

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

●Have you heard of Tokunoshima, Kagoshima's remote island?●

By Kim Juhee

Korean CIR, Tourism, Culture and Sports Department, Kagoshima Prefecture

Spanning 600km from North to South, Kagoshima prefecture has many charming remote islands. I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to visit one of these islands, Tokunoshima, in 2021, when it was registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site along with Amami Oshima.

Before leaving for Tokunoshima, I asked my colleagues and friends if any of them had been there before, but almost nobody had. It was, therefore, an adventure into the unknown. So, I went onto the Kagoshima Prefectural Visitors Bureau and Tokunoshima Tourism Organization's website and planned out my trip.

Kagoshima Prefectural Visitors Bureau: kagoshima-kankou.com

Tokunoshima Tourism Organization: tokunoshima-kanko.com

If I was pushed to name the most famous thing about Tokunoshima, it would definitely be bullfighting. There are few places left in Japan where you can experience bullfighting; however, there still remains quite a few places to watch bullfighting in Korea. It is from this connection that Cheongdo County, North Gyeongsang Province in Korea and the three towns of Tokunoshima (Tokunoshima, Isen and Amagi) became sister cities. When I heard that there was going to be bullfighting on the weekend that I was visiting Tokunoshima, I jumped at the opportunity.

When we arrived at Nakusami Hall, Insen Town, we could see the bulls stood ready by the entrance. Nakusami Hall is dome-shaped and has a roof that covers the venue, so events can be held during bad weather as well. As Tokunoshima has the highest birth rate in the country, it was no surprise to see so many children at the venue. At first glance, bullfighting may not seem particularly suitable for children. However, if they are able to experience Tokunoshima bullfighting firsthand, then perhaps this will help play a role in preserving the traditions of Tokunoshima going forward.



Bullfighting handout from the day

As the bulls entered the ring, the crowd erupted into a frenzy. One bull quietly enters the arena and waits for the other bull who starts fighting immediately as he enters. A distinctive feature of Tokunoshima bullfighting is that there is no rope restraining the bulls by the nose; instead, the bull's owner (seko) stays close by to guide and provoke the bull. The powerful bullfight began and the bulls charged at each other engaging



Bullfighting in full force

their horns and hardened heads. In some cases, the bull would bleed when it was pierced by the other bull's horns and its white head would turn red. On other occasions, the bulls just stared at each other and ran away before the real fight began. In this

case, the first bull to run away was quickly defeated.

On the day that I attended, a total of 20 bulls within 10 teams participated in the bullfight. The longest fight was over 40 minutes, but being swept up in the performance

meant it felt much quicker. When a bullfight was won, the owner of the winning bull and those on the team would run into the arena and celebrate victory shouting “Wide! Wide!”.

The next day, I went to Tokunoshima in earnest. My goal in travelling across Tokunoshima was to introduce Tokunoshima to as many people as possible, especially to the foreign residents who read this publication. Therefore, I chose to cover Tokunoshima’s most famous tourist spots. There are many to choose from- so please find them below listed by theme.

Natural scenery

●Mushiroze

Here, the granite topography of Amami, which is rarely exposed, and the beautiful ocean scenery blend together in harmony. The name Mushiroze was given to this place because the scenery looks like it is covered in straw mats (*mushiro*). The granite and the endless horizon make this a stunningly beautiful spot.



Mushiroze

●Kanamizaki Palm Tunnel

In Tokunoshima, palm trees have been planted since ancient times and used as fences, to separate houses and fields. Here, they have grown so thickly that they look like a tunnel. You can fully immerse yourself in Tokunoshima’s tropical scenery at this tourist spot.

Beauty Spots

●Izumi Shigechiyo Memorial

Tokunoshima, famous for having Japan’s highest birth rate, also has another title: the Island of Longevity. Tokunoshima is home to a man who lived to the age of 120. Why not visit the island and receive the good fortune of longevity?



Izumi Shigechiyo Memorial

History and Culture

●Tokunoshima Town Museum

This is a valuable resource for learning about Tokunoshima Town. As someone who loves learning about the history of this area, I thoroughly enjoyed spending time here. I was particularly taken by the exhibition that allows visitors to see the turbulent history of Tokunoshima from ancient times up to the modern era.

●Tokunoshima Nakusami Kan (Bullfighting materials museum)

Inside the building that houses the bullfighting ring, there is a museum where you can learn about bullfighting. Through exhibits and video materials you can immerse yourself in the history of bullfighting. The museum is located indoors so you can also visit on rainy days!

●Nishikawa Brewery

Kagoshima's most famous alcoholic drink is sweet potato shochu; however, on Kagoshima's remote islands where sugarcane is grown in abundance, brown sugar shochu is the local speciality. Unlike sweet potato shochu which has a very unique flavour profile, brown sugar shochu has a lovely, sweet brown sugar aroma and is a good introduc-



Various Tokunoshima shochu

tory drink for those have never tried shochu before. At the Nishikawa Sake Brewery, you can see the process in which brown sugar shochu is made and sample several types of brown sugar shochu. However, drinking and driving is against the law, so if you are driving across Tokunoshima, don't give into temptation and give the samples a miss!

