

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 Relations (CIR) column

●Searching for the echoes of Amami's nature and traditions Part.2●

—Lixia Deng, *Kagoshima Pref. Coordinator for International Relations (from China)*— Continuing from VOL. 196

On the third day, we visited the Amami Museum, Amami Marine Exhibition Hall, Amami Wildlife Conservation Center, and the Amami Tourism Hub Center. We learned a lot about Amami's history, culture, and nature. There was a lot to see at Amami Museum, which is the only comprehensive museum in the Amami Islands

Upon entering the museum, we watched an introductory video about Amami that was playing in the hall on the first floor. There we learnt about the mysteries of the ocean floor.

The geometric pattern in the photo on the right appeared on the seabed off the coast of Amami Oshima. It has been known as an 'undersea mystery circle' for over 20 years, but the question of who created it and why it is there remained a mystery. However, in 2011, underwater photographer Yoji Okata succeeded in photographing the small pufferfish that create these mystery circles, and it became clear that these mystery circles are elaborately constructed nesting sites for Amami's male white-spotted pufferfish to attract females.



Mystery circle on the sea floor
made by pufferfish

On the second floor, 'Nanto Zatsuwa' (Southern island chitchat) was on display, where we perused illustrations of life on Amami Oshima around the end of the Edo period and learned about the modern history of Amami. On the third floor, there was an exhibition of the people living on Amami Oshima, organized by month, focusing on the changes in nature throughout the year.

Through the materials on display at Amami Museum, I learnt that Amami culture, whilst founded in Japanese culture, has been distinctively developed through influences from Ryukyu and Satsuma cultures.

The Amami Marine Exhibition Hall is an aquarium-like space, where you can see the ecology of Amami's marine creatures, including coral, sea turtles, shrimp, crabs, fish, and seashells. There are also workshops where you can work with coral, sand and seashells.



Arts and crafts made from seashells

We had a light meal in a tent outside the exhibition hall, then we had the chance to explore the nearby Ohama Seaside Park.



Ohama Seaside Park

Afterwards we went to the Amami Wildlife Center. Alongside displays of insect, bird and animal specimens, the conservation center also introduces us to their conservation projects for Amami's precious animals. Here we learnt about the Amami mongoose eradication project. Mongooses are mammals that originally came from the Middle East and South Asia, and were brought to Okinawa from India in 1910 to eradicate snakes and other pests. It is said that several dozen mongooses were transported from Okinawa and released onto Amami Oshima in 1979. However, the mongooses did not prey on the snakes, and instead ended up preying on many of the animals that live on Amami Oshima, including the Amami rabbit. As a result, the Ministry of the Environment began full-scale mongoose eradication efforts in 2000, and from 2005 it had been carrying out control projects based on the Invasive Alien Species Act with the goal of “completely eliminating mongooses from Amami Oshima”. The eradication of the species was finally declared in September 2024. Through the Amami Wildlife Center, I was able to learn about the efforts being made to preserve Amami's rich nature and precious wildlife for future generations.



Stuffed black rabbit



Stuffed small Indian mongoose

After visiting the Amami Wildlife Center, we paid a visit to Yamatohama to see their storehouses. Amami has unique wooden structures called 'takakura' (storehouses) used to store grain. These storehouses were used to store threshed rice and seed rice that was to be used the following year. It protects against damage by rats, moisture and the heat of the sun. The term 'gunkura' used to refer to these groups of storehouses comes from the fact that they were often built far away from homes and tightly packed together. In 2004, Kagoshima Prefecture designated Yamatohama's Gunkura storehouses as a cultural asset.



Yamatohama's 'gunkura' storehouses

On our final day, we first visited the Amami Nature Observation Forest. On the walking paths in the Amami Nature Observation Forest we could hear the calls of many animals, including birds and frogs, amongst the lush subtropical vegetation. The view from the observation deck was also very impressive, with the distant mountains looking like a watercolour, shrouded in smoky rain. Also, being surrounded by Amami's emerald sea made it feel like an enchanted land.



View from the observation deck in Nature Observation Forest

Before we headed to the airport, we stopped off at Oshima Tsumugi Mura. Oshima Tsumugi Mura is located within a tropical plant garden. Here you can see authentic Amami Oshima Tsumugi being made as well as take part in experiences such as mud dyeing. While we were looking around, a steady



Craftsperson dyeing in the pond



Bustling mud-dyeing Preservation Museum



Prof. Koujo interpreting the mud-dyeing process

stream of foreign tourists arrived. On the shopping street, we could see a variety of products such as hats, pouches, bags, ties and kimonos were being made. Oshima Tsumugi Mura also had a wide selection of Oshima Tsumugi-related products, including original high-quality Oshima Tsumugi as well as tsumugi accessories and souvenirs. Finally, we enjoyed an island goat soup curry at an open-air seated restaurant on Yoan Beach. The goat meat went beautifully with the curry and, with the location, made for a very satisfying meal.

