

Multilingual Electronic Newsletter

多言語メールマガジン

かごしま南の風便り

Kagoshima Southern Wind Tidings



VOL.194

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Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) Column

●A trip to Satsuma Peninsula tracing the path of friendship between Japan and China

—By Deng Lixia (CIR from China) —

A one-day bus tour was organized by the Japan-China Friendship Association of Kagoshima Prefecture and Kagoshima City, and has about 60 participants, mainly consisting of Chinese exchange students in Kagoshima Prefecture.

Although I am still inexperienced as an interpreter, I had the opportunity to guide these exchange students with the Japan-China Friendship Association around the scenic southern part of the Satsuma Peninsula. Together, we created many wonderful memories through sightseeing and exploring the area.

We gathered in front of the Kagoshima University Library at 7:30 a.m. and first headed to the Roadside Station Ibusuki, Sakanakan, which offers a view of Chiringashima. Although it wasn't the right time of year to see the sandbar connecting Chiringashima to the mainland, the thought of the road being submerged by the tide—formed when sand and gravel accumulate at the boundary where the ocean currents flowing through Kinko Bay collide—captivated me, highlighting the unique natural beauty of Kagoshima.

Next, we visited Nagasakibana, the southernmost point of the peninsula. From here, you can see Mt. Kaimon, also known as Satsuma Fuji.

We also found a stone statue of Urashima Taro from the famous Japanese legend, along with Ryugu Shrine, which enshrines the princess from the same legend.



Ryugu Shrine



Interesting sign at the roadside

The stunning scenery, combined with the roadside shops and signs, offered a glimpse into Kagoshima's rich culture and unique atmosphere. I also bought some famous dried bonito flakes as souvenirs.



Me climbing the reefs of the Bandokorobana beach.

Before lunch, we also visited Lake Ikeda. I shared some interesting facts with the exchange students about the lake and the Legend of Issie, the mysterious monster said to reside within the lake. Thereafter, we went to see the giant eels in the lake.

Lake Ikeda is the largest caldera lake in Kyushu, and its giant eels, which live for 30 to 50 years, grow up to 2 meters long and can weigh as much as 20 kg. I couldn't help but

imagine that eels raised in such a beautiful natural environment must be incredibly delicious! 😊

For lunch, we dined at Tosenkyo, which is said to be the birthplace of the rotary-type flowing *somen* noodle dish. Tosenkyo is particularly popular in the summer because it is cool even outdoors among nature, and in the winter, there is heated indoor seating.

Despite it being winter, we enjoyed eating *somen* noodles in the indoor warmth, which reminded me of the experience of eating ice cream in a warm room during the winter in northeastern China, where temperatures can drop to minus tens of degrees Celsius.

After the meal, we headed to Bandokorobana Nature Park. Many of the exchange students are from mainland China, and this was their first time experiencing the ocean this close up. As we walked along the forest path leading to the sea, we were all amazed by the vastness and grandeur when the view opened up with the sea and sky merging into the same color. At that time, we couldn't help but exclaim "Wow!" in unison. We took photos with towering Mt. Kaimon in the background, creating wonderful memories in Kagoshima.

Afterwards, we visited Jian Zhen Memorial Museum, where the history behind goes like this. Ganjin, a high-ranking monk from the Tang Dynasty and the founder of Toshodaiji Temple in Nara, was invited by Emperor Shomu to travel to Japan. However, traveling to Japan at the time was extremely difficult, and after five failed attempts, he lost his sight in both eyes.



Bell of Bandokoro

Despite these hardships, on his sixth attempt, Ganjin finally arrived in Akime, Bonotsu Town, Minamisatsuma City, in the fifth year of Tenpyo Shoho (753). He brought with him Buddhist teachings and knowledge of medicine to Japan. In Ganjin's hometown, now Yangzhou in Jiangsu Province, Jian Zhen Memorial Museum was established at Daming Temple to honor the history of their long-standing friendly exchanges.



Monument of Jian Zhen

To reach the museum, we navigated a narrow, winding mountain path, which gave us a sense of the immense challenges Ganjin had faced. Inside the museum, we explored exhibits and watched videos on a large screen, learning about Ganjin's remarkable journey and his life.

Although it is a small memorial museum, I felt that the spirit of Monk Ganjin—his perseverance and ability to overcome challenges—serves as a great encouragement to those working hard to foster friendly exchanges between the two countries.

