

Multilingual Electronic Newsletter

多言語メールマガジン

かごしま南の風便り



Kagoshima Southern Wind Tidings

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## Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) Column

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### ●Thank you, Kagoshima●

—By Kim Hyojin (CIR from South Korea)



The beautiful cherry blossoms that herald the coming of spring are beginning to bloom in Kagoshima, and you can already feel springtime in the air throughout the prefecture's towns and cities too.

I first came to Kagoshima during the spring 5 years ago. After the Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) Orientation in Tokyo, with butterflies in my stomach, I arrived in Kagoshima, where I had been assigned. Even now, I clearly remember that day: the scent of spring in the breeze, the gentle warmth of the sun, the rows of palm trees.

But, whether it's because "time flies when you're having fun", the next thing I knew, the end of my term here was fast approaching.

So today, I want to reflect on my 5 years in Kagoshima.

Just 2 weeks after I arrived in Kagoshima, I experienced Golden Week. Worried about their daughter who had just begun her life overseas, my parents came to visit Kagoshima. At the time, I was still getting used to life in Kagoshima, and I took my parents onto the wrong tram. As I was wrestling over what to do, a group of nearby junior high school students explained how to get to where we wanted to go, and we managed to arrive there safely. Those students didn't just give us careful directions; they watched over us with concern all the way to our destination. I really felt the kindness of Kagoshima in that moment.

Sometimes, my parents talk about that day. "We got a little lost, but we still remember that day almost like it was a scene from an anime. The scenery and the people... everything about that day was great."

During these 5 years, the time I felt most nervous was at the "Commemorative Event to Celebrate 30 Years of Exchange Between Kagoshima Prefecture and North Jeolla Province", held in FY2019. This was a commemorative event, held in South Korea's North Jeolla



Kagoshima Airport from the plane window



The welcome message in the entrance to the North Jeolla Provincial Office

Province (now known as Jeonbuk State) during the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the signing of the “Joint Declaration for the Promotion of Friendship and Cooperation”, and I was able to participate as a member of the Kagoshima delegation. At the time, alongside my gratitude and happiness to be able to participate on the Kagoshima side, I was nervous about fulfilling the important role I had been assigned. My main duty was Japanese-Korean

interpretation. As a beginner interpreter, I was worried: “I have absolutely zero experience interpreting, and now I’ll have to interpret for dignitaries... I wish somebody would show me how...”, but I resolved to get the job done. However, a harsh reality was waiting for me. During the courtesy visit to the Governor of North Jeolla Province and the meeting between Vice-Governors, I got so nervous – my hands were shaking, I broke out in a cold sweat, I had to ask for things to be repeated many times, and I felt self-conscious in front of the other side’s experienced interpreter – it’s a memory that I don’t really want to remember.

So how about now, in my fifth year? Well, I still feel that interpreting is the most difficult of my duties as a CIR. From the tough preparatory work to the weight of the responsibility, and the fact that you can’t just relay the words, but have to translate with an understanding of the different cultures and nuances involved, every time I’m reminded of the difficulty of interpretation. But, I do like these jobs. When I’m able to facilitate smooth exchange between countries and bridge the gap between people who speak different languages, I feel the greatest sense of achievement as a CIR.

One of my other duties as a CIR is to participate in events and give presentations to people across Kagoshima, and through this, I’ve been able to interact with many people from all over the prefecture.

The first time I visited an elementary school as a CIR comes to mind. I didn’t have any experience as a teacher before then, so I had butterflies in my stomach as I made my way to the school. After calming my nerves, I entered the room and saw about 200 elementary school pupils waiting for me. I didn’t think I would be giving my first presentation in front of the entire school, so I really wanted the ground to just swallow me up, but as I got towards the second half of my presentation some of my nerves began to disappear, and I noticed the sparkling eyes of the pupils listening to me. At that moment, I had a thought – I might be the first Korean person these children have ever met – and I realized just how important time interacting with children is. The presentation went well in the end. Now, when I look back, I think the experience was useful, and possibly became a source of courage for me.

Every Wednesday, I hold a Korean culture class for prefectural citizens at the Kagoshima Prefectural Citizens' Exchange Center. The class participants vary in age and motivation, and range from those who have attended for around 10 years, to those who have recently developed an interest and just begun to participate. In the class, I discuss traditional culture including annual events in South Korea, as well as food, K-pop, travel information, recent news, basic Korean language, and more. Even I, myself, have become more knowledgeable about South Korea through running the class, and I've been able to learn about Japan too.

What's more, as time has passed, there has been a change in my mindset towards this class. I thought that it was just one more of my duties as a CIR, but, before I could notice, the sessions became an irreplaceable source of excitement for me. And it's all thanks to every one of the participants. They are all so kind and considerate: greeting me with a beaming smile, showing interest in South Korea, checking in with me to make sure I'm safe during disasters. I wonder if it's this kindness that changed my mindset to "I want to make this class more valuable, I want to cherish this time more."

Finally, from the prefectural employees and other CIRs at the Kagoshima Prefectural Government International Affairs Division, to everyone at the Kagoshima International Association, it's been an honor to work alongside every one of my colleagues for the past five years. I've learnt many things from you all, including from the passion and care you show towards your work, and the consideration and kindness you show to foreign nationals. I really value the things you have taught me, and want to continue doing my best in future. I am grateful from the bottom of my heart.



