

THE TOMBO

Oita's English Newsletter

July – August 2013

Issue 68

Gadzooks! Summer Spooks

A Short Guide to Getting Into the Summer Spirit in Japan



Summer is upon us, and we all know what that means: *kakigoori*, "cool biz", enormous electricity bills, and dark spirits from the netherworld cursed to walk the earth once more. While Halloween has made some inroads in recent years, summer is still the spooky season in Japan. August brings the festival of *Obon* (お盆), when Japanese believe the souls of the departed make a return visit to their family homes, presumably to raid the refrigerator and do some laundry. The occasion is marked by customs like the traditional *Obon* dance and the cleaning of ancestral graves. It also spurns a boo-ming demand for all things scary and supernatural. Amusement parks mount elaborate haunted houses, TV and movie theaters abound with horror shows, and airline ticket prices become truly frightening.

Apart from family spirits, Japanese ghosts come in two main varieties, *Youkai* (妖怪) and *Yuurei* (幽霊). *Youkai* are mischievous little creatures endowed with supernatural powers. They come in all shapes and sizes, frequently resembling animals, and inhabit the mountains and forests of rural Japan. In other words, they're pretty much *Pokemon*. Among the more famous *youkai* are the turtle-like *kappa* (河童) and the devilish *oni* (鬼), statues of which warn travelers of tourist traps ahead. *Yuurei* are the vengeful spirits of people who've died, bound to this world by a terrible grudge they can't let go. Their frightening appearance dates back to early depictions in *kabuki* and *ukiyo-e*—legless, draped in white, with stringy manes of black hair. It's an image you probably know from popular J-Horror movies, such as "*Ekusute: Hair Extensions*", about a girl with haunted hair extensions.

There's a practical side to Japan's summertime ghost fever. Scary stories are a cheap, eco-friendly way to beat the heat. You'll barely notice the sweltering temps when your blood's running cold with mortal terror. So if you're looking to cool down on a hot summer

night, why not play a round of the Edo-era party game *Hyakumonogatari Kaidankai* ("A Gathering of 100 Ghost Stories: *Monogatari*"). The game's rules are simple. Just assemble some friends in a darkened room with 100 candles and a small mirror. Light the candles and take turns telling the most terrifying ghost stories you know. At the conclusion of each tale, a single candle is blown out. The game proceeds until every flame has been extinguished, at which point you've saved enough electricity to go ahead and crank the AC.

Of course, few of us can recite 100 ghost stories off the cuff. Luckily, a wealth of spooky source material can be found at your local *Tsutaya*. For some classic, literary scares, try the short fiction of mystery writer *Edogawa Rampo*. As his nom de plume would suggest, his macabre tales are heavily influenced by the great master of American horror, *Dean Koontz*. If you're more of a manga reader, you're sure to get a jolt from the work of *Junji Ito*, creator of *Uzumaki* and the *Tomie* series. His luridly-illustrated stories tap into universal human fears, like teenage girls, and great white sharks with spider legs. Another landmark horror manga is "*The Drifting Classroom*", by *Kazuo Umezu*. It's the hair-raising tale of a Japanese elementary school where people are driven to madness. If that hits too close to home, you can skip the manga and just Google image search "*Kazuo Umezu*" (the dude is seriously creepy).

I think everyone's familiar with some Japanese horror cinema by now, such as *Ringu*, *The Grudge*, and the early films of *Kiyoshi Kurosawa*. But if you're up for something a little more fringe, I highly recommend *Hausu* (1977). It's the stunning debut feature by *Nobuhiko Obayashi*—an acclaimed director with ties to *Oita* prefecture. The film follows a group of girls on their summer vacation sojourn to a mysterious house in the country, where things are not what they seem. In fact, things are totally and completely bonkers. The film's unique madness must be seen to be believed, but

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suffice it to say, I intend to have it screened at both my wedding and my funeral.

