

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

● Satsuma Kiriko ●

– *By Wong Yimin (CIR from Singapore)*

Have you heard of Satsuma Kiriko, a traditional glass craft from Kagoshima?

About Satsuma Kiriko

Satsuma Kiriko is a type of cut crystal glass first created in the Satsuma Domain (present-day Kagoshima) near the end of the Edo period (between 1603-1868).



Satsuma Kiriko

Coloured glass is layered over transparent glass and intricate patterns carefully cut into it, resulting in beautifully elegant designs with vibrant colours that sparkles enchantingly when the light hits them.



Satsuma Kiriko glassware
(Photo from ART Deshimaru)

One unique feature of Satsuma Kiriko is colour gradation, also known as *bokashi*. It is due to the thickness of the layered coloured glass which results in a gentle colour gradation each time a cut is made.

Birth of Satsuma Kiriko

Glass production in the Satsuma Domain first began in 1846. When the 28th head of the Shimadzu family, Shimazu Nariakira took over, the industry saw rapid development and also the creation of Satsuma Kiriko.

However, thereafter production was stopped due to the death of the family head. At the same time, it was also a largely chaotic period for Japan as a whole.



Iridescent Highball Glass
(Photo from ART Deshimaru)

It was not until a hundred years later that Satsuma Kiriko glassware finally came back to life thanks to the combined efforts of numerous artisans and experts.

Satsuma Kiriko today

Today, Satsuma Kiriko is thriving as a traditional craft of Kagoshima.

In addition to drinking vessels, there are also modern reinterpretations such as beautiful stained-glass-inspired pieces and delicate accessories.

One such example can be found in Satsuma Kiriko Glass Studio ART Deshimaru, where there are workshops where participants can use leftover scrap glass to craft their own Satsuma Kiriko pieces.



The kiriko wall decorations outside the building of ART



The crafting process of Satsuma Kiriko



Stained-glass-like pieces made using Satsuma

Satsuma Kiriko Workshop

I went to one such workshop, where I experienced crafting my very own glass accessory under the careful guidance of the kiriko artisan.

You are free to choose between various types such as necklace pendants, earrings, hair ties and so on. It was indeed an experience like no other!

Firstly, you get to select your own base glass piece. There are numerous shapes and colours to choose from, and the possibilities are endless!



Inside ART Deshimaru



Satsuma Kiriko workshop area



Workshop sample pieces (Photo from ART Deshimaru)

There are kiriko sample pieces too, as reference to aid in visualizing how you might want your final piece to look like.

You can pick out two base pieces, one for practice and one for the actual final piece; only the final piece will be polished and finished, but you get to bring home the practice piece too.



Selection of glass base pieces and samples

Next, the kiriko artisan will demonstrate how to operate the machine and how to cut the designs into the glass using a special cutting tool (diamond wheel, a type of diamond-embedded abrasive wheel).

The part where you wish to cut is pressed against the rotating blade, and moving the piece back and forth will produce clean cut lines.



Machine for glass cutting

Depending on the depth and angle of each cut, the colour of the glass changes and interesting gradations can be created. Even though it looks intimidating, but the blade will not puncture skin and is safe and easy to use!

Once you are satisfied with your design, you will pass it to the kiriko artisan, who will polish and finish up the piece for you. The final gorgeously-sparkling piece will be delivered to your home in about a month.



Demonstration by the kiriko artisan



Cutting the glass



Finished! Test piece and final piece.

As the choice of colour, shape and design are entirely up to you, the final product will be a piece of wearable glass art that is fully unique to yourself.

Why not try your hand at this workshop and experience a part of Kagoshima traditional craft for yourself?



My final finished pendant

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Activities of the Governor

- 2 September : Visit to introduce an exhibition of paintings by Ukrainian children ●

The Prefectural Office was visited by Mr. Hiroshi Hyodo, the director of Sunstar School of Japanese in Krakow, Poland, and Mr. Murakami, the chairman of Kagoshima Food Bank Center, which is working to support evacuees from Ukraine living in the prefecture.

Mr. Hyodo, together with students enrolled in the Sunstar School of Japanese, continues to provide emotional support to children evacuated from Ukraine to Krakow, Poland. As part of this support, he gave an introduction to the Exhibition of Little Painters, which is held at the Kagoshima Prefectural Library until 12 September.

He hoped that by viewing these paintings from children who were evacuated from Ukraine and who had painted them while thinking of their homeland, the people of Kagoshima would not forget the devastation in Ukraine.



