



Japan Local Government Centre (CLAIR, Sydney)

Newsletter Issue
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Local Cuisine around Japan: Vol.29

Written by Aomori Prefecture

Aomori: Northern Japan's 'Blue Forest'



Aomori Prefecture is located in the northern tip of the main island of Japan, Honshu. As the Aomori is surrounded by sea, tourists and locals can enjoy a wide variety of fresh seafood such as scallop, tuna and mackerel.

Aomori is also well known for producing agricultural products such as apples, rice and garlic.

Today, we would like to introduce to you a local cuisine called 'Senbei-jiru'. Senbei-jiru is a Japanese style hotpot with crackers (senbei) made from flour, and mainly eaten in the eastern Aomori region.

In Japan, crackers are popular snacks that are usually made from rice. However, in eastern Aomori, where the temperatures in summer are usually below average in Japan due to north easterly wind from the

Northern Pacific, rice is not a crop that can be easily grown and harvested. It has been said that because of this, people in this region started making crackers from flour instead.

The senbei produced in the eastern Aomori region is called Nanbu senbei, and it is the centrepiece of senbei-jiru. The senbei is usually broken up into pieces and placed in the senbei-jiru pot together with meat, fish, vegetables and mushrooms cooked in a soy sauce, miso or salt based soup. Once cooked, the senbei pieces become chewy like pasta.



Senbei-jiru is a widely popular dish amongst the locals and has been previously selected as one of the top 100 local dishes in Japan. In addition, it was also popularly voted as the no. 1 national 'B-grade gourmet' dish in Japan in 2012. Senbei-jiru is a favourite of Joe Fujishima, who is one of our prefectural staff currently on a secondment at CLAIR Sydney. Joe is originally from eastern Aomori's Hachinohe City.

Besides senbei-jiru, Aomori also has many delicious food and amazing Japanese sake. Additionally, Aomori has many attractive tourism destinations and events for international and domestic travellers to enjoy. Locals in Aomori always look forward to welcoming visitors to the area!

Discover the Hidden Gems of Kyoto

Official site for Kyoto Prefecture, Japan
Kyoto Tourism

DESTINATIONS HIGHLIGHTS PLAN TRAVEL INFO

Font Size L M S English

Discover your own Kyoto

Sakura report

Nine Must-see Spots of the Spring Flowers in Kyoto

Kyoto Prefecture Certification
Assured Hotels
Kyoto Prefecture Approved Quality Accommodation

The charms of Ryokan

Representatives from the Kyoto Prefectural Government came to Australia to promote tourist destinations in Kyoto at the World Travel Expo held in Sydney. On 4 Feb, they visited the CLAIR Sydney office to meet with CLAIR Sydney staff members and talked about Australian tourism trends.

When it comes to Kyoto, you may think of images of historical Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, however, there are also open sea, lush forests, bamboo groves and so on in the nature-filled Kyoto Prefecture! For instance, in the northern region of Kyoto Prefecture where it borders the sea, you can find Amanohashidate, which is one of the three most celebrated scenic sites in Japan. Amanohashidate, which means 'bridge in heaven', was featured in many traditional Japanese poetry and has influenced the Japanese sense of beauty over many centuries. In northern Kyoto Prefecture, you can also enjoy staying at unique boat houses called Funaya.

The central region of Kyoto Prefecture is covered with woodland, and many old houses with thatched roofs, known as Kayabuki, still stand in this area. You can definitely see and feel what the old Japanese landscape looked like in this region. If you are up for it, you can also stay at a Kayabuki house. If you are a matcha lover, you cannot miss southern Kyoto Prefecture! Southern Kyoto Prefecture is well known as a green tea production area, so you can enjoy a wide range of blended green tea and matcha sweets in this part of Kyoto!

Click on the following link to discover your own Kyoto!

<http://www.kyototourism.org/en/>

JNTO Seminar in Perth



On 6 Feb, a tourism seminar jointly organised by the Japan National Tourism Organisation (JNTO), Perth Airport, and All Nippon Airways (ANA) was held in Perth CBD to promote Japan as a travel destination. It was also a promotional event where ANA announced the launch of the new direct service between Tokyo/Narita and Perth from 1 Sep. Over 100 participants from organisations such as travel agencies or the media attended the event. There were six Japanese organisations that ran a booth at the event, including the Aomori

Prefectural Government. After the presentations by JNTO and ANA, there was a networking session where seminar participants were able to visit the exhibiting booths to converse with different organisations for an hour.