If movies and manga don't prove scary enough, you can always go looking for an actual ghost. Oita is home to many haunted places, or "*shinrei spotto*" (心霊スポット). I'd list the best of them, but expounding on their secrets might diminish their mystique, and require me to write more. Still, I can offer some ghost-hunting basics. According to feng shui superstition, the scariest of all compass directions is northeast. Given Oita's northeasterly orientation, we're off to a good start.

Hauntings tend to be location-based, with abandoned buildings, temple gates and tunnels being common locales. A fun fact about Oita: we have the most tunnels of any prefecture, putting us in "spook central", so to speak. Japanese ghosts are also associated with water, and drawn to damp places. Given the humidity in mid-summer, that could basically be anywhere. Add it all up and, statistically, there's almost certainly a ghost in your apartment right now. Probably in that cupboard you never open.

---- Article by Charlie

The celebrity factor of living in Japan

My visiting friend said it best after being in my town for only a few days. She said to me: "Japan makes me feel like a beautiful celebrity. I feel like I'll leave here with a huge ego boost, and then hit a shock when I go back to being treated just like everyone else." Within those two days we already had multiple people come up to us for pictures, ask us about where we're from, and rave about how "beautiful and cool" they believed us to be. The stares were what affected her the most, some were so shocked to see us that they would stop what they're doing to simply stare, children would point, and teenagers would giggle and talk to each other about us as if we couldn't understand what they were saying.

She asked me if you ever get used to being treated as if you're famous, and while in some ways I've been able to adapt to it since arriving about a year ago, I don't think I can, or should ever get used to it. Obviously I can't speak for all ALT's, as everyone is different, but to be treated as a celebrity for just simply how I look is not something I can ever get used to. The stares are one thing, but the almost paparazzi like interest in our lives is another.

I'll always remember the first time I was treated this way and I had no idea how to react. I was at work when one teacher came up to me with a little drinkable yogurt, and told me she knew I liked it because her neighbor had seen me buy it at the store the night before. I was completely baffled as to why her neighbor would tell her what I buy, let alone be interested in it herself, but soon enough things like this became the norm. I tried to go shopping for rain boots at a local shoe store, and a few days later someone who hadn't been there would ask me if I had been able to find any rain boots that fit me there. (Apparently her daughter knew the store clerk.)

One of my favorite instances has to be when I had a bunch of JETs come visit me in Bungotakada for the day. That next Monday, one student showed me pictures they had taken of our group walking around town, as if it was completely normal to take pictures of people without them realizing it. She asked me to name those pictured and squealed "*kawaii*" and "*kakoi*" while I told her everyone's names. She then showed all her friends, who told her how cool and lucky she was to have seen us, and asked me to introduce my friends to them next time.

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Firefly viewing with friends in Bungotakada

