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KAGOSHIMA SOUTHERN WIND TIDINGS

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01 Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) columns

○ Discover Kagoshima

Xu Kui, Chinese CIR, Kagoshima Prefecture

It's hard to believe that six months have already passed since I came to Kagoshima. Although I had the chance to visit Kyoto and Shiga for training, I had not yet taken the time to truly explore Kagoshima itself.

During the Silver Week holidays, I finally had the opportunity to travel with friends to Ibusuki and Satsumasendai. The trip brought not only beautiful sights but also wonderful new friendships. Come along with me as I revisit this unforgettable adventure!

Ichigo Ichie in Ibusuki

This trip gave me the chance to experience a true *ichigo ichie*, a once-in-a-lifetime encounter.

I traveled to Ibusuki with a fellow Chinese CIR working at Kagoshima City Hall. We were also joined by a Chinese doctoral student from Kagoshima University and a half-Japanese, half-Chinese girl who loves Chinese culture. Although it was our first time meeting one another, the four of us quickly hit it off and set off on a lively journey to Ibusuki together.

The train ride from Kagoshima-Chuo Station to Ibusuki takes about an hour. To be honest, I wasn't expecting much from the view along the way. However, as the train sped through lush greenery, passing through what felt like a tunnel of trees, I found myself captivated by the scenery.

Part of the journey also runs alongside the sea, and for a moment I felt as if I were traveling along the tracks above the water from *Spirited Away*. Surrounded by such beautiful scenery, our excitement grew. Before long, we were taking photos of one another and filling the carriage with laughter. Across from me sat a Western traveler wearing a headscarf much like my own. When I struck up a conversation, I was surprised to learn that he was an ALT in Nagasaki Prefecture who had come to Japan through the same program as me.



▲The Nagasaki Prefecture ALT

His goal is to visit all 47 prefectures of Japan, and this time he was exploring Ibusuki on his own. Since we

planned to visit the same places, we happily invited him to join us, and our travel group grew by one more member.

After purchasing a sightseeing bus pass at Ibusuki Station, our first stop was Nagasakibana. The moment we stepped off the bus, we were greeted by a magnificent view of Kaimondake, famously known as “Satsuma Fuji.” Rising against a backdrop of blue skies and white clouds, the mountain was every bit as impressive as its nickname suggests.



▲ Kaimondake

After making wishes before the statues of Urashima Taro and the turtle, we wandered along the coast, each setting off in search of our own “Dragon Palace.”

After taking a commemorative photo beneath the Nagasakibana Lighthouse, we headed to a nearby flower park recommended by our half-Japanese, half-Chinese friend. There, we were greeted by a rainbow, discovered unusual plants rarely seen in everyday life, and even tried mango curry. Each experience was a pleasant surprise.

Our final stop of the day was the famous Tamatebako Onsen. Soaking in the open-air bath while gazing out over the East China Sea was the perfect way to unwind and wash away the fatigue of the day.





▲Nagasakibana Lighthouse and flower park▲



▲Mango curry

The Sendai Great Tug-of-War

On the second day of the long weekend, our group headed north to Satsumasendai City to experience the famous Sendai Great Tug-of-War.

Although we arrived in the afternoon, the festive atmosphere was already in full swing. When we reached the venue, local residents were hard at work weaving the giant rope used for the

event. We learned that students and volunteers had been working since morning to create a rope measuring 365 meters in length and weighing around seven tons.

As evening fell, the opening ceremony began with remarks from Governor Shiota. One after another, teams representing local communities and organizations appeared in traditional attire, carrying the massive rope on their shoulders. Their energy and determination, combined with the cheers of the crowd, created an unforgettable spectacle.

What impressed me most was the strong sense of community. Just like the giant rope itself, the people of Satsumasendai seemed closely connected. By working together, they transformed the city into a place filled with excitement and energy.

After the event, we picked up small pieces of rope that had fallen to the ground. Said to bring good luck and protection, they became special souvenirs from our trip.

This journey introduced me to a new side of Kagoshima that I had never experienced before. My adventure to discover the many charms of Kagoshima is far from over, and I look forward to sharing more discoveries and encounters with you in future columns.

○ A Mid-Autumn Reunion Night

Xu Kui, Chinese CIR, Kagoshima Prefecture

At the end of September, people across China celebrated the Mid-Autumn Festival, one of the country's four major traditional festivals. The festival falls on the 15th day of the eighth month of the lunar calendar each year.

The term "Mid-Autumn" refers to the middle of autumn. The full moon on this day is traditionally believed to be the roundest and brightest of the year, which is why the festival is also known as the "Eighth Month Festival." Today, let's take a closer look at this special Chinese tradition and the customs and stories associated with the moon!

