
THE TOMBO

Oita's English Newsletter

July, August, September 2015

Issue 79

Exploring Oita City's Newest Treasures

It's hard to believe, but we are now over halfway through 2015. At the time of writing, the rainy season has started, and long grey rainy days are punctuated by *tsuyu no harema* ("the sunny spells between rain" – my new favourite Japanese phrase of 2015!) I moved to Oita City from the United Kingdom in August 2014, and it's hard to believe that the center of Oita City has changed so much in the short while since I've been here. I'm talking, of course, about the new JR Oita City Station and the new Oita Prefectural Art Museum, which both opened in April 2015. When I talked to friends living in Oita City about these new developments in order to write this article, their pride in Oita City was evident: Comments such as "It feels like Oita is becoming really dynamic and exciting! It has a real 'big city' feel to it now," were common.

It became clear to me that, in the name of my journalistic duty (of course), I should perform the arduous (!) task of exploring Oita City's new attractions so that I could write about them. And if that task involved shopping in a lovely new shopping centre, relaxing in a beautiful outdoor onsen, and getting a chance to see some of the finest works of art from both Oita and around the world, well, then as editor of the TOMBO, that was a sacrifice that I was more than willing to make...!

♥ JR Oita City



Maybe it's because I watched *The Railway Children* too many times as a child, but there is something undeniably joyful about trains, railway travel, and train stations. Oita's new station, featuring a shopping centre with restaurants, an arcade, and a cinema, is (and I may, of course, be biased) one of the nicest stations I have ever used. The station building

itself, with its stars, its large semi-circular windows, and its large clock, is lovely. It manages to look both simultaneously modern and timeless.

Inside, the station is clean, shiny and new, with a seemingly endless array of shops, attractions and food.



What's more, many of these attractions have a unique "Oita" flavour – even the cinema loyalty card depicts cartoon characters bathing in an onsen.

Every time I now go to Oita Station to catch a film, or a train, or a bite to eat, I'm taken aback by how bustling and lively it is. It really feels as if the station is the new beating heart of the city – a place not just used to travel to and from Oita, but a place to relax, meet people, and enjoy yourself!

♥ City Spa Tenkuu

I am a huge fan of onsen, so when I heard that the new Oita Station would be getting a fancy onsen, I was, to put it mildly, over the moon. City Spa Tenkuu is a part of the JR Kyushu Hotel Blossom Oita, but non-guests can pay a fee to use the onsen. I went on a sunny late afternoon, a bit sweaty and flustered after a busy day rushing around at work.

As a result, I felt a little bit intimidated as I stepped out of the lift into the rather posh reception area. "I don't think I've ever been to an onsen this fancy before," I thought, "I hope it's alright that I look like a mess!" Luckily, I had no need to worry, I was greeted by smiling staff members and handed a towel set and a small bracelet-barcode that I could use to pay for vending machine drinks or in the café bar. I was then led to another lift up to the top floors and the baths.

Once I had changed, I quickly had a preliminary soak in the indoor bath before putting on my spa-provided wrap (for modesty) and heading upstairs to the outdoor baths. There are two outdoor baths, one of which is a carbonated spring (good for the skin!), and the view from both baths was simply beautiful. I could see the whole of Oita City spread out before me, with the mountains, the sea, and Beppu in the distance. Sitting at the edge of the bath, I could make out birds flying low and trains ferrying passengers in and out of the station.

After relaxing for a while, a spa attendant came over to point out the names of the different mountains. "If you stay a little while," she told me, "you'll be able to see the sun set!" I followed her advice and stayed and watched the sky change colour, the city lights come on, and the stars come out. I don't think it is possible to feel more relaxed than I was as I lay there soaking, and it was with some reluctance that I eventually left the baths to enjoy a pleasant half hour in the spa café-bar with a good book.



An almost cloudless blue sky – the perfect weather for an outdoor bath!

All in all, it was a wonderful experience and I cannot recommend this onsen highly enough!

