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○ Me, Tea Ceremony, and Kagoshima

Kelly Chia, Singaporean CIR, Kagoshima Prefecture

When you hear the word “tea ceremony,” what comes to mind? Making tea, sitting in seiza, or various rules and procedures? I think everyone has a different image of tea ceremony.

For me, tea ceremony is a way to learn about Japanese culture. It is something deeply meaningful in my life. A practice that has brought me into contact with many wonderful people and places, creating connections that I have come to cherish. In Japanese, we call these go-en (ご縁).

I began learning Enshu-ryu tea ceremony in Japan during my university years. Through tea ceremony, I learned the procedures of preparing tea, and also how to appreciate the seasons and the spirit of “omotenashi”, thinking of others and making them feel comfortable during their time with you.

After returning to Singapore, I continued practicing tea ceremony and joined the Sado Club at the National University of Singapore (NUS). I am grateful to have met many wonderful friends through the university's sado club. I also participated in the club's regular activities and also helping with events.



▲During tea-practice



▲Receiving Shoden certificate from The Grandmaster



▲Japan Culture Festival at NUS



▲Event at Japan Creative Center



▲ Hand-made wagashi by sado club's Senpai



▲ Sticker design by then-sado club's president

One day, while helping at a sado club event, someone who happened to be passing by the sado club's booth gave me a pamphlet introducing the work as a Coordinator for International Relations (CIR). At the time, I never imagined that this single pamphlet would somehow lead me to Kagoshima.

That pamphlet gave me the opportunity to learn about the work as a CIR, and I gradually became interested. And now, I am working as a Coordinator for International Relations in Kagoshima Prefecture. Looking back, I wonder if that small encounter on that day was also an important “go-en” that led me to where I am today.

Another important phrase in tea ceremony is “ichigo ichie.” Treasuring each moment and treating each encounter as though it were a once-in-a-lifetime meeting. Now that I have started a new life in Kagoshima, I feel this phrase more closer than ever. I look forward to seeing where the “go-en” I make with the people through my work as a CIR.



▲ club's regular activities



▲ club's regular activities

I myself never imagined that receiving a single pamphlet at a sado club booth would have such a big impact on my future. The connections that began through tea ceremony have now led to my work in Kagoshima as a CIR. That is why I will cherish each and every “go-en” I encounter in Kagoshima.

○ Chinese Spirits

Xu Kui, Chinese CIR, Kagoshima Prefecture

How are you coping with the summer heat? In China, there is an unusual way to cool down: spooky stories! Tales of supernatural creatures can send chills down your spine and make you forget the heat for a moment. Today, let's explore Chinese yokai and beat the summer heat together!

#1: The Chinese Zombie

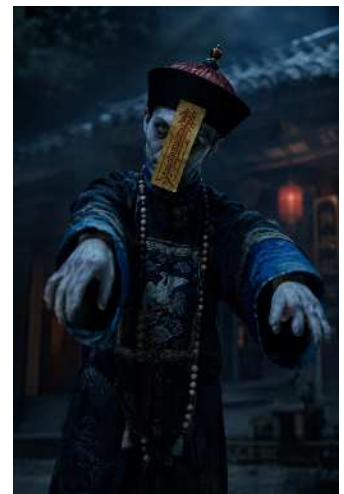
The Chinese zombie is one of China's most iconic supernatural creatures and is widely recognized both in China and abroad. Many people have probably heard of Chinese zombies and know what they look like, but how much do we actually know about them?

The term "Chinese zombie" first appeared in the Taoist text *Daqian Lu*. It describes a corpse with stiff limbs that cannot lower its head, move its eyes, or spread its legs. Strangely, its body never decays. With no place in heaven, the underworld, or the human world, the Chinese zombie has nowhere to belong and must wander endlessly.

From the mid-Ming dynasty onward (around the late 15th to early 16th century), as society developed, people became increasingly interested in culture and entertainment. As a result, more and more literary works featuring Chinese zombies began to appear.

From the mid-Ming to the Qing dynasty (17th century onward), stories featuring Chinese zombies became widely popular. Notable examples include Yuan Mei's *Zi Bu Yu* and Ji Yun's *Yuewei Caotang Biji*.

In modern times, a series of hugely popular Chinese zombie films from Hong Kong helped shape the image we know today, making these creatures famous both in China and around the world.



▲ Chinese zombie (Chat GPT)

#2: The Painted-Skin Ghost



▲ The Painted-Skin Ghost(Chat GPT)

The Painted-Skin Ghost became widely known after the release of the 2008 film *Painted Skin*. Based on *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio* by Qing-dynasty writer Pu Songling, the story follows a fox spirit that wears human skin and consumes human hearts to appear beautiful. It eventually falls in love with a human man and tries to take the place of his wife.

Every night, the Painted-Skin Ghost must remove its human skin and reshape it into an appearance that people find attractive. Over time, “painted skin” became a powerful metaphor for something that appears beautiful on the outside but hides a completely different true nature within.

There are many more supernatural creatures to discover in Chinese literature, especially in famous works such as *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* and *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*. If you’d like to learn more about Chinese supernatural culture, try exploring a related book or TV drama. You might be surprised by what you discover!

