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# THE TOMBO

Oita's English Newsletter

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November – December 2013

Issue 70

## Noh Theatre (能)

*'Klock...!' resonates the sudden sound of wood striking wood. A chorus of low humming voices erupts and then morphs gradually into a kind of cryptic wailing chant. As I strain my ears, attempting to decipher some of the short strings of syllabic puzzles, I realize that I cannot understand any of this Japanese. Like a mix between an esoteric mantra, and spiritual hymnal, the vibrations draw me into a state of relaxed meditation. 'Klock...!' again sounds the smooth piece of lacquered maple as its echo weaves a rhythm through the choir's melody. Soft amber light fills the room. I can feel my legs, folded beneath me, seiza style, beginning to lose feeling. 'Whack!' one, two, three... 'whack!' The sharp slap of an unopened fan on a choir member's thigh awakes the male figure who has, all of this while, with his eyes cast down, been kneeling motionless in the center of the floor. A powerful rumble begins to grow from deep within him, while simultaneously, all but his own voice fade into silence. He comes to life, rises to his feet, and begins to walk, deliberately, but ever so slowly, and yet his feet glide across the floor. His mind, voice, and body move together in a simple, almost mechanical, but beautiful and controlled harmony.*

*-This is Miyamoto Shigeki, a master of Noh.*

A number of months back I had the good fortune of being invited by one of my elementary school teachers to a Noh performance in Hiji town. To be quite honest, I at first considered politely declining Tanaka sensei's invitation because it happened fall on an evening on which I already had other plans. However, as she enthusiastically described a hobby of hers, Noh chanting, her eyes lit up and I could not help but feel her sincere desire to share a special part of Japan's traditional culture with me. She described to me how present day Noh embodies a fusion of religion and art, and how its adoption by the samurai class as a discipline influenced its character in profound ways. Anyone seeking to better understand the samurai, and Japanese culture, 'must study Noh,' she told me. Intrigued, I accepted her invitation. I thank my lucky stars that I did so, for that first live performance opened my eyes to a completely new facet of Japanese culture, and opened the door to some very special new friendships.

One characteristic that sets Noh's artistic form apart from many others is its attention to the absolute control of the body's movements. In Noh, at all times, 'no body parts are free to move freely. Like a wall, everything must be controlled.' Every muscle movement, voice fluctuation, every single breath is subjected to the strictest standards of regulation. 'No part of Noh is easy,' and this is perhaps one reason it became so suitable to the samurai class. The concentration and discipline required to sustain such complete control

over the body's movements can only be achieved after years of intense training and dedication. It is said that only then does one become able to manifest what lies at Noh's heart, *yuugen*, or that profound grace and subtlety that underpins the Japanese cultural aesthetic. Ultimately, like so many other elements of Japanese culture I have encountered, and revel in, Noh is something that undeniably deserves first-hand live experience.

I could not have guessed the deep impression that first experience would leave on me, or the new friendships that would grow out of Tanaka sensei's simple, yet sincere invitation to me, but as I watched Miyamoto Shigeki perform that first night, awestruck, I was touched by something that has deeply enriched my experience of this beautiful land and culture. How grateful I am to Tanaka sensei for reaching out and sharing with me her hobby.

(Miyamoto Shigeki belongs to the 大江能楽堂 'Oouenougakudou', and performs, instructs, and lectures extensively on Noh throughout Japan (sometimes even in Oita)! For those who can read Japanese, please visit the 大江能楽堂 website at: <http://www.asahi-net.or.jp/~tn4m-ooe/>

For those who cannot read Japanese, please check out this site with someone who can.)

----Article by Aaron Jones

## Dance no Aki

### Dance Walking Through the Seasons in Japan

In Japan there are all sorts of pleasures to look forward to in the fall, expressed as *'Shoku-yoku no Aki'* (Hearty Appetite Fall), *Undo no Aki* (Sports Fall), *Bunka no Aki* (Culture Fall), and *Dokusho-no-Aki* (Read Books in Fall), to name a few. While there is still another exquisite month of southern Japan autumn to go, I would like to add another category to the mix--- *Dansu no Aki!*

As the red, brown, and golden leaves fall from the trees and spiral playfully with the autumn winds, what about dancing along with nature's twists and turns? Skip down a dirt path and feel the earth beneath your feet as you reach your arms to the blue skies and gather up that autumn light. Then, bring the light into your body and let it radiate out through your heart and back into the world as you go!

At the beginning of this year (the year of the snake) I discovered the joys of Dance Walk, a combined form of exercise and expression that has even become my main form of transportation. I dance walked by the Oita River in January at the new moon, along Beppu Bay in the crisp February morning light, through a tunnel of Cherry Blossoms in March, with lotus blossoms in Usuki in the rainy season, and into the start of a local summer festival in July.

