

# JAPAN



## PM Koizumi appoints new Cabinet



PHOTOGRAPH: CABINET PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICE

Prime Minister Koizumi with members of his new Cabinet

Junichiro Koizumi was re-elected as President of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) on Saturday, September 20, allowing him to continue as Japan's Prime Minister. The election campaign focused on the reforms which

Koizumi has introduced in order to revitalise Japan's economy. Accepting his second term as party leader, Koizumi said that the election had come at a time of great change for the LDP, adding: "This was an election to prove this party is the party of the people, and of promoting reforms."

On September 22, Prime Minister Koizumi announced the members of his new Cabinet, a coalition of the LDP, the New Komeito and the New Conservative Party. Six members held their positions, including Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi and State Minister for Financial Services, Economic and Fiscal Policy, Heizo Takenaka. Two internal moves saw Sadakazu Tanigaki take up the role of Finance Minister and Nobuteru Ishihara become Minister for Land, Infrastructure and Transport. There were nine new appointments: Taro Aso

(Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications); Daizo Nozawa (Justice); Takeo Kawamura (Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology); Shoichi Nakagawa (Economy, Trade and Industry); Yuriko Koike (Environment); Kiyoko Ono (Chairman of the National Public Safety Commission, State Minister for Cultivation of Youth and Measures for Decreasing Birthrate, and Food Safety); Toshimitsu Motegi (Okinawa and Northern Territories Affairs, Protection of Personal Information, Science & Technology Policy, and Information Technology); Kazuyoshi Kaneko (State Minister for Regulatory Reform, Industrial Revitalisation Corporation, Administrative Reform, Special Zones for Structural Reform); and Kiichi Inoue (State Minister for Disaster Management and National Emergency Legislation).

## Japan 21 Awards

Earlier this year, the first grants were awarded under the new Japan 21 Awards scheme, which replaced the Japan Festival Awards.

Since May, from a total of 31 applications, 18 grants have already been awarded, with some projects still under consideration. The distinctive feature of the new scheme is that grants can be given for future projects and there are no deadlines – all applications are dealt with as they are received and, in most cases, a response can be given within a month.

The awards are designed to support and encourage Japan-related community, grass-roots and educational projects in the UK. The amount available per grant is usually up

to £1,000 and, as a rule, should account for no more than 50% of the budget.

So far, the Japan 21 Awards have helped to fund several Japan Days and curriculum enrichment weeks in primary and secondary schools, as well as supporting workshops by artists and musicians around the country.

Specific examples of projects which have received grants are a visit by Bunraku expert Noriyuki Sawa to the Buxton Festival of Puppetry, held in July, and the development of language teaching resources at King Edward VII High School in Sheffield. Also under way is the Touring Mackintosh Tea Room, which aims to explore the influence of Japanese architecture and design on Charles



Schoolchildren work on designs for the Mackintosh Tea Room

Rennie Mackintosh by means of a tea room kit which is travelling to rural communities in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.

For further information and application forms, please contact Japan 21 at Swire House, 59 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6AJ; Tel: 020 7630 5552; email: [awards@japan21.org.uk](mailto:awards@japan21.org.uk).

NEWS IN CONTEXT

# Japanese live longer

Japan holds an enviable record for longevity, according to the Health, Labour and Welfare Ministry. The figures, released annually in time for Respect the Aged Day, which falls on September 15, show that Japan's centenarians total 20,561, 86% of whom are women.

Respect the Aged Day traditionally celebrates the elderly and their achievements. Recently, its focus has widened to social issues such as pensions and the provision of care and welfare services, at a time when 19% of the population is aged 65 or over. Coincidentally, Kamato Hongo, who at 116 is the oldest person in the world, celebrates her birthday around this date.

A breakdown of the figures show that the majority of centenarians live in southern and western Japan rather than in the east, with the Okinawan islands topping the list.

