

10th International Geography Olympiad

FIELDWORK

iGeo Kyoto 2013



Cities and Water

Resource Booklet

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Class and Teacher

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Introduction

Many Japanese cities have evolved as a consequence of the availability and use of local water. In the pre-modern era, water was used for variety of purposes in urban areas (transportation, drinking and domestic use, for ceremonial purposes and in industry). In the modern era water has also been used for generating electricity. Such is the importance of water that there is a Japanese term *Shinsui*, which literally means 'water intimacy'. National government and public discourses now emphasize that water sustains people's everyday lives. While water is vital for urban living, too much water may cause problems like flooding; humans need to protect themselves from the risk of hazards (at the interface between extreme natural events and human occupancy of space).

Ever since the national capital was formed nearly 1200 years ago, Kyoto has had close connections with local water, most notably the Kamo River. Since the Meiji period in the late 19th century, the City of Kyoto has taken water from Lake Biwa and used it to supplement local ground water in the development of local economies and residential areas. You will have seen the video presentation at the Lake Biwa Canal Museum on the Excursion this afternoon; it explained the background and current use of Biwako Sosui (the water delivery canal from Lake Biwa). Currently, millions of residents and tourists have access to a secure water supply throughout Kyoto.

Fushimi developed as a river transportation gateway to Kyoto more than 400 years ago, and is a community that especially demonstrates a close connection with water. Current urban development and planning of Fushimi actively emphasizes its relationship with water. The Local Organizing Committee chose Fushimi as the site of the Field Work Task, and we welcome students from around the world to Japan and to the FWT in Fushimi in particular.

In the FWT we will explore some historical associations with water, the way water has influenced the local geographies of Fushimi and the important matters that will shape the future of this community. We note in particular that;

1. More than most places in Japan, Fushimi has worked to build a place that utilized water in the development of the local community.
2. Although there are issues in modern Fushimi (such as deterioration of the old center and narrow roads), awareness of these issues can lead to planning strategies that make good use of key resources like water, and the history/heritage of former water uses.

The first field work exercise tomorrow (observation and field data recording) will provide you with material for innovative ideas that would make Fushimi a more sustainable community with effective use of resources like the local water supply. The second fieldwork test (written answers) on Friday morning requires you to use the Fushimi fieldwork in a written response.

