

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.

October 2017 No. 17



Greetings! from Mitsuru Tokuno <tokuno-mitsuru@pref.oita.lg.jp>, the Head of the International Policy Division in the Oita Prefecture Planning Promotion Department

Typhoon No. 18 made landfall in Oita towards the end of September. It primarily damaged the southern regions of the prefecture, and we are thankful for all those who have checked in on us. Including a courtesy call the Bangladesh ambassador made to our governor, many parliamentarians, including Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, and Tuvalu, came to Beppu for a conference. There were many who came to Oita for the first time. Although they spent only a short amount of time here, I believe they had a good time. Fiji and Tonga are countries that excel at rugby, so I hope that they will return in two years for the 2019 Rugby World Cup.

(Sun. September 17th) Damage Caused by Typhoon No. 18

Southern Oita received record breaking rainfall as typhoon no. 18 approached on the 17th. Rivers flooded and landslides occurred all throughout the area. The typhoon flooded over 3,500 buildings, caused one casualty, and injured five others.

Around noon on the 17th, severe winds reached speeds of more than 25 km/h (15.5 mph) in the prefecture, and we experienced strong winds and rains. According to the Oita branch of the Japan Meteorological Agency, Tsukumi and Saiki City saw between 110 and 120 mL (4.3 to 4.7 in.) of intense rain in one hour.



Reception Held for Friendship in the Asia-Pacific Region

The Asian-Pacific Parliamentarians' Union came to Oita for a conference, so a welcome reception was held here on September 19th.

The reception treated the guests to food that used ingredients made in Oita Prefecture (Bungo beef steak, sashimi and sushi, tori-ten, etc.) and went over extremely well. Additionally, a variety of displays were set up at the reception venue in order to advertise tourism, agricultural products, handicrafts, and more.

History in Taketa

I'll be honest. I don't go to Taketa very often. Since I moved to Oita, I've visited twice. But something I've learned through my travels around Oita is that Oita is full of history. For example, when I visited Usa Jingu in April, I didn't realize that it was the first shrine-temple in all of Japan. On my visit to Taketa, I wanted to know what interesting pieces of history it contained that I didn't know about.

In order to do so, I boarded a bus headed towards Kumamoto and disembarked in front of Hanamizuki Onsen. (The recent typhoon has eliminated direct service to Bungotaketa Station from Oita Station by train.)

My first stop was the Rentaro Taki Museum, located about a 10 minute walk from the bus stop. It's located on a history trail filled with other historic sites and small, quaint shops. The Taketa that I was seeing was not all that different from the Taketa that Taki experienced.

Rentaro Taki was born in 1879 and died in Oita City at the young age of 23 in 1903. He lived in Taketa from age 12 to 15. He attended the Tokyo Academy of Music and later studied abroad in Germany. After studying abroad in Germany, he came back to Oita Prefecture where he later died of tuberculosis.

From a young age, Taki wanted to become a musician. And he succeeded! But he didn't become just any musician, he went on to become one of Japan's most famous composers. He composed many famous songs, including "Kōjō no Tsuki."

Although I had never heard of Rentaro Taki before I came to Taketa, I have seen him before. There's a statue of him in Oita City that I've seen any number of times. I just never stopped to read the inscription.

Alongside being informative, the museum has a very pleasant atmosphere. It's set in Taki's former house and you can wander freely about the tatami rooms. The information is primarily written in Japanese, but there is also some artwork that can be enjoyed.



Left: Exterior of the Rentaro Taki Museum

Below (clockwise): Notes carved into a rock, a roadside piano, and a music stand next to a metronome found in other locations in Taketa



History in Taketa



Statue of Rentaro Taki

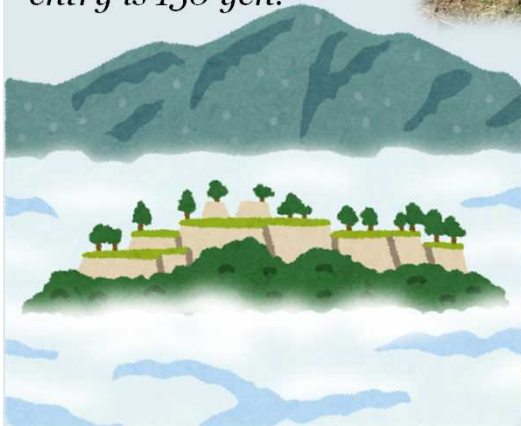
My next stop in Taketa was the Oka Castle Ruins. Taki himself frequented these ruins. In fact, the song "Kōjō no Tsuki" is about the Oka Castle Ruins.

The first thing I noticed about Oka Castle Ruins was the hill ("Oka"). In order to make it "easy to defend [and] very difficult to capture," it was built atop a hill. If I were the enemy, I'd get tired, give up, and go home pretty quickly, so I think it's effective. Although, people back in the 12th century, when this Castle was constructed, were probably a lot stronger than me.

The grounds of the Ruins are extensive, and, although the structures that used to occupy the castle are gone, is still an interesting tourism destination complete with souvenir shops and rest areas.

The ruins are also a fantastic photo spot. You can see the Sobo Katamuki mountains as well as Mt. Aso and Mt. Kuju. The Oka Castle ruins ranked #18 this year as one of the best castles in Japan.

Adult entry to the Rentaro Taki Museum is 300 yen; entry for elem./JHS children is 200 yen. Adult entry to the Oka Castle Ruins is 300 yen; elem./JHS entry is 150 yen.



Between Typhoon No. 18 in Oita and several hurricanes impacting my own country, I will be more than glad when this season comes to an end. My thoughts and prayers are with those affected.

Editor's Note

Sheridan McKisick
Oita Prefectural Office
Planning Promotion
Department
International Policy
Division
pu1014001@pref.oita.jp