「The term "Mid-Autumn" first appeared in the ancient Chinese classic Rites of Zhou (Zhouli). At that time, however, it simply referred to the middle of the autumn season. The imperial court would hold ceremonies to worship the moon and pray for a good harvest, favorable weather, peace, and prosperity. During the Wei and Jin periods, moon-viewing became a popular pastime among scholars and poets. By the Song Dynasty, the Mid-Autumn Festival had become firmly established as a traditional celebration. Around this time, the famous legend of Chang'e Flying to the Moon also became closely associated with the

festival, adding a touch of romance to the occasion.

The Legend of Chang'e Flying to the Moon

According to legend, there were once ten suns in the sky, scorching the earth and causing great suffering. The hero Hou Yi shot down nine of them, saving humanity. In recognition of his achievement, the Queen Mother of the West rewarded him with an elixir of immortality.

Unwilling to leave his beloved wife Chang'e behind, Hou Yi entrusted the elixir to her safekeeping. One day, while he was away, a villain tried to steal it. To prevent it from falling into the wrong hands, Chang'e swallowed the elixir herself. She then drifted up into the sky and eventually reached the moon, where she is said to live in the Moon Palace.

Missing his wife dearly, Hou Yi would make offerings of fruits and other foods and gaze at the moon every year on the fifteenth day of the eighth lunar month. Inspired by his devotion, people began following the same custom. Over time, this developed into the tradition of moon-viewing and family gatherings that remains an important part of the Mid-Autumn Festival today.



▲Create by Chat GPT

How the Mid-Autumn Festival Is Celebrated

Moon Viewing: One of the most cherished Mid-Autumn Festival traditions is admiring the full moon. The custom became popular during the Tang Dynasty and flourished further in the Song Dynasty, when people from all walks of life gathered to appreciate the moon. Even today, families spend the evening together enjoying the bright full moon, making moon viewing an important part of the festival.

Moon Worship: The Mid-Autumn Festival has its roots in ancient moon worship. Since ancient times, people have offered prayers and offerings to the moon during autumn nights.

In some parts of China, these traditions continue to this day.

Eating Mooncakes: Mooncakes are perhaps the most iconic Mid-Autumn Festival food. Originally used as offerings to the moon, they became closely associated with the festival over time. Their round shape symbolizes family unity, togetherness, and happiness.

Solving Lantern Riddles: On the night of the festival, colorful lanterns are often displayed in public spaces. Families and friends gather to solve riddles written on the lanterns, adding an element of fun and celebration to the occasion.

Eating Pomegranates: Pomegranates are in season around the time of the Mid-Autumn Festival. Because the fruit contains many tightly packed seeds, it is regarded as a symbol of family harmony, unity, and prosperity.

Enjoying Sweet Osmanthus: The Mid-Autumn Festival coincides with the blooming season of sweet osmanthus, whose delicate fragrance fills the autumn air. In China, people also enjoy osmanthus wine, a traditional drink made using its blossoms.

Quiet Night Thoughts (静夜思)

by Li Bai

Before my bed, the bright moonlight glows,
Like frost upon the ground, or so it seems.
I raise my head and gaze at the shining moon,
Then lower it, thinking of my distant home.

Explaination：

It is late at night, and everyone else has already fallen asleep. Unable to sleep, the poet gazes at the moonlight shining before his bed. For a moment, the pale white light is so bright that he mistakes it for frost on the ground. Then, realizing that it is moonlight, he lifts his head and sees the moon shining above the distant mountains.

The moon in the poem is most likely a full moon. In Chinese culture, the full moon has long been a symbol of family reunion and togetherness. Seeing the full moon naturally brings thoughts of loved ones and home. This sentiment is beautifully captured in the poem, which expresses a deep sense of homesickness and longing for family.

02 The Governor's activities

○ Kagoshima Whisky Trail Council visits (September 9)

Members of the Kagoshima Whisky Trail Council visited the Kagoshima Prefectural Government Office to announce the establishment of the council.

Six distilleries across the prefecture have joined forces to promote Kagoshima whisky both in Japan and overseas. They aim to showcase whisky made in Kagoshima by drawing on the prefecture's warm climate, rich natural environment, and expertise developed through generations of shochu production. One of their initiatives will be the Kagoshima Whisky Trail, which invites visitors to tour the participating distilleries.

Kagoshima Prefecture will also help more people discover Kagoshima whisky and promote the Whisky Trail as a unique tourism experience.



▲Group photo



▲Whisky

○ Satsuma Student Dispatch Program Participants Visit (September 10)

High school students Yui Sato and Amami Nagai, along with their accompanying teacher, James Nobis, visited us to share their experiences after returning to the UK, where they participated in the Satsuma Student Dispatch Program from July 21 to August 3.

The two students reflected on their experiences, saying, "Through the program, I learned about different approaches to learning and the importance of actively participating in class," and "I had the opportunity to speak with many different people, which made it a

truly valuable experience.”

