

KITAKYUSHU

BRIDGES

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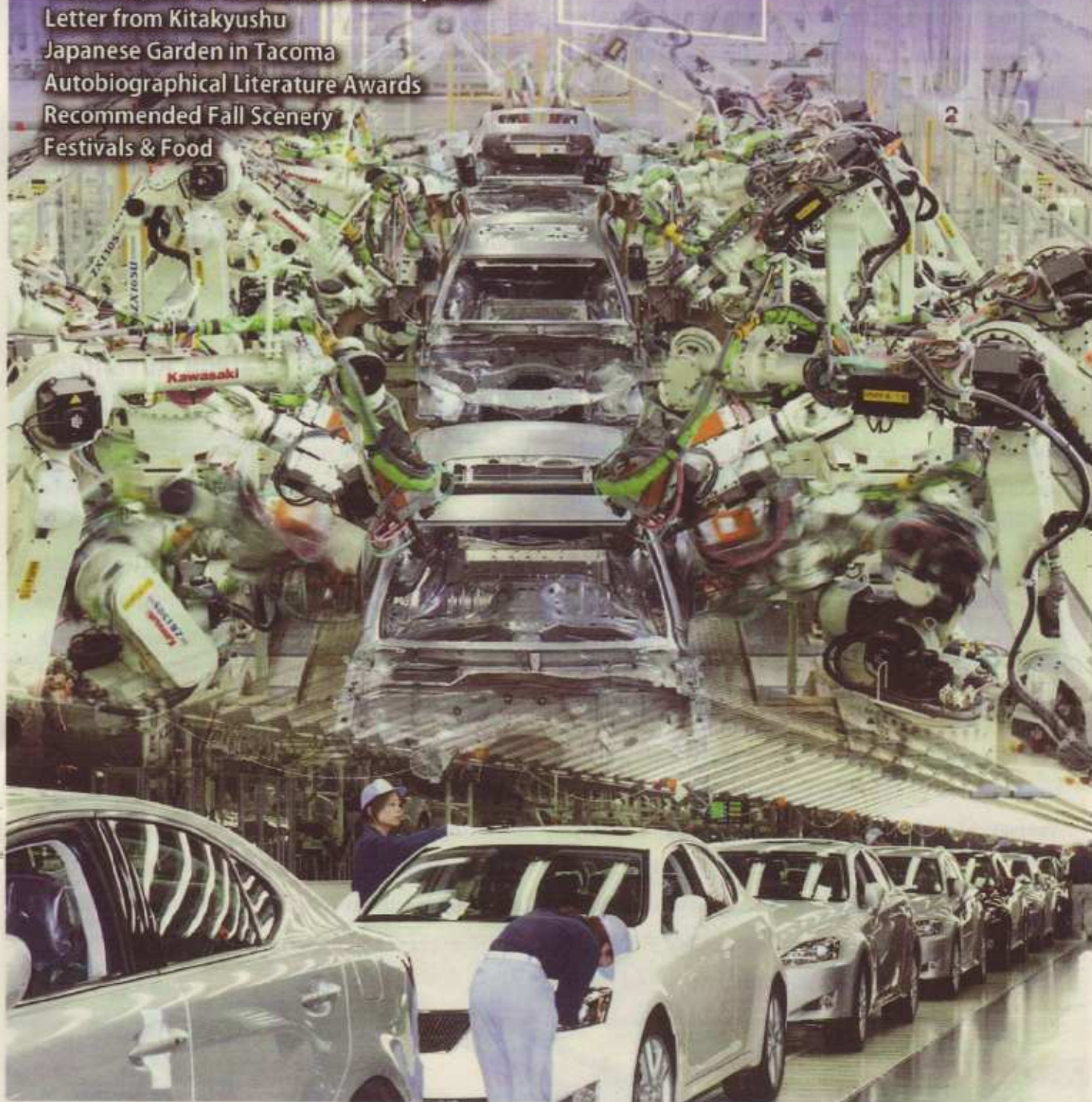
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Kitakyushu's Strategic

The Beginning

Heralded as the site of Japan's first modern manufacturing facility and also infamous for the pollution brought on by its major iron, steel and chemical industries, Kitakyushu began striving to change its image during the latter part of the 20th century. Along with a world-renowned massive environmental clean-up, the local government decided to spread its interests—especially in light of the downturn in the steel industry during the 90's. Among many new areas, the city decided to invest in advanced technological industries such as semiconductors, robotics and particularly automobiles.