After touring Jian Zhen Memorial Museum, we visited Kasasa, the home of Kurose Toji Brewery, which laid the foundation for shochu culture in modern Japan. This visit was especially timely as Japan's traditional sake brewing has recently been registered as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage.

In Kagoshima, shochu production was significantly shaped by brewery craftsmen known as *Toji*, who emerged in the 1930s. These master brewers spread their shochu techniques from Kagoshima Prefecture across to Kyushu, the Kansai region, and throughout Japan.



China's *Moutai* liquor is also on display.

Inside the facility, there are displays of documents and tools related to the history of shochu, as well as the techniques used in its production. Visitors were able to observe the entire process—from koji-making to the first and second *moromi* (sake mash), distillation, storage, and bottling.

When thinking about Chinese distilled spirits, the first that comes to mind is *baijiu*, a strong liquor with an alcohol content of over 50%, and is made from grains such as sorghum, corn, potatoes, and sweet potatoes. As a result, many Chinese students generally do not drink alcohol.

However, in Kasasa, the home of the master brewers, the exchange students had the opportunity to sample Kagoshima shochu and enjoyed its smooth sweetness and delicate aroma.



Kagoshima Shochu

Before the sun set, we stopped to purchase some local specialties at Yasuragi no Sato Kawanabe, a roadside station. There were long queues, with shoppers eager to buy a variety of regional products including unique snacks, condiments, vegetables and even meat.

For the Chinese exchange students, the scenic views along the way, the interactions between participants, attentively listening at each stop, and the radiant smiles captured in photos will all become cherished memories of their time in Kagoshima.



Sake jars lining the entrance hall

Although the tour was packed, this one-day bus trip allowed us to experience Kagoshima's stunning nature and delicious food, making it a truly fulfilling day.

I hope that this trip will foster even greater friendly exchanges between our two countries in the future.

Activities of the Governor

●2 November : Attended the 10th Anniversary Ceremony of the Satsuma Students Museum●



●*Giving a speech at the ceremony*

A ceremony was held to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the opening of the Satsuma Students Museum, with the Governor delivering a congratulatory address as a guest. In his speech, he expressed deep respect and gratitude toward Ichikikushikino City and everyone involved in making this milestone possible.

The Governor also emphasized that in order to promote Kagoshima's historical assets, Kagoshima Prefecture intends to collaborate with Ichikikushikino City, as well as other relevant municipalities and organizations. These include the resources related to the Meiji Restoration, which are considered 'Treasures of the South'.

With this in mind, it is hoped that the Satsuma Students Museum will continue to grow as a key learning hub, showcasing the achievements of the Satsuma students and their historical contributions.

● 6 November : Held a meeting with Hong Kong Kagoshima Club and Hong Kong Kagoshima Kenjinkai Association ●

A meeting was held with the Hong Kong Kagoshima Club and the Hong Kong Kagoshima Prefectural Association in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong Kagoshima Club plays a significant role as a bridge between Kagoshima and Hong Kong, making great efforts to promote exchanges between the two regions. This includes initiatives such as promoting Kagoshima, supporting Japanese language trainees, and facilitating student exchanges.

As a prefecture, we are committed to furthering the exchanges between Kagoshima and Hong Kong. This is a legacy established by the late Tetsuichiro Mizoguchi, who had served as Chairman of the Hong Kong Kagoshima Club since its inception and sadly passed away in February of this year.

Feedback was also received from the participants about their desire to visit Kagoshima, leading us to promote the prefecture's attractions from a variety of perspectives including food, tourism, and traditional crafts.



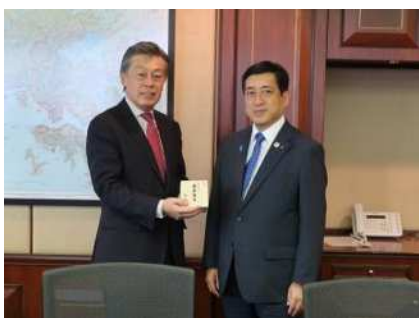
● *Giving a speech during the event*

●7 November : Courtesy visit to the Consulate-General of Japan in Hong Kong●

A courtesy visit was paid to the Consulate-General of Japan in Hong Kong to provide an update on the current status of exchange between Kagoshima and Hong Kong, including the Hong Kong-Kagoshima Conference. During the visit, opinions were also exchanged on Hong Kong's economic situation and other relevant topics.

