Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) Column

“Tsuyu” Rainy Season
William Jefferson (CIR from the USA)

When I think about the fact that the rainy season is coming I start feeling a bit gloomy. With rising temperatures and humidity my body feels sluggish, and sometimes it’s hard to go out when the rain keeps coming down. It gets even more difficult to go out when it turns to heavy rain, and sometimes plans get cancelled because of it. I like taking a camera with me when I go out, whether I’m on my way to work, or going shopping, I carry a camera with me most of the time, but that also becomes difficult during the rainy season. In really bad years I hear there is flooding, and other inconvenient and unfortunate things. However, Japan’s rainy season may not be all doom and gloom. The volcanic ash that falls from the sky and accumulates on the ground gets washed away, and the ash blowing around in the air gets suppressed, so there are some things about the tsuyu rainy season to be thankful for. The tsuyu rains are also an important water source for Kagoshima’s rich natural environment and people’s lives, so even though the rain is inconvenient, I think it is something we can also appreciate.

Doing a search about the tsuyu rainy season reveals a lot of information. This particular weather phenomenon happens every year when a tropical monsoon air mass forms over the Indian Ocean and spreads northeast, causing the ‘tsuyu’ weather front in East Asia. As this front slowly moves from south to north, tsuyu begins for each area one after another, from the bottom of the Japanese archipelago, where the rains are mostly steady until the front passes. These two events: the beginning and the passing of tsuyu, are called tsuyuiri and tsuyuake respectively, and are officially announced by the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA). Their website says ‘based on the weather up to the current point, and the one-week outlook, a news
bulletin on the beginning and the passing of the tsuyu monsoon period’ will be published. Other information, like on an average year tusyu in South Kyushu starts on May 31st and lasts about a month, is listed there. Also, according to the JMA’s past data roughly one third of Kagoshima’s annual rainfall falls over the tsuyu period. There is a trend for the rain to fall steadily over the tsuyu period and for it to end without incident, but as the people of Kagoshima Prefecture well know, there are times when it can bring disastrous flooding: the ‘1993 Kagoshima Heavy Rain’ is one such well known disaster. That was an exceptional year where there was no clear ‘tsuyuake’ or passing of the weather front, and the story is that the rainy weather front doubled up with typhoons, which usually come after the front has passed, creating disastrous flooding.

This year is the second time I am experiencing the rainy season in Kagoshima, and the 5th time experiencing it in Japan. In my experience up to now it has certainly been very rainy and humid and inconvenient, but there hasn’t been anything too bad like disasters or the like.

The tsuyu rainy season has a lot of rain, high temperatures and humidity, and can be an unpleasant season, but misfortune being turned into fortune, water that is necessary for the natural environment, and people’s lives gets replenished. In Kagoshima Prefecture, where groundwater and aquifers are plentiful, there are spring water sources and hot springs that enrich our lives. Water necessary for farming is also replenished in irrigation ponds, where it is stored as an important resource. Furthermore, I think rainwater that falls on the ground and flows through various waterways serves an important role by cycling nutrients in the natural environment, and diluting pollution. Thinking about these points makes me feel thankful for the blessing that the rain that falls during the tsuyu rainy season is.

The area where I’m from, Washington State in the U.S., has a season that gets more rainy, but we don’t have a season like ‘tsuyu’, and I just can’t get used to this gloomy, sticky, troublesome weather. But although I say that, and even though it is inconvenient, I also see the good things in it, and accept it as part of the Japan lifestyle. I also learned you can avoid it impacting your life too much by making some preparations. Today I commuted to work on my bicycle wearing a rain cape, and my shoes were the only thing that got wet.
The 23rd Chiran Neputa Matsuri Festival, the big summer event in Chiran, Minami Kyushu City is coming (In the event of bad weather, it will be postponed to the following day). With fan shaped floats exhibiting heroic images of warriors as big as 5 X 4 meters in size as the main attraction, a procession of dancers with a band along the lively avenue next to the samurai residences and gardens will paint the evening the colours of summer in Chiran. This year being the 150th anniversary of the Meiji Restoration, a ‘Sego Don’ Neputa float will be made, and there will also be a sales booth selling related goods. The festival time is 19:00~21:00. On the day of the festival, at the nearby Toyotamahime Jinja Shrine, there will be a special showing of the water-powered waterwheel marionette. How about coming to Chiran, the Little Kyoto of Satsuma, this summer to enjoy the Neputa Matsuri Festival?

Event date and time:
Saturday July 21st 2018, 19:00～21:00

Details available at↓
http://www.kagoshima-kankou.com/event/50211/
Information about Kagoshima Specialty Products
Soft Boiled Tempura Eggs

These are soft boiled Kagoshima Prefecture chicken eggs thinly wrapped in Satsumaage coating. The Satsumaage coating is tender, while the soft boiled egg yolk is thick and gooey, creating an exquisite combination of textures for you to enjoy.

Kagoshima International Association Corner
Introducing the Kagoshima International Association

The Kagoshima International Association organizes a variety of projects related to Kagoshima Prefecture resident’s, foreign resident’s and other’s international exchange based on the four pillars of ‘promoting international understanding’, ‘developing international exchange activities’, ‘promotion of living together in an international community’, and ‘international cooperation’.

Also, our homepage has been renewed as of March 2018, please have a look.

Lunchtime Talk

A midday conversation class where you can learn about foreign cultures and freely exchange opinions with Prefectural CIRs.

Application not required. Free.

Venue: Meeting Room B, Kagoshima Prefectural Citizens Exchange Center 1F

Date:

- Chinese Lunchtime Talk Every Tuesday, 12pm – 1pm
- Korean Lunchtime Talk Every Wednesday, 12.30pm – 13.30pm
- Lunchtime English Club Every Friday, 12pm – 1pm

*Lunchtime Talk classes will be suspended when the facilitating Prefectural CIR is absent, or when the Kagoshima Prefectural Citizens Exchange Center is closed.
**English Picture Book Story Time**
Targeted at children above the age of 3 and their guardians, prefectural CIRs will read English picture books at this class.
Application required. Free.
Venue: Meeting Room B, Kagoshima Prefectural Citizens Exchange Center 1F
Date: about once a month on Saturday, 2pm – 3pm
Target Audience: Children from 3 years old to elementary school students (children must be accompanied by guardians)
Capacity: about 10 families (on a first come first serve basis)
Dates will be announced on the KIA website.
A report of the English Story Reading Session held in May:
https://www.kiaweb.or.jp/2018/05/post-46.html

**Japanese Language and Culture Class**
This is a session for foreign residents in Kagoshima capable of daily conversation in Japanese. Guest speakers will present on a certain topic and participants are encouraged to speak freely in Japanese.
Free.
For more information on the dates, please click the following link.

**Homestay and Interpreter Volunteers**
KIA welcomes applications for homestay volunteers who are able to welcome foreign visitors to their house for home visits or overnight stays, and interpreter volunteers who are able to interpret for foreign nationals at events, and translate documents, etc. If you are interested in helping out, please submit a completed application form available at the KIA
Website: https://www.kiaweb.or.jp/volunteer-system.html

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From the Editors (Kagoshima Prefecture International Affairs Division)
What did you think of this month’s “Kagoshima Southern Wind Tidings”? The editors will continue to strive to make this prefectural foreign language newsletter a source of information and a bridge to connect all of you to Kagoshima. We'd like to ask our readers to provide their opinions, suggestions, article contributions and Kagoshima-related news.

Inquiries

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