♥ Oita Prefectural Art Museum

In May, my friend Ellie made the trip from her home in Hokkaido for a holiday in Oita. One day during her trip, the heavens opened and it rained solidly from morning to afternoon, and so we decided to spend the day at OPAM looking at art. We went to see both the permanent collection and the "Modern: Blossoming Garden-Oita World Museum -Oita & World 200 Masterpieces" exhibition.



Ellie gets up close and personal with art.

It was a fantastic opportunity for us to see not only works by world-renowned artists such as J.M.W. Turner, Salvador Dalí, and Yoshitomo Nara, but also works of art by artists from Oita Prefecture. As part of its "Modern: Blossoming Garden" exhibition, these works were displayed side-by-side, inviting interesting comparisons and creating a totally unique exhibition. There was so much to see that you could potentially lose yourself in there for hours. The permanent collection also features a number of fascinating works of art. I particularly loved the gorgeous Japanese folding screens and paintings depicting different seasons. **(Continued on page 3)**

EXHIBITIONS & SCREENINGS

Date	Description	Place	Admission	Contact #
Apr. 24 th – July 20 th	Opening Exhibition vol. 1 “Modern: Blossoming Garden – Oita World Museum – Oita & World 200 Masterpieces”	Oita Prefectural Art Museum	¥1200	☎ 097-533-4500
Jul. 18 th – Sept. 27 th	Wartime Life and Post-War Reconstruction	Oita Prefectural Museum of History	See Oita City website.	☎ 097-549-0880
Jul. 18 th – Sept. 23 rd	Oita Toilennale 2015 – A collection of public toilets where you can enjoy some art!	Various toilets around Oita!	N/A	☎ 097-585-6011
Jul. 11 th – Sept. 27 th	Eiji Mitooka – Design Wonderland – From Eki-ben to the Seven Stars	Oita City Art Museum	¥1200	☎ 097-554-5800
Jul. 8 th – Sept. 27 th	Art Wonderland 2015	Oita City Art Museum	See Oita City website.	☎ 097-554-5800
Aug. 1 st – Aug. 30 th	Attack on Titan WALL OITA – Exhibition celebrating the popular manga, Attack on Titan.	Oita Prefectural Art Museum	Prices vary, see OPAM website.	☎ 097-533-4500
Aug. 1 st – Sept. 23 rd	“Kaku!” Manga Exhibition	Oita Prefectural Art Museum	See OPAM website.	☎ 097-533-4500

Most Museums and Centers are closed on Monday, or Tuesday if Monday is a public holiday. Student admissions vary, highest cost shown.



STAGE & MUSIC EVENTS

Date	Time	Artist/Event	Venue	Cost	Contact #
Jul. 4 th	18:30	Music House Cantaloo II 18 th Anniversary Live VOL. 1	Cantaloo II	¥1500 /w 2 drinks	☎ 097-548-5363
Jul. 5 th	15:30	Music House Cantaloo II 18 th Anniversary Live VOL. 2	Cantaloo II	¥1500 /w 2 drinks	☎ 097-548-5363
Jul. 11 th	10:30	Yoshi and Hiuta's New Sensation Kamishibai (paper picture stories)	Patria Hita	¥1000	☎ 0973-25-5000
Jul 19 th	12:30	T.O.P.S V.A. Scramble 3	T.O.P.S Bitts Hall	Free entry +drink	☎ 097-533-0467
Jul. 30 th	19:00	From Berlin ~Violin Sonata~ - Sayako Kusaka x Martin Helmchen	iichiko Grand Theatre	Prices vary	☎ 097-533-4004
Aug. 6 th	18:00	South Pacific – the musical	iichiko Grand Theatre	Prices vary	☎ 097-533-4004
Sept. 8 th	19:00	Heinz Holligar and Friends	iichiko Otonoizumi	¥3000	☎ 097-533-4004
Sept. 22 nd	16:00	Don Quixote Ballet – with Yasuyuki Shuto	iichiko Grand Theatre	Prices vary	☎ 097-533-4004

**Ticket prices range from student to most expensive general admission. Prices shown otherwise indicate price for purchase on the day of the event, they may be cheaper if purchased in advance. “w/ drink” prices include a drink, “+drink” prices require the additional purchase of a drink. Times shown indicate start times, doors usually open 30 minutes beforehand.