We hope what they learned through the program will play an active roles in international exchange and many other fields in the future.



▲Sato Yui、Nagai Amami、Nobis James



▲Return reports

○Kagoshima Gion Mutsumikai 25th Anniversary Celebration (September 13)

We attended the 25th anniversary ceremony and celebration of the Kagoshima Gion Mutsumikai, a group whose members carry *kasahoko* floats and *mikoshi* portable shrines during Ogionsaa, one of Kagoshima’s three major festivals. The event provided an opportunity to learn more about the history of Ogionsaa and the journey of the Kagoshima Gion Mutsumikai over the years. It also gave us a renewed appreciation for the dedication and passion of everyone who has supported the festival for so many years.We congratulate the group on reaching this important 25-year milestone and extend our sincere respect for all that they have accomplished over the years. We hope the traditions of Ogionsaa will continue to be passed down to future generations and that the festival will continue to grow and bring even more energy and excitement to Kagoshima.



▲Opening remarks



▲Group photo

03 Kagoshima event information

○Myoenji Mairi (October 24-25)

Myoenji Mairi is a traditional pilgrimage in which participants walk approximately 20 kilometers from Kagoshima City to Ijuin in Hioki City.

The event commemorates Shimazu Yoshihiro's return following his famous escape from the Battle of Sekigahara. During the Edo period, samurai from Kagoshima Castle Town would make the round-trip journey in armor to visit Myoenji Temple, the burial temple of Lord Yoshihiro, to honor his legacy, strengthen their spirit, and train both mind and body. After the Meiji era, the tradition was continued by ordinary citizens and remained active even after the site became Tokushige Shrine.

Over time, Myoenji Mairi became one of Kagoshima's three major traditional events. Today, visitors can enjoy a variety of activities, including traditional performing arts, martial arts competitions, and community walks that attract participants of all ages.





▲ Myoenji Mairi © K.P.V.B.▲

Coming UP in November and December

◇ Nov

1st Satsumasendai Hanya Festival (Satsumasendai City)

2nd-3rd Ohara Festival (Kagoshima City)

3rd Yagorodon Festival (Soo City)

29th 33rd Yoron Marathon (Yoron Island)

Oct. 30-Nov. 29 Flowers of Hikari (Nagashima Town)

◇ Dec

Dec. 6

46th Running Sakurajima Race (Kagoshima City)

Dec. 5, 6, 12, 13, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26 & 27

Christmas Fantasy Night 2026 at Kanoya Rose Garden (Kanoya City)

Dec. 19, 24, 25 & 26

Mini Fireworks Show at Christmas Fantasy Night 2026 (Kanoya City)

Please do check them out! ♪



Editor's note

(International Strategy Division, Policy Planning and Coordination Department, Kagoshima Prefectural Government)

Hello, everyone!!

Although the days are still quite warm, the mornings and evenings have gradually become cooler, making it feel more like autumn. With the changing temperatures, please take care and stay healthy.

In this issue, CIR Xu introduced the Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival, one of the biggest autumn celebrations in China.

That got me wondering about autumn festivals in other countries as well, so I asked our CIRs from South Korea and Singapore to share some traditional events celebrated in their home countries!

(If you are interested in learning more about festivals from our CIRs' home countries, be

sure to check out the August issue on the Kagoshima Prefectural Government website.)

Joohee Kim (South Korea): In Chungju, South Korea, the Ureuk Cultural Festival is held every year in honor of Ureuk, the musician credited with developing the traditional Korean instrument known as the *gayageum*. Ureuk is remembered for composing numerous pieces in Chungju and passing on traditional music to his students. To celebrate his legacy and preserve Korean traditional music and culture, the festival features music competitions, live performances, hands-on activities, and food stalls. This year's festival was held from October 8 to 11 and brought a festive atmosphere to the entire city. 🎶🎵

Kelly Chia (Singapore): In Singapore, Deepavali will be celebrated on November 8. Also known as the Festival of Lights, this important Hindu festival celebrates the triumph of light over darkness and good over evil. People mark the occasion by creating beautiful patterns on the ground using colored rice, powder, sand, and flower petals. In some areas, dazzling light displays illuminate the streets, filling the city with a bright and festive atmosphere. If you're curious, be sure to look it up! ✨

Until next time, see you in the next issue! ☆彡

The Kagoshima Southern Wind Tidings is accepting submissions on the following topics:

☆**Kagoshima photo gallery**

We are looking for photos that have a Kagoshima feel to them, or photos of Kagoshima that you have found overseas. Please send them with a brief description of the photo (e.g. mountain of volcano ash collection bags).

We are also accepting any other information or stories you would like to share with our readers

Enquiries/submissions:

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Discover Kagoshima, tourism site
www.kagoshima-kankou.com

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