Research on Okinawans has inspired countless studies and reveals that not only do they live longer, but that their longer lives

are healthier: they have cleaner arteries and low cholesterol levels, and incidences of heart disease, breast cancer and prostate cancer are few. They also have a higher than average bone density, a lean body mass index, and suffer less from debilitating diseases such as dementia. Most of these healthy attributes can be traced to their diet, which includes fish, seaweed, soy foods such as tofu, a wide range of vegetables and a small amount of 'good' fats. Their food tends to be sourced locally, and they also enjoy a close-knit community life, a low-stress lifestyle and exercise in the form of gentle martial arts and traditional dancing.

This research has spurred a huge diet consultancy industry in the United States, but unfortunately there is no Okinawan longevity pill. Health gurus and researchers can only conclude what the Okinawans have known all along: a stress-free environment and a healthy diet seem to be the key to a long life.

## Letter from Japan

As anyone can testify, living next to a school in any country can be noisy. In Japan, on Sunday mornings in October, the bang of an exploding rocket signals the start of the school *undōkai*, or Sports Day.

Not only is October the best month for sports, as the weather is usually dry and still sunny, but the school *undōkai* is often timed to coincide with *Taiku no Hi*, or National Sports Day. The first National Sports Day was decreed on October 10, 1966, to commemorate the opening ceremony of the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games.

Students are usually divided into two main

teams, red and white, by class. *Undōkai* is also a fun day for the family when proud parents

come to support the competitors and often join in the 'oyako' or parent/child races. In rural areas, it is also an opportunity for sumptuous picnics and, come lunchtime, the community or sport hall is transformed into a giant picnic spot with clusters of families sitting on blankets, eating rice balls and other delicacies.

The Japanese workplace, already famous for its *rajio taisō* or morning stretch exercises, and afternoon callisthenics, also organises *undōkai*, though many companies have now sold off their playing fields and employees are exercising with their families or friends rather than with their work colleagues. Nor are senior citizens forgotten, as October is also often the month in which local community gateball, a form of croquet practised throughout the winter, begins.



Photo finish: Japanese schoolchildren sprint to the line on National Sports Day

## J-trends

### Robotics



PHOTOGRAPH: HONDA

Prime Minister Koizumi created a stir two months ago on an official visit to the Czech Republic, when, in addition to his normal human entourage, he was accompanied by what looked like an astronaut. Enter Asimo, who has taken a giant leap for mankind in the field of robotics. His name may sound as though it was inspired by a famous science fiction writer, but Asimo is in fact an acronym for Advanced Step in Innovative Mobility. The robot, which represents 17 years of research into movement control, measures 1.20m and weighs just 43 kg. Researchers are particularly proud of his smooth walk and the way he can 'see' and negotiate steps and corners. Asimo began a European tour in September and already has a dedicated homepage.

Perpetually in search of convenience, a Japanese car maker has also recently launched the first self-parking car, equipped with a rear camera linked to software to enable perfect parallel parking. The system measures a parking space electronically and marks out a turn point, then relays the information to the computer which activates the steering wheel accordingly; the rear of the car swings into the space first, followed by the front. Since it recognises white lines and curbs, engineers say the system could ultimately steer the car and keep it in lane during regular driving.

Small cars may no longer be able to play hide-and-seek by parking in awkward positions for the benefit of advertising campaigns, but technology might put an end to the eternal debate about male versus female parking skills.

## interview

THE FUTURE OF JAPANESE RUGBY

## Akio Ueda



*As The Rugby World Cup kicks off in Australia, Under-21 Japan Coach Akio Ueda talks to On Japan about the state of the game in Japan. Mr Ueda is also the Japan Rugby Football Union's (JRFU) Vice-Chairman of the National Squad Committee and Director for Youth. He is based at his alma mater, Keio University, established as Japan's first private university, with faculties of Law, Literature and Economics, in 1890.*

**How did your love of rugby come about?**

I began playing at 10 at Keio School. Keio is the birthplace of Japanese rugby, which was introduced by a man called Clark from Cambridge. It has strong links with the UK because of this, despite the distance. My own links with the UK go back to 1976, when I came with the All Japan Tour. We have been a few times since, and wanted to come 18 months ago as part of Japan 2001, but the events of September 11 made it impossible.

