



What's up, OITA!

Bringing the latest from Oita, Japan to people around the globe!

2022 Oita Prefecture Scholarship Students

“Discover Oita” Study Tour!



On Saturday, July 16, a study tour was held for students holding the Oita Prefecture Scholarship in order for them to deepen their understanding about the food, culture, sights, and nature of Oita and share that experience with others through social media. On this study tour, the first of several, students first visited Oita Airport, which has been gathering attention as the first horizontal spaceport in Asia. After this, students participated in an internship fair in Beppu. It's hoped that students who participated will further deepen their understanding of other cultures and bring Oita and their own respective countries closer together in the future.

#Oitastudytour

Students posted about the tour on social media. Go check it out!

Oishii Wales!

Welsh specialty products have arrived in Oita!



The 'Oishii Wales' Booth set up shop at the end of June as part of an imported cars event that took place in the square in front of Oita Station. The square was bustling with people who had come to check out the delicious wares on offer, many of which you cannot usually find in Oita, including Welsh cakes and lemon curd. A limited Welsh pop-up shop has even been opened at the 'OitaMade' select shop, which deals in locally produced goods. With the successive selling-out of Welsh Whiskeys, the most popular product on offer, you could really feel the extent of the interest in Wales within the prefecture. The exchange between Oita Prefecture and Wales established in March of this year with an agreement of friendship has been progressing even in familiar areas such as this!



News From Around Oita

Headlines for July

- Oita Asia Sculpture Exhibition: first prize in fine art category goes to Asaji Town resident
- Passionate Hita Pear appeal holds ceremony marking beginning of pear season
- Castle ruins discovered at peak of Kusu's Mount Kirikabu; discovery includes group of trenches and entrance/exit from around 1580
- Experience the summer! Oita City's Nagahama Shrine's pedestrian paradise opened for first time in 3 years
- Nakatsu City holds ceremony at port, welcoming passengers on large-scale cruise ships for first time in 5 years



Mount Kirikabu, Kusu Town



Fumio Asakura Museum of Sculpture, Asaji Town



Mameda Town, Hita City



The Top Five Spots You Should Go in Kitsuki While Wearing a Kimono!

In Kitsuki, there are places all over town that provide special services if you visit them while wearing a kimono. Here, we'd like to introduce some spots that we think you should definitely visit!

① There's no doubt you'll look good in a kimono here!
~Ohara-Tei~



② Enjoy specially-made sweets in a longstanding samurai home
~Noumi-tei/Dainochaya~



③ The earth and stone walls make quite the impression at this hill
~Suya no Saka~



