

Correspondence

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Spring has come to Japan, Spring has come to Osaka!

~ Osaka Castle Cherry Blossoms ~

The Symbol of Osaka

Osaka Castle has a history of more than 400 years. It was originally built by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, one of the greatest warlords in the history of Japan, a man who was born the son of a humble farmer. Few on Earth have risen as far and fast as he, or left such a striking monument, which now stands as the symbol of Osaka.

Now, the 8-storey construction is used as a museum, with many visitors from Japan and around the world enjoying its historic exhibitions and the marvelous scenery from the top of the castle.



the spot of Cherry blossoms. Nishinomaru garden in the Osaka castle park is worth visiting, especially during Spring.

Passing through the Mint Bureau under cherry blossoms

The Mint Bureau is a famous place for cherry blossoms with around 130 species and 352 trees in bloom – some call it the best place for cherry blossoms in Osaka. Some trees have just tens of petals, others may have 100-200. The Cherry Blossom of the Year is selected during the season, and introduced for people to familiarise themselves with different species of tree.



Japan Mint

*Address: 1-1-79 Temma, Kita-ku, Osaka City
Admission: free / Period: 11-17 April 2014*

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What's new in Osaka

The 3rd International Jazz Day Events to take place in Osaka, Japan has been selected to serve as the 2014 Global Host city.



UNESCO designated 30 April as International Jazz Day and intends to bring together communities, schools and other groups the world over to celebrate and learn more about the art of Jazz, its roots and its impact. So far, the International Jazz Day celebration has been taken place twice (Paris/New York in 2012 and Istanbul in 2013).

Osaka has been selected as a global host city for International Jazz Day 2014. The venue of the live event will be at Osaka Castle Garden which is the symbol of Osaka, and participants will have the chance to enjoy Osaka's culture and hospitality.

On the morning of 30 April, there will be a series of jazz

education programs, performances, and community outreach. An evening Concert at Osaka Castle Garden will feature performances by many world famous musicians, such as UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, Herbie Hancock, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Esperanza Spalding, Wayne Shorter, and many more. From Japan, Terumasa Hino and Toshiko Akiyoshi are also scheduled to join.



UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador
Herbie Hancock.

Osaka POP "International Cool Japan Awards"

In March 2014, Osaka opened its doors to fans from across the globe to take part in the Osaka POP festival. During this period, numerous events were held throughout the city exposing the many facets of Japanese pop culture, from exclusive *cosplay* pilgrimage tours to featured *kawaii* spots, special live concerts,



delicious yet affordable gourmet Osaka food, maniac fashion, *karaoke*, plastic figurines and more. The first official Cool Japan Awards Ceremony took place on 28 March, with the mascot-characters Mio & Tsukushi making their debut to the world. The best *cosplayers* were crowned in various Cosplay Award categories. More information at



<http://osaka-pop.com/en>

Abeno HARUKAS

Abeno Harukas, the new tallest building in the country, had its grand opening on 7 March, has 60 floors housing the Marriott Miyako Hotel Osaka, viewing deck Harukas 300, a museum and huge department store Kintetsu. Thanks to this department store, the Abeno area (near Tennoji station) is becoming one of the biggest shopping areas in Osaka city, following Umeda and Shinsaibashi. There is a direct train called "HARUKA" from Kansai International Airport operated by JR to Abeno Harukas.

More information; <http://www.abenoharukas-300.jp/en/>



Special Lecture given for students at UNSW

Our Assistant Director Hiroaki Seino (from Aomori Prefecture) gave a special lecture for students learning Advanced Japanese at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) School of Humanities & Languages on the many charming aspects of Japan.

The lecture sought to convey the many instances of Japanese culture one may not readily find in Australia, such as the yuru-kyara, mascot characters sponsored by certain municipalities to promote local products and tourism in that area, regional dialects, and celebrations accompanying the four seasons. Students got a surprise when Hiroaki demonstrated Aomori's regional Tsugaru dialect – a very thick accent.



The students gave us their impression that thanks to this lecture, they became even more interested in Japan's diversity. Among the 50 students in the class, only 10 had visited Japan so far. We hope that the students not only learn the Japanese language as a subject, but also that they visit Japan and get to experience many of the whole of Japan's nice points.

