen is considered one of the three oldest hot spring resorts in Japan and has often been listed near the top of onsen rankings for Western Japan. It has two types of hot spring waters: The Kinsen ("gold water") is colored brown with iron deposits and is said to be good for skin ailments and muscle pain, while the Ginsen ("silver water") is clear, with radium and carbonate, and is said to cure various muscle and joint ailments.

### **Night View**

Kobe has one of the most beautiful night views in Japan. The night view from Kobe's two most famous mountains, Mt. Rokko and Mt. Maya, especially charms viewers with beautiful, overflowing lights. It holds the title of "10 million dollar night view"



### **Sake**

The Nada area, in the west of Kobe, is a sake-producing area boasting the largest amount of sake produced in Japan. This area has many sake breweries that people can visit and taste their products, and everyone can enjoy knowing the splendor of sake and its history. There are three reasons why this area's sake tastes so good. First, the rice which is best suited for brewing, called

Yamadanishiki, is rich in quality. Second, good quality mineral water is abundant. And last, the combination of the cold winds known as "Rokko Oroshi", and the influence of the Inland Sea make for ideal weather conditions for brewing sake.

### **Kobe Beef**

As you know, Kobe beef is Wagyu beef. But to be certified as Kobe beef, it needs to meet very strict standards for how the cows are raised, their pedigree, and their meat quality.

Because of high standards and careful cultivation methods, only about 5,500 head of cattle comprise 0.16% of total beef consumption in Japan.

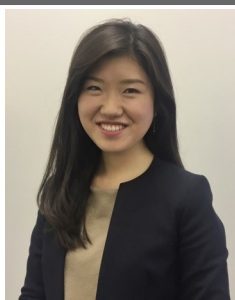
You can also try "shabu-shabu" or "sukiyaki", but it is recommended to eat "steak" so that you can fully enjoy the deliciousness of the meat itself. There are many steakhouses in Kobe where the chef cooks in front of you.



For more information about Kobe, please look at our official site:

<http://plus.feel-kobe.jp/en/>





## Tomoko Fujiwara

Assistant Director, / Representative  
of Nagano Prefecture

Hello, everyone. My name is Tomoko Fujiwara. I come from Nagano Prefecture. Nagano is famous for holding the Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games in 1998, and for having many ski

resorts. It also is the home of what we call the onsen-loving snow monkeys. As I'm sure you know, onsen are hot spring spas.

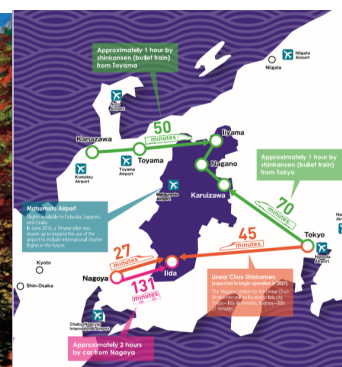
Before joining Nagano Prefecture government, I pursued a graduate education in Forestry Science in Kyoto. Even before my graduate study I was interested in the natural habitat and spent some time at Purdue University in Indiana.

I joined Nagano Prefecture government in 2016, where I worked in the Department of the Next Generation, or "jisedai" in Japanese. There is no easy translation of the name, but the mission of the department is to help prevent further population loss in the prefecture. So, the department supports families with children and those expecting children by reducing the financial burden on them in order to encourage population growth.

Now, let me introduce Nagano Prefecture to you in detail.

### Specific Features of Nagano Prefecture

Nagano Prefecture is a mountain highland sightseeing destination surrounded by 9800 ft high mountains. Especially in winter, Nagano is the most accessible ski resort area in Japan. It takes only approximately 1 hour by Shinkansen (bullet train) from Tokyo.



The industrial strength of Nagano is evident in its manufacturing sector. It has a wide range of companies that contribute to innovative research and advanced human resource development.

Access to Nagano



Thanks to its diverse natural environment and conditions, there are also a great variety of agriculture businesses in Nagano. The prefecture boasts one of the highest levels of production of fruits and vegetables in Japan. Countless locals and tourists alike enjoy the experience of fruit picking, such as strawberries, peaches, grapes and apples, in their different seasons.

Nagano Prefecture is among the healthiest and longest living societies in the world, where many people remain active well into their twilight years. The prefecture has long been chosen as an ideal place to settle by many Japanese people with the dream of a fulfilled and relaxed life, nestled in a beautiful and rich natural environment.



