Essay Contest Awards Ceremony

An Awards Ceremony for the 28th Australia-Japan Relations Essay Contest was hosted by Consul-General Masahiro Kohara at his official residence on the evening of 2 March.

Some 50 people—prize winners, their families, teachers and principals, and supporters of the contest-attended the event to celebrate the achievements of the students.



Prize winners with supporters of the contest

The Australia-Japan Relations Essay Contest is conducted annually by the Embassy and Consulates-General of Japan in Australia, and its aim is to promote understanding of Japan and Australia-Japan relations among Australian secondary school students.

This year 768 entries were received nationwide; 370 in Junior A division (Years 7 & 8), 346 in Junior B division (Years 9 & 10) and 52 in Senior division (Years 11 & 12). New South Wales students won 15 of the 39 prizes awarded nationally, including the first prize in Junior A. Ms Rachel Jorêt from St Columba's High School. The School of the Year prize went for the second consecutive year to St Columba's High School in Springwood, NSW.

Ms Sharon van Etten, immediate past president of JETAA Sydney, spoke on behalf of the judges, congratulating students on their efforts and encouraging them to keep up their interest in Japan beyond school.

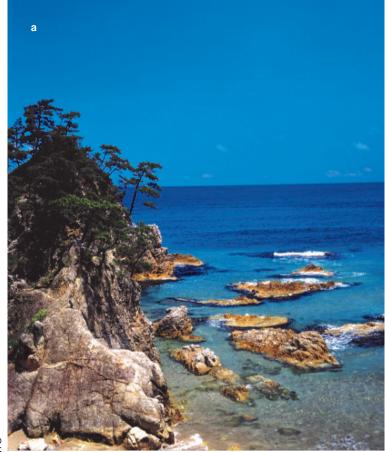
Information about next year's contest will become available in early May this year.

New President for JETAA Sydney

The AGM for the Sydney Japan Exchange and Teaching Alumni Association was held in February and JETAA Sydney now has a new president, Mr David Boyd. David's previous position on the committee was secretary and he has also been active representing JETAA in Australia internationally. The Consulate looks forward to working with him and the new executive committee members.

Thank you to Ms Sharon van Etten for her 4 years as president. She brought great energy to the role. She will still be a committee member and now serves as communications officer.

www.sydnevjetaa.org

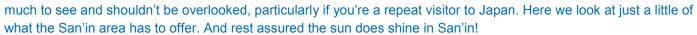






San'in — exploring another side of Japan

The San'in region in Japan covers the modern day prefectures of Tottori, Shimane, part of Yamaguchi and the tops of Hyogo and Kyoto prefectures. The term San'in (山陰) means 'in the shade (陰) of the mountains (山)'; its partner is the Sanyo (山陽) region, the sunny side of the Chugoku mountains which run along the middle of western Honshu. The name San'in might not create such a positive impression, but don't be fooled. The area has



One of the most photographed natural sites in Japan must be the famous **Tottori Sand Dunes** near Tottori City. These 16km by 2km dunes are constantly changing shape and are not the common image of a Japanese landscape! Perhaps more in line with that image would be the beautiful **Uradome Coast** (a) in the northern part of Tottori and impressive in all weather.

A lovely way to see the San'in region is to travel by train along the coast using the JR San'in line, stopping off along the way. For example Hagi in Yamaguchi not only has nice coastal sunsets (e), it is a former castle town with a large area of samurai and traditional houses to explore. It is famous for being the birthplace of several leaders of the Meiji Restoration (1868), among them Hirobumi Ito, a preeminent statesman and Japan's first prime minister. Hagi is also a significant centre of pottery and Hagi ceramics became highly regarded for tea ceremony wares.

Shimane prefecture lies between Tottori to the north and Yamaguchi to the south on the San'in Coast and here you will find one of the lesser known of Japan's World Heritage poor in natural resources, the lwami Silver Mine is perhaps a surprise samurai. His former residence in the Japanese World Heritage site. In fact during the 16th century the mine open to the public. was said to account for around one third of the silver in circulation around the world. Operational from 1526 to 1923, there are many remains and traces of the trade. One is the Rakan Temple founded in 1766 for the souls of those who had worked in the mines. There in caves carved into the side of a mountain, you can find the '500 Buddhas' each with its own expression.

Shimane is also home to one of the most important Shinto shrines, Izumo Taisha. Shimane's capital, Matsue, boasts one of Japan's 12 remaining original castles. This intimate castle (d) is still surrounded by a moat that

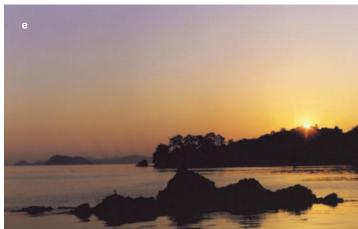
you can travel by boat. Set by the beautiful Lake Shinji, you can still see why Matsue enchanted Japan's famous early Western chronicler, Lafcadio Hearn (1850-1904). He lived Sites. In a country known as being in Matsue for just over a year and married the daughter of a local samurai district near the castle is

> Of course, new tourist destinations emerge with time. Back in Tottori in the port city of Sakaiminato, a popular manga/anime series has created a domestic tourist attraction. Kitaro (b) is the main character of a manga and anime created by local man Shigeru Mizuki in 1959, Gegege no Kitaro. It was a huge hit and today the town has created Kitaro Road lined with statues of characters from the series.

And of course timeless attractions such as Mt Daisen aka Hōki Fuji (c) continue to work their magic on visitors to the San'in region.







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