Nagoya-Geelong Wetlands Exchange Brings School Students Together

Tsuyoshi Ito, Deputy Director



Eighteen junior high school students from Nagoya visited Geelong from 24-27 March to further their environmental education. This people-to-people exchange is made possible by the 2007 Wetlands Agreement between Nagoya City and the City of Greater Geelong, based on both cities having wetlands of international importance under the auspices of the 1971 Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

Since 2007, Nagoya has sent a delegation to Geelong every two years, with 2014 being the fourth delegation to visit. The environmental exchange activity focuses on measures to protect and maintain a sustainable wetland environment for migratory birds and other creatures, for the sake of future generations.

The delegation attended a welcoming ceremony organised by Gary Van Driel, General Manager City Services; Councillor Andy Richards, responsible for environmental issues, gave a warm welcoming address to the delegation. The students from Nagoya were deeply impressed by Geelong's kind hospitality during their sojourn.

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During their four-day trip to Geelong, through reporting on the condition of wetland conservation activities and engaging in environmental education with the local Queenscliff Primary School – including a field trip to the wetland conservation area – both cities' school students deepened mutual exchange and understand through their work on environmental protection.

Particularly, while observing the living creatures at the wetlands extending on Swan Bay, both sets of students began to chat with each other; it seemed as if they all felt the magnitude and importance of protecting the wildlife in the wetlands.



Promoting JET Programme at University of Queensland Career Fair

On 26 March, Hiromi Hakuta, our Assistant Director from Hokkaido, attended a Career Fair at the University of Queensland (UQ) to promote the JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching) Programme along with members of the local JET Alumni Association and staff of the Japanese Consulate-General in Brisbane. The JET Programme allows university graduates to have opportunities to live and work in Japan for up to 5 years. After passing some selection phases, JETs are able to work in Japanese schools to assist language teachers (mainly English), or in Japanese local governments to become involved in their international-related works and so on. The university has a Japanese language program, but few students who study Japanese language know much about the JET Programme – they followed our explanations of the life and work of JETs with great interest.



For more information about the JET Programme, visit <http://www.jetprogramme.org>

JETAA Wellington activities -Friendship Kimono at 20th anniversary between Sakai & Wellington-

~ From JETAA Wellington ~



Following the success of the 2012 JETAA Wellington 60m sushi roll which represented the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between New Zealand and Japan at the Wellington City Council Kia Kaha Japanese festival, JETAA Wellington have once again been asked to participate and produce an iconic feature for the 2014 festival in recognition of the 20th anniversary of sister city relations between Sakai and Wellington city. So what have we decided to do this time?

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Friendship Kimono

JETAA Wellington presents the friendship kimono – a collaborative piece of hanging art produced by students from both Sakai and Wellington Cities. This kimono will be the first of its kind in New Zealand and will feature art inspired by the cities and the two cultures of New Zealand and Japan. At 11m x 9m and comprised of 22 segments, this will be the largest kimono known to be made in New Zealand.

The proposed plan is to involve participation from a total of 20 schools from both the Wellington and Sakai areas. At the end of the festival the kimono will be disassembled and the participating schools will have an exchange of decorated segments; this is in the hope of developing a new connection and sharing something about themselves.

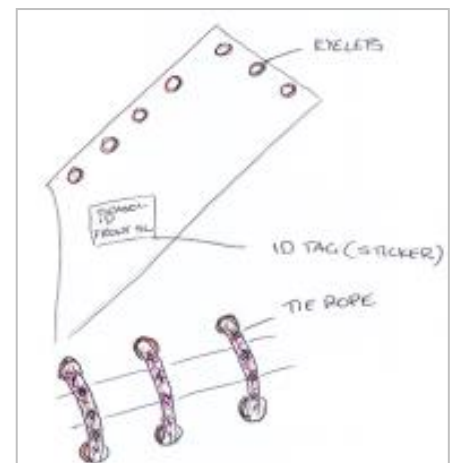


Why a kimono?

The kimono is often worn for special occasions and festivals; it is a fitting symbol for the Wellington-Japan festival. It also provides the perfect medium to showcase the designs and images that school children hold of their own city environment and cultures.

The JET Programme sends thousands of participants each year to Japan to gain a unique experience while employed as Assistant Language Teachers (ALT) or Coordinators of International Relations (CIR). ALTs are the interactive face with Japanese students in all years of primary and secondary schooling.