**What were your general impressions of this year's Under-21 World Cup?**

Well, in our opening match against the title defenders Australia, we didn't really stand a chance. It is also natural to have lost against England, but we could have beaten Italy – it was a close score. To be fair to the team, certain factors were against them: compared with other teams such as England, who benefit from tournaments such as the Five Nations U-21, Ladies U-21, etc, we didn't have enough time to train. Unlike some, who are professionals, our players are also all amateurs.

**Is this something to do with a different start to the academic year?**

Absolutely. As you know, ours begins in April, so our new team's first game of the season was against Australia.

Most other players have finished their courses and can concentrate on their game; the Japanese are still at college.



PHOTOGRAPHS: JAPANESE RUGBY FOOTBALL LONDON

Scrum down: Japan vs England U-21 match in Oxford. Inset: Japan squad

**How do you ensure a steady and fresh supply of talent coming up through the schools? Is there much investment in youth rugby in Japan?**

Our government imposes rigorous guidelines for sport at primary and secondary schools but rugby is not part of the curriculum. We are trying to introduce rugby to the Under-17s, then Under-19s, to put a good and reliable system in place which will then trickle down to lower years in the future. We are also currently developing an elite academy, which will cater for Under-17s during their last year of school and which includes fitness and medical tests as well as special menus. Training will involve wrestling, including two days of sumo wrestling.

**Some Japanese, such as Saracens' Iwabuchi, are playing abroad; how difficult is it for Japanese players to gain overseas experience? Does the JRFU encourage overseas relationships with teams abroad?**

Yes. Saito and Ohata currently play in the French League and Inoue and Katsuno are in Wales, to name but a few. International experience is vital to develop breadth of experience. Sport is also a very important medium for international exchange. Looking after the U-21 team here in Oxford has been really interesting, and I've encouraged them to go and find things out for themselves, and to learn through rugby about the people and society. It would be a great medium for conflict-solving but unfortunately, its potential in international relations is not sufficiently recognised. For example, it enabled me to go to Johannesburg, which I could never have done otherwise.

**Conversely, the Japanese team has recently included a few foreign players; is this a pattern for the future?**

The Japanese league already has many foreign players from Tonga, Fiji, Australia and New Zealand, including an ex-All Black. But, as you know, there can only be two non-national players in a national team. In Japan, one has to have played in the country for three years before being considered for the national team.

**Do you see rugby expanding in Japan, and gaining popularity in the way football has?**

Around 15-16 years ago, rugby was more popular than football. Players today also have more support than in my day; for example they are subsidised by the government when they are on tour. But our coaching committee is learning from the football World Cup experience, and looking closely at anything new we can apply to rugby. Hopefully rugby will soon regain its popularity. The onus is on our teams to produce good results and raise the profile of the game in Japan with a victory.

*Interview by Elizabeth Aveling*

## Promoting peace with Pacific Venture

The latest group of participants on the Pacific Venture scheme returned from a two-week friendship tour to Japan at the end of August.

Pacific Venture enables young British people, in particular the grandchildren of former Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees held by the Japanese, to travel to Japan to learn more about the country and its people.

During their stay, the twenty 16- to 17-year-olds followed a busy and varied schedule, which included cultural exchange with Japanese teenagers as well as sightseeing. Among the group was Adam Young from London, who particularly enjoyed having the chance to stay with a Japanese family in Hiroshima. "I took a shine to the people, who I felt were very much like the British, or at least how we used to be when we were more polite!" He also valued the experience of attending lessons with Japanese pupils at a school in Karuizawa. "Discovering a completely new and fascinating culture while at the same time feeling that we had something in common made it the best experience of my life."

For Katie Irwin from Ipswich, one of the highlights of the trip was a visit to a hot spring in Ikaho. "I liked the fact that every-



Adam Young hangs up paper cranes

thing was so traditional – as well as learning the Japanese way to bathe, we wore yukata and had a meal

seated on tatami mats. I was also impressed by how many of the young people we met had

learnt traditional activities such as putting on a kimono or playing Japanese instruments. Our last stop was Hiroshima, where we went to the Peace Memorial Park and Museum – I think that really brought home to everyone the whole reason for being in Japan."