Ambassador Kenichi Okada offered valuable advice on how to tap into Hong Kong's vast market for Kagoshima's wagyu beef, seafood, shochu, and other products.

Moving forward, we will continue our efforts to raise awareness of Kagoshima's products in Hong Kong and to expand sales channels.



● *With Ambassador Kenichi Okada*



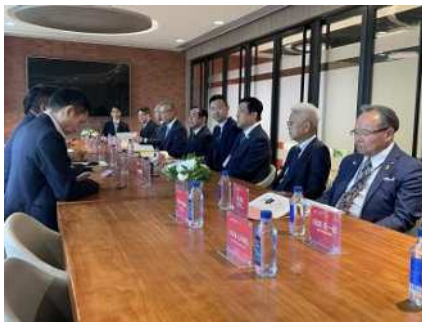
● *Courtesy call at the Consulate-General of Japan in Hong Kong*

●7 November: Visit to Hong Kong Airlines●

As part of the 24th Hong Kong-Kagoshima Conference, a delegation consisting of members from the Kagoshima Prefectural Assembly and various prefectural economic organizations paid a visit to Hong Kong Airlines.

The Governor expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the airline for its operations, especially as the Kagoshima-Hong Kong route celebrated its 10th anniversary in March this year. He also conveyed his hope that the airline will continue to expand its services.

In response, Hong Kong Airlines announced that starting from 23 December, they would increase the number of flights on the Kagoshima-Hong Kong route to four per week. During their discussions, the Governor and the airline exchanged views on ensuring the stable operation of the route and promoting its use.



●Exchange of opinions between the
Kagoshima delegation and Hong Kong Airlines

●8 November : Held the 24th Hong Kong-Kagoshima Conference●

The 24th Hong Kong-Kagoshima Conference Round Table Meeting in Hong Kong marked an important milestone in the long-standing relationship between the two regions. Since the first Conference in 1980, Hong Kong and Kagoshima have been fostering exchanges across a wide range of fields for over 40 years, including economic, tourism, arts, culture, and youth exchange.

Hong Kong is a hub for international business in the Asian region, and at this year's Conference, government officials and representatives from various sectors in Hong Kong engaged in discussions with representatives from Kagoshima's Prefectural Assembly and economic organizations.

This dialogue led to an agreement to continue fostering a broad range of exchanges in the future, with the next Conference scheduled to take place in Kagoshima in two years.

Hong Kong, with its affluent population, high purchasing power, strong recognition of Japanese products and favorable business environment, is seen as a promising market for expanding sales channels for local products and attracting tourists.

Additionally, the active air traffic between Hong Kong and Kagoshima, facilitated by the Kagoshima-Hong Kong flight route operated by Hong Kong Airlines, further strengthens the connection between the two regions.

We hope that this Conference will serve as a valuable opportunity to further deepen the partnership and cooperation between Kagoshima and Hong Kong in the years to come.



●With Hong Kong government officials and representatives from various fields



●The 24th Hong Kong-Kagoshima Conference

●8 November : Held the Governor-Hosted Dinner Reception of the 24th Hong Kong-Kagoshima Conference●

A dinner reception was held for over 150 guests, including attendees of the Hong Kong-Kagoshima Conference, the Consul-General of Japan in Hong Kong, and representatives from the food, distribution, tourism, and aviation industries.

The guests had the opportunity to enjoy Kagoshima's renowned delicacies, such as Kagoshima wagyu beef and yellowtail. Additionally, there were also booths offering *honkaku shochu* (Kagoshima single-distilled shochu), tea and amber rice vinegar, as well as promoting tourism in Kagoshima Prefecture.

Through such direct sales efforts and various promotional activities, we will continue to raise awareness of our prefecture's products, further expanding exports and boosting tourism.



●Giving a speech at the reception



●With various guests

●15 November : Courtesy visit by the Consulate-General of the People's Republic of China in Fukuoka●

Consul General Yang Qingdong of the Consulate-General of the People's Republic of China in Fukuoka paid a courtesy visit to the prefectural office.