A Clear Goal

Beginning in 2007 and with a projected date of 2010, Kitakyushu aims to become the capital of automobile manufacturing in the region. In 2007, factories in the greater Kitakyushu area produced approximately 1 million automobiles and with the concentration of more company's enterprises in the area that number looks to increase several fold. Currently, Toyota has one operating factory and two more being built while Nissan and Daihatsu both have one currently operating factory and one more factory slated for construction each. Across the Kanmon strait in Yamaguchi prefecture, Mazda has also built a factory.

The City of Kitakyushu is currently doing much to attract more growth to the area, however, there is much competition with neighboring Fukuoka City as well as Nagasaki, Kumamoto and Oita prefectures. The Kitakyushu Science and Research

Park located in Wakamatsu Ward has brought several undergraduate and graduate universities, private research firms, automobile related and other enterprises all together at one facility. The facility serves the dual purposes of attracting high-tech industries with advanced R&D facilities and at the same time training skilled human resources for various companies' operations in the Northern Kyushu area. Recently, the City has pushed to implement a car electronics research and training program at the Science and Research Park in order to attract automotive-related industries to the city.

Economic Fear into Strategic Advantage

As anyone who watches the news these days knows, Japan is facing an economic decline due to a shrinking and aging population. In light of this situation, car manufacturers are looking more heavily into risk management and cutting costs. Kitakyushu is striving to turn this situation into to the benefit by emphasizing the relatively low risk of natural disaster in the geographically sheltered location. Also compared with the historically dominant automobile manufacturing regions of Aichi, Osaka and Kanagawa, land costs are far cheaper in Northern Kyushu and unlike the above locations where companies are currently having to fight over labor, the Northern Kyushu region is also rich with skilled workers and features low living costs.

Advantage to Automakers

Environmental Consideration

More than just a way for businesses to cut costs, relocating to Northern Kyushu is proving to have advantages in regard to creating more environmentally sound manufacturing and distribution processes. For example the majority of materials currently used at the four factories currently operating in the area are provided by local materials manufacturer Sumitomo Metals using their heavily government-regulated process. Also considering the close proximity in which several steel, chemical and other material manufacturers are located, the materials for manufacturing automobiles

need not be transported very far also reducing costs and carbon emissions. Distance from factory to distribution site is also decreased several fold as manufacturers may take advantage of Kitakyushu's first rate distribution facilities and network including the deep berth sea ports and airport freight rail system as well as the strategic position close to major Asian markets and along major trade routes to the Americas. Lastly, with so many skilled workers living in the area, potential workers' commutes can be drastically shortened also helping reduce industry's carbon footprint.





World Capital of Sustainable Development

As anyone who has visited the city of Kitakyushu recently may find hard to believe, as little as thirty years ago, this city was one of the most polluted spots on earth and certainly among the most polluted areas of Japan. This environmental disaster began at the turn of the 20th century with the establishment of the Yawata Steel Works in what is now present day Yahatahigashi Ward. Kitakyushu grew as a heavy-manufacturing city and Japan's economy grew along with Kitakyushu. At one time this was seen as height of accomplishments but it was not long before this uninhibited industrialism took its toll on the environment and everyone who lived there.

It was not until the late seventies when the Yahata Women's Association got together and campaigned to get City Hall's attention that people began to act to reverse the desperate situation they found themselves in. Shortly thereafter an unprecedented three-way union between the local government, residents and local businesses formed to take on the incredible task of restoring the natural environment. The City Assembly got together and acted to pass several measures to limit emissions and other forms of waste produced by factories as well as offer funding for filtration/purification systems to be installed at said factories. Businesses complied with the new strict emissions regulations and the city also invested in overhauling its sewage and water treatment systems. Residents volunteered for a variety of fundraising and cleanup activities at both the small and city-wide scale. Today, the skies and rivers are once again blue and in light