④ The city's symbol, looking over Castle Town
~Kitsuki Castle~



⑤ A portal to the Edo era
~Kitsuki Castle Festival~



Introducing One of Kitsuki's Greats

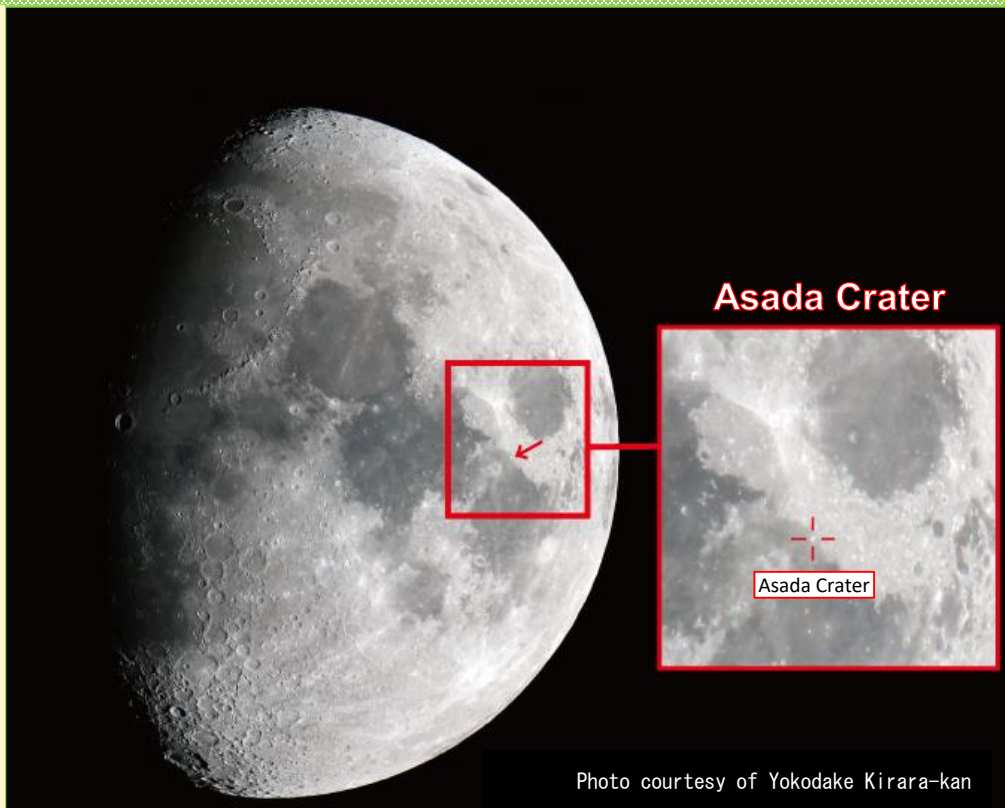
麻田剛立

(ASADA Gouryu)

Asada Gouryu was born in Kitsuki, and worked as an astronomer and doctor during the Edo era.

He has been recognized as one of the forefathers of modern astronomy in Japan, and in 1976, the IAU (International Astronomical Union) named one of the moon's craters, "Asada," after him.

Asada Crater is located at 7°3' N 49°9' E on the moon's surface, and has a diameter of 12 km.



Asada Crater

Asada Crater



Nakatsu Days



Nakatsu, located on the far west edge of Oita Prefecture, has been on my to-go list for a while. I had heard that its culture and overall vibe was quite different from the rest of Oita Prefecture, which makes sense considering that Fukuoka City is a similar distance away from Nakatsu City than is Oita City, the capital cities of both prefectures respectively. Though I had scoffed slightly at seeing the “Sonic” bested in speed by my friend’s K-car, I had to admit that it was fairly fast, coming in with a one-way journey duration of just under an hour. Escaping from the rain of Oita City, I sped towards Nakatsu, where the sun was attempting to shine, at least, and had a day to myself exploring this city at the far reaches of Oita Prefecture. My first impressions of Nakatsu were that it was particularly spacious, with wide

Swara Fife

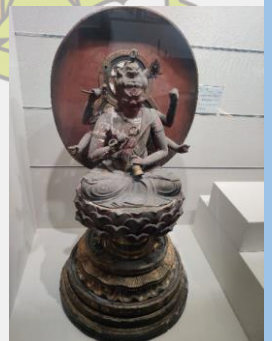
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streets and spaced-out buildings in a suburban-like structure. Even the layout and vibe of Nakatsu was vastly different to Oita City and other cities I had visited before in Oita Prefecture.

I embarked on a route I had seen in a tourism pamphlet called the ‘Castle Town Walking Route’. Being very easily distracted, I managed to somehow complete the tour almost completely out of order, and kind of backwards, however I still managed to go to all the main sites listed. It was en-route to Nakatsu City History Museum that I made the mistake of investigating Nakatsu City’s Castle Town Road; it was long and windy, and set me on a path, albeit the wrong one, in experiencing a taste of Nakatsu as it would have been hundreds of years ago. I stopped at a number of small temples along this deserted, windy road, including Goganji, the striking red temple that was supposed to be last on my ports of call. It was peaceful and refreshing, as shrines and temples almost always are, but contained within it an elegant sort of atmosphere of the kind I had not yet come across in Oita Prefecture.

From there, I tried my best to reroute myself and headed towards the museum. It was modern, and held a plethora of artefacts from the Jomon Period (14,000-300 BC) right through until the modern day, even detailing archaeological digs that had taken place to discover some of said artefacts in the area. After taking a little too long admiring the fragments of pottery, ancient stone Buddhas, farming tools, old armour, and scrolls, I took a break at the museum café, sampling their ‘stone wall parfait’! The flavour was very Japanese, with azuki (red bean), matcha ice cream, mochi, jelly, and rice crispies, all assembled beautifully and topped with a wafer in the shape of Nakatsu Castle, which happened to be my next stop.

