

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.195

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Prefectural Scholarship Student Column

● Looking back on my life in Kagoshima – By Sacay Fabiana

Nice to meet you! My name is Fabiana Sacay, and I am from Brazil. I studied abroad here in Kagoshima Prefecture from April 2024 for 10 months.

On my mother's side, my family has roots in Kaseda City, Kagoshima Prefecture. My great-grandfather immigrated to Brazil in 1927, and later, my grandfather followed in 1952.

The reason I wanted to study abroad in Kagoshima was to connect with my relatives in Japan and learn more about my roots. While in Kagoshima, I was fortunate to meet my grandfather's younger brother's family, the family of a deceased relative, and even my grandfather's former classmates in Kaseda.

I also visited my grandfather's elementary school, the place where my great-grandfather lived before immigrating, and my ancestors' graves. I am truly grateful for this experience.



*At Kagoshima
Prefectural Office*



At Kagoshima University

I studied at Kagoshima University and joined the Food Function and Nutrigenomics Laboratory in the Faculty of Agriculture.

Since I had the opportunity to study in Kagoshima, I decided to extract samples from 26 types of citrus fruits and conduct a comparative study. They include *Sakurajima Komikan* (a tiny local mandarin orange) and *Kikaijima Mikan* (Kikai Island Citrus), which are local specialties.

My research focused on analyzing the antioxidant capacity of functional components in fruit, polyphenol quantification, and carbohydrate decomposition enzyme inhibitory activity. I was very happy to obtain interesting results.

I also had various experiences that deepened my understanding of Japanese culture. One of the most memorable was wearing a



*Sengan-en
Chrysanthemum Festival*

kimono to the Chrysanthemum Festival at Sengan-en Garden and participating in a tea ceremony, where I learned about its detailed etiquette.

I also had the opportunity to dance with my friends at the Ohara Festival. Additionally, I actively participated in international exchange events in Kagoshima, where I interacted with other international students and learned about multicultural coexistence.

Moreover, I became interested in Kagoshima's traditional culture and artifacts. Before coming to Japan, I knew little about Kagoshima, but the longer I lived here, the more I learned about the region—its specialty products, the Kagoshima dialect, and the history of the Meiji Restoration.



First sunrise from Kinko Bay

This experience significantly changed my perspective. One of the most impressive sights was Sakurajima, an active volcano that erupts frequently. On clear days, the view of Kinko Bay and Sakurajima is breathtaking, and in winter, I was amazed to see Sakurajima covered in snow. I also found the history of Kinko Bay fascinating.

Even though I lived in Japan for 10 months, I often felt frustrated and disappointed that my Japanese skills did not improve as much as I had hoped. However, as time passed, my desire to communicate more fluently in Japanese grew stronger. I am determined to continue studying Japanese even after returning to Brazil.

Finally, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Kagoshima Prefecture and the Kagoshima Kenjinkai Brazil for giving me this opportunity. I also want to thank my family for their constant support, the relatives I met in Japan, the professors who guided me, and everyone who showed me kindness.

Thank you very much.

Activities of the Governor

●11 January : Attended the Lighting Ceremony of 2025 Pingtung Festival of Lights●

In January 2024, the Governor visited Pingtung County, located in southern Taiwan, with whom Kagoshima Prefecture had signed an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding). During the visit, we attended the opening ceremony of the "Pingtung Festival of Lights".

The Lantern Festival is a traditional event celebrated all over Taiwan to celebrate the Lunar New Year. The venue was beautifully illuminated with colorful lanterns, creating a mesmerizing and enchanting atmosphere.

In the Governor's speech, he promoted Kagoshima to the people of Pingtung County and Taiwan, saying, "Please come and visit Kagoshima, the Treasure of the South, which is home to many world-class treasures such as its diverse and abundant natural beauty and its rich variety of culinary delights."



▲ Giving a speech at the ceremony



▲ Group photo

●12 January : Visited Pingtung County to review the development of tourist sites ●

We visited the southern part of Pingtung County to tour the development of tourist attractions such as the Kan Hai Art Museum and Sichongxi Hot Springs Park.

Pingtung County is actively redeveloping its tourist destinations by utilizing the region's unique characteristics and natural environment. The areas we visited have not only undergone facility maintenance and renovations, but are also attracting visitors by leveraging tourism resources such as hosting annual events that make use of these sites.

During our visit, representatives from tourism-related facilities guided us through the attractions and introduced local tourism promotion efforts, making it a highly informative and valuable experience. We hope to apply the insights gained from this visit to further enhance tourism development in our own prefecture.