of this experience in reversing extreme environmental pollution, the City of Kitakyushu has set its sights on becoming the World Capital of Sustainable Development! Toward this end, the City has enacted its two birds with one stone approach of advancing economic development and promoting a cleaner environment. This is being accomplished through the City-mandated optimization of manufacturing processes, alternative energy production such as the wind-power generators in Wakamatsu Ward and private firms offering solar kits for houses and all-solar apartment complexes, energy conservation, resource conservation at the enterprise and grassroots levels, and the creation of a resource-recycling society through efforts by NPOs and other resident groups, the City-sponsored annual Eco-Life Stage environmental awareness event and the City-managed Ecotown massive recycling facility where everything from old furniture to cars, computers and even toilet seats are recycled or otherwise reused. The City just signed a deal with the city of Taingtao in China to cooperate regarding their "Ecotown" project. Kitakyushu is also involved in international environmental exchange through the JICA and KITA organizations through whom the City sends experts in various fields to countries around the world to advise and help build environmentally friendly infrastructure and resource-recycling societies. So far over 4,000 people from over 100 countries have also come to Kitakyushu to take part in study programs to learn from our experience as it pertains to a variety of environment-related fields.



Kitakyushu Profile


Bridges talks with the Director of recent award-winning film "Sad Vacation"
**Background:**

Shinji Aoyama: film Director
 Born in Kitakyushu in 1964
 Graduated from Rikkyo Univ. English Literature Dept. in 1989-
 Enrolled in film studies thereafter
 His most recent award-winning film "Sad Vacation" is now available on DVD!

Q Why did you decide to become of film director? What was the source of your drive to make films?

A I had an instinctive desire for action. If I could feed that desire it didn't really matter if I became a film director or not, however, there also seemed to be something [about filmmaking] I could not get otherwise.

Q Do you consider yourself to be an auteur director?

A Yes, of course. I believe that in not just looking at the big picture but getting lost in the details of making a film turns one into an auteur. Thus one can't truly make films without being an auteur and vice versus making a film also makes on an auteur.

Q Has growing up in Kitakyushu had an affect on your filmmaking?

A Absolutely! I mean that, everything in my past has had an effect on me.

Q Have you ever filmed abroad and how has that experience differed from filming locally (in Kitakyushu)? Also were there any surprises during the shooting?

A I have never actually filmed abroad and do not have any plans to at the moment. Where ever you are though, shooting a film is a constant stream of surprises! If not then it wouldn't be a good movie!

Q With regard to making a film, what is the most difficult part?

A The full length of the process is a continuous pain, but also a continuous joy!

Q What was the trigger that led you to come up with the story for "Sad Vacation?"

A I was struck by something Tadanobu Asano said during the 2000 Cannes Film Festival to which I had submitted my film "Eureka." After seeing the film he immediately asked me "What happens to [the main character in the film] Kenji?" (Asano had also appeared in my first film "Helpless.") At that point I began thinking about the continuation of Kenji's story. That was also the beginning

of my friendship with Mr. Asano. Actually that conversation went beyond friendship —it felt like the beginning of something incredible!

Q What do you remember most about participating in the Venice Film Festival?

A At the screening of my film, I remember for the first time feeling like I was not watching my own film but that I was truly seeing it from the audience's perspective and during one particular scene in which Aoi Miyazaki appears, I was truly moved to tears although I can not explain why.

Q What would you like to make a film about next?

A I want to make a brainless action movie bursting with sex and violence! Ha Ha Ha!

Q What do you feel Kitakyushu needs in the way of international PR?

A Well, isn't the only thing left tourism? Including old things and dirty things (people familiar with the "sancho sunset" boom will understand that these kind of places are also tourism assets) don't change what's already here. Instead attract first rate hotels and restaurants to areas with open land such as places facing the Kanmon Strait or the Hibikinada area. Also create a Chinatown! Its been said there's no future unless we make these kinds of infrastructural improvements.

Q Do you have a message for the readers of Bridges?

A I was born and raised in Kitakyushu, this place very symbolic of the 20th century and here I create this media-art called film —also symbolic of the 20th century. In order for humanity to stop repeating the same mistakes over and over again, I feel it is extremely important to continue thinking about the 20th century, our city of Kitakyushu and even film on into the 21st century. I continuously hope that this message will reach everyone.