Tokunoshima scenery

● Tokunoshima World Heritage Conservation Center

The World Heritage Conservation Center, which opened in 2024, is a place where you can see and learn about the natural ecosystems of Tokunoshima. The display makes you feel as if you are in the forest, allowing you to experience Tokunoshima's nature up close. Next door, there is service station called Tokunoshima which is a great place to buy souvenirs.



Me stood in front of the Center

● Hub House, Amami Rabbit Observation Hut

Here you can see the unique ecosystem in action with Habu snakes and Amami rabbits, proof if needed of Amami's designation as a UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site. It located right next to Amami Town Hall and you can observe them very closely. Don't worry, the cages are properly closed!



Snake's alive!



Amami rabbit droppings – curiously didn't smell!

Although you can't see the real thing at the Amami rabbit observation hut, there is an observation camera and you can see footage of Amami rabbits playing nearby. I recommend this because you get to hear explanations from staff members who are really passionate about Amami rabbits.

There are many activities you can enjoy in this beautiful sea that is unique to tropical islands. I visited during a colder season so I didn't get to go in the sea; however, by chance I was able to do some whale watching! These humpback whales were spotted just off the coast of Tokunoshima where they were giving birth and raising their young

during the winter months. You can join a whale tour and get a close-up view of the whales from a boat, or if you're lucky you can see them from land!

Please take time out to visit Tokunoshima, where there is so much fun to be had throughout the four seasons.

International exchange in Kagoshima

●2025 Prefectural Scholarship Students arrive in Kagoshima●

The three Prefectural Scholarship Students for the 2025 academic year arrived in Kagoshima in early April. The purpose of this programme is to give the descendants of people from Kagoshima who moved abroad a chance to study at universities in the prefecture, to familiarise them with their home prefecture, and to foster talented people who will contribute to strengthening ties between the Prefecture and the countries they now live in.

The three students will stay in Kagoshima for 11 months until February next year, and will study their respective fields of expertise at Kagoshima University.

The programme began in 1970, and this year marks its 55th anniversary. This year, we welcomed two students from Brazil and one from Peru. The three students arrived in Kagoshima Prefecture after long flights totalling about 30 hours from Brazil and Peru in early April, started their studies at Kagoshima University in short order, and thus began their life in Kagoshima for the next 11 months.

We asked the three students about their enthusiasm for studying abroad.

Kodama Bruno Keigo (Brazil)

I will be studying Community Studies at Kagoshima University for the next 11 months.

I am very honored to have the opportunity to come to Kagoshima, where my grandfather was born and raised, 45 years after he emigrated to Brazil.

Although my grandfather already passed away, I am truly grateful that I will now be able to experience firsthand the memories of Kagoshima that he shared with me.

I also see this as an important opportunity to learn new things and improve my Japanese.

I would like to learn as much as I can about Kagoshima's festivals and traditions, and share that knowledge when I return to Brazil.

In addition, I would like to learn how events are held in Japan so that I can use that knowledge to celebrate in the same way in Brazil.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for this valuable opportunity. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my family and friends, as well as the people of Kagoshima Prefecture and the Kagoshima Kenjinkai* Brazil.

**Kenjinkai are groups aimed at bringing people together who are from, or who descend from, a certain prefecture, who live outside of the prefecture.*

Fukugawa Gustavo (Brazil)

Nice to meet you! My name is Fukugawa Gustavo.

Last year, I graduated from the Federal University of São Paulo in Brazil at the age of 23 with a degree in Business Administration. I am a Kagoshima Prefectural Scholarship Student for the 2025 academic year.

I am Japanese-Brazilian, and since I was in high school, I have always wanted to get to know my grandparents' hometown, and it has been my dream to go to Japan for many years. However, even though I wanted to go to Japan, I didn't know how to make that dream come true. Thanks to the seminar I attended at the time, I became a member of the Kagoshima Kenjinkai of my great-grandfather's hometown. After that, I joined the Kagoshima Prefectural Scholarship programme, and I felt that my long-held dream was finally becoming a reality.

The seminar is held every year by Asebex, an organisation made up of Japanese-Brazilians who have studied in Japan. Through the seminar, those who would like to study in Japan in the future can learn a lot about Japanese culture and Japanese student life. During the seminar, I learnt about the Kenjinkai, and since my great-grandfather was from Kagoshima, I decided to join.

In 2024, when I became a member of the Kenjinkai's youth division, I participated in various Kenjinkai events as a volunteer. The Kyushu Block Sports Day and the Japan Festival were particularly memorable.

