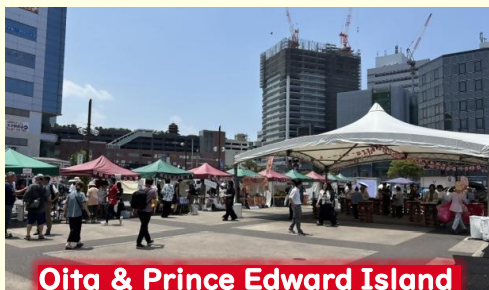




What's Up, OITA !

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



**Oita & Prince Edward Island
Exchange Fair**

On July 25th, 2026, the "Oita & Prince Edward Island Exchange Fair", hosted by Oita Prefecture, was held at Toyota Corolla Oita Shukusai Hiroba.

The event celebrated ties between Oita and Prince Edward Island (PEI), an island province in eastern Canada, born from the connection between *Anne of Green Gables*, set on PEI, and Kusu-born children's author Takehiko Kurushima. The venue was filled with excitement, with programmes including performances of both national anthems, video messages from the Premier of PEI and the Embassy of Canada to Japan, and a Canadian quiz.

Anne of Green Gables & PEI's Charm

The main event featured a special talk session with writer Eri Muraoka, granddaughter of Hanako Muraoka who translated *Anne of Green Gables*, Kiichiro Sato, the governor of Oita Prefecture, and Izumi Kuwano, president of Yufuin Tamanoyu, who is well-versed in the novel. Together they discussed the appeal of *Anne of Green Gables* and PEI. Although I have yet to visit, as I listened, PEI's beautiful scenery came to life in my mind. I found myself wanting to experience the island's abundant natural beauty, which Anne described as the most beautiful place in the world. ✨



<From left to right: Ms. Kuwano, Ms. Muraoka, Governor Sato>



Reflecting on *Anne of Green Gables*, which I read as a child, I discovered thought-provoking themes that I had not noticed before. Beyond the growth of orphaned Anne, the novel also portrays the growth of those who welcomed her into their family. This narrative of "growing together" also resonates with Oita Prefecture's current efforts to support the foster parent system.

Experiencing PEI!



The venue offered hands-on booths for rope keyring making and ice hockey, alongside food stalls offering Canadian specialties such as mussels, poutine-style hashed browns and maple burgers, making the event truly immersive.

Having had the opportunity to be involved in last fiscal year's signing of the Statement of Intent to Establish Friendly Relations with PEI, I was delighted to learn more about PEI's culture and charm through this exchange fair. It was a truly memorable day!

Writer: British CIR **Rosa Boutelle**

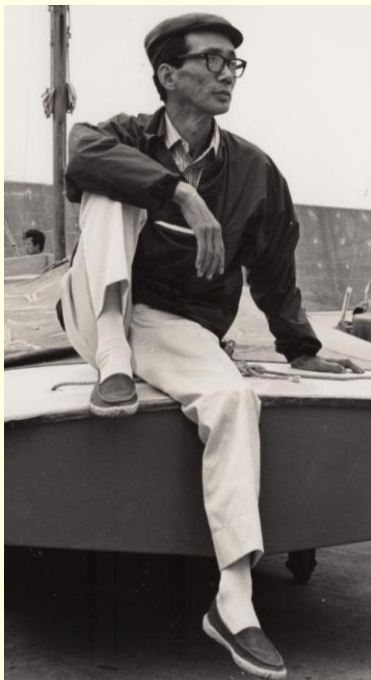


News from

Takeda City



Takeda City
Website



Yoshimi Sato, a lyricist and songwriter who created beloved children's songs cherished across generations like "Inu No Omawari San" and "Ice Cream no Uta," was born in Takeda City in 1905. Surprisingly, in contrast to the gentle world of his children's songs, he was quite a free spirit and lived a life full of ups and downs! In Takeda City, the Yoshimi Sato Memorial Museum honors his achievements. Through his works and personal documents, visitors can step into his richly imaginative world. Now, let's sing together ♪