*This interview was conducted in Japanese and translated into English by the Bridges editor



Letter from Kitakyushu

Hi everyone, my name is Jin Fenghua and by the time you read this it will have been a year since I came from Shanghai to work at the Kitakyushu City Hall. I have made close friends who I have both laughed and cried with and been able to experience life in Japan. I feel my time here has been an extremely valuable experience and am increasingly glad I came.

Even if my job as in the International Relations Section is over, I feel I would like to continue to being involved in international exchange and do all I can to help further friendly relations between China and Japan. Along with economic development, the world is fast becoming one body where one cannot get away from one another. It is my wish that this earth, our world, and the bonds between all countries and people will be full of love. Toward this end, I intend to work hard alongside all my fellow people.



Japanese-Style Garden in Tacoma



In late fall of 2007 Kitakyushu's new mayor Kenji Kitahashi (interviewed in the last issue of Bridges) visited our sister city of Tacoma, Washington USA to take part in the dedication of a Japanese style garden at the Tacoma Community College Campus. Named after the primary donor and local philanthropists, the Babe & Herman Lehrer Japanese Friendship Garden began life in 2002 as a plan by the TCC President's Council on Diversity to celebrate the community's cultural diversity. People of Japanese birth first immigrated to Tacoma in the late 1800s and now after more than a century of dedication to the community very little is left of their contributions. The demolition of many historical sites originally built by these Japanese-Americans helped prompt the Council in their decision to build a traditional Japanese-style garden on their campus.

The project soon came to be an international endeavor involving master craft persons from the Kitakyushu Greenery Association who not only sent detailed plans

but also visited Tacoma in person to help pick stones and plants and to oversee the placement of said stones.

At a massive 980m² the completed garden is a sight to behold. Following the traditions of the ancient "waterless style," the garden employs patterns of stones to invoke the feeling of water flowing down Tacoma's iconic Mt. Rainier, forming a lake and eventually flowing out to the ocean.

The dedication ceremony became a wonderful opportunity for exchange; bringing both cities' mayors together as well as offering speeches by the garden committee chairman Dr. Scott Earle, University President Pamela Transue, Consul-General Tanaka and donor Babe Lehrer. Rounding out the ceremony were celebrations of art including traditional Japanese dancing and music!

Traditional Japanese dance performance ▶



▲ Kitakyushu Mayor Kenji Kitahashi participating in the dedication with Tacoma Mayor Bill Haastema.



18th Autobiographical Writing Awards

企画・実行委員会
後援：(株)学習研究社



Once again it is the time of year when hundreds of Kitakyushu residents and people throughout Japan submit their personal stories in hopes of being selected for one of the Kitakyushu Autobiographical Writing Awards! Any as yet unpublished, nonfiction work written in Japanese about one's life, hobbies, child-

rearing experiences, marriage, pregnancy, illness, triumphs etcetera may be submitted. Congratulations go out to last years winners, who have been recently awarded, Mr. Katsuyasu Nakata from Fukuoka Prefecture who won the big prize of 2,000,000 yen, Isao Onishi from Chiba prefecture, and Yoshio Yamashita from Tokyo! By the time you read the 2008 applications should be ready so please all Bridges readers residing inside Japan, send us your stories!

Changing of the Colors good places to experience fall in Kitakyushu!

Deep in the mountains of Kokuraminami Ward and only accessible by car, the Sugao Falls are amazing all-year-round, but the narrow and daring drive through the mountains and the short climb from the nearest parking lot are best experienced in autumn. The fallen leaves crunch under foot as one climbs through the forest and the cool crisp air feels great as one nears the falls.

For reasons unknown to this writer, the neighborhood of Takami becomes especially humid during summer but is dry and cool during fall. The beautiful houses and streets in this neighborhood are lined with trees and there is the unforgettable sight of Takami Shrine which is hidden away in a clearing deep in the forests behind the town.

Kokura Castle Garden, which is right next to City Hall, is also resplendent during autumn with the many varieties of traditional Japanese trees showing how bright and how many colors their leaves can be. Admission is free if you go in through the back seriously.