The Pacific Venture programme grew out of a youth exchange scheme set up as part of the Japanese government's 'Peace, Friendship and Exchange Initiative' in 1995, and was originally intended to run for a 10-year period. As of May 2000, there are three separate programmes under the Pacific Venture umbrella, to cater for different age groups. In addition to the two-week trip mentioned above, there are occasional 10-day trips for participants over 20, and a five- to 10-month stay for 15- to 19-year-olds which is run as part of the Encounter Japan programme.

Although participants for the 2004 trips have already been selected, Mary-Grace Browning, Joint Co-ordinator of the programme, hopes that candidates will continue to register their interest with the scheme. To find out more, call her on 01284 728839 (tel/fax) or email [mgb44@hotmail.com](mailto:mgb44@hotmail.com). Further information can also be found on the Pacific Venture website at [www.pvjapan.org.uk](http://www.pvjapan.org.uk).



Mary-Grace and Katie with Japanese friends

## JICC at your service: Speaker Service

JICC's Speaker Service has been providing speakers on a wide range of Japan-related themes to non-profit-making organisations for more than 20 years. Among the subjects most often requested are a General Introduction to Japan and an Outline of Economic Trends.

JICC maintains a list of UK-based specialists on particular aspects of Japan, ranging from Anglo-Japanese History to Traditional Music, and has a limited budget to provide speakers for events held by UK-Japan societies and other grassroots organisations. It can also occasionally arrange for a member of the diplomatic staff to give a presentation.

Since the Speaker Service is generally oversubscribed, we recommend that you send your request at least two months in advance. If we are not able to fund a speaker directly, we may nevertheless be able to introduce you to a suitable person from our list. Please note that we are not able to arrange speakers for corporate organisations.

For further details about JICC's Speaker Service, contact Teruko Sekiguchi on 020 7465 6500. Requests from schools and colleges should be made to the Education Officer on 020 7465 6573 or [education@embjapan.org.uk](mailto:education@embjapan.org.uk).

## Welcome to affordable Japan

Currently, 16 million Japanese go abroad annually, but only five million foreign visitors reciprocate. Riding on the wave of popularity the country enjoyed during the World Cup, the government is eager to boost Japan's image as a tourist destination, and has recently established the Japan Tourism Advisory Council to study strategic ways in which to achieve this.

Japan is often thought of as an expensive holiday destination, but concerted efforts to woo foreign visitors have already been made by the tourist industry to redress the country's costly image. As the Japan National

Tourist Organisation (JNTO) points out in its Affordable Japan Campaign, the country is not as cheap as some of its Asian neighbours, but the standard of service and facilities available are among the best in the world. Japan also has an enviably low crime rate and can offer the attractions of an exotic culture, history and scenic beauty combined with the modern conveniences of a developed country.

In line with the Affordable Japan strategy, two major tour operators have already introduced flexible six- or seven-day packages to Tokyo or Kyoto including direct

flights and accommodation from only £549,

which is the same as the average price of a discounted airfare. Visitors are also being encouraged to discover other parts of Japan, which offer cheaper facilities and accommodation and activities such as skiing, golf, hiking and diving.

For further information about travel to Japan, please visit the JNTO's website: [www.seejapan.co.uk](http://www.seejapan.co.uk).



\* Yokoso = Welcome

# The Japan Society Library re-opens

After moving to a new location and an extensive process of re-cataloguing, the Japan Society Library has now re-opened at Swire House in London.

Arguably the best collection of material on Anglo-Japanese relations in the UK, the Japan Society's library has made an important contribution to academic study. What particularly distinguishes the library is the wide range of material assembled in the century after the establishment of the Society in 1891. Many books, including several classics of Western writing on Japan, were donated by the authors, many of them enthusiastic members of the Society.

