Question 3: People and Places Solution

1	N
2	I
3	B
4	M
5	E
6	P

7	H
8	O
9	D
10	G
11	L
12	Q

13	A
14	C
15	F
16	J
17	K

This was quite a difficult puzzle. This is a chaos-and-order problem, the solution to which may be to count the recurring elements on either side, and see if there are any pairs with a unique and matching pattern. Of course one problem is that you don't know how to split the Japanese words … in the middle is a reasonable guess, though that is not always obvious.

That's actually not all that helpful: most of the elements occur twice, though we have 3 'mountain's, and 3 'rice field's, and one each of 'cherry', 'Fuji' , 'little', 'road' and 'sun' (five in total). The only Japanese element occurring 3 times is *yama*, while the elements occurring once are *da, ki, Fuji, gi, kawa, ki, michi, ni, o, saka, sakura, san, zaka* – not the same number as English. So there must be something else going on. There was a clue in the blurb: "when two words combine, sometimes one of them changes slightly".
Of course *Fujisan* must be 'Mount Fuji', which gives you *san* 'mount', though *san* doesn't appear elsewhere, even though it should, as the translation of 'volcano'. Perhaps *san* has "changed slightly".
If you're observant, you will spot the clue in the blurb (or you may already know) that Japan is *Nihon*, which tells you *hon* is 'origin', so *honda* must be 'original rice-field', and *da* is rice-field. But *da* doesn't occur again either!
The key is that some of the elements occurring once in Japanese must be paired up to match English elements that occur more than once. The slight change referred to is the key to it all: that hange is that sometimes the first letter in Japanese is 'voiced': *k* becomes *g, s* becomes *z, t* becomes *d*.