▲ Visiting the Kan Hai Art Museum and Sichongxi Hot Springs Park

●13 January : Visited Taiwanese supermarket “Yumaowu” ●

We visited “Yumaowu,” a supermarket in Taiwan that sells Japanese food ingredients, and exchanged opinions with its representative.

Yumaowu currently offers over 50 products made in Kagoshima and has made significant contributions to expanding sales channels and raising awareness of Kagoshima products, such as by hosting a Kagoshima fair every year since 2015. For his contributions to date, we presented a letter of appreciation to Mr. Xie Ming-da, the representative of Yumaowu who also gave us a tour of the store. In addition, we requested his cooperation in further expanding the range of Kagoshima products they carry.

On the day of our visit, many customers were seen purchasing the store’s bento boxes, which featured Kagoshima-produced *Wagyu* beef and kumquats. A Kagoshima Fair is also planned for February at the store, and we will continue collaborating with Yumaowu to expand sales channels, ensuring that products from Kagoshima Prefecture are able to reach people in Taiwan.



▲ *Presentation of a Certificate of Gratitude
to Mr. Xie Ming-da*



▲ *At “Yumaowu”*

●13 January : Courtesy visit to the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association Taipei Office ●

We paid a courtesy visit to the Taipei Office of the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association, where we provided an update on the current status of exchanges between Kagoshima Prefecture and Pingtung County, with which we have an MOU. We also exchanged views on Taiwan's economic situation and other related topics.

Representative Mr. Kazuyuki Katayama stated, "We would like to continue cooperating to promote exchanges between Kagoshima Prefecture and Pingtung County, expand sales channels for Kagoshima Prefecture products in Taiwan, and attract more tourists from Taiwan to Kagoshima Prefecture."



▲ *With Mr. Kazuyuki Katayama*



▲ *Courtesy call at the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association Taipei Office*

● 7 January : Visit to China Airlines ●

We visited the headquarters of China Airlines in Taiwan together with representatives from the prefectural assembly.

We expressed our gratitude for the resumption of the Kagoshima-Taipei route last May, and requested an increase in the number of flights on this route.



▲ *During the meeting*



▲ *Commemorative photo with China Airlines*

● 23 January : Held the Welcome Ceremony for Foreign Skill Interns under the Cooperation Agreement between Kagoshima Prefecture and Vietnam National University ●

We held a welcome ceremony for Foreign Skill Interns based on the cooperation agreement between Kagoshima Prefecture and Vietnam National University of Agriculture, where the Governor delivered a welcome speech.

Previously in July 2023, we had visited Vietnam and signed a cooperation agreement with the university, working toward the acceptance of Foreign Skill Interns in the agricultural sector.

The nine Foreign Skill Interns welcomed this time have been undergoing Japanese language training since June last year, followed by training on Kagoshima's culture, environment, and agriculture since October.

The earliest arrivals began their practical training in December and have been working hard alongside the farmers who have accepted them.

We hope that the Foreign Skill Interns will continue to excel, that the friendship and trust between Kagoshima Prefecture and the Vietnam National University of Agriculture will deepen, and that agriculture in both Vietnam and Kagoshima will continue to thrive.



▲During the ceremony



▲Commemorative photo
with the Foreign Skill Interns

Tourism Information in Kagoshima

●25 January : The 25th World's Best Sakurajima Daikon Radish Contest ●



▲Harvested Sakurajima Daikon radishes
Photo credit: Kagoshima City

The 25th World's Best Sakurajima Daikon Radish Contest was held at the same time as the 2025 Hinoshima Megumikan Rest Stop Appreciation Festival on Sakurajima.

In addition to the main contest, there was a weight-guessing competition for Sakurajima-grown daikon radishes, an all-you-can-stuff vegetable event, and a fun raffle.

●14 January : Ibusuki Nanohana Marathon●

The Ibusuki Nanohana Marathon is the earliest-held annual event of the year and is known for its warm and welcoming atmosphere. City residents come out in droves to cheer on participants along the route, and runners are treated to plenty of local delicacies.

The running course passes through breathtaking fields of *nanohana* (canola) flowers in full bloom, and features scenic views of Kyushu's largest lake, Lake Ikeda, as well as Mt. Kaimon, also known as the "Mt. Fuji of Satsuma". While the course has a considerable elevation profile, the generous 8-hour time limit makes it accessible even for beginners.

Although entry numbers were limited, from 2024 onwards the marathon was held alongside a new 12-km Fun Run: Lake Ikeda Course.

The finishing line is right along the shore of Lake Ikeda, offering stunning views of Mt. Kaimon, Lake Ikeda, and the vibrant *nanohana* flower fields.

Many runners visited Ibusuki for the event, creating a lively and festive atmosphere.



▲*Lake Ikeda and participating runners*

Photo credit: P. K. N

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