The kimono will be made of individual panels held together by threaded rope. These joins represent the tied bonds between the two cities, with the separations of the panels representing the individual characteristics of the cultures and the students who prepared each one.



The Event and Support

The event is to take place in late August 2014 at the TSB arena in Wellington; the 2012 festival attracted over 30,000 people. JETAA Wellington has received great support from the Wellington Sakai Association, Japanese stationery giant Pentel and the Wellington City Council.

It is expected that our kimono will gain media exposure and a lot of public interest which will provide a great opportunity to promote the JET Programme.

Festival Participation

In addition to the kimono project, JETAA Wellington will have a fundraising stall selling taiyaki and one of our executive will have the pleasure of being co-MC at the festival.

We are hopeful for a successful outcome and look forward to providing an update later in the year.

Ganbarimasu!

Farewell Messages

Two of our former Assistant Directors, Tomohiko Okuno and Tetsu Jinzenji have left Sydney at the end of March to take up their new roles back in Japan.

Hi everyone,

This March was the last month I worked at CLAIR Sydney as an Assistant Director. I had been in Sydney for two years from 4 April 2012. During this term, I had the chance to have a lot of experiences which I never had imagined. I also enjoyed meeting great people in Australia and New Zealand through my work and at many events.

Especially, I remember that I could attend Australia-Japan 50th and New Zealand-Japan 40th sister city milestone events.

Thank you very much for the huge support and assistance you have provided me during my work in Oceania.



Tomohiko Okuno

I will work for the International Relations Division at the City of Wakayama from this April.

I hope the relations between Australia/New Zealand and Japan will continue to advance in the fields of culture, economic, education, sister city, etc.

Thank you again.

Tomohiko Okuno



Tetsu Jinzenji

Thank you for everything over the last two years. I am going to leave Sydney. It is very sad, but I had a lot of good experiences in Australia – I wouldn't trade these two years for anything. Every time, whether for business or private matters, I was helped by Aussies who are very friendly and full of kindness. I think Aussies are the most friendly people in the world – I am really happy to have lived in Australia.

At the end of March, I am going back to Kochi Prefecture. But my Australian experience is not over yet; my native Kochi Prefecture will promote its tourism and local products in Australia. Someday, I would like to come back to Australia for business, to promote Kochi Prefecture.

I hope Australia and Japan (especially Kochi) understand each other more deeply, and that our relationship will continue in the future.

Again, Many thanks for your warm assistance.

Best Regards,

Tetsu Jinzenji

Introducing our New Staff



Noriyuki Shiba
Assistant Director

Hello, my name is Noriyuki Shiba, from Wakayama Prefecture. I started work at CLAIR Sydney this April. I would like to tell you about Wakayama – it is located on the Kii Peninsula, the largest peninsula in Japan, in the Kansai region which is also home to Osaka and Kyoto. Wakayama has wonderful beaches, delicious food and interesting history.

If you are interested in Wakayama, you can get some information at the link below:

<http://www.pref.wakayama.lg.jp/english/>

I am looking forward to learning about the local government system and policies in Australia and New Zealand.

For the next two years, my wife and I will live here in Sydney. This is our first time living overseas. We are looking forward to meeting new people, learning about the many different cultures in Australia, eating wonderful food, and seeing great natural beauty during our stay.

From The Director

CLAIR Report

One of our important tasks is to conduct research on Australian and New Zealand local governments and make reports for the benefit of Japanese local governments.

Our staff, during the second year of their secondment to Australia, write CLAIR reports about a topic they are interested in and which they think will be useful information for Japanese local governments.

This year, Tetsu and Tomo, who have just left our office, wrote their reports. Tetsu's research focused on tourism promotion in Australia at each level of government. Tomo's research looked at citizen engagement policies, introducing new methods used by social media, precinct systems in some New South Wales councils and the community board

system in NZ.

They also looked at the policies of councils on their topic where they did their internship programme. I would like to express special thanks to the City of Perth and Christchurch for hosting Tetsu and Tomo respectively.

I think not so many people who read this newsletter can read the Japanese-language CLAIR reports. But when you need to explain some topics to Japanese people, please feel free to ask us if we have CLAIR reports which already explain the topics in detail in Japanese.

I am now looking forward to what topics will be chosen by Misa and Hiromi for our next CLAIR reports.

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