02 The Governor’s activities

○ 47th Kirishima International Music Festival Final Concert and Closing Ceremony (August 9)

We attended the Master Class Closing Ceremony and Final Concert of the 47th Kirishima International Music Festival. The concert featured passionate performances by festival participants, including a violin concerto by Sergey Krylov.

We hope the students will build on the experience gained through the festival and one day return to Kirishima as professional artists.

As this was the final festival under Music Director Tsutsumi, we extend our sincere

gratitude for his many years of dedication, as well as to everyone who has supported the festival.



▲Kirishima International Music Festival



▲Governor's remarks

○ Visit to Travel Agencies in South Korea (August 12)

During a visit to Seoul, South Korea, we met with leading travel agencies Hanjin Travel and HanaTour. While many Korean visitors come to Kagoshima in winter for golf and hot springs, summer travel remains limited.

We introduced Kagoshima's beautiful natural environment, renowned local cuisine, and summer attractions such as Yakushima's forests and waterfalls, as well as the flowing somen experience at Karafune Gorge in Ibusuki.

We will continue working to attract more visitors from South Korea to Kagoshima.



▲ During discussions ▲

○「Kagoshima Day」 at the Embassy of India in Japan (August 25)

「Kagoshima Day」 at the Embassy of India in Japan. Approximately 170 participants attended, including business representatives with ties to India and members of India's business community.

The event served as an important first step toward deepening mutual understanding and building new relationships between Kagoshima and India. Together with local businesses, we were able to showcase the many attractions of Kagoshima, including its food, culture, and other unique strengths through a seminar and networking reception.

Prior to the event, we also paid a courtesy visit to the Deputy Chief of Mission and exchanged views on future cooperation across a range of fields. We will continue working to expand exchanges between Kagoshima and India, building on the momentum created by this event.



▲ At 「Kagoshima Day」▲

03 Kagoshima event information

○ Sendai Great Tug-of-War (September 22)

Held every year in Satsumasendai City on the day before the Autumnal Equinox, the Sendai Great Tug-of-War is a tradition with more than 420 years of history.

From early in the morning, members of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force's Sendai Camp, local construction companies, students, and local residents come together to make the enormous rope. Measuring 365 meters long and weighing around seven tons, it is the largest tug-of-war rope in Japan. According to one theory, the tradition was started by Shimazu Yoshihiro to boost the morale of his troops around the time of the Battle of

Sekigahara.

○Designated an Intangible Folk Cultural Property of Kagoshima Prefecture○

Starting in the morning, around 1,500 people spend more than half a day twisting 365 individual ropes together to form one enormous rope. At night, around 3,000 bare-chested men known as “Hadaka,” wearing traditional sarashi cloth, pull the 365-meter-long, seven-ton rope with all their might. Meanwhile, the “Oshitai,” or pushing teams, charge into the opposing side to disrupt their rivals, creating an intense and spectacular showdown.



▲The Sendai Great Tug-of-War © K.P.V.B.▲

🎪👤 Coming UP in October and November

◇ Oct

- 10th ~11th 2026 Akune Midokoi Festival (Fireworks on Oct. 11) (Akune City)
- 17th ~18th Kagoshima Jazz Festival (Kagoshima City)
- 31st ~Nov 3rd Miyama CRAFT WEEK 2026 (Hioki City)
- 31st ~Nov 3rd Izumi Machi Terrace: Festival of Lights Connected by Bamboo Lanterns (Izumi City)

◇ Nov

- 1st Satumasendai Hanya Festival (Satumasendai City)
- 2nd • 3rd Ohara Festival (Kagoshima City)
- 3rd Yagorodon Festival (Soo City)
- 29th 33rd Yoron Marathon (Yoron Island)



Editor's note

(International Strategy Division, Policy Planning and Coordination Department, Kagoshima Prefectural Government)

Hello everyone!

From Aug, Kelly Chia, a CIR from Singapore, has joined the International Strategy Division! This is Kelly's very first column ✨ Tea ceremony opened the door to an unexpected connection that ultimately brought Kelly to Kagoshima as a CIR.

Please look forward to next month's CIR column

Did you enjoy September? October is packed with lots of fun events! 🍁

Autumn is the season for good food 🍷, sports 🏹, art 🎨, reading 📖 and Halloween 🎃!

We hope you enjoy autumn!

See you again in the next issue ☆彡

The Kagoshima Southern Wind Tidings is accepting submissions on the following topics:

☆Kagoshima photo gallery

We are looking for photos that have a Kagoshima feel to them, or photos of Kagoshima that you have found overseas. Please send them with a brief description of the photo (e.g. mountain of volcano ash collection bags).

We are also accepting any other information or stories you would like to share with our readers

Enquiries/submissions:

International Strategy Division,
Policy Planning and Coordination Department,
Kagoshima Prefectural Government,
10-1 Kamoike-shinmachi,
Kagoshima City,
Japan 890-8577
TEL +81-99-286-2306
FAX +81-99-286-5522
Email: minami@pref.kagoshima.lg.jp

Kagoshima Pref. Government homepage
www.pref.kagoshima.jp



Pref. Government *kawaraban*
<http://www.pref.kagoshima.jp/kohokocho/kouhoushi/kohosi/kawara/index.html>



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www.kagoshima-kankou.com



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