Dance walk is a way to explore new places in Japan, or wherever you are.

*'Doko demo, dansu walkku!'* (you can do dance walk wherever you are!) is a motto I came up with while waiting for a train in the rain with my video collaborator on the way back from a day trip to Usuki to see the lotus blossoms (*hasu-no-hana*). We were giddy from the rain and a *panku* (flat tire) when I put on my iPod and started dancing on the platform to 'Drunk on Love' by Rihanna. By tuning into the music and my own inner rhythms, I began to see the lush green all around me, and the wonder of the moment. It

is this awareness of connecting with our own flow and the world around us that attracts me to dance walk.

In the spring, the idea of going to Miyajima to do a dance walk 'floated' into my mind.

Miyajima is famous for its orange *torii* that appears to float in the sea at high tide, and is home to the



Itsukushima Shrine, a World Heritage Site. When I got to the site and started the dance, it was like a dream come true. So many things from my 'Japan journey' came together, from a love of Japanese art and architecture that first attracted me to Japan, to the connection to water and tides (yoga dance which forms the basis of my dance walks is

based on the fluidity in the body and starts with moving from our 'inner oceans'); to the feel of the sand at low tide that reminded me in some way of the sandy beaches where I am from (yes, even this connection of Miyajima to Long Island is possible as we explore our own stories and connections!!).

At 5AM my video friend/collaborator and I were the only ones there between the shrine and the *torii*, before the incoming tides of sea and tourists began. At first I felt some intimidation and doubts when I stood



there---how could I dance with a national treasure? But once I put my bare foot in the sand and turned on the music, I entered into a gesture of greeting with the *torii* that became the start of a day-long dance.

We then watched the sun rise, 'danced' with deer, and rode bikes around the island, filming bits of the day. At sunset we even had a fun moment where a group of tourists shared a dance with me! As the sea filled into the basin where I stood that morning on the dry sandy expanse, I felt gratitude and reverence for the majestic *torii* gate at Miyajima.

(Continued on page 4)