まいごのまいごの
こねこちゃん ♪ ♪
あなたのおうちは
どこですか ♪ ♪ ♪



News from

Kitsuki City

Kitsuki Tourism
Organization
Website

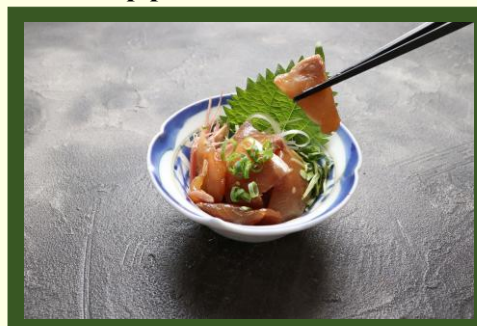


“Ryukyu” has been recognized by the Agency for Cultural Affairs as a 100-Year Food!



“Ryukyu” is a soul food from Oita, which is widely beloved in pubs and households here even now. It's a must-try when you come to Kitsuki!

The Agency for Cultural Affairs refers to cuisines passed on from generation to generation in a region as “100-Year Food” and aims to cooperate in promoting initiatives that help preserve them.



News from

Usa City

Usa City
Website



New Wine Festival

Held in November

An annual autumn event where you can sample new wine made from grapes grown in Ajimu. Enjoy wine, nurtured by the region's rich natural surroundings, alongside local delicacies, and immerse yourself in Ajimu's unique charm.



Grape Picking

Until October

A popular hands-on experience where you can harvest juicy, sweet grapes grown amidst Ajimu's abundant natural beauty. Enjoy tasting them at the peak of their season on site, while having a great time with your family and friends.

News from

Kunisaki City

The village where a
demon became Buddha
Kunisaki!



くにさきおにむすび
公式キャラクター
オニムスジン
Kunisaki Onimusubi
Official Character
Onimusujin

Enjoy unique
onimusubi
crafted by local
restaurants, cafes,
and farmers'
markets across
the city!



Kunisaki City is blessed with a delicacies from both the sea and the mountains. But with such a wide variety of local ingredients, it's hard to choose just one "specialty"...

So, we put them all in an onigiri! That's the idea behind the "Kunisaki Onimusubi."



With Seafood!



With Mountain
Vegetables!

＼ This fall, eat in Kunisaki! ／

Kunisaki Onimusubi Stamp Rally!!

2026

10/1^{Thu} ▶ 12/31^{Thu}

Taste and explore Onimusubi and win amazing prizes!



Furen Limestone Cave

Usuki City



American CIR
Aliceana Lin



It's my first summer in Oita, and I didn't expect it to be this hot! I had to find somewhere cool to escape the heat, so I decided to visit Furen Limestone Cave, where the temperature stays around 15°C (59°F) all year round.



Do you see a turtle?

The cave was first discovered 100 years ago from this small opening! The area inside is filled with groundwater so we can't enter from here; however, it is connected to the main cave which you can see once you enter from the main entrance.



Waterfalls inside the Cave!?

Some of the stalactite formations resemble waterfalls. "Zuiun no Taki" is a beautiful formation that resembles water cascading down a waterfall. When it rains, water flows and drips through parts of the cave, making them look and sound like real waterfalls.



Furou no Taki



Zuiun no Taki



Nunobiki no Taki

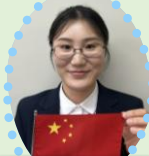


After walking through the 500-meter tunnel, I arrived at the impressive Ryugujo formation. Limestone formations grow at a rate of about 1 cm³ every 100 years, so it's said to have taken roughly 1 million years for the cave to form. The spacious area is sometimes used for small performances as well. At a cool 15°C (59°F), I could have stayed here all day! Cool Oita is here!