Many of the questions asked on the day were snow or ski related, and a participant on the day noted that there are increasing demands for ski holidays in Japan. In addition to those interested in skiing, many

participants were eager to discover new travel destinations in Japan in preparation for their upcoming trip, and staff at the Aomori Prefectural Government booth answered questions regarding the prefecture, major attractions, and transportation in the prefecture.

According to many participants, the launch of the new ANA direct service is hot topic for travel agencies and people in Perth, and they expect an increase in the people travelling to Japan from areas around Perth.



Conferment of the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays, upon Ms Madeleine Rennie

On 7 Feb, a reception was held by the Consulate-General of Japan in Perth to celebrate the conferment of the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays, upon Ms Madeleine Rennie. The event was also a networking opportunity for those involved in sister city relationships between Western Australia and Japan. Ms Rennie has been involved in the sister city relationship between the City of Belmont in WA, and Adachi City in Tokyo, and the two cities are celebrating the 35th anniversary of their sister city relationship this year. We are extremely honoured that we were able to join this event.

After the conferment ceremony, our staff were able to network with many representatives from WA who are involved with Japan-Australia sister city relations. It was a great opportunity for us to meet and talk with representatives from the cities such as Perth, Bunbury and Rockingham. We would like to continue supporting sister city exchange activities between Western Australia and Japan.



JET Programme Welcome Back Receptions

From 7 to 28 Feb, Welcome Back receptions for recent JET Returnees were held in Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland in New Zealand, and Perth in Australia. CLAIR Sydney was invited to each reception and celebrated the returnees' achievements in Japan together with members from the respective JETAA chapters, and attending guests from government and university related organisations. CLAIR Sydney had opportunities to make a speech at the beginning of each reception and in the speeches, we praised the returnees' success in Japan, and expressed our hope that the returnees will keep in contact with all the people who they had met in Japan.

We hope all the returnees will continue to play an active role in being cultural bridges between Australia/New Zealand and Japan.



Christchurch



Wellington



Auckland



Perth

Imperial Decoration Conferment Ceremony for Mrs Jenny Dowell

On 7 Feb, Lismore City Council hosted the Imperial Decoration Conferment Ceremony and reception for the 2018 Autumn Decoration bestowed upon Mrs Jenny Dowell, former Mayor of Lismore City Council. Mrs Dowell received the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette from Mr Keizo Takewaka, Consul-General of Japan in Sydney, for her contributions towards promoting the sister city relationship between Lismore and Yamato Takada. The honour is very traditional and authoritative in Japan.



Established in August 1963, the sister city relationship between Lismore and Yamato Takada is the first ever sister city between the two countries, and the Lismore-Yamato Takada friendship is a symbol of the bilateral relations between Australia and Japan.

Mr Kevin Hogan, Member of the Australian House of Representatives; Mr Isaac Smith, Mayor of Lismore; and a total of 30 participants were in attendance at the ceremony to celebrate Mrs Dowell's decoration.

We hope the friendship between the two cities will continue to thrive in future.

Visitation to Hutt City Council

On Wednesday, 20 Feb, staff members of CLAIR Sydney visited Councillor Glenda Barratt; and Ms. Linda Goss-Wallace, International relations and Projects Manager at Hutt City Council. Hutt City established a sister city relationship with Minoh City in Osaka in 1995 and since then, many residents of the two cities—from primary school students to senior citizens—have been interacting in many ways such as conducting video calls via Skype, art and sport exchange. There is a historical heritage constructed in 1904 at the park in the middle of the hill in Hutt City. It was renovated and was opened as “Hutt Minoh Friendship House”. The house is a basement for



interactions between both cities. In addition, Minoh puts emphasis in the city's English education, and there are currently many Assistant Language Teachers (ALT) appointed through the JET Programme including New Zealanders and they are actively working in the city.



Zealanders and they are actively working in the city.

CLAIR Sydney would like to continue to have more dialogues with local councils in New Zealand such as Hutt City Council. We would also like to continue to provide support for Japanese local governments' activities in New Zealand.

