

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

Two international friendship associations, the Oita Japan-America Society and the Oita-Cameroon Friendship Association, were started this August. Relation activities between both America and Cameroon have proven successful and have launched in the form of friendship associations throughout the prefecture. Members from both organizations plan to make goodwill visits to each other's countries between September and November, so we expect relations to expand even further. I'd like "What's Up, Oita" to showcase how these activities are progressing as well.

Tobidate! (Leap for Tomorrow) Study Abroad Initiative: Local Talent Tour and Governor Courtesy Visit

The Oita Prefecture region global talent tour of Tobidate! (Leap for Tomorrow) Study Abroad Initiative, a public-private partnership aimed at helping Japanese students study abroad, aims to cultivate talented individuals, who are needed by society and industries and can flourish on a global stage, through study abroad.

Six Japanese students studying abroad were selected from the prefecture this year as well. They made a courtesy visit to the governor on August 3rd, underwent pre-orientation, and had a farewell party. Including the Oita University students, each study abroad student announced his/her plans for study abroad at the courtesy visit with the governor and received words of encouragement from him. "I want to experience cutting-edge semiconductor technology in America's Silicone Valley and make use of it in technologizing Oita Prefecture's agriculture," one student said. After interning at supporting businesses in the prefecture, the students went to the U.S., Italy, Australia, Nepal, and Cambodia (in that order) in the second half of August before taking off for their study abroad destinations.



(Tues. August 29th) Osprey Makes Emergency Landing at Oita Airport



On the 29th, a new model of the Osprey cargo transport plane made an emergency landing at Oita Airport. The osprey was en route from the Iwakuni base (Yamaguchi Prefecture) to Futenma Air Station. Engine trouble reportedly caused the emergency landing. No damage or injuries occurred.

The Animals of Oita City

Three of Oita City's best tourism spots lie clustered together in walking distance: Mt. Takasaki, Umi Tamago Aquarium, and Tanoura Beach. Although I had visited Mt. Takasaki and Tanoura Beach before, I had never been to Umi Tamago, and I certainly hadn't visited more than one on the same day before. In order to really get my fill of all three, I started my day bright and early at the bus stops in front of Oita Station.

I took the bus headed towards Beppu, which has a stop in front of Mt. Takasaki. A one way trip is a little over 20 minutes and 410 yen. The ticket gate to the mountain is about a minute walk away from the bus stop.

Although there was a monorail available, I took the scenic walking trail and enjoyed the natural surroundings of Mt. Takasaki before I encountered its inhabitants.

The monkeys living on Mt. Takasaki come in a wide range of sizes and shades of cute. Sometimes the monkeys chat amongst each other amicably and other times they quarrel, especially when there's food involved.

Feeding time at Mt. Takasaki is an incredible sight. The stampede the monkeys make is reminiscent of the wildebeest stampede in *The Lion King*. Monkeys come from all over the mountain to feast together. At times, monkeys rushed past me, less than an inch away from my shoes. Two words sum it up: fascinating and frightening.



After being surrounded by wildlife without any barriers, my subsequent trip to Umi Tamago Aquarium was a return to a much more conventional form.

Although I've rode past the aquarium any countless number of times on my way to Beppu, I'd never taken the time to enter it before. The aquarium was much larger and filled with many more attractions than I'd anticipated. The number of different species the aquarium housed was immense and ranged from local species (like seki-aji and seki-saba) to more exotic ones.

The Animals of Oita City



Aside from hosting a wide number of aquatic species, the aquarium also hosts several different performances every hour throughout the day.

I made it my mission to visit as many of these performances as I could. I attended the dolphin show and a bearded seal performance, but the star of my favorite performance was a walrus. She waddled (crawled? slid?) out to greet the audience and gave us a very funny show.



After wrapping up at the aquarium, I headed next door to see more nature at Tanoura Beach.

Tanoura Beach is more than just sand and water. There's a gigantic pirate ship that children play on and an artificial island across the way that's perfect for a stroll with a lover or a friend. (It's also good for introspective walks; I went by myself.)



Both Mt. Takasaki and Umi Tamago have English language pamphlets available. Entry to Mt. Takasaki is ¥510 for adults and high school students, ¥250 yen for elementary/JHS students, and free for preschool aged children. Entry to Umi Tamago is ¥2,200 for adults, ¥1,100 for elementary/JHS students, and 700 yen for children under age 4. Entry to Tanoura Beach is free, but facility fees may vary.

Two International Friendship Associations Established in Oita

The inaugural meeting of the Oita Japan-America Society was held in Oita City on August 2nd.

In recent years in Oita Prefecture, international relations have not stopped at private exchanges, such as study abroad or sister city relations. They now include international trade and market development and a growing number of businesses connected to America. Moreover, the success of the “Japan-America Grassroots Summit” that Oita hosted in 2015 heightened the demand to continue having extensive relations with America as a region. In light of this, administration, economic, university, and business officials started the Oita Japan-America Society, the first to be established in the Oita Prefecture region.

In her commemorative address, Joy M. Sakurai, Principal Consular Officer of the Fukuoka Consulate, introduced the consulate and spoke on relations between America and Japan, as well as Oita.

Oita Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Himeno served as chairman and said aspiringly that, “Oita Prefecture has many businesses that have relations with America though trade or overseas market development. I want Oita to become a place where anyone can meet.”



The inaugural meeting of the Oita-Cameroon Friendship Association was held on August 4th.

This organization was established with TMT. Japan (Oita City, represented by Tomoki Yokoyama) at its center. TMT. Japan aims to spread bio-toilets (toilets that use bacteria in place of water) in Cameroon. Cameroon Charge d’Affaires Raymond Kamga also participated in the inaugural meeting and said he was, “incredibly pleased that the relationship between Cameroon and Nakatsuemura that started with the 2002 Soccer World Cup had developed into the establishment of this organization.” Chairman Yokoyama said, “From here on out, I want to do my best to learn more about Cameroonian culture and visit Cameroon.”

Editor’s Note

I felt chilly for the time in months the other day. This year has been difficult: late cherry blossoms, a disastrous rainy season, and a relentless heat. But perhaps, just perhaps, fall is coming after all.

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