Bungo-Ono City

Harijiri Falls



Chinese CIR
Liao Man

According to the calendar, it's already autumn. I recently welcomed my first summer in Japan. What comes to mind first when I think of Japanese summers are scenes from anime—never-ending green fields, playing in the river, and the sound of cicadas filling the air. I wanted to experience that kind of nostalgic, anime-like summer, so this time I visited Harijiri Falls, a waterfall that seems to appear out of nowhere in the middle of the rice fields.



The majestic Harijiri Falls was formed from a volcanic eruption from Mt. Aso about 90,000 years ago. There are stairs leading to the plunge pool, so definitely go down and enjoy the waterfall up close!



A network of waterways stretches around the waterfall. The water drawn from the river enriches the surrounding rice fields growing delicious Ogata rice. I visited when the rice plants were growing rapidly, so the waterfall didn't have as much water. Even so, I felt that the way the water flows to the rice fields to support the lives of the local people was a unique charm of Harijiri Falls.



A long wooden suspension bridge, *Takimi-bashi*



At the end of the path past the *torii*, you'll find Ninomiya Shrine. Surrounded by greenery, the grounds are cool and feel like a hidden sanctuary protected by the gods. Please take your time exploring!



オススメ!

(Liao Man's Recommendation!)

~Harijiri Falls Original~

Honey and Kabosu Soft Serve

How about a nice, cold soft serve from the roadside station before heading home?



A Princess? No, it's Himeshima!

~Discover the island's mysterious charm~

Korean CIR
Suyoung Ahn



Chestnut Tiger
Butterfly

Off to Oita Prefecture's only village, "Himeshima Village"! It takes about 20 minutes by ferry from Imi port, Kunisaki City. There was a cool breeze as I stepped onto the island, putting me at ease. It's also worth visiting in May and October, when Chestnut Tiger Butterfly migrate here.

① Abundant Nature

An island located in northern Oita, Himeshima is Oita's Eden, filled with clear seas and lush greenery. It's rare obsidian, formed by seven volcanos, and unique geological features are must-sees. Houses also feature charred cedar wood, which protects against insects and water.



Obsidian



Charred Cedar Wood House

② The Seven Wonders of Himeshima

Himeshima has many legends about a princess. With the princess's story in the *Nihon Shoki* (Chronicles of Japan) in mind, discover the island's Seven Wonders!



Hyoshimizu



Ukisu



Sennin-do

③ Bon Odori/Fox Dance



Every August, visitors can enjoy Himeshima's unique traditional and original dances. The children performing the fox dance are especially adorable.



Passed down through generations since the Kamakura period (1185-1333), it is designated as a National Intangible Folk Cultural Property.

Kuruma Ebi

Kuruma ebi (tiger prawn) farms using salt fields can be found all over the village.

Himeshima produces 10% of Japan's tiger prawns.



Tiger Prawn Cuisine



Umi Soumen

Himeshima has its own unique words and culture, distinct from the mainland. For example, *mozuku* seaweed is known here as "*umi soumen*" (seaweed noodles).

By the way, the local specialty tiger prawns are plump and sweet, and best enjoyed as sashimi!

Oita Himeshima Geopark

As soon as you arrive, you'll see the Tourism Information Centre, where you can rent an eco-friendly car. There is also a free bus which loops Himeshima.



You can also tour the island with a guide in an eco car powered by Himeshima's solar energy, with zero CO₂ emissions. It really is an eco island!

Himeshima Ecotourism
Official Homepage →





From Our Reporters



A World Expanded Through Knowledge



British CIR
Rosa Boutelle



The other day, a poster for a festival stall caught my eye, and I thought, “Wait, was this made with AI?” Since then, my curiosity has grown, and I’ve been asking myself, “How does generative AI create text and images?” and “Is it safe to upload photos to AI?”