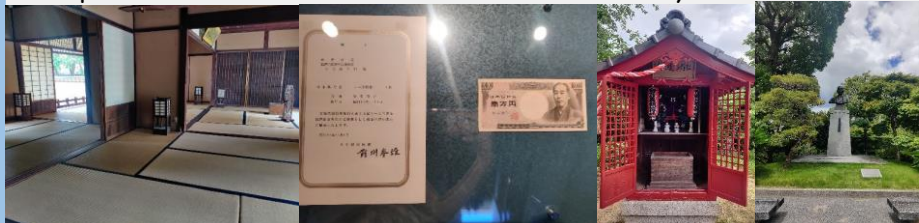




Built in the 1500s, Nakatsu Castle is a stone castle surrounded by a moat; it offers panoramic views of Nakatsu from the top observation deck. The artefacts on each floor offered a glimpse of the castle as it would have been through the ages. The view from the top was spectacular, and the sun had shown her face just in time for me to enjoy a panoramic view of Nakatsu City. From up here, I once again felt the impressive and elegant air of Nakatsu and its castle acutely.



Exiting the compound, I passed by the quaint shrine that likely serviced the feudal lords and their retainers, and headed onwards towards the Fukuzawa Yukichi Memorial Museum, to learn more about the Nakatsu man whose face appears on the 1000 yen note. There, you can purchase *senbei* that looks like the 1000 yen note as a souvenir!



My final stop of the day was a *karage* shop, where I purchased a bag of fried chicken and a ham fry to nibble on before my train home.

Be sure to try these if you find yourself in Nakatsu, as they are both famous foods of the area! The Katsu shop was funky and featured a drawing of a pig, its speech bubble exclaiming: 'my ham katsu - 100 yen!'. After collecting my freshly fried takeout, I found a nearby park to sit and munch before heading home.



Nakatsu City
History Museum



Nakatsu Castle



Fukuzawa Yukichi
Memorial Museum



700¥ for same-day entry to these three attractions!





Going Dutch

Back when Japan was closed for business to most of the outside world (1641–1854), only one country from Europe was allowed to trade with Japan—the Netherlands. Through the point of contact they were allowed in Nagasaki, knowledge from the western world spread throughout Japan. The study of this knowledge, and the study of Dutch in order to understand it, was called 蘭学 *rangaku* (Dutch learning). Nakatsu was one of the major players in Dutch learning. Many lords of Nakatsu supported these studies, with one even writing several Dutch→Japanese dictionaries. This support also led to much study of western technologies and medicine by Nakatsu’s populace. Therefore, in Nakatsu there are two small branches of the Nakatsu History museum dedicated to learning about, well, the learning of Dutch/western medicine.

One is the Murakami Archives, the old home of the Murakami family, a family of doctors spanning back to 1640. Gensui Murakami, of the seventh generation of the family, was the first person in Kyushu to perform a dissection of a human body, receiving special permission from the lord of Nakatsu to do so. The archives contain a few detailed, and therefore kind of gruesome, drawings of the dissection. There are also various old medical instruments and bottles all around the premises for your viewing pleasure. The other museum is the Oe Archives. The Oe family worked as official doctors for the Nakatsu domain for generations. Here you can see the 解体新書 *Katai Shinsho* (New Book on Anatomy), a translation of the Dutch translation of *Tabulae Anatomicae* (Anatomical Tables), and one of the first major translations of a medical text from a European language to Japanese. It’s so important, a floor in Nakatsu Castle is even dedicated to it. There’s also a garden that was used to grow plants to make various kinds of medicine, and diagrams of breast cancer surgery, which really made me think about how long cancer has actually been around. Both museums have caretakers that are willing to explain so much more about Nakatsu’s role in modern Japanese medicine and western learning. They may be small museums, but definitely give them a chance!



