

## **“Shimai-jichitai / Shimai-toshi” (Sister Municipality / Sister City)**

The structure of a “Shimai-jichitai / Shimai-toshi” (Sister Municipality / Sister City) agreement is not determined by law. Fundamentally, exchange occurs in the interaction between people and occurs in an environment of free will. As a result, it would not seem fitting to apply legal restrictions to such a relationship.

The Japanese dictionary Kojien (published by Iwanuma Shoten) defines “Shimai-toshi” (Sister City) as “international cities united for such purposes as cultural exchange and goodwill [the rest of the definition is omitted here].” However it is necessary to establish a minimum set of conditions to define a Sister City for the purpose of compiling statistical data. CLAIR will recognize the municipality in question as a “Shimai-jichitai/ Shimai-toshi” (Sister Municipality / Sister City) provided it meets all of the following conditions:

- (1) There is an official agreement signed by the heads of both local authorities
- (2) Exchange is not limited to one specific field
- (3) Consent is received from the local Assembly for any exchange events which are thought to require budgetary steps

Similar affiliations referred to as “Yuko-toshi” (Friendship City) or “Yuko-koryu-toshi” (Friendship Exchange City) will be treated the same as “Shimai-jichitai / Shimai-toshi” only in cases where they fulfill the above three conditions.

The statistical work regarding Japanese local government international affiliation agreements (including changes to content and dissolution of the agreement) shall be conducted based on information gathered from the division responsible for international affairs in each prefecture or ordinance designated city. (With the exception of ordinance designated cities, information regarding city/special ward/town/village affiliation agreements will be sent via the municipality’s respective prefecture.)

\* The origin of the word “Shimai-toshi” (Sister City)

“Shimai-toshi” is the direct Japanese translation of the phrase “sister city” which originated in America. It has been the most commonly used phrase to describe “sister cities” in Japan up to the current day.

Instead of “sister city,” England and Germany use the phrases “Twin City” and “Partnerstadt” respectively. In China, “Yuko-toshi” (Friendship City) is used because the two Chinese characters that make up the word “shimai” (sisters) indicate an older and younger sister which may lead to a misunderstanding regarding which municipality is the younger, and thus subordinate, sister.

As an additional note, an increasing number of local authorities have chosen to hold “Yukoteki-na-koryu” (friendly relations) with municipalities and local governments overseas instead of fulfilling the above conditions and becoming a “Shimai-toshi” (Sister City).