One thing I’ve learnt through my work in international exchange is that the more unfamiliar something is, the more important it is to try to understand it. Amidst a whirlwind of opinions around me, I decided to deepen my own understanding by studying for the “Generative AI Passport”, a private-sector certification covering the fundamentals of generative AI. I’m enjoying learning how generative AI works and how to use it safely, gradually deepening my understanding in Japanese.

I don’t know what exact impact AI will have in the future, but actively learning about it has given me the tools to think for myself.



*Made with generative AI

Embarking on my 2nd Year in Oita!



American CIR
Aliciana Lin



It’s been 1 year since I came to Oita. Sometimes I still can’t believe that I’m actually living and working in Japan.

I had many worries before coming here, especially since I had just graduated from university and was moving abroad all by myself. I worried whether I would get along with my coworkers, make friends, or adjust to the new environment. But thankfully, everyone has been so kind and welcoming, and they quickly put all those worries to rest.

Over this past year, I’ve made many new friends and had so many memorable experiences that have made me genuinely happy that I came here. I’m truly thankful to be in Oita, where I get to experience a different side of Japan from the big cities like Tokyo. I’m looking forward to my second year here and can’t wait to explore even more places in the prefecture!





From Our Reporters



The Community Bonds I felt at Neighborhood Gatherings



Chinese CIR
Liao Man



The neighborhood where I live is a town filled with strong bonds and warmth. Once a month, a casual neighborhood gathering is held. We gather at the community center to enjoy food and drinks while catching up on recent events, discussing community development, and sharing a pleasant time together. Thanks to everyone's kindness, participating in these gatherings has helped me expand my local connections, make new friends, and truly enrich my life in Oita.

I'm sure many readers, like me, are living away from their home countries or hometowns. If you ever feel lonely or homesick, instead of keeping it to yourself, why not try getting involved in local activities like neighborhood associations or festivals? You are sure to meet new people and make your life here that much richer.



I Love A Good Ol' Swim!



Korean CIR
Suyoung Ahn



I recently started exercising in a new way. Since summer began, I've found myself wanting to swim and was delighted to find a pool nearby.

In Japan, children learn how to swim at school, but as there were no such lessons in Korea, I didn't know the proper techniques or even how to swim. Still, all I wanted was to get into the water!

The first time I took my swimsuit and went to the pool alone, I swam as if I had become a fish. With the cool water washing over my whole body, I swam for about an hour until all my stress had melted away.

On my days off, I not only swim at the pool but also go to the ocean, where I have discovered the joy of swimming and playing in the water.

In order to learn to swim and enjoy playing in the water more safely, I'm even considering joining a swimming class. I can't wait!





What's Up, OITA!

Cir Dispatch Available!

The International Policy Division is providing opportunities to learn about different countries' culture and daily life through dispatching **Coordinators for International Relations (CIR)** as lecturers! Do you want to learn more about cultures and lifestyles from around the world?

Possible CIRs for Dispatch: British, American, Chinese, Korean

Overview

- Target Audience: Oita Prefecture Schools • Regional Organizations • Community Centers etc.
- Time: Weekdays 9:00 ~ 17:00 (flexible upon request)
- Contents: CIRs will introduce culture, tourism, food, pastimes and more of their home countries!
- Cost: Dispatch is free of charge! (Excluding transport/material costs)

Application Process

- ① First consult via phone!
- ② Confirm the date and contents, then submit the application form at least one month in advance.
- ③ Coordinate with the CIR by email, etc.
- ④ On the day of, the CIR will visit! Enjoy learning together.

Things to Note

Depending on the date/time and content of the dispatch, there may be cases where we cannot accept the request. Please feel free to inquire for more details!

Request a CIR here



Want to introduce your initiatives to the world?

From Kenjinkai initiatives to updates from exchange student alumni, if you've got something you want to tell the world about Oita, let us know! (Any format is accepted)

【Submissions/Inquiries】

International Policy Division
c/o Eguma, Nakayama

【E-mail】 a10140@pref.oita.lg.jp

