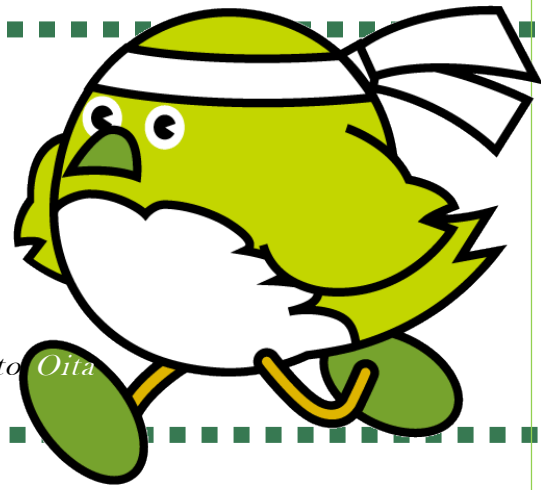


What's up,

OITA! 2019 May No. 36

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



A few words from the new head of the International Policy Division



My name is Masanao Fujii, the new Director of the International Policy Division. Selected matches for the Rugby World Cup 2019 will convene in Oita during October, I will be highly anticipating everyone's arrival at the prefecture in upcoming days!

Masanao Fujii <fujii-masanao@pref.oita.lg.jp>, Head of the International Policy Division in the Oita Prefecture Planning Promotion Department

***Please see the Japanese version of this month's newsletter for more information on the International Policy Division's new administration.*

News from March: Two Study-Abroad Graduates, from Shanghai and Taiwan Respectively, have been Appointed Mejiro Overseas Supporters

Mr. Siqi Zhang, a student member of the inaugural class of Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, returned home to Shanghai in 2005 and began running an import and export company among other businesses before establishing his first local Japanese cuisine restaurant in 2014, and has since expanded his local business to a total of six stores. Seeing that Oita has a place in Mr. Zhang's heart as a second home, a selection of the prefecture's local alcoholic drinks is available in his store. Additionally, Mr. Zhang has run a series of fairs in which Oita's food and drinks are featured, with an upcoming fair expected to held in autumn this year as well. *(Continued on Page 2)*



Mr. Siqi Zhang





Ms. Yating Chung



(Continued from Page 1) Ms. Yating Chung from Taiwan entered Nippon Bunri University in 2000 and returned home in 2007, then made her way back to Japan again in 2014 to open her own import and export company. Hoping to spread the name of Oita's products overseas, Ms. Chung began her business by handling umeshu and other local alcoholic beverages, and has gradually increased her company's trade volumes. Aside from being an appointed Mejiro Overseas Supporter, Ms. Chung is also a supporting trade advisor on matters concerning export for local businesses in the prefecture.

Among the prefecture's study-abroad graduate alumni, there are those like Mr. Zhang and Ms. Chung who start their personal businesses and continue to engage with Oita prefecture in areas such as local product export and tourism promotions. The Prefecture greatly looks forward to working with Mejiro Overseas Supporter for the revitalization of Oita's local economy in the future as well.

Two Brazilian Internship Students Have Arrived Oita Prefecture

Mr. Masayuki Marvin Ishii, born in a family of Oita expatriates who have immigrated to Brazil, and Ms. Lika Karen Shikata, have arrive Oita prefecture as study-abroad students. Our two new members will briefly introduce themselves below.

I am Lika Karen Shikata, currently studying Architecture in Oita University. I am twenty-years-old and a second-year student. As of now, I am studying the Japanese language in one of Oita University's special departments. I get to interact with study-abroad students from many countries at university, so I am having quite a lot of fun. In my upcoming one year of exchange, I would like to do my best so as to learn a lot and acquire plenty of new experiences.



My name is Marvin Masayuki Ishii, a twenty-two-year-old. I come from Sao Paulo, Brazil. I am a university student studying Engineering. This year, I will work to the best of my ability to learn about the Japanese language and engineering at Oita University. I would also like to know more about Oita, the city of my family.



My name is Zhanting Miao, and it is a pleasure to be in your acquaintance. I arrived Japan from Xiangyang, Hubei Province, China in April, and my interests are watching movies and making dumplings. Back at home, I would go to the theatres and cook up a meal of dumpling with my family once every week. While I partake in the role of a Coordinator for International Relations, I would like to serve as a bridge for Chinese-Japanese relations and to strengthen my general skillset. I look forward to working with everyone in the future as well.

- Zhanting Miao, CIR from the People's Republic of China

The International Policy Division extends its warmest welcome to Zhanting Miao, the new Coordinator for International Relations who has joined the division from April.

Having entered April, one can feel the presence of spring more vividly by the day. Around the same time every year, the cherry blossom front travels northward from Okinawa to Hokkaido, traversing across the islands of Japan in a span of approximately four months. Oita, situated in the island of Kyushu, is one of the earliest places in the nation where one can enjoy the flowers. With the thought of cherry blossoms in mind, the participants at the English Free Talk at the Oita International Plaza and I spoke about hanami.

