



What's Up, OITA!

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

F.Y.
2024

International Policy Division

To everyone connected to Oita all around the globe, please allow us to introduce ourselves.



Director

**Miki
Tabuki**

We'll work hard to make a more visitable, shoppable, livable Oita for those from abroad.



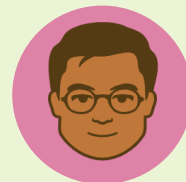
Associate
Director
(Head Manager)

**Kazuyoshi
Nishimura**

I reach zen when I'm picking weeds in the garden.

Main Responsibilities

- Passport inspection (lead)
- HR development in Passport Section



Head Section
Manager

**Kazuhisa
Namba**

"Every day to the fullest," that's my motto.

Main Responsibilities

- Overseas strategy promotion (lead)
- HR development of Division staff



Associate Section
Manager

**Kosuke
Kiyota**

I've got a big sweet tooth.

Main Responsibilities

- Overseas strategy promotion
- MoU with Wales



Senior Staff

**Natsuki
Abe**

I really like SEVENTEEN!

Main Responsibilities

- International student scholarships
- Supporting foreign workers (support for foreigners living in Oita Prefecture)



Senior Staff

**Kaho
Suto**

I like hamburgers.

Main Responsibilities

- Nihongo Partners
- Promoting exchange with Indonesia



Senior Staff

**Keiko
Saga**

I love dogs ♡

Main Responsibilities

- JET Program
- Overseeing CIR activities
- What's Up, Oita!



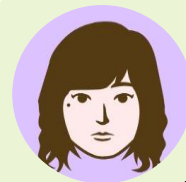
Staff

**Yoko
Aso**

I love K-pop!

Main Responsibilities

- Passport inspection and shipment
- Commission of passport work
- Budgeting for the Passport Section



Staff

**Shiho
Shono**

I'm really into Sudoku!

Main Responsibilities

- Budgeting, balancing, and audits
- Promoting exchange with South Korea

CIRs
Coordinators
for
International
Relations



**Noh
Jiyoung**



**Austin
Vaughn**



**Yang
Jia**

Announcement

In order to provide an even better reading experience, "What's Up, Oita!" will change to a quarterly schedule beginning with this volume. The next volume is planned to be released at the start of September. We hope you continue to enjoy the new "What's Up, Oita!"

豊後大野市からのお知らせ

Heartstrings from BungoOhno



In Bungo-Ohno, there are many saunas that allow visitors to enjoy our mountains' boundless natural wonders, clear, emerald green currents, and even take a dip inside of a limestone cavern.

What Bungo-Ohno lacks in onsen it makes up for in outdoor saunas, and has been gaining ground as a must-visit sauna hotspot with people across the country.

Brewery Tour in "Sauna City," Bungo-Ohno!

Abundant nature and blessed land—Bungo-Ohno is highly renowned for its preservation of culture and is home to the only "Japanese Geopark"/"UNESCO Eco Park" in all of Kyushu.

This park is home to an ancient rich culture of "stone baths," where our ancestors dug holes into the sides of solid stone precipices and burned herbs to enjoy steam baths in the hollowed-out rock.

In 2021, Bungo-Ohno declared itself "Sauna City" to let the world know of this unique outdoor sauna culture in the midst of nature and attract visitors from far and wide.

Bungo-Ohno: Sauna City

https://www.bungo-ohno.jp/categories/gaiyou/si_kankou/sauna/



13th Annual "Meguru Kura" Brewery Tour

In Bungo-Ohno, there are four breweries for sake, shochu, and craft beer that have been passed from generation to generation through the ages. Once every year, these breweries join together to liven up Bungo-Ohno with the annual "Opening of the Breweries, Meguru Kura."

This year marked the 13th Meguru Kura, which was held on Saturday, March 16. Lovely spring skies heralded in the special occasion. Many journeyed between the breweries, enjoying good food and spirits while appreciating the wonderful scenery of Bungo-Ohno.





The Mountains,
The Sea,
Tanourara

Michi no Eki Tanourara

Sun. July 7, 2024

OPEN!



Opening Event!
(Live Music and Gifts for Visitors)

Point 1



Superb Location

Look over all of Beppu Bay from the 2nd Floor. The observation deck provides a view to die for.

Point 2



Face the "Music"

Celebrate Oita, the birthplace of western music in Japan, in this hall, which takes music as its motif.

Point 3



A Tram *in* the Station?!