The library has an especially fine collection of older Western language books and periodicals on Japan and Japan's relations with the West covering the late Edo period through to the Taisho era. It is also strong on post-war Western writing on Japan, covering such areas as politics, economics, literature, the arts



Library archive: early photographic image of Japanese life. Inset: original magazines

and society. For the first time, the Society's extensive collection of photographs, which date from the early 1860s to the 1950s and include some of the first images taken by a professional Western photographer in Japan, has been fully catalogued. Although the most valuable items in the library cannot be borrowed, they are available for study on site. Sebastian Dobson is the librarian and his assistant, Clare Barclay, is a full-time member of the Japan Society staff.

The library is open to both corporate and individual members of the Society. Non-members wishing to use the library for research purposes are welcome to do

so and should contact the Japan Society. Details of the Catalogue and Conditions of Use are available on the website [www.japansociety.org.uk](http://www.japansociety.org.uk) or by calling 020 7828 6330.



## The British Origami Society

The fascination of origami is in the concept of transforming paper, by folding alone, into an ornament, a box, a flower, a working toy or a highly detailed replica of a living creature. In its purest form, origami does not allow glue, scissors or decoration, and thus many practitioners consider that it offers a challenge to the mind of the folder, with the simplest and most available raw material – a humble square of paper. As an alternative to precise representation, other creators convey the suggestion or mood of a subject by placing a few discreet creases, much like *sumi-e* brush painting.

A handful of British paperfolders formed the British Origami Society (BOS) more than 35 years ago, and it has grown into a truly international organisation with about 700 members, half of whom live overseas. The benefits of membership include a bi-monthly magazine, regular local meetings and national conventions, the use of a vast library of origami material, the sourcing of first-class origami literature and materials and, most importantly, a keen sense of friendship, sharing and communication between paperfolders of all levels, everywhere.

For membership details please visit the BOS website at: [www.britishorigami.org.uk](http://www.britishorigami.org.uk) or write to: Membership Secretary, Penny Groom, 2a The Chestnuts, Leicester LE8 5TL; email: [penny.groom@btinternet.com](mailto:penny.groom@btinternet.com).



PHOTOGRAPH: BOS

Paper perfection: examples of work by BOS members

## BATJ holds Annual Conference

Almost 100 teachers of Japanese gathered at London University's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) on September 5 and 6 to attend the sixth annual conference of the British Association for Teaching Japanese as a Foreign Language (BATJ).

BATJ was set up in 1998 with the aim of promoting Japanese language education in the UK, in particular by raising the standard of teaching and encouraging research in the field of language studies as an academic discipline. BATJ's membership is mainly drawn from the Higher Education sector although most events are open to non-members.

The Conference provided an opportunity to present current research in the field of Japanese language teaching and to exchange ideas. In her keynote speech, Professor Kumiko Sakoda from Hiroshima University gave a fascinating explanation of how teachers can gain new insights into the best ways of teaching Japanese by studying the mistakes their students make when acquiring grammar, and in particular

the demonstratives *ko*, *so* and *a*.

Presentations covered a wide range of subjects, from teaching linguistic devices for encoding feelings in Japanese, by Akiko Furukawa from the University of Reading, to integrating hearing-impaired students into Japanese language lessons, by Yuko Hasegawa from the University of Bristol.

A reception was held on September 6 to conclude the conference, during which speeches were given by Professor Graham Furniss, Dean of the Faculty of Language and Culture at SOAS; Minister Haruhisa Takeuchi, from the Embassy of Japan; Mr Kohki Kanno, Director-General of the Japan Foundation; Dr Steve Dodd, Head of the Department of Japan and Korea; and Professor Ulrich Kratz, Head of the SOAS Language Centre.

For details about BATJ's activities please visit [www.batj.org.uk](http://www.batj.org.uk) or contact Kazuko Sorensen, Japanese Studies, Language Centre, Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, Surrey TW20 0EX; tel: 01784 443812; email: [K.Sorensen@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:K.Sorensen@rhul.ac.uk).

