

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



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Coordinator for International (CIR) Relations column

●Searching for the echoes of Amami's nature and traditions - Part.1●

—Lixia Deng, *Kagoshima Pref. Coordinator for International Relations (from China)*—

March has come around in the blink of an eye, and it is time to wrap up my year of work as a Coordinator for International Relations (CIR). While working at the Kagoshima Prefectural Government, I have been told many times that Kagoshima is the only prefecture in Japan that has two World Natural Heritage sites. Before returning home, I wanted to see the charm of these World Natural Heritage sites with my own eyes, and in March I had the opportunity to go on a fact-finding trip to a remote island in Kagoshima Prefecture. I paid a visit to Amami Oshima, part of a World Natural Heritage site that spans Amami Oshima, the northern region of Okinawa, Tokushima and Iriomote Island, which was registered as a World Natural Heritage site in 2021.

Professor Koujo from the Faculty of Economics at the International University of Kagoshima took the time to accompany me on my trip. After our 50-minute trip over the ocean, the emerald-coloured sea welcomed us into Amami Oshima Airport.

This was the first time for both Professor Koujo and I to visit Amami Oshima and we excitedly boarded our bus to Amami Park. Whilst it was only March, Amami Oshima has a very warm climate; so warm in fact that some on board were wearing short sleeves! While we were wondering whether we should get off at 'Amami Park' or 'Amami Park Entrance', a man on the bus (wearing short sleeves 😊) kindly told us that it would be closer to get off at Amami Park.



Amami Park entrance



Pineapple-like flowers on a fragrant screw-pine tree

Amami Park is home to Amami's subtropical plants, as well as facilities such as Amami no Sato and the Tanaka Isson Memorial Museum of Art. In Amami no Sato we were introduced to Amami's beautiful nature, diverse culture, history, and folklore. I was particularly taken by a theme wall that had Amami's yearly traditions and events written on it. I learned that many of Amami's traditional events are held according to the lunar calendar, and the grandest of them all is the "Jugoya Harvest Festival" held on August 15th of the lunar calendar.

The Jugoya Harvest Festival is an event that celebrates the harvest of crops over the year and gives thanks for the good health of the community. On this day, traditional events similar to the 'Jugoya Harvest Festival' are held in China. For example, during the Mid-Autumn festival, Chinese communities celebrate the good harvest and the happiness of their families under the full moon.

In addition to the Full Moon Harvest Festival, there are about 40 photos of other events on display, detailing how the islanders live honest lives and coexist with nature.

In one corner of Amami Park, there is the Tanaka Isson Memorial Museum of Art. Tanaka is so well loved in Amami that you would struggle to find someone that doesn't know him. He loved the nature of Amami, and depicted subtropical plants, flowers and birds with a keen eye for observation and excellent drawing skills, creating a unique world in his works. In addition to Tanaka Isson's works, we enjoyed a special exhibition called 'To Amami' which was all about the island.

As a souvenir from Amami Park, I bought a postcard featuring Isson Tanaka's work. On the day we visited, a concert for the Amami Park Spring Festival "Sangatsu Sanchi" was held in the hall inside the park, where we were also able to listen to some Shimauta (music from Amami Oshima).



A building in the park

After the tour of Amami Park, we went to visit the Oshima Tsumugi Museum and Oshima Tsumugi Art Museum near the Tsuchihama bus stop. The staff gave us an easy-to-understand explanation of the complex manufacturing process of Oshima Tsumugi, and showed us how it's produced. More than 30 extremely detailed steps are required to make Oshima Tsumugi. It takes dozens of craftspeople a long time, anywhere from six months to a year, to complete just a small amount of fabric. As we were marvelling



Oshima Tsumugi Museum

at the time-consuming process, the president of the company that runs the Oshima Tsumugi Museum came to show us around.

The Oshima Tsumugi Museum faces the vast ocean and is situated with a resort hotel. The fatigue of our travels was washed away as we gazed out upon the blue

ocean from the ground floor hall of our hotel. In the museum on the second floor, you'll find on display Oshima Tsumugi woven fabric based upon Tanaka Isson's masterpieces. Here, you can touch authentic Oshima Tsumugi and even try on a kimono made from the woven fabric. Authentic Oshima Tsumugi is light and easy to move in, has excellent breathability and heat retention, and is said to be wrinkle-resistant and long-lasting. We were beginning to understand how they justify the price tag!

After we'd finished for the day, we moved to Amami City. While wondering what to have for dinner, we decided to stop by a restaurant serving island cuisine called 'Kitahachi'. There, we enjoyed a very satisfying meal of local vegetables, seafood, chicken and pork, followed by a brown sugar dessert. Before leaving the restaurant, we were given their business card and a toothpick wrapped in origami folded to make a kimono. We thought it would be a shame to use such a cute toothpick, so we took it back as a souvenir.

On the second day, we paid a visit to Tomita Shuzo, which produces Amami's brown sugar shochu 'Ryugu'. The fourth-generation president explained the history of the company to us, which is celebrating its 75th anniversary, and the manufacturing process of its brown sugar shochu. We learned about their enthusiasm for brown sugar and their unique manufacturing method, which involves fermenting rice koji using indigenous bacteria in individual jars instead of large tanks. As a result of this process, the taste and aroma of the shochu can vary slightly depending on the jar.