Trams used to run between Oita and Beppu. Enjoy this display of one of the relics of Oita's past, unique to "Tanourara."



Visit our Website!

Contact Us

Oita City Department of Commerce, Industry, Labor, and Tourism, Oita Promotional Bureau
Phone: 097-574-6195 / Niage-machi 2-31, Oita

Operations
Otomusubi Oita Co.
Phone: 097-594-4901

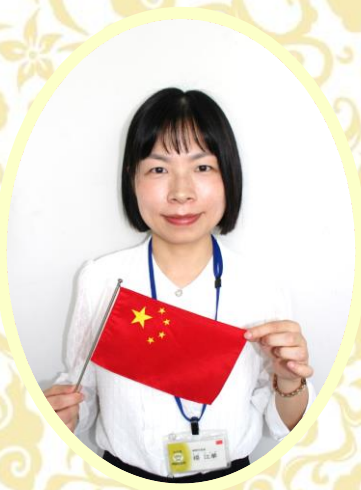


Michi no Eki Tanourara
1228-9 Kajiwara, Kanzaki, Oita City



<https://www.tanourara.jp/>

Farewell Message



Chinese CIR
Yang Jianghua

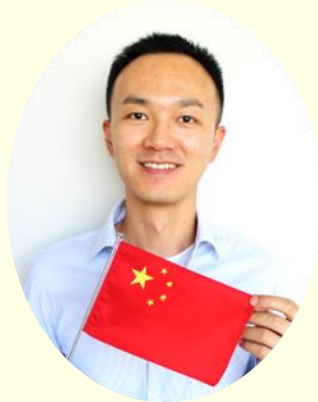
My time as a CIR has come to an end, and I will be leaving my position on April 4, 2024. It was only 10 short months, but working as a Coordinator for International Relations was a truly valuable experience for me.

It was my first time ever coming to Japan, so I was nervous at first, but everyone at the International Policy Division was so nice and helpful, that I was quickly able to get used to my life in Oita. There are places where I felt I could have been just a little bit better in my work, but with everyone's help, I was able to learn a lot.

Oita has great food, beautiful onsen, blue seas, clear rivers, and very clean public restrooms. Compared to my hometown, winters aren't that cold, and the climate is very mild, so I think it's a very easy place to live. While I was in Oita, I was able to visit many places and experience much of Japan's culture—making soba, rolling sushi, attending a tea ceremony, going to a festival at Usa Jingu...the list goes on. I was even able to visit schools and help the students with group work and see their club activities firsthand. Not only that, I was able to interact and make new friends with many residents of Oita through my Chinese language class and Free Talk classes. There are so many things that I was able to know and experience by coming to Japan. My time here will be one of my life's most precious treasures.

When I return to China, I will once again be teaching Japanese at university. I can't wait to tell all about the wonderful sights and fun experiences of Japan to the young people of China. Finally, to everyone who's read "What's Up, Oita!", from the bottom of my heart I wish you all good health and happiness!

Greeting Message



Chinese CIR
Yang Jia

Dà jiā hǎo!

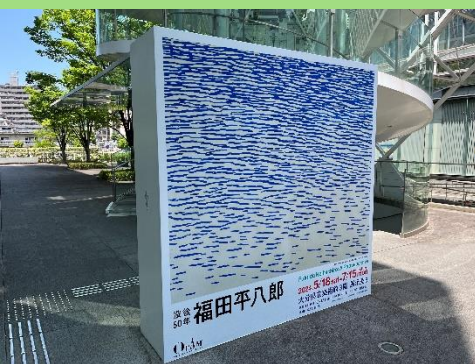
Hello, everyone! My name is Yang Jia, and I'm the new CIR for China. I was born in Yunnan Province as a member of the Yi people, or "those who worship tigers and fire."

I've been studying Japanese since the second half of my first year of college, when I changed my major. I then studied interpretation in graduate school. As for why I changed my major... Well, I made the mistake of thinking that "Law" was the right major for me. Long lectures on ancient autopsy law, grotesque pictures of capital punishment... I don't even want to think about my time as a law student. It was that awful. Honestly, the only reason I stuck with law that long is because I thought I could find some nice loopholes if I studied hard enough. But once midterms started, I had reached my limit and started thinking about changing majors. So I tried to change my major to the language that seemed like it'd have the easiest entrance exam. (Note: Don't underestimate it. Japanese is hard!) But I managed to pass the test. And with that small victory, I began my life as a proud Japanese student—a life full of frustrations and hardships.