## Bringing nature nearer to the patient

Graham Cooper



*Graham Cooper is an artist/designer with a 20-year involvement in healthcare design. He co-ordinated the architecture programme for Japan 2001 and introduced Osaka architect Tadao Ando to the Manchester Piccadilly Gardens Regeneration, the largest new urban green space and the first significant building in the UK by a major Japanese architect. Since 1994, he has been Chairman of Art & Architecture, a unique cross-discipline network which advocates a better quality built environment for all. In July, Graham Cooper launched the Nature of Health Design project, which aims to produce environments that engage users of healthcare with nature. As part of the scheme, a touring exhibition presenting key hospital projects in the UK and Japan will open in Devon in October.*

Evidence-based research has clearly demonstrated that the typical hospital environment is highly stressful, causing a negative impact on the quality of care and on medical outcomes. Although patients have been shown to benefit from contact with the outside world and, in particular, views of the surrounding landscape, this is rarely considered when healthcare facilities are procured. Such findings are endorsed by the Centre for Healing Environments in Tokyo, where research into clinical spaces strongly advocates reducing levels of stress and anxiety.

It is this type of research about therapeutic spaces and healthy environments which underpins my latest project, which aims to provide guidance on how art, architecture and garden design can be integrated to bring natural phenomena nearer to the patient's experience. It celebrates the belief that the arts and especially nature, as positive distractors, have the power to reduce levels of stress.

The initial phase of the project begins with the opening of a touring exhibition in Exeter which uses panel presentations



PHOTOGRAPHS: COOPERGRAHAM

Stress-free: Japanese Healing Garden at the new Okehampton Centre for Health

arranged to reflect the patient's journey through spaces of potential interaction with the changing patterns of nature.

Much of my enthusiasm for this theme has developed from my contact with Japan over the past decade. I have been observing hospitals in Japan since 1993. In 1995, in the aftermath of the Great Hanshin Earthquake, I was invited to join the Hospital Damage Design Study in Kobe, undertaken by the Kyoto Institute of Technology. At the time, I was in Kansai on a Japan Foundation Artist Fellowship, carrying out a project on Art in the context of Contemporary Architecture, hosted by Dr Kisho Kurokawa.

As a result of the fellowship, my general interest in Japanese architecture began to focus on the distinctive approach to nature in Japan and how this could impact on the construction of buildings designed to promote health. In October 1998, with help from the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation, I was able to revisit Japan to document the ways in which artists and designers were contributing towards the latest range of health care facilities. At the time Japan had experienced a rapid growth in the construction of these services, creating ample scope for creative innovation.

Examples include the Shiranui Mental Care Clinic in Kyushu by architect Itsuko Hasegawa, who deliberately relocated the Stress Centre seaward for the patients to benefit from the changing ambience of the tidal estuary, and The St Luke's Medical Centre in Tokyo, which won an urban regeneration award for its approach to landscaping with features such as a large roof garden. These facilities reflect a distinctive feature of Japanese architecture, namely *ma* – the blurring of boundaries between inside and out.

In November 2002, I was invited to give the keynote speech at the Forum for Healing Environment (FHE)'s inaugural conference at The Big Sight in Tokyo. At this event, the FHE Awards were presented, to recognise medical facilities which have improved their environments in order to create a place that provides healing and comfort. No such forum exists in the UK and I felt there were lessons to be learnt. Some of the innovations I witnessed as a result of the conference are introduced in the Nature of Healing Arts exhibition.

*The **Nature of Healing Arts in the UK & Japan** exhibition will open at the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital from October 1 to 15. It can then be seen at the Architecture Centre in Bristol from October 21 to November 10 and at The Lighthouse in Glasgow from November 28 to January 5, 2004. For further details, please contact Graham Cooper on 01395 514048; email: [chair@artandarchitecture.co.uk](mailto:chair@artandarchitecture.co.uk) or visit the website [www.grahamcooper.com](http://www.grahamcooper.com).*

# what is Akaihane?

*Akaihane* literally means red feather, and symbolises the national appeal for donations to charity which begins every year on October 1. Based on an American concept, a red feather is given to every donor, and features extensively in the promotion of the three-month fundraising campaign.