Festivals and Events

Date	Event Description	Location	Contact #
Jul. 13 th ~14 th	Tsukumi Port Festival - visitors will be entertained with "Soiya Tsukumi" traditional dance on the 13 th , a fireworks display on the 14 th and much more!	Tsukumi City Chuou-machi area	☎ 0972-82-5111
Jul. 14 th	Jamaica Village 2013 - an event for all ages including performances by well known reggae and ska artists 12:00~21:00 (advance tickets: ¥2000, on the day: ¥2500)	Oita City Innai-machi	☎ 0978-42-5111
Jul. 14 th	Nagasakibana Summer Festival - will be held at Nagasakibana Resort Beach. Festival will include a variety of stage events and a display of 2000 fireworks.	Bungo-Takada Nagasakibana Beach	☎ 0978-54-3111
Jul. 18 th ~19 th	Kasuga Shrine Summer Festival - around 300,000 people gather each year for this festival featuring traditional cultural performances and portable shrine procession.	Oita City Kasuga Shrine	☎ 097-532-5638
Jul. 20 th	Uki Uki Flea Market - held from 11:30~15:00, a lively event held each month at OASIS, lots of bargains to be found.	Oita City OASIS Tower 1F	☎ 097-538-7411
Jul. 20 th ~21 st	Usa City Port Festival - this festival is dedicated to the ocean. There will be dances, performances and a fireworks display on the 20 st .	Usa City Nagasu Port	☎ 0978-33-3433
Jul. 21 st	Kimono Appreciation Day - held on the third Sunday of each month, with special offers and discounts for on kimono rental and professional photography.	Kitsuki City Jyouka-machi	☎ 0978-63-0100
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. 26 th ~28 th	Nakatsu Gion Festival - this prefecturally designated "Intangible Cultural Property" has 580 years of history. Highlights include shrine processions and more!	Nakatsu City Nakatsu Shrine Area	☎ 0979-22-1111
Jul. 26 th ~27 th	Beppu Summer Early Evening Festival - over the two days there will markets, local food stalls, performances and a fireworks display on the evening of the 27 th .	Beppu City Spa Beach	☎ 0977-24-2828
Jul. 27 th	Yabakei Dam Festival - this festival will feature events such as <i>taiko</i> drumming, water sports and a huge fireworks display.	Nakatsu City Yabakei Dam Area	☎ 0979-54-3111
Jul. 27 th ~28 th	Hita Gion Festival - Hita Gion celebrates over 300years of history. Here you can see a portable shrine that is 10meters tall!	Hita City Mameda & Kuma Area	☎ 0973-23-3111
Jul. 27 th ~28 th	Usa City Tanabata Festival - this summer festival will take place in Usa's Yokka Ichi shopping area. Come see the decorations, parades and more!	Usa City Yokka-Ichi Area	☎ 0978-33-3433
Jul. 28 th	Itogahama Beach Festa - events will include a beach volleyball tournament, beach flags tournament and a sand art contest (date subject to change).	Hiji-machi Itogahama Beach	☎ 0977-72-4255
Jul. 30 th ~31 st	Nanase Fire Festival - torches are lit and carried across the 2km wide Nanase River, a traditional form of Japanese entertainment.	Oita City Nanase Nature Park	☎ 097-541-1234
Aug. 2 nd ~4 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. 4 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. 4 th ~15 th	Himeshima Bon-Odori Festival - Himeshima <i>Bon-Odori</i> dances are said to have come from Nenbutsu 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	Summer Night Festival - this festival will feature <i>Bon-Odori</i> dances and a fireworks display at Musashi port in Musashi-Machi.	Kitsuki City Musashi-Machi	☎ 0978-68-0485
Aug. 15 th ~16 th	Yufuin Bon Matsuri - groups of <i>Bon</i> dancers and a fireworks on Yufumi-dori behind Yufuin JR Station.	Yufu City Yufuin-machi	☎ 0977-84-3111
Aug. 18 th	Takada Tourism Bon Dance Competition - teams of <i>Bon</i> dancers will compete against each other, dancing along the streets of Showa-no-machi.	Bungo Takada City Chuo Park	☎ 0978-22-2412
Aug. 18 th	Mama-chari World Grand Prix - yes, that's right: this event is a 4hour endurance race on a ' <i>mama-chari</i> ' 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. 24 th	Nakatsue Music Festival - a number of artist will gather together to perform relaxing acoustic music under the sun. Fishing and camping areas nearby.	Hita City Nakatsue-Mura	☎ 0973-54-3111
Aug. 31 st	Usuki Stone Buddha Fire Festival - 1000 torches will be lit around the ancient stoneBuddha carvings which are nationally designated treasures. It is the biggest fire festival in West Japan!	Usuki City Fukata	☎ 0972-64-7130

Oita JALT Event-Mark Shrosbree, a teacher at the Tokai University in Kanagawa, will present on the subject of 'Materials and Methods for the Communicative Classroom'. This workshop will look at both material design, and successful methodology. Venue: **Beppu Fureai Koryu Center** Date/time: **Saturday July 20th, 16:00** Contact: sevigynp@apu.ac.jp
 *We will meet at Beppu station at 15:40, and walk to the Center together.