VENUES

Cantaloo II=3-2-30 Miyako-Machi

iichiko Grand Theatre= Oasis Tower 2F Oita City

T.O.P.S Bitts Hall.= Ikushi 5-783, Oita City

Nakayama Dai 5 Building 6F Oita City

iichiko Otonoizumi Hall =Oasis Tower 4F Oita City

Patria Hita= 1-8-11 Sanbonmatsu, Hita City

(Continued from Page 2)

Tired out from a morning of art and culture, we then went to OPAM's Café Charité for hearty meal. As Ellie was visiting from Hokkaido, I hinted strongly that she ought to try some famous Oita cuisine (the food in Oita is great and I wanted to show it off, after all!). She selected the toriten, which was served to us on beautiful onta pottery. As we chatted about the art we had seen that morning, we stuffed our faces with delicious toriten until we were full enough to burst.

While OPAM would be a great day out any day of the week, I particularly recommend it as a rainy day destination. I was worried the rain would spoil Ellie's holiday, but it instead allowed us to have a fantastic day at the gallery.

I strongly recommend exploring Oita Station, City Spa Tenkuu, and OPAM!

2015 has been a fantastic year for Oita City so far – let's hope that the next six months are equally great! --- Miriam

Festivals and Events

Date	Event Description	Location	Contact #
Jul. 1 st – Sep. 30 th	Taketa Soft-serve Ice Cream Rally- grab a map and start eating delicious ice cream to collect stamps to enter the draw to win one of many prizes!	Taketa City Various locations	☎ 0974-63-0585
Jul. 10 th ~ 18 th	Usuki Gion Festival- a traditional festival that started in 1643. There are 3 portable shrines and 2 floats paraded from <i>Owatari to Okaeri</i> .	Usuki City Castle town	☎ 0972-64-7130
Jul. 11 th	Kuju Furusato Shizen Gakkou rice growing - participants can experience weeding barnyard millet from rice fields by hand whilst learning about the local wildlife (participation fee 1000yen)	Kokonoe-Machi Kuju Furusato Shizen Gakkou	☎ 0973-73-0001
Jul. 18 th	Kimono Appreciation Day- held on the third Saturday of each month, with special offers and discounts for kimono rental and professional photography.	Kitsuki City Jyouka-machi	☎ 0978-63-0100
Jul. 18 th ~ Sep. 27 th	The Beppu Contemporary Art Festival "Mixed Bathing World 2015" - a citizen-run contemporary art festival that will be held every three years. There are art displays, installations and interactive events for visitors to enjoy.	Beppu City Various locations	☎ 0977-22-3560
Jul. 18 th ~ 19 th	Tsukumi Port Festival- a "Soiya Tsukumi" traditional dance on the 18 th , a fireworks display on the 19 th and much more!	Tsukumi City Chuou-machi area	☎ 0972-82-5111
Jul. 20 th	Uki Uki Flea Market- come and take a look at the stalls of clothes, books and more. You might just find some bargains. 11:30 ~ 15:00	Oita City Oasis Tower 1st Floor	☎ 097-538-7411
Jul. 24 th ~ 25 th	Tenjin Festival- portable shrines will be carried throughout the city, and on the evening of the 25 th there will be a shrine against shrine hitting competition.	Kitsuki City Tobimatsu Tenman Shrine	☎ 0978-63-0100
Jul. 24 th ~ 26 th	Beppu Summer Early Evening Festival- over the two days there will be markets, local food stalls, performances and a fireworks display on the evening of the 26 th .	Beppu City Spa Beach	☎ 0977-24-2828
Jul. 24 th ~ 26 th	Nakatsu Gion Festival- this prefecture-designated "Intangible Cultural Property" has 580 years of history. Highlights include shrine processions and more!	Nakatsu City Nakatsu Shrine Area	☎ 0979-22-1111
Jul. 25 th ~ 26 th	Hita Gion Festival- Hita Gion celebrates over 300 years of history. Here you can see a portable shrine that is 10 meters tall!	Hita City Mameda & Kuma Area	☎ 0973-24-6453