At the heart of this movement is the Japanese Community Campaign, a non-governmental organisation with a network of prefectural fundraising units. Its work is based on four main principles: it should be operated from within the community, encourage residents' participation, and be well-planned and open. Fostering

local mutual aid and promoting welfare education are the campaign's prime roles. It recruits a large number of volunteers to collect funds who often line up at the entrance to department stores or stations. The money is used to support various community-based welfare organisations and facilities.

The campaign has been very successful in its public relations, in particular in convincing companies to endorse the red feather symbol to help raise awareness of welfare education. Airline cabin crew or bank tellers, for example, often wear a red feather pin in October.



Good cause: Akaihane fundraising outside a convenience store

## kanji of the month

赤 [aka]

This month's kanji is *aka*, red. The seven-stroke radical (*aka hen*) can also be read *aka-ramu*, *aka-bamu* or *aka-meru* which means to blush or redden. The adjective 'red' is *aka-i*. Compounds include *akaji*, 'deficit' or *akage*, 'redhead'. Add the

diminutive – *chan*, and it means 'baby', (*akachan*), literally 'little red person'. Its *on* reading is *seki*, as in *sekihan*, a traditional Japanese dish of rice with red beans, or *sekidō*, 'equator'. The character also has a lesser-used reading *shaku*.

## On Line

As we head towards the **Kyushu Grand Sumo Tournament** in Fukuoka, which takes place from November 9 to 23, you might like to find out more about the fascinating world of Sumo. The official site for the Nihon Sumo Kyōkai (Japanese Sumo Association) is [www.sumo.or.jp](http://www.sumo.or.jp). It provides the latest information on each tournament as well as profiles of the wrestlers, sumo statistics and other interesting details.

## Ask the Embassy

### What is the smallest village in Japan?

Geographically, the smallest village in Japan is Udono-mura in Mie Prefecture, which occupies an area of only 2.88km<sup>2</sup>. Coincidentally, it neighbours the largest village in Japan, Totsugawa-mura in Nara Prefecture, which is 672.35 km<sup>2</sup>. The smallest village by population, however, is Aogashima Village, on a southern island off Tokyo Bay, which is home to a population of just 203.

Do you have a question on Japan? Send it to us at JICC.

## gallery



PHOTOGRAPH: KATE CROCKETT

This photograph was taken early one Spring morning – the best time to visit Kiyomizudera, in Kyoto, before the onslaught of tour groups. Fortunately, tourists head straight for the temple, so the alleyways and surrounding streets are fairly quiet. This scene shows Sannenzaka, one of the two picturesque streets – Ninnenzaka is the other – which lead up to the temple, lined with tea houses and traditional shops.

The photograph and caption were submitted by Kate Crockett, a freelance writer and journalist. If you have an image of Japan that you would like to see appear in the Gallery, send it to us at the address on page 8 together with a short caption.

## Women in Textiles

On September 9, The Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation hosted a reception at Daiwa Foundation Japan House in London to mark the launch of a new publication on the role of women in the industrialisation of Japan.

Professor Janet Hunter's new book, *Women and the Labour Market in Japan's Industrialising Economy: The Textile Industry before the Pacific War* (Routledge), explores the contribution made by women to the textile industry at a time when it was the coun-

try's largest manufacturing sector. The reception was preceded by a presentation from Professor Hunter who outlined the main arguments in her book, which is based on extensive original research.

Ms Hunter is the Saji Professor of Economic History at the London School of Economics, and also President of the British Association of Japanese Studies. She has written widely on the economic and social development of modern Japan.

## Skydance to celebrate 100 years of flight



PHOTOGRAPH: KISA KAWAKAMI

Possibly the largest piece of permanent street sculpture in London, Skydance (pictured left during construction), a work in steel by Japanese architect-turned-sculptor Kisa Kawakami, will be officially unveiled later this year at the Royal Air Force Museum in Hendon as part of celebrations to mark the 100th anniversary of powered flight on December 17, 2003. Kawakami, who has lived and worked in the UK for over 30 years, was commissioned to make the landmark sculpture after winning a competition.