Putting that aside, this is my first time staying long-term in Japan, and so I've been continuing my life of hardship; not knowing left from right, a bike saddle from a bike pedal, and still wondering if there's a difference between "flammable" and "nonflammable" trash. But I'm going to do my best so that I can master it all someday. Not only that, I've got plenty of things that I want to tell to the good people of Oita—about China, about Yunnan (where spring never ends), and the rich cultures and various festivals held by the diverse ethnic minorities of China. In exchange, I would be grateful if everyone could tell me about the best places and food in Oita. (I've already tried *toriten*, *hyuga-don*, and *ryukyu-don*, and they were all delicious! I'll be recommending them to all my friends!)

For my year as a CIR, I'll be devoting myself to learning about Japan and teaching about China. I hope we can do so together!

Where's Mejiron?



Fukuda Heihachiro: A Retrospective

I like art, but I've never really gotten the point of looking at it in person. Why bother going to an art exhibition or museum when I can look at the same art any time I want on my computer?

But being in Oita has started to change the way I think—especially with the many exhibits that I've gone to see at the Oita Prefectural Art Museum (OPAM). And I think with their latest exhibition, "Fukuda Heihachiro: A Retrospective," my mind has been changed entirely.

FUKUDA Heihachiro (1892 - 1974) was a renowned nihonga ("Japanese painting") artist, born in Oita and raised in a house only a dozen or so minutes from OPAM itself. He was well known for his realistic drawings, but oddly enough, his more famous works are relatively abstract. This was actually a transition he made as he aged. Just like Picasso, he moved from realism to the abstract, but unlike Picasso, who often embraced bold and dramatic styles, Fukuda's abstract works retained a subtlety and attention to detail that marked his unique approach.

It was this transition and Fukuda's dedication to detail that convinced me that I was wrong about seeing art in person. If I had looked at the art on a computer, I would not have known how his art was divided into different periods, or how his technique slowly developed over time. Not even a fraction of the small intricacies of his art would come across correctly in a 400x300 JPEG.

There are stories that would be untold without seeing this exhibit in person. Like the countless sketches that led to his finished paintings, or the mold spots left behind on Fukuda's now famous "Cloud" from being left abandoned in a basement after being regarded by the public and himself as a failure. Sure, you could probably find an article about the failure of "Cloud" or read a biography to learn how meticulous Fukuda was about details, but that isn't the same as seeing the actual process behind a great work, or seeing the evidence of how an artwork was treated.

Sometimes, there truly are things that must be experienced in person. And art is one of them. For those who hold similar feelings to mine in the past, maybe take some time to "retrospect" and go see Fukuda Heihachiro's art. With any luck, your perspective will change, just like mine.

OPAM is holding "Fukuda Heihachiro: A Retrospective" in two sessions, from May 18 - June 16 and June 18 - July 15. 106 works from throughout Fukuda's lifetime are split between the two sessions. Personally? I'm already looking forward to going to the second half.



Fukuda
Heihachiro: A
Retrospective
OPAM



WHAT'S UP, OITA!



Writer: Noh Jiyoung (Korean CIR)

— Classic Cars, Memories of Showa —



Showa Town Classic Car Show Bungo-Takada

Recently I've taken to indulging in a bit of nostalgia, looking at old school pictures, listening to decade-old hit songs. I feel that the memories come back stronger if you experience them through some kind of media, like looking at them through pictures or hearing them through songs. But what if that media...was cars?

On March 17, the "Showa Town Classic Car Show" was held in the parking lot of Bungo Takada's Showa Town. This year marked the 19th show, and visitors were able travel back to the past to see over 60 classic cars from the Japanese Showa Era (1926-1989), painstakingly cared for by their owners. Most cars were from the 1950s - 1960s, but there was even a 1928 Ford Model A Tudor sedan. Thinking of how each car was used regularly for at least 15 years, I couldn't help but feel awe at how well they were cared for. Not only that, but some cars had the owner right by their side so you could talk with them about the cars, or even see the passion radiating off of other car aficionados as they asked the owners their own questions.

Not only were there classic cars, but also interviews with owners, talk shows, live music, car goodies, and last but not least, a 1957 Isuzu Bx141 Bonnet Bus (affectionately known as the "Showa Roman Go") that was fully restored in 2009 and provides rides to passengers all through the town. There were enough things going on that not only car enthusiasts, but also those who don't know much about cars were able to enjoy the event to the fullest. This year was the first time it ever rained at the event in its history, but thanks to the owners who decided to show off their cars despite the inclement weather, everyone was able to have a remarkable experience. The "Showa Town Classic Car Show" is held every March in Bungo-Takada, so if you have an interest in classic Showa-era cars, please come take a look next year.