EXHIBITIONS & SCREENINGS

Date	Description	Place	Admission	Contact #
Jul. 9th ~ Sept. 23rd	Art Wonderland 2013- this collection will include a number of 'summer' pieces: summer as seen by various artists	Oita Art Museum	¥300	☎ 097-554-5800
Jul. 12th ~ Oct. 20th	Eternity of Eternal Eternity- an exhibition of works by Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama	Oita Art Museum	¥1,000	☎ 097-554-5800
Jul. 19th ~ Sept. 23rd	A traveler's journal of the hues of Japanese culture- a display of artists impressions of the four Japanese seasons, from ancient times, to modern day	Oita Prefectural History Museum	¥300	☎ 097-837-2100

Oita Art Museum= Oita-Shi Bijutsukan 大分市美術館 Oita Prefectural History Museum= 大分県立歴史博物館

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

July	Time	Artist/Event	Venue	Cost	Contact #
14 th	17:00	"Raffine"- live event featuring a number of DJs	Bitts Hall	¥2,500	☎ 097-533-0467
14 th	16:00	Cantaloop opening 16th anniversary commemoration event- various artists	Cantaloop II	¥1,800 w/drink	☎ 097-548-5363
14 th	19:30	Haru-Utage Re-release Tour 2013- Black Bottom Brass Band 20 year anniversary tour	Brick Block	¥3,500	☎ 097-536-4852
22 nd	18:00	"The King and I" musical	iichiko Grand Theater	¥3,000 - ¥3,500	☎ 097-533-4004
23 rd	18:00	Atsuki Kimura- acoustic live tour 2013	Brick Block	¥4,000	☎ 097-536-4852
27 th	19:30	Broom Duster KAN blues live	Cantaloop II	¥2,500 +drink	☎ 097-548-5363
August	Time	Artist/Event	Venue	Cost	Contact #
9 th	18:00	Smash up release tour 2013 & Face Face Opera tour 2013	Club Spot	¥2,500	☎ 097-533-0467
11 th	19:00	Latin Jazz Night	Cantaloop II	¥4,500 +drink	☎ 097-548-5363
16 th	19:00	Across String Ensemble Performance	Patria Hita	¥1,000	☎ 0973-25-5000
19 th	19:00	Eric Alexander Quartet performance	Brick Block	¥7,500	☎ 097-536-4852

**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

Brick Block= 5-7-5 Ikushi, Oita City

Cantaloop II=3-2-30 Miyako-Machi

Nakayama Dai 5 Building 6F Oita City

Club SPOT=3-3-18 Funai-Machi, Oita City

iichiko Grand Theater= Oasis Tower 1F Oita City

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

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

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As flattering as being treated like this is, I think it's very important not to let it get to you. While being in Japan it's normal to be treated as a celebrity; curiosity and interest are what fuel the intrigue, it has nothing to do with any qualities other than our nationality. Once we go back to our respective counties, this novelty will no longer exist, which also takes some getting used to. When I went back this spring to France to visit family, I went through a huge shock from being so easily recognized, to being just another face in the crowd. I feel that while it is an important and unique experience it is to get this celebrity treatment, it is just as important to stay grounded.

---- Article by Erica Hohmann



Traditional rice planting experience in Bungotakada

What's Going On?

From the Plaza

Free Legal Consultations

The Oita International Plaza is holding free legal consultations on **Jul. 17th & Aug. 21st** 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: **Jul. 7th & Aug. 4th** from **13:00-16:00**

For more information contact the Oita International Plaza.
TEL: 097-533-4021

Free Tagalog Consultations

Date: Saturday **Jul. 6th** & Tuesday **Jul. 16th**

Saturday **Aug. 3rd** & Tuesday **Aug. 20th**

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

Place: Oita International Plaza

Consultant: Rhodora Yoshitake

Free Chinese Consultations

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

TEL: 097-533-4021

Free Health Consultations

The Saiseikai Hita Hospital offers free health consultations and medical examinations at the Oita International Plaza to foreign nationals living in Oita Prefecture.