## Art at the Embassy



This month, the Embassy's Foyer Gallery hosts an exhibition of **Edo Kiriko**, featuring examples of a traditional Japanese glass-cutting art, rarely seen outside Japan.

*Kiriko* refers to a technique whereby designs are cut into brightly-coloured glassware. The art is said to have originated in 1834, when a craftsman first decorated glassware by cutting into its surface with diamond sand. In 1985, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government designated Edo Kiriko as a traditional handicraft industry, recognising the role it played in preserving Edo-period culture through the use of patterns and designs popular at the time.

**Edo Kiriko** can be seen at the Foyer Gallery, Embassy of Japan, from October 20 to 31, and is open Mondays to Fridays (9.30am to 5.30pm). Admission is free. For details, call JICC on 020 7465 6580 or email [culture@embjapan.org.uk](mailto:culture@embjapan.org.uk).

## Japan Foundation Annual Programmes

Applications are now invited to the Japan Foundation's Annual Programme of Grants, designed to provide support for Japan-related projects in the fields of humanities and social sciences, Japanese studies, Japanese language education, the arts as well as media exchange.

For further general details and guideline booklets, contact the Japan Foundation London Office on 020 7436 6695 or

[info@jpf.org.uk](mailto:info@jpf.org.uk) or visit the website at [www.jpf.org.uk](http://www.jpf.org.uk). Application forms are available upon request.

To find out more about the range of support programmes designed specifically for teachers of Japanese in the UK, call the Japan Foundation London Language Centre on 020 7436 6698 or email [info.language@jpf.org.uk](mailto:info.language@jpf.org.uk). The deadline for all applications is December 1, 2003.



## Mitsuko Uchida plays Mozart

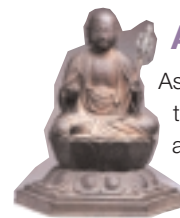
On Tuesday, October 28, Japanese pianist Mitsuko Uchida and conductor Jeffrey Tate join the English Chamber Orchestra for an all-Mozart programme at the Barbican. Uchida is considered to be one of the leading Mozart pianists of our time, while Tate has a deep understanding of the composer, making this concert a rare treat for Mozart fans. The performance will begin at 7.30pm. For further information and to book tickets, contact the Barbican Box Office on 020 7638 8891 or log on to [www.barbican.org.uk](http://www.barbican.org.uk).

## Japanese films at Raindance

This year's Raindance Film Festival, which takes place in London from October 24 to November 7, will feature a special programme of Japanese films, made possible with support from the Japan Foundation. The programme includes short films by new directors and a retrospective of animation works by Kōji Yamamura. For a full list of titles, see the enclosed Cultural Events List or log on to [www.raindance.co.uk](http://www.raindance.co.uk).



## Asian Art in London



Asian Art in London (November 6 to 14) sees the major art dealers and auction houses in London join forces to exhibit and offer for sale some outstanding examples of Asian antiquities and works of art. The event is accompanied by an extensive programme of lectures and specialist exhibitions both in and outside London. For a full list of events, see the enclosed Cultural Events List, log on to [www.asianartinlondon.com](http://www.asianartinlondon.com) or call for a free guidebook on 020 7499 2215.

## Sir Peter Parker Awards for Spoken Business Japanese

The Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO) is inviting applications for next year's Sir Peter Parker Awards for Spoken Business Japanese, the final round of which will be held on February 10, 2004, at SOAS, University of London. Application forms can be downloaded at [www.jetro.co.uk/sppa](http://www.jetro.co.uk/sppa) and the deadline is November 24, 2003. For details, contact Yasko Kurahachi or Mari Hardwick on 020 7470 4700 or by email: [ldnsppa@jetro.go.jp](mailto:ldnsppa@jetro.go.jp).