Melbourne Japanese Summer Festival 2019



On 24 Feb, CLAIR Sydney exhibited at the Melbourne Japanese Summer Festival 2019. We promoted Melbourne's sister city, Osaka, and many Japanese prefectures and cities at the event. In addition, we also distributed brochures of upcoming major international sporting events in Japan: the Rugby World Cup 2019, the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympic Games, and the World Masters Games 2021 Kansai.

A Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Norikazu Suzuki, took time out from his business trip in Melbourne and visited the CLAIR Sydney booth to assist with promoting various Japanese tourist destinations including his local area, Yamagata Prefecture. Mr Suzuki also answered many questions that the visitors had about Japan.

The festival was blessed with good weather and on the day, and many visitors came to the CLAIR Sydney booth to ask for travel information for destinations all over Japan. There were many questions on the cherry blossoms blooming period of different locations around Japan, recommended travel destinations for the days between the Rugby World Cup matches that the Wallabies will play in, and tourist destinations outside the Tokyo-Kyoto-Osaka Golden Route. From the festival, our staff was able to personally witness the apparent increase of Australians' interest in Japan, and the surge in Australian tourists travelling to Japan.



CLAIR Sydney will continue to actively support Japanese local governments' initiatives in attracting tourists from Australia, as the latest statistics revealed that Australians are the highest spending international tourists in Japan.

Meeting with the Mayor of the City of Cockburn



On the 28 Feb, CLAIR Sydney staff members had a meeting with Mr Logan Howlett, the Mayor of the Western Australian City of Cockburn, in Perth. Mayor Howlett participated in the 2015 Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar organised by CLAIR, and visited Yamato Takada City in Nara Prefecture to learn about different aspects of Japanese local government. Since then, Mayor Howlett has kindly accommodated a CLAIR Sydney staff member's request to conduct a study tour in the City of Cockburn last year.

At the meeting with Mayor Howlett, we exchanged opinions on collaboration opportunities between CLAIR Sydney and the City of Cockburn in future. CLAIR Sydney would like to continue to have more dialogues with local governments in Australia, as well as provide support for Japanese local governments' activities in Australia.

Busy year for 2018-19 JETAA Wellington committee

Written by Mr Mark Dittmer, JETAA Wellington President (March 2017-March 2019)

It's been another huge year for JETAA Wellington - we put on 14 events. Big thanks to our hard-working 2018/2019 members who put in the hard yards - Seamus (Vice President), Michael (Secretary and Treasurer), Rosa (JETAA NZ country rep), Steven (communications officer) and Xan (JKAIWA rep).

Here are sixteen highlights from the past year...

Making sushi with Yoshi Sushi & Bento - March 2018

Our first big event of 2018 was learning to make sushi at Yoshi sushi - the makers of Wellington's best sushi according to the Dominion Post. We are grateful to Helen and Yoshi for opening their shop to us on a Saturday afternoon.



Ikebana lesson - April 2018

For the first time since 2014, we teamed up with the Ikebana Society of Wellington. Nine members were taught how to making arrangements in a garage. We had JETAA members come from as far afield as Palmerston North - 170 kilometres away - for the lesson.



Children's Day at Wellington City Libraries - May 2018

Koinobori making has been a fixture of the JETAA schedule since 2013!

Helping out with the 2018 JET Programme New Zealand pre-departure orientation - May/June 2018

Our members played a key role in panels and workshops for the 2018 departing group. We also organised an evening at Wagamama to give the new JETs a chance to chat with alumni from their areas. And because we're so generous, we also funded Japanese language classes for the new JETs so they would have a head start when they arrived in Japan.

Celebrating Tanabata at the JICC - July 2018

We gave the new JETs a taste of Japanese culture and then went for a drink with them afterwards.

JET Programme New Zealand recruitment - August-September 2018

Who better to sell the benefits of the programme than former JETs? Our alumni rocked up to Victoria and Massey Universities in Wellington and Palmerston North to talk about their JET experiences.

Seeing Shoplifters @ the New Zealand International Film Festival - August 2018

Another new event! Fifteen JET alumni went to the festival to see the film that shows another side to Japanese life.

Neko Ngeru Cat Adoption Cafe visit - July 2018

We were ignored by the cats at Wellington's only cat cafe. Miaow! One of our two Hutt-based events - as requested by our alumni members who live in the area.



Hanami rock climbing - September 2018

So many original events this year! I'm looking forward to this year's version: hanami kayaking.

