

# W h a t ' s U p , O I T A !

Bringing the latest from Oita, Japan to all those connected to Oita thriving all across the globe.

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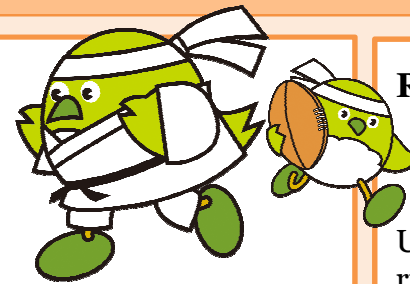
**Greetings!** from Shunro Hori <hori-syunro@pref.oita.lg.jp>, the Head of the International Policy Division in the Oita Prefecture Planning Promotion Department

Every day in August we could excitedly follow the various Olympic events. Recently, in Oita Prefecture as well, there was a brilliant and close rugby match played between Rugby School from the UK and Oita Maizuru High School. From September 1st, there was a joint training camp in Hita for fencing, and the representative teams of Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Kazakhstan all attended. The circle of international exchange in Oita keeps on widening through sport.

## Oita Prefecture Association Relations in Rio, An Olympic Support Organization

**The Rio de Janeiro Olympics**, the first Olympics to be held in South America, have safely concluded, save for the Paralympics. We are now one new step closer to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, but this year's Rio Olympics also had exchanges between people from Oita Prefecture.

It could've been lonely for the two Olympic athletes competing from Oita Prefecture, but, in order to support Mami Umeki, who competed in Women's 78 kg Judo, her relatives from Kokonoe and mayor Kazuaki Sakamoto came to support her. The former chairman of the Brazilian Oita Prefecture Association, Michikazu Nagamatsu, who is a distant relative of Umeki's from Kokonoe, went out to greet them, and the two parties supported Ms. Umeki together. Mr. Nagamatsu moved to Cotia as a youth and has been residing in São Paulo for over 50 years, but he had been planning for the arrival of the support group for close to half a year. Unfortunately, Ms. Umeki did not make it past the first match, but she's still young and is hoping to do better at the Tokyo Olympics. **[Brazil Oita Prefecture Association]**



## Rugby News

August 28<sup>th</sup> (Sunday) – Rugby School (from the UK) came to Oita for a rugby match.

There was a match between Rugby School in England – the birthplace of the sport – and Oita Maizuru High School. At the end of the match, a winning try turned the tables, and Maizuru High School lost narrowly with a final score of 22-20. Supervisor at Rugby School, Simon Brown, praised the teams, saying it was “a tough match.”



↑ Published in Brazil's “Nikkei Shinbun”



# Interviews with an ALT

**We went to Kunisaki** this month. Kunisaki is a city with no train station, no movie theater, and no McDonald's. But Kunisaki does have three JET Programme ALTs (Assistant Language Teachers teaching English). As foreigners living in a more urban area, the lifestyle of foreigners who live in the countryside is somewhat of a mystery to us. So we spoke to Jon Harwell, a third year ALT from Los Angeles, to help solve that puzzle.

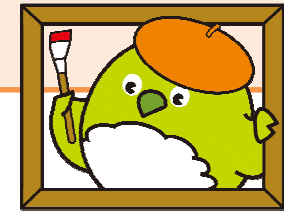
As Jon is from Los Angeles, adjusting to Kunisaki was both easy and difficult. Cars are a necessity in L.A. as well, so the two cities do have some things in common. However, the roads in Kunisaki are straighter and less interesting, and the population is miniscule in comparison to L.A. Jon experienced problems with this at first but has since adjusted.

After all, Kunisaki does have a number of things that make it different in the best ways. Kunisaki has a long religious history as the birthplace of mountain worship that arose from a unique combination of Buddhism and Shintoism. Tourists can embark on climbing and walking paths, called long trails, that are related to this history. (There's an American former ALT who now works in the Kunisaki tourism office, so English-speaking tourists should definitely make a visit!)

Aside from its fascinating history, present day Kunisaki also has a very strong community. Tourists who only visit famous places in Japan, such as Tokyo and Kyoto, don't get to see the locals cultivating rice fields together or making mochi. They don't get to see students practicing for *eki-den* (a type of running race) or preparing for small, local festivals. Although adults run the festivals, students participate in taiko, dance, and more. For an ALT, festivals provides an opportunity to talk to students outside of class.

And Jon has quite a few students. He teaches at eight different schools, including two junior high schools and six elementary schools. His class sizes ranges anywhere from 6 to 40 students, and sometimes different school grades are combined with each other. It can be hard to remember names or form meaningful relationships with students in large classes. However, Jon enjoys teaching, leading classes, and admires the dedication the JTEs show to English language education.





## 13<sup>th</sup> Oita Asia Sculpture Exhibition

October 8<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) to November 27<sup>th</sup> – Asakura Fumio Memorial Hall

The Oita Asia Sculpture Exhibition was founded in 1992, in honor of Fumio Asakura - a sculptor from Bungo-Ono City – in order to discover and help nurture young sculptors from Asia. This year will be the thirteenth Oita Asia Sculpture Exhibition. This year there were more applications than ever, from fifteen different countries in Asia. Thirty selected works will be displayed, including the grand prize winning piece and six pieces that won awards for excellence. Additionally, while the exhibition is being held, there will be workshops and events held at the Asakura Fumio Memorial Hall and so on, mainly on Saturdays and Sundays. Please come to the home town of Fumio Asakura, and enjoy the energetic modern sculptures created by young sculptors from various Asian countries, as well as Bungo-Ono City's rich nature!



*The 13<sup>th</sup> Winning Artworks (1 Grand Prize Winner <top left> & 6 Merit Award Winners)*

Miriam Starling

## Editors' Note

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Please enjoy our new autumn colors as the seasons slowly (but surely) change. The Olympics have made this summer more amazing than usual, so we hope that the rest of the year keeps bringing good news.



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