**My long-cherished Yakushima**



**Steam rising from the Kirishima Onsen area**

Kagoshima is blessed with rich nature, including Sakurajima. It also has so many delicious foods, including Kagoshima Black Beef, the best Wagyu in Japan, as well as Black Pork, seafood, shochu, and more. But, to me, Kagoshima's treasure is its people. The people of Kagoshima might seem a little shy, but actually, they are full of warm-hearted kindness. Whenever I remember Kagoshima, I'm sure that in among the rich nature, I will think of the warm smiling faces of Kagoshima's people.

To the people of Kagoshima, thank you for your immense support over the past five years. I will never forget the wonderful memories I made here. Thank you!



## The Governor's Activities

### ●22<sup>nd</sup> December: Visit by the Japanese Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago●

His Excellency, Ambassador Matsubara, from the Embassy of Japan in Trinidad and Tobago, paid a courtesy visit to the Prefectural Office.

Ambassador Matsubara highlighted that an ALT from Trinidad and Tobago is currently working in Kagoshima via the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme, and expressed his gratitude that Kagoshima has also requested JET Programme participants from countries in the embassy's jurisdiction for the next financial year. During the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, 6 towns across Kagoshima became host towns for various Caribbean nations, and the Ambassador expressed his desire to continue such exchange in the future.

Through the JET Programme and the host towns initiative, the Governor looks forward to seeing the continuation of reciprocal cultural, economic and people-to-people exchange between Kagoshima Prefecture and the Caribbean.



The Courtesy Visit

## Kagoshima's International Relations

### ●20<sup>th</sup> December: Visit by Jinliang Li and a delegation from Tsinghua University to renew the MOU (comprehensive agreement) for a third term●

Kagoshima Prefecture signed an MOU (comprehensive agreement) with Tsinghua University (Beijing, China) in August 2013, and since then, both sides have engaged in exchange across many different fields, including youth/student exchange, academic exchange, economic exchange, etc. On this occasion, the MOU was extended for a third term, and Jinliang Li, Dean of the Office of International Affairs at Tsinghua University, as well as a number of university officials and related companies, came to Kagoshima for a reception to celebrate the renewal of the MOU.

I conveyed my intention to continue promoting exchange with Tsinghua University across a range of different areas.

Mr. Li highlighted that the MOU signed with Kagoshima Prefecture was Tsinghua University's first with a local government in a foreign country, and he expressed his desire to continue long-term exchange across diverse fields, such as human resource development and arts and cultural exchange.

At the reception, guests were treated to a Satsuma biwa performance, as well as cuisine making use of Kagoshima's local ingredients, appropriately showcasing "Kagoshima, Treasure of the South".



◀ Unveiling of the renewed MOU

Group photo ▶



## What's New in Kagoshima?

### ●The 41<sup>st</sup> Ibusuki Nanohana Marathon was held on 14<sup>th</sup> January●



Photo credit: Kagoshima Prefecture Nansatsu Regional Promotion Bureau

The 41<sup>st</sup> Ibusuki Nanohana Marathon was held in Ibusuki City on 14<sup>th</sup> January. Around 7,500 runners from around the country and beyond tackled the New Year Ibusuki course.

The Ibusuki Nanohana Marathon is the first marathon to be held every year. Its appeal includes the warm welcome shown to the participants, with city residents coming out in droves to show their support along the route, and treats like zenzai and steamed sweet potatoes given out to runners.

The course offers views of Kyushu's largest lake, Lake Ikeda, as well as Mt Kaimon, also known as the "Mt Fuji of Satsuma", and takes runners past fields of nanohana flowers in full bloom. While the course has a considerable elevation profile, the 8-hour time limit means that even beginners will find it easy to participate. After running, you can soothe your fatigue in the city's signature hot sand baths and make the most of Ibusuki for the entire day.

While there was a limit on entry numbers, 2024 marked the first time that the marathon was held in parallel with a ~12-km fun run, "Fun Run: Lake Ikeda Course", which finished by the lakeside of Lake Ikeda, surrounded by beautiful scenery like Mt Kaimon, Lake Ikeda and nanohana flowers.

Kagoshima Prefectural Office Website: <http://www.pref.kagoshima.jp/>

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**Editor's Note (International Affairs Division, Department of Tourism, Culture and Sports, Kagoshima Prefectural Government)**

Hello, everyone! It's almost the season when *sakura* cherry blossoms will be bursting into bloom. How have you been?

March is the season of encounters and farewells. When starting at a new school or a new job, leaving behind the people and the places that have become familiar to us feels sad, but at the same time, I think it's exciting to begin a new life.

That's all for now – please look forward to our next issue!

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The Kagoshima Southern Wind Tidings Bulletin Board is looking for the following content!

☆Kagoshima Photo Gallery

We invite people to send us photos that remind them of Kagoshima, or photos of Kagoshima that they have seen overseas. Please also attach a brief description along with the photo. (E.g., a mountain of volcanic-ash bags.)

☆Kagoshima Lifestyle Know-How

We invite people to share with us information related to life in Kagoshima (e.g., delicious ways to enjoy fried fish cakes, how to deal with volcanic ash, etc.)

We also welcome any other information that you would like to share with our readers.

▲▽▲▽ **Inquiries** ▲▽▲▽

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