Japanese Film Festival - TEIICHI -Battle of Supreme High - October 2018

We watched possibly the ultimate film about Japanese High Schools ever. It featured warring factions at a boys high school, vying for power (and possibly the Prime Ministership of Japan).

Oceania JETAA Conference in Perth - October 2018

The fantastically well-organised JETAA Western Australia committee hosted us in Perth. It was a nine hour flight for us, accompanied by some killer jetlag on the way back, but totally worth it to see what the other chapters are up to.

Japan Festival Wellington stamp rally + taiyaki stall - November 2018

An outing for our taiyaki machine. We made over 400 taiyaki (pancake fish) and 300 people did the stamp rally - visiting booths and stamping their sheets to collect a prize.



JETAA + JICC Photo Contest - November-December 2018

We ran our annual photo contest at the JICC and received many excellent entries. We presented the winners their prizes in December.



End of year drinks - December 2018

Our last meet up for the year and another new event - and hopefully something the committee will run again next year.

Okonomiyaki at Minoh House - February 2019

For the first time ever, JETAA Wellington held an event at Minoh House - the Japanese friendship house - in the Hutt Valley.

Jkaiwa classes - all year long

We again joined forces with our friends at Wellington Sakai Association to run/fund the monthly Japanese speaking group held at the Japan Information and Cultural Centre. Sugoi!



The 2018-19 committee can be proud of our work. We worked hard, put our creativity to work and put on a huge range of events. Thank you to the committee members, our alumni and everyone else who made the year a success. I wish the new committee and President Seamus the very best for the year ahead.

Farewell Messages

Our Deputy Director Shigeki Yamada and Assistant Directors Toru Sugawara, Joe Fujishima and Yuta Watanabe are leaving Sydney at the end of March to take up their new roles back in Japan.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to everyone for the kind support and warm friendship extended to me during my two-year stay in Sydney.

Firstly, I would like to sincerely thank the former Director of CLAIR Sydney, Mr Katsunori Kamibo; and the current Director, Mr Hiroto Akaiwa, for giving me many opportunities to challenge myself, and providing me with generous support for my activities in Sydney—in particular, the promotion of my home town, the City of Nagoya.

In addition, thank you to all my colleagues at CLAIR Sydney for supporting me and cheering me on during my two years here. As I had never made a presentation or speech in English at conferences or receptions in Japan before, I would not have been able to accomplish this without your warm support.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the staff and members of the City of Sydney, the City of Geelong and the Sydney-Nagoya Sister City Committee. Without your support, the high school students from Nagoya would not have been able to have such memorable trips to Australia.

It has been my privilege to be able to accompany the Nagoya high school students during their time in Sydney, and the Nagoya junior high school students during their time in Geelong. It is so amazing to me that they have such strong curiosities, and great abilities to see, listen, feel and absorb new and different things abroad so quickly. I was able to witness their change and growth in the short times they were in Australia.

Their happy smiles during their time in Australia is one of my most cherished moments of my time in Australia. Through their experiences abroad, they seemed more energetic and happy as they were able to see the world, as well as Japan, from a broader point of view, which I believe is very important for our future world.



Shigeki Yamada

Deputy Director from Nagoya City
(Aichi Prefecture)



I have learned the importance of exchange activities between different countries and Japan through these wonderful students.

I have also learned many attractive aspects of Australia and New Zealand from the Mayors, Councillors, and council staff members I have met at occasions such as conferences and receptions. I really appreciate your warm kindness.

I have received many invaluable treasures from many people who I have met in Australia and New Zealand. I will cherish the great experiences and wonderful memories I have had in Australia and New Zealand for the rest of my life.

I will continue to work as a public servant in the City of Nagoya. I hope that our paths will cross again. I wish everyone good luck.

All the best!

G'day, mates!

I am leaving Australia to go back to my hometown Kurihara, Miyagi in Japan. I would like to express my gratitude to all of you for taking such good care of me! You are the reason why I'm here.

My family and I will cherish the great experiences and all the unforgettable memories we have had in the past two years in Australia and New Zealand.

I hope I will see you again in the future.

All the best!



Toru Sugawara
Assistant Director from Kurihara City
(Miyagi Prefecture)



Joe Fujishima

Assistant Director from Aomori Prefectural
Government

Time flies! I came to Sydney with my family in April, 2017, and it is hard to believe that I have spent almost two years in Australia. Colleagues who were previously seconded to CLAIR Sydney told me that their second year in Sydney flew by very quickly, and I realised what they said is true now.