Conversation concerning *botamochi*, a food eaten on the Vernal Equinox Day, was also brought up as we became caught up in the ambiance of early spring. While I knew that *botamochi* in spring and *ohagi* in autumn are the same thing as a bit of trivia, I found out for the first time that like the *botan* (peony), the *hagi* (Japanese clover) also refers to a kind of flower. Should the opportunity arise, besides the cherry blossom, I would love to be mesmerised by the beauty of *botan* and *hagi* as well.

- Xin Lan Xie, CIR from Australia



Monthly staff corner



Hita Pressed Flower Museum

Capturing the Colours of the Seasons

The weather turns warmer by the day as we enter May, and cherry blossoms in the prefecture have more or less withered. Hoping to capture some essence of spring before the season passes, we decided to pay the Hita Pressed Flower Museum a visit – after all, what brings forth the image of springtime better than flowers?

After travelling from the Oita city by car for a bit over an hour, we made our way to a building known as Reimeikan. The building, with its stylish red brick exterior, was first built as a branch for the Oita Bank in 1916, then operating as the Hamada Hospital in 1993 to 1996 before finally transforming into the current Hita Pressed Flower Museum in 2001. The second floor of Reimeikan now functions as a gallery and conference room, while the first floor acts as a workshop space for visitors who wish to experience the art of pressed flowers firsthand.

It simply wouldn't do for us to miss the pressed-flower experience now that we were in the museum itself. We opted for the framed flower basket artwork on the day, and once the experience began, a paraphernalia of

pre-pressed flowers ranging from violets, creeping daisies, doubtful knight's spurs and others were laid before our eyes. Being Australian, what caught my attention the most was the madder-leaved bauera, a pink flower with yellow stamen that blooms in the eastern part of Australia. We faltered momentarily at the seemingly limitless array of choices – looking at the colourful selection alone was quite fun in itself, and we were all pumped up before the actual hands-on part had even begun.



A printed template of a basket sprayed with craft glue acted as our canvas, and we fiddled with our tweezers and the flowers for much of an hour before we were finally somewhat satisfied. One excellent tip from the staff was to lay down smaller flowers before the bigger ones to create a sense of perspective. Our finished designs, which all looked like splashed watercolour, were then pressed against sheets of glass and presented in wooden frames. The experience, of course, is not only limited to springtime, with the selection of pressed flowers changing according to season. If you're looking for a fun and aesthetically pleasing activity, be sure to visit the Hita Pressed Flower Museum when you're in the area.

Framed artwork: ¥1,000 (Tax excluded; other experiences also available, please contact museum for further information.)

Hita Pressed Flower Museum
2 Chome-2-1 Kuma, Hita, Oita 877-0044
10-walk from Hita Station
TEL : 0973-25-5060 / FAX : 0973-25-5061

② Jion-no-Taki Waterfall

Access: 30 minutes by car upon entering the Amagase Takatsuka Interchange

Situated in Kusu-machi, the Jion-no-Taki Waterfall is a local favourite. While the scale of the waterfall is not overly big, standing at 30 metres, the surrounding greenery and stylishly furnished Michino-Eki roadside station makes it a pleasant place to stop by. What makes the waterfall extra special is that visitors can walk behind its curtain of water. It's also worth mentioning that the landscape is quite a stunner when the foliage becomes red in autumn.

③ Sakuradaki Waterfall

Access: 10 minutes on foot from the Amagase Station

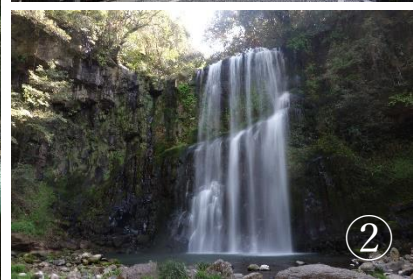
The Sakuradaki Waterfall can be reached in 7 minutes by car from the Jion-no-Taki Waterfall. It's said that the waterfall was so named because the sprays of droplet resemble the flowers of sakura. The waterfall is situated conveniently within a 10-minute walk from the Amagase Station on the Kyudai Main Line. The multiple open-air spas in the Amagase Onsen area are also interesting attractions for those who are adventurous.

Other attractions in the proximity:

① Mameda-machi

Access: 15 minutes on foot from the Hita Station

A retro townscape first built as a castle town for the Maruyama Castle in 1601, Mameda-machi was a *tenryo* directly administered by the Tokugawa Shogunate from the early Edo period. Much of the historical buildings have been preserved to this day, and the current Mameda-machi is littered with numerous shops and museums. For foodies, the district is famous for its yakisoba noodles, not to mention the numerous trendy cafes that line its streets.



Words from the editor:

The Hita Kawabiraki Tourism Festival draws closer by the day as we head towards the end of May. Keep an eye out on the event for a display of fireworks extravaganza.

- Xin Lan Xie, CIR from Australia