Aug. 7 th ~ 9 th	Oita Tanabata Festival- this exciting summer festival takes place across downtown Oita, and features parades, performances, and dances.	Oita City Downtown Area	☎ 097-537-5959
Aug. 9 th	Oita River Fireworks Festival- to celebrate the last day of the Oita Tanabata Festival, there will be a fireworks festival along the river.	Oita City Oita River	☎ 097-538-9647
Aug. 16 th	Mama-chari World Grand Prix- yes, that's right: this event is a 4 hour endurance race on a 'mama-chari' bicycle with prizes for the winners. Registration is necessary (around 7 different classes) and riders must wear a helmet and gloves.	Hita City Autopolis Circuit	☎ 0973-55-1111
Aug. 14 th ~ 15 th	Himeshima Bon-Odori Festival- Himeshima Bon-Odori dances are said to have come from <i>Nenbutsu</i> folk dances. Come see traditional local dances such as the 'fox dance', recreated and performed each and every year.	Himeshima Village Chuo-Hiroba	☎ 0978-87-2111
Aug. 15 th	Kimono Appreciation Day- held on the third Saturday of each month, with special offers and discounts for kimono rental and professional photography.	Kitsuki City Jouka-machi	☎ 0978-63-0100
Aug. 22 th	Haniwa (clay images) making workshop- A hands on event for children and parents to enjoy. Participation fee is 230yen (Incl. admission fee), reservations necessary.	Oita City History Museum	☎ 097-549-0880
Aug. 22 th	Tsukumi Sensu Dance Ceremony - 1000 dancers will dance with Japanese fans.	Tsukumi City Tsukumin Park	☎ 0972-82-9521
Aug. 29 th	Usuki Stone Buddha Fire Festival- 1000 torches will be lit around the ancient stone Buddha carvings which are nationally designated treasures. It is the biggest fire festival in West Japan!	Usuki City Fukata	☎ 0972-64-7130
Sep. 5 th	Paper Baskets making workshop- A hands on event for children and parents to enjoy. Participation fee is 150yen (Incl. admission fee), reservations necessary.	Oita City History Museum	☎ 097-549-0880
Sep. 9 th	Free onsen entrance- September 9 th is Kokonoe's designated hot spring day and designated facilities marked with posters let customers bathe for free!	Kokonoe-machi Various locations	☎ 0973-73-5505
Sep. 12 th ~ 13 th	The Ajimu Fair "Wine Festival 2015" - various events such as Ajimu wine sampling, and a bazaar. You can have your fill of Bungo Beef, wine and more.	Usa City Ajimu Area	☎ 0978-44-1111 ☎ 0978-44-0381
Mid-Sep.	The 32nd Taketa Takigino- For this event, a special aquatic stage is set up and several Noh plays are performed.	Taketa City Castle town	☎ 0974-63-0585
Sep. 19 th	Kimono Appreciation Day- held on the third Saturday of each month, with special offers and discounts for kimono rental and professional photography.	Kitsuki City Jouka-machi	☎ 0978-63-0100

* Although the TOMBO aims to provide information that is as accurate as possible, there may be occasions when the dates mentioned or other small details are incorrect. If you are unsure at all regarding the details of an event, please use the contact numbers listed above to make inquiries.

What's Going On?

From the Plaza

The Oita International Plaza is holding free legal consultations on **July 15th, August 19th & September 16th** from **13:00-16:00**.

The Oita Emigration/Immigration Affairs Council also organizes free consultations where emigration/immigration specialists are available to offer advice on a variety of topics from Immigration Bureau paperwork and procedures, to daily life matters. English interpretation available, other languages may be available with reservation two days in advance.