Just as the sound of Oshima Tsumugi weaving looms still echoes through the workshop after hundreds of years, the gentle yet powerful activity of life that I felt in Amami still resonates in my heart.

●Looking back on life in Kagoshima Prefecture●

I will be returning to China at the end of May. It was a very fulfilling year that went by in a flash, where I learned and experienced a lot. I know that the end of my work as a Coordinator for International Relations is simply a step towards a new start. I will treasure the encounters I had in Kagoshima and continue to do my best. Thank you very much!

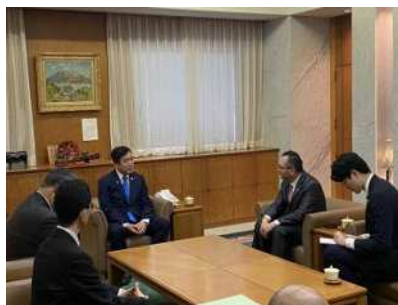
The Governor's Activities

●China Airlines Japan Branch pays a visit (3rd April)●

With China Airlines increasing their number of regular flights, China Airlines Branch Director, Marketing Director and Kumamoto Branch manager paid a visit to the prefectural office.

Governor Shiota expressed his gratitude for the increase in regular flights between Kagoshima and Taipei and discussed the operation and promotion of the route, as well as the feasibility of increasing the number of flights.

With this increase in flights, the prefecture aims to stimulate travel demand from Taiwan through social media and online promotions.



▲Image of the discussion



▲With the Japan Branch Director

●Tsukuba Science and Technology Japan Branch opening ceremony (15th April)●

I delivered a congratulatory address as guest of honour at the opening ceremony for Tsukuba Science and Technology's new Japan Branch.

Tsukuba Technology is a Taiwanese company that provides comprehensive services including optical communications, semiconductors and other technologies. They have now opened their first Japanese branch in Izumi City.

Governor Shiota emphasised the deep historical and geographical ties between Kyushu, Kagoshima and Taiwan. He explained that Kagoshima Prefecture is actively working to strengthen ties with Taiwan, highlighting the recent Memorandum of Understanding signed with Pingtung County, Taiwan. I also stated my intention to continue our efforts to further stimulate trade, investment and exchange between Kagoshima and Taiwan.

Our prefecture will continue to work alongside local towns, cities and villages to further attract companies both domestically and internationally to the prefecture.



With the Japan Branch workers ▲



◀ Delivering address

Kagoshima seasonal tourist information

●Sakurajima Artistic Fireworks 2025 (26th April) ●

A fireworks display was held at Marine Port Kagoshima, where visitors could enjoy artistic fireworks alongside the world-class natural scenery of the prefecture's symbol, the majestic Sakurajima and the calm waves of Kinko Bay. The artistic fireworks were created by one of Japan's top fireworks makers, who have received a Prime Ministerial award for their displays. The fireworks are meticulously programmed to synchronise with the rhythm and melody of the music being played. The makers specialise in bold techniques that incorporate the location of the venue into their performances. Their advanced techniques have elevated traditional fireworks displays to a new level of art.



▲Fireworks on the day

●Shibushi Buddha Festival (28th-29th April) ●

One of the three major festivals in Kagoshima Prefecture, the Shibushi Buddha Festival has run since the Edo period and celebrates the birth of Buddha. In alignment with the Japanese calendar, sweet tea is poured onto the Temple's Hall once a year in a prayer that calls for good health and freedom from illness.

This festival is bustling with local residents and tourists, and features colourful parades such as a horse procession carrying newlywed brides, a dancing troupe, a children's procession, and the Senkenmachi market.



▲The bride and groom's horse procession

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Kagoshima Prefectural Office website <http://www.pref.kagoshima.jp/>



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

The cherry blossom season has come to an end in the blink of an eye, and the season of fresh greenery has arrived.

This refreshing season only lasts for a short time. Soon the rainy season will come, followed by summer. I hope you will make the most of this pleasant time while you can.

In the International Exchange Division, Lixia Deng, our Chinese CIR, returned to her home country last month as her period working with us comes to an end. CIR Deng has been working at the Kagoshima Prefectural Office since April of last

year, and has continually impressed us with her bright and cheerful personality, always with a smile on her face.

She has been a bridge connecting China with Japan, and thanks to Lixia I have been able to truly appreciate the importance of heart-to-heart international exchange between peoples. I sincerely hope that after you return to China, you will remain healthy and successful, keeping your memories of Kagoshima close to your heart.

Looking forward to the next edition.



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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