•During the meeting



*•Commemorative photo with
Mr. Hyodo and Mr. Murakami*

● 5 September : Visit by the Governor of Pingtung County, Taiwan ●

A delegation led by Governor Chou Chun-mi of Pingtung County, Taiwan, visited Kagoshima and is made up of about 45 people involved in agriculture, livestock, fisheries, as well as commerce and industry. They visited relevant local businesses exchanged opinions in order to promote specific exchanges in each field.

On 5 September, representatives of the delegation paid a courtesy visit to the Kagoshima Prefectural Office, where they discussed the future of friendly exchange between the two prefectures.

According to the governor, this visit has deepened exchanges between producers and businesses in the two prefectures. He also hopes that the partnership and cooperative relationship between Kagoshima Prefecture and Pingtung County can be further strengthened through opinion exchange that will lead to improvements in future earning power of both sides.

According to PingTung Governor Ms. Chou, this visit provided an opportunity for in-depth exchanges between representatives of the industrial circles of Kagoshima and Pingtung Prefectures. They hope to foster closer and more enthusiastic exchanges not only between local governments, but also within the private sector.

After the courtesy call, they enjoyed the Treasure of the South, Kagoshima, at the dinner party which included a performance of traditional island songs from Amami Oshima and served cuisine using ingredients from Kagoshima.



•Commemorative photo with Governor Chou Chun-mi



•Commemorative photo with the delegation from Pingtung County

● 10 September : Visit by guests from the Slovak Republic ●

His Excellency Mr. Ivan SURKOŠ, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Republic to Japan, and related parties from the Slovak Republic in Central Europe paid a courtesy visit to the Prefectural Office.

The Governor introduced the local specialties of both countries, such as *shochu* and wine, as well as each other's rich natural and historical landscapes, which have been designated World Heritage site. He also expressed his hopes that exchanges between the regions will flourish in the future.

The Ambassador said that with the help of Mr. Masahiro Yamamoto, Honorary Consul of the Slovak Republic in Kirishima, he hopes to introduce Slovakia's fascinating nature and architecture such as its historical castles and caves, as well as the very fine quality of Slovak wine, to the people of our prefecture and Japan.

We hope that this visit will lead to further development of exchanges between Kagoshima Prefecture and the Slovak Republic.



•Commemorative photo with Mr. Ivan SURKOŠ

International Relations of Kagoshima

- 14 September : JEJU AIR resumes operations after 5 and a half years ●

South Korean low-cost carrier (LCC) JEJU AIR has resumed scheduled flights to Kagoshima for the first time in five and a half years, after suspending its flights to Kagoshima due to the COVID pandemic.

The service was first launched in January 2018 with three roundtrips per week in response to growing demand from visitors to Japan, but was suspended due to the COVID pandemic and other factors.

Going forward, the service will operate three round trips per week on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, just as it did before the pandemic.

- 23-29 September : Public awareness activities for sign language were carried out in conjunction with the International Day of Sign Languages and International Week of Deaf People ●

Based on the Kagoshima Prefectural Ordinance on Sign Language enacted in March 2020, sign language promotion and awareness activities were carried out on 23 September, the International Day of Sign Languages, and from 23-29 September, the International Week of Deaf People.



•During the event

Tourism Information in Kagoshima

● 22 September : Sendai Tug-of-War ●

The Sendai Tug-of-War is a traditional event in Satsumasendai City and was held on 22 September. The rope used is the largest in Japan, measuring 365 meters in length and weighing approximately 7 tons, and it is a traditional event that has continued for over 420 years. In March 2024, it was designated as an Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property of Japan.

On the day of the festival, about 3,000 shirtless men called *Hadaka* and with a *sarashi* (a type of cotton cloth) wrapped around their torsos, compete by pulling a large rope against each other.

In addition, near the center of the rope, you can see the heroic sight of the 'pushing troops' from both sides violently slamming their bodies into each other in offensive and defensive moves in order to impede the 'enemy's camp' and to protect their own.



·During the event

● 23 September : The 38th Sakurajima Kinko-Bay Open Water Swimming ●

The Sakurajima Kinko-Bay Open Water Swimming event has been held since 1987, and this year marks the its 38th year.

Participants swim 4.2 km from Koike Beach on Sakurajima Island to Iso Beach in Kagoshima City, aiming for the goal across the gentle and beautiful Kinko Bay above which the majestic active volcano Sakurajima towers over.