Murakami Archives (JPN)



Oe Archives (JPN)





The Dojo

And now for something completely different. I have a fairly large interest in retro video games. At this point, I own over 20 different kinds of game systems, and someone should really probably stop me from buying Japanese copies of games I already own. But for now, no one *is* stopping me, so when I decided I was going to Nakatsu, this was the first place I wanted to go. The Famicom Dojo. Old game stores like this are a very rare sight, both here and in America. Most stores have been bought by major chains or have gone out of business, but the Dojo is still kicking. They sell games from the original Famicom (NES) all the way up to the Wii at relatively competitive prices, and have quite the selection. But obviously, people don't really shop local for the prices or the inventory, they go for the service. One of the biggest reasons I went to this shop was honestly just to talk with the owner. I picked out a couple games I wanted and started a conversation by asking if he had a cartridge version of the first Legend of Zelda game. Unfortunately, he didn't. But the fact I led the conversation with that and he immediately knew what I was talking about shows that the shopkeep knows his stuff.

We talked about the differences between the Famicom Disk System version and the cartridge Famicom version, specifically the music. He apparently thinks the Famicom cartridge music wasn't as good as the Disk System version. He has a point, but the cartridge version is based on the American NES version, so I'm kind of partial to it... At any rate, we even talked about the evolution of Zelda through the ages, what kind of Action-Adventure/RPGs he'd recommend (Shin Megami Tensei, by the way), and I asked him how long he's been running his store. Apparently, he's been at it for at least 36 years. The shop started as a toy store, then got into games pretty early and he's been selling them ever since. It might genuinely be the oldest video game store in Japan. After he finished carefully cleaning the discs I bought, he even gave me some candy.

It's just part of his store's way of doing things—giving out candy to every customer—a tradition I can very much get behind. It wasn't just me who got the royal treatment either. The person before me was treated in just the same way. It goes without saying that I think his store deserves some love. I only ask that anyone who visits treats the owner with as much respect and care as he does for every customer.

Hours: Every day 10:00 A.M. - 6:00 P.M.

(Days and hours open can be irregular depending on the store owner's health)

Phone: 0979-22-4104

from our Reporters 国際交流員だより



Swara Fife

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My round, pink sons!

Japanese summers are stifling at best, and dizzying at worst - and not in a good way. Although my British way of thinking compels me to make the most of every sunny day, as it is wired into my brain that there are so few, and are therefore precious and not to be wasted indoors, I have found myself unable to step outside in recent weeks. To avoid the summer heat, I have been going to Round 1 in Oita City often, playing on the claw machines in the sweet sweet air-conditioning. On the downside, my past addiction to claw machines has reared its head once again, and I have found myself lumped with a trio of round, pink sons to take care of! Recently, I have been playing Kirby: The Forgotten Land on Switch with a friend, and since then, my love for Kirby has expanded exponentially; his ability to eat anything and become that object's shape, paired with his cute and pink round body has endeared me to him. The three sons I now have custody of are 30th Anniversary special Kirby plushies: all the more reason to try my best to expand my brood! They are being well taken care of in my apartment, and if the heat of Oita's summer continues as it has done, I'm sure they shall have new siblings very soon..!

Kinda hard to say I "won" ...

I did an *ichiban-kuji* for the first time the other day. They're kind of like a lottery for pop culture stuff where no matter what, you get a prize each time you draw. At any rate, 7-Eleven was doing one for one of my favorite series, Kingdom Hearts, and I really wanted the A-Prize and B-Prize from that. But where I'm from, lotteries and things like that are pretty much banned entirely, so I didn't know what a good stopping point was. And that's where I screwed up. At first, I drew three tickets, got a cool hand towel, and left satisfied, but before I knew it, a few hours later I was in another 7-Eleven. I drew two tickets again, won some small prizes, again... The day after that, the 7-Eleven I first drew at was down to 13 prizes total. I drew four... And then nine—the entire lot. In terms of how much it cost, I managed to get the "last one" prize, so it was actually an alright deal, but I still think I shouldn't go to Vegas any time soon.

Austin Vaughn

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