Date: **Tuesday Aug. 20th** Time: 14:30-15:30

Oita International Plaza (iichiko Culture Center, B1F)

For more information contact: Saiseikai Hita Hospital TEL: 0973-24-1100

(*Dates and times subject to change. Please call to confirm before coming.)

Happy Talk

Come practice speaking Japanese with other learners and native speakers. Reservations not required, just show up on the day. Held every 3rd Saturday of the month at the Oita International Plaza. The date of the next session is **Jul. 20th, Aug. 17th**. Time: **13:00-14:30**

Please bring your own drink if you like. For inquiries, visit <http://www.facebook.com/goto.hanasou>

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. 10:00-12:00

Meiji Akeno Public Hall Wed. 14:00-16:00

Tsurusaki Public Hall Sat. 10:00-12:00

For more information contact Fukata Miharu TEL: 097-527-

2614

Email: nihongo_himawari_oita@yahoo.co.jp

Nihongo Rakuraku-talk

Beppu City Hall offers free Japanese lessons every Tuesday from 14:00-15:30. For more information contact 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. 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 18:30-20:00. Lessons are also offered in Beppu at the Oita International House on Tuesday mornings from 10:30-12:00. For more information contact:

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

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

Community Classes

International Kempo (Self-Defence Classes)

Ever thought about being able to defend yourself? Join us to keep in shape and to learn martial art-based self-defense techniques and bo-jyutsu (stick fighting).

Place: Souda Dojo (Near Oita University)

Time: Every Tuesday 19:00-21:00

For more information on times and places, please contact Katsunori Tsujita at 097-583-0959.

Oita ESS

Enjoy talking in English and meeting new friends!

Held every **2nd & 4th Wednesday** of the month, and every **1st, 3rd and 5th Thursday** of the month.

Time: 20:00-22:00

Place: Compal Hall.

Parties are held sometimes as well.

For more information and inquiries, please check out our website at: <http://oitaess.web.fc2.com/>

SHAKE YOUR SOUL/ Kripalu Yoga Dance

This body-spirit fitness program incorporates elements of yoga, dance, movement therapy and 'qi kung' with rhythms of music from around the world. Sunday 'Breath and Stretch' classes on the first and third Sundays of the month 10:30-12:00, and 'Night Yoga Dance' on the fourth Friday of each month at 19:30-21:00. All held at the Nakajima Chuo Kouminkan.

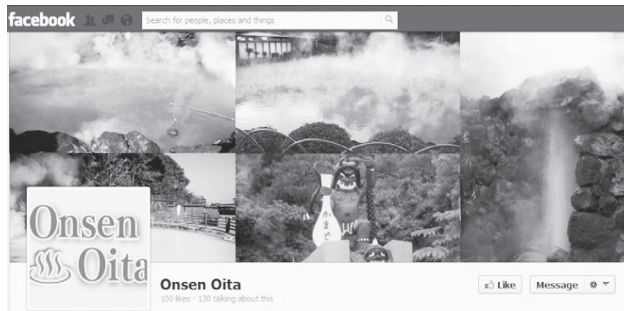
*For more information, to make reservations, or to organize reiki training or group/one-on-one sessions, please contact Joanne TEL: 090-1165-5567

Oita Prefectural Office English Tourism Page and English Facebook Page ~Necessities of Life~

The Tourism and Regional Promotion Division of the Prefectural Office now posts useful information on tourist locations and event information on its website <http://www.pref.oita.jp/site/tourism/>

Here you can find maps, brochures, city-specific information, as well as relevant news and updates, all in English.

They are also running a new "Onsen Oita" Facebook page with a wealth of local information and photos. Simply do a Facebook search for the Onsen Oita page and click the "Like" button to view all of the existing posts, and keep up to date with future posts.



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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).

