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Kagoshima Kenjinkai World Conference a Grand Success

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"ANA Symposium: The Meiji Restoration as seen by the World" was held in Commemoration of 5 Years of Ties between Kagoshima and Tsinghua University

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The Kagoshima Kenjinkai World Conference was held on the 1st and 2nd of November in Kagoshima City to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Meiji Restoration. People born in Kagoshima now living in other parts of Japan or overseas as well as other people with ties to Kagoshima all came together at this event to establish a global Kagoshima network.

At the welcome reception on the first day, the governor of Kagoshima spoke of his desire to treasure the ties with Kagoshima people who have worked hard to prosper overseas.

Later that day, the atmosphere of the Rokugatsudo Summer Lantern Festival was recreated at the welcome festival, and participants enjoyed a fireworks display, mikoshi parade, and drum performances at the bustling festival.

On the second day, representatives from Kenjinkai associations around Japan and abroad held a lively discussion on the promotion of exchanges and the strengthening of cooperation between people with ties to Kagoshima at the People of Kagoshima Summit. They adopted the conference declaration at the official ceremony held thereafter, agreeing to work towards expanding the network of Kagoshima people in Japan and abroad, promote exchanges for the next generation and nurture global talents.

We would like to thank everyone who participated in this Kagoshima Kenjinkai World Conference.
Kagoshima Prefecture and Tsinghua University in China signed a comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement in 2013.

Based on the MOU, international exchanges were held between the two parties. Besides marking the 5th year of ties, this year also celebrates the 150th anniversary of the Meiji Restoration and the 40th anniversary of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship between Japan and the People’s Republic of China. To commemorate this meaningful year, the “ANA Symposium: The Meiji Restoration as seen by the World” was co-organised by Kagoshima Prefecture and Tsinghua University, and generously sponsored by the ANA Group. World-class historians including Mr Akira Iriye, professor emeritus at Harvard University; Mr Li Ting-jiang, professor at Tsinghua University; Ms Lesley Down, author and journalist; and Mr Izumi Haraguchi, director at Kagoshima Prefectural Library were invited to speak at the event.

The lectures and a panel discussion provided an extremely invaluable opportunity for the many attendees gathered that day to think about the Meiji Restoration, brought about by Kagoshima’s historical figures, from a global perspective.
Latest Kagoshima News
Kingdom of Shochu Liquor, Kagoshima!

To raise awareness and improve sales of Honkaku Shochu liquor, Kagoshima Prefecture set up a promotional display at the entrance hall of the office building exhibiting over 500 brands of shochu liquor from all 113 distilleries in the prefecture.

By showing the vast number of shochu liquor brands to both Japanese and foreign visitors to the prefectural government office building, Kagoshima hopes that locals and non-locals alike will come to know that Kagoshima is a kingdom of shochu liquor and deepen their affection for Honkaku Shochu.

Together with the Kagoshima Shochu Makers Association and all related parties in the shochu industry, the public and private sectors in Kagoshima are united as one in continuing our efforts to encourage consumption of shochu liquor.

Kingdom of Shochu liquor Kagoshima, chesuto (give it all you’ve got)!
Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) Column

Are you a Mountain Person or a Beach Person? by Seo Heekyung (CIR from South Korea)

Three years and a half into this job as a Coordinator for International Relations, there are still some things I am unsure about. My work involves talking in one way or another to people I meet for the first time, and what I still do not know is the ‘ultimate question’ to ask that will grab their attention. Of course, a part of me knows that my listeners’ gender, age, and place of birth will affect the mood of the session and that there is no one-size-fits-all solution, but I cannot help but want to find something that will bring a smile to their faces. Even now I continue to rack my brain thinking of topics that will loosen up the atmosphere without offending anyone, so if you know any fun stories or questions that I may use please share them with me.

Last month on the television, a comedian talked about how she would break the ice by asking people their preferred type among members of a certain idol group. That made me think about the things I ask people I meet for the first time, and upon reflecting on the conversations I have had, I am surprised to realise that I have been asking people if they are a mountain person or a beach person ever since I came to Kagoshima. I have never asked or been asked such a question before back home in South Korea.

In my case, people in Kagoshima often tell me, “You’re a Korean, so you must like the mountains.” I somehow understand why people would presume so. According to the 2018 census on recreation in the mountains and forests conducted by the Korea Forest Service (National Institute of Forest Science), 87% of South Koreans visit the forests on a day trip that takes less than 4 hours (including travel time) at least once a year. Furthermore, many South Korean tourists list “Mt Karakuni” and “Kyushu OLLE Courses (Ibusuki/Kaimon course, Kirishima/Myoken course, Izumi course)” among their reasons for visiting Kagoshima, so it is perhaps unavoidable that the equation “South Koreans = hikers” would come to mind. However, I am through and through a beach person. There was a period of time when I hiked to keep healthy, but those were just low hills, and in fact my first proper hike was in Kagoshima. The 10 hour-long trek to reach Jomonsugi Cedar was in many ways an experience that I will never forget for the rest of my life.

I do not remember when exactly I started to love the sea, but I vividly recall the catalyst that changed the way I think about it. There is a phrase ‘the sea of words’ in the novel “The Great Passage” by Shion Miura. Whenever I imagine the protagonist drowning in that sea of words, the feeling that the sea would accept me for who I am precisely because of its unfathomable depths would come over me, and for some reason that would put me at ease. From that point onwards, I would visit the sea whenever I have worries, and these few days I find myself lingering around Kinko Bay. Also, on sleepless nights, I would search on YouTube for ASMR videos of ocean waves to watch. (ASMR (which stands for Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response) videos are videos that stimulate the mind to trigger relaxation, and are especially recommended for people who have a hard time falling asleep.) I know it has been a while since I came, but I am truly glad that I am here in Kagoshima surrounded by the sea.

So, what about you? Are you a mountain person or a beach person?
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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