### **Zenkoji Temple**

Zenkoji Temple dates back to 642 A.D. It has long been an important destination for Buddhist pilgrims, and is claimed to house the first statue of Buddha ever brought to Japan. It is considered unique due to the fact that it is not affiliated with a specific religious sect.

### **Matsumoto Castle**

Matsumoto Castle, also known as “Crow Castle” due to its black exterior, is now a designated national treasure. Built in 1504, the keep (called “tenshu” in Japanese) still maintains its original wooden interior and external stonework, and it is the oldest original tenshu among Japanese castles.



### **Wild Snow Monkey Park**

The wild Japanese monkeys of the Jigokudani Wild Monkey Park were made famous by the international media during the 1998 Nagano Winter Olympic Games. The monkeys live in a mountainous valley, which is called Jigokudani or “Hell’s Valley”, where about 200 monkeys bathe and relax in open-air hot springs,



especially during winter as they escape the harsh cold.

### **Ski Resort**

Winter is one of the most beautiful seasons of the year. Nagano's mountains are home to fabulous ski resorts with a wide variety of courses, plentiful powder, and beautiful views. Nagano's ski season begins in mid-December and continues through April, with some resorts remaining open during Golden Week (the first week of May).



### ***Winter Festivals***

Don't get stuck hibernating indoors during the long winter evenings. Instead, experience traditional Japanese festivals and other lively events!

### **Nozawa Fire Festival (Dosojin Matsuri)**



On January 15th of every year, the villages of Nozawa Onsen celebrate the Dosojin Matsuri, a fire festival of epic proportions. Male villagers battle with fiery bundles of straw to burn down a mock shrine built for the festival. 25-year-olds defend the shrine while 42-year-olds sit atop it. The cleansing flames are said to rid them of their bad luck, and they pray for the health and success of first-born sons as well as for the harvests in the coming year.

### **Iiyama Snow Festival**

Iiyama City is a part of Japan's "Snow Country", where heavy snowfall completely covers the landscape. While the snow has been a burden for a long time, residents of Iiyama have taken it and turned it into something enjoyable once again. Now, for two days in February, you can see magnificent snow sculptures in a range of Japanese motifs, from popular anime characters to bullet trains.





## ***Food and Drink***

### **Soba**

A trip to Nagano could never be complete without trying some of the local specialties. In Nagano, “soba noodles” are the most popular signature dish. Nagano’s soba is called “Shinshu Soba” in Japan. Most Japanese tourists have it at the top of their “What To Eat List” when visiting Nagano.

The origin of soba is unclear, but it is said that soba was an alternative source of food when the rice harvest was poor. Soba noodles are noodles made from buckwheat flour and are as thick as spaghetti.



### **Sake**

Delicious rice, pure water, and a cool climate are key to producing good sake and all are plentiful in Nagano. Nagano is home to 80 sake breweries, the second most in Japan following Niigata Prefecture.

\*These are quoted from the website “[Go NAGANO](#)”. You can see more detail on this website. I also quoted from [here](#).

## ***3. The 2019 International City/County Management Association’s Annual Conference***

We attended the 2019 International City/County Management Association (ICMA) Annual Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, which was held from October 20th to 23rd. ICMA is the world’s leading association for professional city and county managers and other employees who serve local governments. ICMA has more than 11,000 members, and more than 5,000 local government management professionals from across the globe participated in this year’s ICMA conference. ICMA has been a significant partner with us ever since our office was





established in 1988.

At this conference, four keynote speakers discussed leadership from their respective positions. Apart from that, education sessions, workshops and field demonstrations were held on various topics. For example, at a field demonstration of “Waste to Fertilizer”, we could learn an environmentally friendly solution for solid waste disposal and a biosolid process that converts waste, producing high-grade fertilizer pellets.



On October 21st, we held a reception (which we call “Japan Night”) to strengthen our relationship with city managers from all over the country and internationally. We were especially pleased that more than 100 senior level local government officials, including the leadership of the ICMA organization, attended our reception. Nearly every official at the reception had a connection with Japan in some form or another. Also, it was very satisfying to see the number of CLAIR Fellows who came to show their loyal attachment to our office’s work here in the United States and Canada, and some of the staff of the City of Novi and the City of Pearland, who hosted our first year staff’s study tour.



New this year was the beginning of what we hope to be a firm relationship with the International Network of Asian Pacific Administrators (I-NAPA). This is a good opportunity to connect with an ever-growing group of senior administrators of Asian heritage in local government in the United States.

As always, our reception creates a bond between the United States and Japan and will lead to the promotion and strengthening of mutual understanding between U.S. and Japanese local governments.