My time in Sydney was very exciting at first, and towards the end it has become ordinary as I got accustomed to my life in Sydney.

For me, because my English is not so great, at times it has been quite tough in both my professional and personal life in Sydney. Although my English is still not great, I think it

has improved from the time I first started living in Sydney.

In the two years, I have had many opportunities to visit all states and territories of Australia, as well as both islands of New Zealand. I visited many cities and met with many people. I have been very blessed that everyone I met has been very warm and kind. Although my stay in some of the cities was really short, the kindness I received has become the overall impression I have of each individual city I visited, and I will be bringing all these fabulous memories with me back to Japan.

I will be going back to work for my original organisation, the Aomori Prefectural Government from April.

When you meet me next time in Japan, even though my hair style may be different, my feelings for Australasia definitely will remain unchanged.

Please let me know if you are interested in visiting Aomori in the future. I am looking forward to seeing you again.

Please forgive me for not being able to write down every individual's name. I want to thank all of the people I have met, and everyone who has supported me in the past two years. Cheers guys!





Yuta Watanabe

Assistant Director from
Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

I would like to express my gratitude to everyone I have met in Australia and New Zealand during my time working at CLAIR Sydney. It was a great honour for me to work with all of you, and I believe what I experienced with you here in Australia and New Zealand will be unforgettable memories in my life.

This was the first time for me to live and work overseas. I actually had hoped to work overseas since I started to work at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) in Japan, where I am seconded from. The two years at CLAIR Sydney was time for me to realise my dream, and I was able to make the most of this precious opportunity. I think my two-year

secondment to CLAIR Sydney is relatively short, and it was not enough time for me to do everything I wanted to do. However, I do also believe that the short amount of time I had in Australia and New Zealand made the two years even more precious and worthy in my life. Although it is really sad for me to leave Australia, I think I have to say goodbye to everyone here.

In these two years, my work mainly consisted of support for the different Australian and New Zealander JETAA chapters and their activities. I always appreciate and respect the JET alumni's eagerness to promote the JET Programme, and their dedication in being the cultural bridges between Australia/New Zealand and Japan. I remember a JET returnee said in his speech at a welcome back reception that the JET Programme gave him "life-changing experiences". Now I can say that the encounters with all of the JETAA members, as well as the time I worked with them, were definitely life-changing experiences for me. I would like to say a warm thank you to all of the members of the Australian and New Zealander JETAA chapters.

Lastly, I would like to thank everyone who kindly assisted me with my researches on the Commonwealth Games and regional revitalisation initiatives in Australia. Also, I am really grateful to my family, friends, as well as the current and former Directors and colleagues of CLAIR Sydney.

I really look forward to working with you all again, and hope to meet everyone again soon.

From the Director

- What March means for CLAIR Sydney as a Japanese organisation -

As you may know, March means not only the end of the fiscal year, but also the end of the school year in Japan. Since many students who graduate schools or universities in March start working in April, many Japanese public/private organisations set the end of March and the beginning of April as the time when staff

rotations are to take place (in Japan, staff are regularly rotated into new positions and even branches depending on their company and role). Because of this, March also means farewell season of staff for many Japanese organisations.

As our CLAIR Sydney office currently has eight staff from the Japanese central and local governments, and similarly to other Japanese organisations, March is the month of the standard personnel transfers. As shown in the farewell messages in this newsletter, four staff are leaving CLAIR Sydney and going back to Japan in this March.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to everyone who has any contact with the four leaving staff. I believe that all of these four staff members and their families received a lot of support from you and your organisations. Every one of you has made a valuable contribution to their fruitful professional and private lives in Australia and New Zealand. I am sure that the four will miss the people they met and experiences they had in Australian and New Zealand. I would be grateful if you would keep in touch with them and visit them if you have the opportunity to go to Japan.

All the other staff staying in CLAIR Sydney after March are taking over the four leaving staff members' works and their professional relationships with you and your organisations. CLAIR Sydney will stay committed to its mission of developing the friendly relationships between local governments in Australia/New Zealand and Japan, promoting sister city relationships and supporting economic ties between Japan and Australia/New Zealand, and supporting all the former and future Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme participants, based on the achievements of the leaving staff.