Tamukeyama Park is often heralded for its beauty in spring when its many cherry blossom trees are all in bloom, but it is also gorgeous during fall when the cool breeze that constantly blows through the park carries along fallen leaves. From the strange sculpture/lookout point atop the hill that is Tamukeyama Park, visitors can enjoy a gorgeous view of the bay.





jinda fish

The name "jinda" is old enough to be featured in the ancient text "tsurezuregusa" and refers to a type of cuisine normally called "nukamiso." Originally enjoyed by the feudal lords of Kokura Castle in ancient times, it is said that Lord Tadazane of the Ogasawarake Clan first ate "jinda fish" or fish pickled in salted rice-bran and grilled. Since then the dish has grown in popularity until it became a household dish of the masses and is still enjoyed today!



Fugu, Lantern and Doll Festival



This year's Fugu, Lantern and Doll festival kicked off in Mojiko on February 2nd and lasted until March 23rd. Attractions included massive 2m-wide fugu (blowfish) lanterns as well as free offerings of sake and fugu soup. In addition to the above-mentioned fishy business, the Mojiko festival district will also be lit up with lights and traditional lanterns and the several public facilities and businesses will put on display collections of traditional "Hina" dolls!



Access to Kitakyushu

From Dalian 1 hour 50 minutes
Dalian International Airport - Fukuoka Airport

From Incheon 1 hour 10 minutes
Incheon International Airport - Fukuoka Airport

From Shanghai 1 hour 50 minutes
Shanghai International Airport - Kitakyushu Airport

From Tokyo

Air: 1 hr. 30min.
Haneda Airport - Kitakyushu Airport
Shinkansen Bullet Trains: 4 hr. 33min.
JR Tokyo Sta. - JR Kokura Sta.

From Nagoya

Air: 1 hr. 15min.
Komaki Airport - Kitakyushu Airport
Shinkansen Bullet Trains: 3 hr.
JR Nagoya Sta. - JR Kokura Sta.

From Fukuoka

Expressway Bus: 1 hr. 19min.
Fukuoka Airport - JR Kokura Sta.
Shinkansen Bullet Trains: 17min.
JR Hakata Sta. - JR Kokura Sta.

KITAKYUSHU AIRPORT

Current Participating Airlines

- ★ STARFLYER (Kitakyushu-Tokyo)
- ★ JAPAN AIRLINES (Kitakyushu-Tokyo)
- ★ J-AIR (Kitakyushu-Nagoya)
- ★ JAPAN TRANSOCEAN AIR (Kitakyushu-Okinawa)
- ★ CHINA SOUTHERN AIRLINES (Kitakyushu-Shanghai)
- ★ VLADIVOSTOK AIR (Kitakyushu-Vladivostok)
- ★ GALAXY AIRLINES (Cargo flights) (Kitakyushu-Tokyo)

Kitakyushu in a FLASH!

..... The 6th ordinance-designated city in Japan

POPULATION

• 1 million/12th largest city in Japan

SISTER-FRIENDSHIP CITIES

- Tacoma, Washington, U.S.A.
- Norfolk, Virginia, U.S.A.
- Dalian, China
- Incheon, Korea

CITY FLOWER

- Azalea
- Sunflower

CITY TREE

- Taxaceous Oak

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

- UN Global 500 Award for Environmental Cleanup.
- UNCED Local Government Governmental Honors.
- Earth Summit 2002 Sustainable Development Award.

INDUSTRIES

TRADITIONAL BASE

- Steel & metal, ceramics, machinery, chemicals, shipping.

NEW INDUSTRIES

- Computer software, environmental technologies, robotics, automotive, assistive technologies

URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

- Hibiki Container Terminal
- Kitakyushu Airport
- East Kyushu Expressway
- Kitakyushu Science and Research Park
- Kitakyushu Eco-Town Project
- Murasakigawa, My Town, My River Project

UPCOMING EVENTS!

- *Kids Eco-life event (end of Mar.)
- *KitaQ-Incheon Sister-City 20th Anniv. (July)
- *Moji Yaki-carry Fair (July)

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