A Tanaka Isson piece made using Oshima Tsumugi



Toothpick wrapped in kimono origami



Brown sugar shochu fermenting in a pot



Our canoe leading the pack

After the tour of the distillery, an employee from the Oshima Branch Office came to pick us up and we headed to the Amami World Heritage Conservation Center and Kuroshio no Mori Mangrove Park. The center has an exhibition room that recreates the forest space of Amami Oshima, and a video was shown that taught us how the Amami rabbit, a symbol of Amami, has evolved in its own unique way. After the tour of the exhibition room, we went canoeing in the Kuroshio Sea. I was a bit worried at first as I can't

swim, but it was actually a lot of fun 😊.

Most of us had no idea how to steer a canoe and kept crashing into each other which made moving forward quite a challenge. However, once myself and Professor Koujo started paddling on the same side of the water at the same time, the canoe moved smoothly and we were able to take the lead. I felt that it was important that we gathered our strength and moved forward as one.

There are many waterways along the way, some of which connect to the Pacific Ocean. It is important to follow the instructions of your guide so that you do not end up canoeing halfway across the world!

The bay was quiet and the waters were so clear that you could see the bottom, and it was very pleasant to feel one with nature and hear the sounds of the wind and waves. Half an hour later, we reached the finish line and our guide took a photo for us to commemorate the occasion.

On the way back, it was low tide so we could see crabs coming out of the exposed black mud. We returned to the starting point, watching herons on both sides of the river and fish in the water. This canoeing experience was a wonderful, relaxing experience surrounded by beautiful nature.



Goal reached – break time!

Article continues in VOL 197...

The Governor's Activities

●An enjoyable performance of 'Toki' in Kagoshima (8th Mar)●

I paid a visit to watch the dance performance 'Toki'.

The performance, centres around the motif of the Japanese crested ibis (Toki), a symbol of friendship between Japan and China. It was jointly produced by Japanese and Chinese teams with the aim of further nurturing friendship between the two countries.

The performance, which did not use dialogue or song but instead pursued the beauty of physical expression, was a stunning work of art from the performers that draws you in with their dance skill and dexterity and the beauty of their movements.

The members of the Shanghai Dance Company took a trip to a zoo to observe the movements of the crested ibis and have incorporated this into their performance.

I hope that this performance will further foster the friendship between Japan and China.



▲ Members of the Shanghai Dance Company



▲ Performance of 'Toki'

●Members of the Kagoshima Bonito promotion board visit Kagoshima (17th Mar)●

Representatives of bonito-related businesses in the prefecture visited the prefectural office to report on the launch of the Kagoshima Bonito promotion board.

Representative promoter of the board, Yamaguchi Kenichiro, who is also president of Yamami Suisan Ltd., gave a powerful statement saying, "I want all those operating in the three ports of Kagoshima, Makurazaki and Yamakawa to come together and promote bonito and katsuobushi [dried bonito]."

I also had the opportunity to sample sashimi made from bonito caught that morning, 'chabushi' broth made with bonito flakes, and croquettes made with bonito.

I hope that by working as one with the promotion committee on further promotion, people from both inside and outside the prefecture, as well as those from overseas, will be able to enjoy Kagoshima bonito.



▲Members of the Kagoshima Bonito promotion project visiting Pref. Office



▲Taste testing various bonito products

●'Hawaii Lani' executive committee pay a visit (19th Mar)●

Tehrel Porter, a famous 3D artist from Hawaii and Representative Imabayashi of the Kagoshima Hawaii Lani Executive Committee paid a visit to the Prefectural Office. The Hawaii

Lani Executive Committee works to promote the charms of Kagoshima both domestically and internationally; they came to visit to provide an update on their latest work.

Porter, who visited Kagoshima for the first time, said he liked the prefecture very much and that, if he had the chance in the future, he would like to return to create art across different parts of Kagoshima.

Porter painted the charms of the prefecture's remote islands, such as the Jomon Sugi tree, In-no-joufuta, and sea turtles, on the wall of the sky deck at Kagoshima Airport, which is visible to many tourists. I hope that this work is seen by many and will further enhance the charms of this prefecture. Moreover, I hope that this work will encourage tourism and urban development across the prefecture.



▲ In conversation with Representative Imabayashi and Tehrel Porter.



▲ Tehrel Porter's mural on the sky deck at Kagoshima Airport

Seasonal tourist information

●Kagoshima Marathon (3rd March)●

The Kagoshima Marathon route allows you to run through the magnificent scenery of Sakurajima and Kinko Bay, the prefecture's busiest shopping district, Tenmonkan, see the industrial revolution heritage of the Meiji era, the statue of Saigo Takamori, and the Kagoshima cityscape, all while enjoying delicious Kagoshima food.

Through this marathon, you can fully soak up the charms of Kagoshima.



▲Runners being cheered on by supporters

(©Kagoshima Marathon Executive)

●Sakura has arrived in Kagoshima prefecture (End of March – start of April) ●

Cherry blossoms are in full bloom all over the prefecture, including in Yoshino Park, Kagoshima City; Tadamoto Park, Isa City; Kannongaike Citizen's Forest, Ichikikushikino City; and Nitta Shrine in Satsumasendai City.

Many events, such as illuminations and street markets, are being held around the prefecture for your enjoyment during this cherry blossom season.



▲ Rows of cherry blossoms in Tadamoto Park (left);
street market (right) 「©ULTRA-C」





Editor's note (Department of Tourism, Culture and Sports,
International Affairs Division)

It's finally April and the new school year has begun. I hope you are doing well.

Spring is in full swing in Kagoshima, and many people are excited about starting a new life in a new place, whether that be going on to school, getting a job, or moving house.

You may feel confused by your new environment, or feel down when things don't go well, but as you gradually get used to it, you'll start to feel the fun and reward of your new surroundings.



Just take it one step at a time and don't push yourself too much!

Looking forward to the next issue ✨



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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