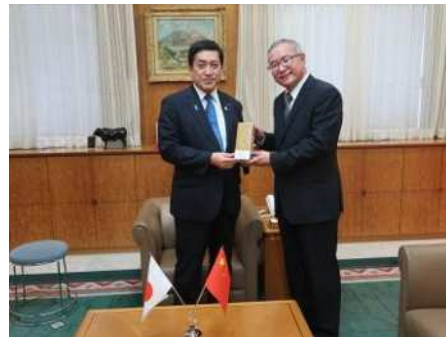
During the visit, Consul General Yang emphasized the close geographical, cultural and historical ties between Kagoshima Prefecture and China. He highlighted that Kagoshima is a place where Chinese residents and tourists can live and travel safely with peace of mind, and expressed his hope to continue strengthening these ties in the future.

In response, the Governor shared that Kagoshima have long-standing exchanges with China's Jiangsu Province and Tsinghua University. He also mentioned that following the COVID-19 pandemic, regular air routes connecting Kagoshima Airport and China has resumed this year.

Additionally, the Governor expressed his desire for the Consul General, as well as the Chinese people as a whole, to experience Kagoshima's renowned products such as wagyu beef, tea, shochu, and more.



●*Courtesy call with the Consul General*



●*With Mr. Yang Qingdong, Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Fukuoka*

Tourism Information in Kagoshima

●3 November : Yagoro Don Festival●

With a rich tradition dating back approximately 900 years, the Yagorodon Festival is one of the three major festivals in Kagoshima Prefecture, alongside the Ohara Festival (Kagoshima City) and the Buddha Festival (Shibushi Town, Shibushi City).

The festival begins at 1 a.m. with the chant, "Yagorodon is awake!", accompanied by the sound of drums (a Shinto ritual). At 4 a.m., the ceremony of *Yagorodon Okoshi* takes place, and it is believed that participating in this event will strengthen your body and increase your fortune.

In the afternoon, the procession of *Hamakudari* unfolds, where *Yagorodon* leaves the grounds of Hachiman Shrine and parades majestically through the city for about three hours.

A large crowd of spectators gathers around *Yagorodon*, and the festival reaches its climax in a truly spectacular moment.



● The procession of 『Hamakudari』

© K. P. V. B

●2・3 November : Ohara Festival●

The Ohara Festival, held annually around Tenmonkan on 2 and 3 November, first begun in 1949 and is the largest festival in southern Kyushu. Various events are held, centered around the *So-odori* dance, a general dance procession performed to Kagoshima's representative folk songs of *Ohara-bushi*, *Kagoshima Han'ya-bushi*, and *Shibuya Ondo*.

The Night Festival part of the event features the *So-odori* and an *Ogojo Daiko* drumming competition, while the Main Festival includes the same, along with marching bands and the *Ohara 21* dance, creating a fevered atmosphere throughout the entire Tenmonkan area.

'*Ogojo*' refers to women in the Kagoshima dialect, and the gallant and beautiful performances of the *Satsuma Ogojo* drums and flutes makes for an amazing sight.



●*So-odori (general dance)* © K. P. V. B



●*The Night Festival*



Kagoshima Prefectural Office Website: <http://www.pref.kagoshima.jp/>

**Editor's Note (International Affairs Division, Department of Tourism,
Culture and Sports, Kagoshima Prefectural Government)**

The cold winter weather has arrived in Kagoshima, and with it comes the season of beautiful illuminations lighting up the city ✨. I'm sure many of you had a busy but enjoyable time over the New Year holidays, filled with year-end parties, Christmas celebrations, and New Year festivities.

We will continue to bring you the latest news from Kagoshima Prefecture in the coming year, so please stay tuned!

We sincerely hope that 2025 will be a prosperous and fulfilling year for you all.



The Kagoshima Southern Wind Tidings Bulletin Board is looking for the following Kagoshima-related content!

☆Kagoshima Photo Gallery

We invite people to send us photos that remind them of Kagoshima, or photos of Kagoshima that they have seen overseas. Please also attach a brief description along with the photo. (E.g., a mountain of volcanic ash bags.)

☆Kagoshima Lifestyle Know-How

We invite people to share with us information related to life in Kagoshima. (E.g., delicious ways to enjoy fried fish cakes, how to deal with volcanic ash, etc.)

We also welcome any other information that you would like to share with our readers.

▲▽▲▽ **Inquiries** ▲▽▲▽

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