It was a great honor for me to become a Prefectural Scholarship Student. I have been able to go to my grandparents' hometown, meet many wonderful people, learn about the culture and traditions unique to the region, and even meet my relatives who remained in Japan. I believe that this will continue to be a wonderful, once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Finally, after returning to Brazil, I would like to spread what I learnt from studying abroad within the Kenjinkai and the Japanese community, and pass on my experience to my successors in the future.

Kawabata Ponce Kevin Miguel (Peru)

When I was offered the opportunity to come to Japan, I knew I had something special right in front of me.

My family has historical ties to Japan and I have always dreamed of visiting the land of my ancestors.

My grandfather had the opportunity to visit Japan twice. My grandmother, on the other hand, emigrated when she was young and never returned to Japan, so she doesn't have many memories of her hometown. However, she always wanted to return given the chance, and continued to send letter to her siblings in Japan, but she was never able to go to Japan.

My father had also visited Japan before, but he never visited Kagoshima. He told me that he wished he had gone there.

Today, being Japan and walking through these lands has a special meaning to me. It's not just a trip; it is the realisation of a dream that has continued for generations, and I feel especially proud that I am realising a dream that my father once had.

I have been fascinated by Japanese culture for a long time. I believe there is still a lot for me to learn, but from now on I would like to immerse myself in this culture, learning as much as I can from these experiences. I will also be able to use what I learn here in my personal and professional life.

My greatest wish is to meet my grandmother's sisters and visit the places my father dreamed of visiting. I am sure my study abroad experience will be one I will never forget.

And when I return from Japan, I would like to share the many experiences I have gained from this study abroad experience with my loved ones.

This is the first time for the three of us to live in Kagoshima. I hope that through visiting grandparents' hometowns and meeting relatives, as well as studying, this will be a meaningful growth experience for us all.



▲Our arrival in Kagoshima

The Governor's Activities

●HIS JAPAN President Yamanobe visits the Prefectural Office (8th May)●

HIS JAPAN President Yamanobe has paid a visit to the Prefectural Office.

Our Prefecture has signed a partnership agreement with HIS Co., Ltd. to promote tourism to the Prefecture. In addition, we have signed a partnership agreement with Vietnam Airlines to launch regular flights to Vietnam, and have operated three charter flights between Hanoi and Kagoshima to promote mutual tourism.

Based on these partnership agreements, we will further strengthen our cooperative relationship, work hard on launching regular flights to Vietnam, and will continue to work on effective promotion to ensure a high level of inbound tourism from Vietnam.



The meeting ▲

▼ Photo with group from HIS



●Kagoshima Prefecture-Jiangsu Province Exchange and Cooperation Conference (19th May)●

The Kagoshima Prefecture-Jiangsu Province Exchange and Cooperation Conference was opened by Jiangsu Province Vice Governor Fang Wei who visited Kagoshima Prefecture with his delegation.

Starting in 1985, this year marks the 40th anniversary of friendly exchange between Kagoshima and Jiangsu. We discussed the situation around environment, economy and welfare among other topics in Kagoshima and Jiangsu.

I explained that problems such as aging, medical care, and the environment are not only issues facing our Prefecture, but also issues facing the world, and that we

would like to use the advanced technological capabilities of both Kagoshima and Jiangsu to work towards solving these problems. I also said that we would like to continue to work toward developing friendly relations by strengthening cooperation between Kagoshima and Jiangsu.

Vice Governor Fang Wei praised Kagoshima's shochu and wagyu beef, and that he would also like to see mutual exchange in the field of renewable energy such as solar and wind power generation, as well as interpersonal exchange through young people and sports.

We will work continue to work to further strengthen our long-standing deep and friendly exchanges between Kagoshima Prefecture and Jiangsu Province.



▲Exchanging gifts with Vice Governor Fang



▲A photo with the Jiangsu delegation



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



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

Around this time of year, when the rain gets heavy you can hear the loud calls of frogs



In Japanese, a frog's croak goes 'kerokero', but do you know how it is expressed in other languages?

In English, it goes 'ribbit ribbit', in Korean it is goes '개굴개굴 (kegul kegul)', and in Chinese it goes '呱呱 (gwagwa).'

One of the fascinating things about language is that even when seeing or hearing the same thing, the way it is expressed is different in each country and region.

I hope to continue to bring you more information about the eccentricities and varieties of languages around the world throughout subsequent publications.

Looking forward to our next edition. 🐸



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 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.

▲▼▲▼ **Inquiries** ▲▼▲▼

International Affairs Division, Tourism, Culture and Sports Department
Kagoshima Prefectural Government
10-1 Kamoike-shinmachi, Kagoshima City, Japan 890-8577
TEL: +81-99-286-2306 / FAX: +81-99-286-5522

Email

English: cir1@pref.kagoshima.lg.jp

Chinese: cir2@pref.kagoshima.lg.jp

Korean: cir3@pref.kagoshima.lg.jp

Japanese: minami@pref.kagoshima.lg.jp

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