Let’s Go, Segodon! by Huang Bo (CIR from China)

The first Sunday after coming to Kagoshima, I went on an adventure around Kagoshima City by foot as I like to travel and needed to lose weight.

Back then, I knew nothing about this attractive city that I had just come to live in, so I first took the city tram to Tenmonkan. After getting off and walking into the shopping arcade of Tenmonkan, my worries at beginning a life alone in Japan 15 years after my first stint were soothed by the bustling shops and warm smiles of people.

Wandering through the shopping streets and Chuo Park, I came across a large bronze statue when I stood in front of the Chuo Community Center. It was the Statue of Saigo Takamori. I had learned about his achievements in school a long time ago, and I knew that the period drama “Segodon” was showing on television. Also, en route to Kagoshima, Mr Yoshinaga who came to Tokyo to welcome me told me that Saigo Takamori is the hero of Kagoshima, and also his own personal hero. Although I know that he was a remarkable figure, I only gave a quick bow and took a photograph of the statue before continuing on my adventure.

A few months have passed since then, and amusingly, many people who I met here and had the chance to talk to or drink with have said to me thus, “Mr Huang, you look like Segodon (term of affectionate respect for Saigo Takamori).”

At first, I had thought that they were just referring to my paunch which Segodon also had and that they were just joking. However, when my partner at work Ms Otono heard about it, she told me that it is a great compliment. I was surprised, and after some research online, I was bowled over by how great a man Segodon was and his many good qualities.

Segodon’s life was certainly not what you would describe as ‘smooth-sailing’. He lost his parents at a young age and suffered setbacks – he was sent to exile not once but twice. Despite finally receiving credit for helping to achieve the restoration of imperial rule through the Boshin War, he resigned from his post amidst the political turmoil in 1873 and returned to Kagoshima, and then ended his own life in 1876 during the Satsuma Rebellion.
Nonetheless, no one speaks badly of Segodon. It was even said that the Meiji Emperor was concerned about Segodon, supposedly a traitor, and bemoaned the loss of the man whenever he drinks.

I wonder if it was because Segodon always had his friends and country in mind. He attempted suicide after Lord Shimadzu Nariakira who cared about him passed away, and again by jumping into the sea with his benefactor Gessho. Not once did he betray his friends. Not only that, Segodon ceaselessly thought of Japan’s future, and lived his life for the country. I believe that he fought in the Satsuma Rebellion not for honour or power, but to forge what he saw as the ideal Japan.

It is said that Segodon often speaks and writes about “Kei-ten Ai-jin” (respect God and love people). Despite Heaven exercising his mind with suffering, his sinews and bones with toil, and confounding his undertakings, Segodon faithfully revered God and followed his heavenly mandate and obeyed natural law. Because he lived his life righteous, Heaven eventually conferred a great responsibility on him. In addition, I think Segodon’s kindness and love for his friends, community, country, and even his dog, and his efforts to improve their lives, came from a burning passion to alleviate their suffering through an understanding of the pains of living as he himself was in difficult circumstances from a young age.

I sincerely and wholeheartedly respect Segodon. I will try my best in everything, so that the reason people say I look like Segodon is not just because of my tummy.

The next time, I will give a deep and proper bow to Segodon.

And before I knew it, I am standing before the Statue of Saigo Takamori again.

The Kagoshima Asia Pacific Intercultural Countryside (KAPIC) Center Column

The “English Camp Connecting with People around the World – Experience Different Cultures!” was held

The Kagoshima Asia Pacific Intercultural Countryside (KAPIC) Center organises a diverse array of programmes promoting international understanding. Below is an introduction to the “English Camp Connecting with People around the World”.

KAPIC Center has held this English language camp since 2016 for students in their 5th year in elementary school to 1st year in junior high school. This camp aims to increase the level of interest and awareness of the English language through various activities and intercultural experiences with Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) teachers from other countries.

Period: 9 – 11 August 2018, Thursday to Saturday (3 days 2 nights)
Participants: 27 (including 1 guardian)
9 foreign staff (3 from USA, 1 from Argentina, 5 from the Philippines)
16 Japanese staff (including 3 English language teachers)
Venue: KAPIC Center

Programme

Shopping
Group barbeque!
Feedback from the participants (extracts from survey)

- I was able to talk to an ALT teacher in English!
- I was glad I could communicate using words and gestures!
- I had trouble explaining to an ALT teacher what a “zabuton” (cushion seat) is.

At this English language camp, the participants enjoyed seasonal activities like barbeque, “suika-wari” (splitting watermelon with a stick while blindfolded), and shaved ice. They also experienced foreign cultures through food and English games. There were some participants who had trouble speaking English, but as the days went by, they gradually communicated more and more in English. In this increasingly globalised society, we believe that experiences such as the joy of successfully communicating in English and the disappointment at failing to be understood are critical to children. Through the English language camp, we hope that our children will gain a broader perspective of the world.

KAPIC Center website: [http://kapic.jp](http://kapic.jp) (in English and Japanese)

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Latest Kagoshima News
The Satsuma Students Youth Dispatch Delegation Made a Post-Trip Report to the Governor

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On August 17, 15 high school students and 1 teacher paid a visit to the Kagoshima Prefectural Government Office and reported to Governor Mitazono on their trip. They were dispatched to the United Kingdom for 10 days from 28 July on the “Meiji Restoration 150th Anniversary: Satsuma Students to the UK Youth Dispatch Programme”.

A student representative reported that they learned about the original Satsuma Students’ efforts and achievements made 153 years ago, and that encouraged them to work towards developing friendship and cooperation with the United Kingdom.

Governor Mitazono revealed his delight in sending the students as modern day (Heisei Period) Satsuma Students to the United Kingdom. He also spoke of his expectations for them to utilise this experience and strive for the betterment of Kagoshima Prefecture, Japan, and the world.

The next day, the 18th, a post-trip debriefing session was held at the Kagoshima Community Hall. All high school student delegates reported on their thoughts and feelings during their stay in the United Kingdom, and spoke of their ambitions for the future.

We look forward to their future success.
Seasonal Tourism Information
Ibusuki Onsen Festival

Hot springs gush out from everywhere in Ibusuki City. The Ibusuki Onsen Festival will mainly be held in Central Park Ibusuki to thank Mother Nature for this blessing.

The Hanya Odori dance parade on the first day, and the mikoshi shrine parade and fireworks display on the second day are sights to behold. Please come and enjoy this festival with your friends and family.

Dates: 29 and 30 September 2018 (Saturday and Sunday)
(held annually on the last Sunday of September and the preceding day)

Times: 1st day 15:30-21:00
2nd day 12:00-21:00

Check out this link for more information: http://www.kagoshima-kankou.com/event/20322/
A Note 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.

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