Date/Time: **Sunday July 5th, Sunday August 2nd, Sunday September 6th**

Venue: the Oita International Plaza

For more information contact the Oita International Plaza.

TEL: 097-533-4021

Free Tagalog Consultations

Date: **July 4th, July 21st, August 1st, August 18th, September 5th, September 15th**

Time: **13:00-16:00**

Venue: Oita International Plaza (iichiko Culture Center, B1F)

Consultant: Rhodora Yoshitake

Free Chinese Consultations

Date/Time: **Every Thursday 10:00-13:00**. Place: Oita International Plaza. Consultant: Kodama Wenyu (*Dates and times are subject to change. Please contact the Oita International Plaza before coming.) TEL: 097-533-4021

Venue: Oita International Plaza (iichiko Culture Center, B1F)

Volunteer Interpreters and Translators

"Skill Up Course" – Disaster Cases

July 11th (Saturday), 14:00-16:00

For volunteer interpreters/translators, we are holding "Volunteer Interpreters and Translators "Skill Up Course"-disaster cases-" from 2 pm to 4 pm on Sat. July 11th. Participation is FREE! Reservation is necessary (Deadline: July 3rd). If you are a volunteer, come to the "Middle meeting Room 1" at iichiko Culture Center 4F. Contact: 097-533-4021 (osei@emo.or.jp)

Japanese Lessons

Himawari Japanese Volunteers

Support for people learning Japanese in order to help them enjoy their lives in Oita, now at three different locations.

Wasada Public Hall Wed. 10:00-11:30

Meiji Akeno Public Hall Wed. 14:00-15:30

Tsurusaki Public Hall Sat. 10:00-11:30

For more information contact Ms. Fukata TEL: 097-527-2614

E-MAIL: nihongo_himawari_oita@yahoo.co.jp

Nihongo Rakuraku-talk

Beppu City Hall offers free Japanese lessons every Monday from 14:00-15:30. For more information contact Mr. Kii in the Beppu International Affairs Division

TEL: 0977-21-6133 E-MAIL: int-ma@city.beppu.oita.jp

Sakura Japanese Class

Come study Japanese with friendly volunteers and teachers in a pleasant atmosphere. Sakura Japanese Class is held every Monday from 10:15-12:00 at the Oita University International House in Nishiki-Machi, Oita City. Classes are free of charge. For more information call Ms. Ohashi

CELL: 090-7866-2486

AIUEO Japanese Lessons

Volunteers offer free Japanese lessons on Tuesday and Friday from 10:20-11:50 at I-NESS near Oasis Tower as well as Thursday nights at Compal Hall from 18:30-20:30. Lessons are also offered in Beppu at the Beppu Foreign Tourist Information Office on Tuesday mornings from 10:00-12:00. For more information contact:

Ms. Miyase CELL: 090-8353-2485 (day lessons)

Ms. Kato TEL: 097-532-5940 (night lessons)

Community Classes and Events

Happy Talk

Come practice speaking Japanese with other learners and native speakers. Reservations not required, just show up on the day.

July 11th

August 8th 13:00-14:30

September 12th 13:00-14:30

Please bring your own drink if you like. Participation is FREE.

For more details visit the Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/HappyTalkOita>

Changes to the TOMBO



Blue skies over Oita during a walk along Oita River in May

As you have probably noticed, this issue marks some changes to the way the TOMBO is edited and distributed. Instead of being distributed bimonthly, the TOMBO will now be distributed every three months (with this issue covering July, August, and September). Thank you for your continued support and for your patience while we deal with any teething problems that result from our adjusting to the new TOMBO schedule.

--- With warmest regards from the editor.

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THANK YOU !!

A special thanks to all those who co-operated with us for this issue. Your help was very much appreciated.

THE TOMBO is produced by:

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HOURS: Monday-Friday 9:30am-7:00pm
(closed weekends and the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month. We are open on the Saturdays before these Mondays)
Closed national holidays & Dec 29th - Jan 3rd

The International Plaza is located on the basement floor of OASIS Hiroba 21 (iichiko Culture Center).