WHAT'S UP, OITA!



Writer: Noh Jiyoung (Korean CIR)

— Over 1 Million Novels sold in Korea —



Miracles of the Namiya General Store Film Locations

Bungo-Takada may let you feel the atmosphere of the Showa 30s (1955-1965), but it's also known as the filming location for the film adaptation of Keigo Higashino's *Miracles of the Namiya General Store*, a popular novel in Korea. Many famous locations of Bungo-Takada, such as "Showa Town" and "Matama Beach" were used in the film. Showa Town's *Showa Roman-gura* has a guide map available (also available in Korean) for the film locations, so please use it if you're planning a tour.



Nakano Sengyo-ten

Used as "Fishmonger Uomatsu"



Namiya General Store Sign

Sign used in outdoor shots
(*Showa Roman-gura*)



Myoju-ji Temple

Site of Matsuoka's
grandmother's funeral



Miyamachi Rotary

Former site of main movie set



Katsura Bridge

Bridge Atsuya dashed over
in the film's climax

From our Reporters 国際交流員だより



"Thank You" to a Guardian Angel



Korean CIR

Noh Jiyoung

On a night in March, while I was crossing in front of the Centporta shopping district in a dash, I carelessly dropped my wallet. It was the first time something like that had ever happened to me, so grasping at straws I called the nearest police station. Luckily, someone had picked it up and taken it to the station, so I was able to go and pick it up. However, the person who found it chose to stay anonymous, so I haven't even been able to say "thank you," which has left a fog over my heart.

In my wallet is my residence card, proof that I'm legally in Japan, so if that person hadn't found it, I'd probably have been arrested by now. Jokes aside, just because you drop something doesn't mean that someone will be kind enough to get it back to you, so I've wanted to thank this person somehow. And so I'll say my piece here. Thank you, my anonymous guardian angel! If I ever find a lost item, I'll be sure to report it just like you did. Truly, *kamsahamnida!*



I Can't Rock, but Guitars Rock!



American CIR

Austin Vaughn

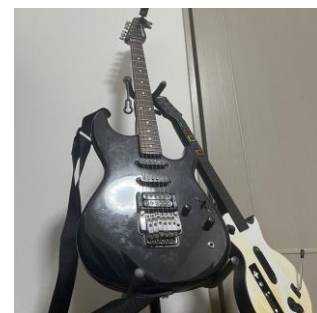
I don't listen to music all that often, but when I was a kid, I loved playing rhythm games and karaoke with my family and friends.

One of the games I really liked was a game called "Guitar Hero." It used this plastic controller shaped like a guitar to make it feel like you were actually playing a guitar.

I was really bad at it as a kid, but I recently I found a controller for cheap, so I picked it up. And I was able to play(?) it better than I thought.

But that made me think. "Why waste my time with this when I could just learn the real thing?" It sounded like fun, so I bought a guitar and got a game that lets you use a real guitar as a controller called "Rocksmith."

I can't really put it into words, but there's just a sort of "freedom" I feel when I play it and it's really fun. I still suck and my fingers hurt though.



The Clumsy Tale of a Clumsy Person



Chinese CIR

Yang Jia

My first Saturday in Oita, I went to a certain furniture store in east Oita. I had rented all my large appliances before getting to Japan and was given a lot of small appliances by my predecessor, so I had already gathered most of what I needed, but I still wanted a computer chair and a carpet for relaxing, so off to the store.

I had already researched the bus timetable and how to ride it, so I managed to get to the store and shopping went off without a hitch. But I took a bit too long, and when I got outside I learned that the next bus wouldn't be coming for two hours.

No taxis were around either, so I was at a loss on what to do, but in the end, I started walking—my big bag in tow. 40 minutes down a wide street with no pedestrians later, I came across a bus stop and head home.

I liked the scenery and only ended up walking 3 km, so I thought I was pretty lucky, but the next day at work when I told my co-worker about it, they informed me if I had just gone a little bit south I would have reached a station, and that plenty of buses that would have come anyway! Guess I've still got some learning to do in Oita!



Want to be featured in What's Up?

Kenjin-kai events? News about former international students? If you've got something you want to tell the world about Oita, let us know!

(Any format is accepted.)

Submissions/Inquiries

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募集中!