## Festivals and Events

Date	Event Description	Location	Contact #
Nov. 1 <sup>st</sup> ~ Dec. 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Beppu Art Month</b> - a variety of exhibitions, performances, workshops and more to be held throughout Beppu City (see back page for more details).	Beppu City	☎ 0977-22-3560
Nov. 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>Beppu Sentoumyou</b> - approximately 15,000 lamps will be lit in Beppu Park creating a magical atmosphere. There will be lamp-making and illumination throughout the park.	Beppu City Beppu Park	☎ 0977-76-5327
Nov. 2 <sup>nd</sup> ~ 3 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>Usuki Takeyoi festival</b> - over this weekend, approximately 20,000 bamboo shoots are lit up with candles all over the city.	Usuki City Nioza	☎ 0972-63-1111
Nov. 3 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>8th 'Tomato Heaven in Ogi' + The 34<sup>th</sup> Ogi Furusato festival</b> - will feature main events such as tomato cooking contests and tomato picking tours, as well as tomato recipe suggestions, tomato quizzes and more.	Taketa City Fukushi-Kenka area	☎ 0974-68-2211
Nov. 3 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>24<sup>th</sup> Shonai Kagura Festival</b> - in conjunction with the 32 <sup>nd</sup> Shonai Town 'Furusato' festival. There will be kagura performances from a number of groups, and specialty goods for sale.	Yufu City Shonai-Machi	☎ 097-582-1111
Nov. 8 <sup>th</sup> ~ 10 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Sennen Akari</b> - Festival of lights in Hita City. Bamboo shoots will be lit up with candles throughout town, and there will be concerts, food stalls, and more!	Hita City Mameda-Machi	☎ 0973-23-3111
Nov. 9 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Bird box making</b> - experience making bird box homes for wild birds, and other crafts. Reservations required, participation cost ¥500.	Kokonoe-Machi Kuju Shizen Gakkou	☎ 0973-73-0001
Nov. 9 <sup>th</sup> ~ 10 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Hita Tenryo Festival</b> - This festival works to recreate Edo period Japan with a samurai parade and various acts of local performing arts around Tsuki-kuma Park.	Hita City Mameda-Machi	☎ 0973-23-3111
Nov. 3 <sup>rd</sup> ~ 17 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Fall rose festival</b> - a relatively new festival at the rose garden where 2000 roses (approximately 200 types of roses) will be in full bloom.	Hita City Amagase-Machi	☎ 0973-57-3147
Nov. 9 <sup>th</sup> ~ 10 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Ono River Battle Festival</b> - is performed by cavalry, archers, and more with the theme of "Battle of Hetsugigawara" which happened 423 years ago between Otomo allied force and Shimazu army. ( <a href="http://www.oonogawakassen.com/">http://www.oonogawakassen.com/</a> )	Oita City Dainan-Hashi bridge Hetsugihon-Machi	☎ 097-597-1264
Nov. 10 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Autumn leaves walk</b> - take a stroll around the park to enjoy the scenic autumn leaves, and experience the beginning of <i>aki</i> (autumn).	Oita City Kenmin-no-mori	☎ 097-588-0656
Nov. 10 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Dancing in the Street</b> - SHAKE YOUR SOUL/Kripalu Yoga Dance group event outside the Beppu TOKIWA department store entrance from 14:00 – 17:00. Participation is free, all participants welcome!	Beppu City In front of TOKIWA	☎ 090-1165-5567
Nov. 16 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Mt. Takasaki Free entrance day</b>	Oita City Mt. Takasaki	☎ 097-532-5010
Nov. 16 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Drum char-grilling</b> - including charcoal flower-making and pizza-making. ¥1,500 participation for adults, ¥1,000 for children (contact Kuju Furusato Shizen Gakkou for details).	Kokonoe-Machi Kuju Furusato Shizen Gakkou	☎ 0973-73-0001
Nov. 16 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Kimono Appreciation Day</b> - A monthly event where visitors can try on rental kimonos, have their photos taken, and receive discounts at nearby facilities if they are wearing kimono.	Kitsuki-City Jouka-machi	☎ 0978-63-0100
Nov. 15 <sup>th</sup> ~ 17 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Taketa Chikuraku bamboo light festival</b> - over the three days 20,000 bamboo lanterns will be lit across Jyouka-Machi, and visitors can enjoy live music performances, and taste local delicacies at food stalls.	Taketa City Jyouka-Machi	☎ 0974-63-2638
Nov. 16 <sup>th</sup> ~ 17 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Healing activities at Japanese temple in Beppu</b> - this two day program will include yoga, pilates, a dance performance, zumba and afternoon tea. Spaces limited, reservation required (13:00-16:40 both days, participation ¥2,000) <a href="mailto:littleto@gmail.com">littleto@gmail.com</a>	Beppu City Hamawaki, Chokakuji temple	*Email only
Nov. 23 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>The 26<sup>th</sup> Hiji produce festival</b> - booths from Hiji businesses will be on display, and there will be a <i>furusato</i> restaurant, and you can also experience shiitake mushroom platning!	Hiji-Machi Chuou Kouminkan area	☎ 0977-73-3127
Nov. 23 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>Kokonoe local cusine cooking class</b> - a great opportunity to eat and make delicious local food and learn about how food has been traditionally steamed using geothermal heat (10:00-15:00, participation ¥1,300).	Kokonoe-Machi Kuju Furusato Shizen Gakkou	☎ 0973-73-0001
Nov. 30 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Human rights enlightenment festival 'Human Festa'</b> - this event will focus on the themes of human rights, acceptance and personal growth, held in the arcade.	Oita City Galleria Takemachi	☎ 097-506-3177
Dec. 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Hyoutan festival</b> - A tradition passed on for 800 years, and designated as intangible cultural property by Oita Prefecture, held at Shibayama Hachiman Shrine.	Bungo-Ono City Chitose-Machi	☎ 0974-37-2111
Dec. 14 <sup>th</sup> ~ Jan. 17 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Beppu Tosuisai</b> - the "Chic Winter Festival" held in Beppu Park features 200 Christmas trees decorated in lights and ornaments	Beppu City Beppu Park	☎ 0977-25-3311
Dec. 23 <sup>rd</sup> ~ 24 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Beppu Christmas hanabi fantasia</b> - approximately 10,000 fireworks are to be fired into the clear winter sky to create huge original displays, accompanying a performance of Christmas songs sung by 1000 people.	Beppu City Spa Beach	☎ 0977-24-2828
Dec. 31 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Usa Shrine New Years Eve festival</b> - this is the final festival to round off the year. Visitors visit Usa Shrine to pray for things such as good health and good fortune.	Usa City Usa Shrine	☎ 0978-37-0001

Date	Event Description	Location	Contact #
Dec. 31 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Ueno Kagura</b> - traditional Japanese <i>kagura</i> dance will be performed at Wakahata shrine.	Nakatsu City Ueno	☎ 0979-23-8615
Dec. 31 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Hello Kitty Countdown</b> - Hello Kitty characters will do a New Year's performance and countdown show at Harmonyland.	Hiji-Machi Harmonyland	☎ 0977-73-1111

## EXHIBITIONS & SCREENINGS

Date	Description	Place	Admission	Contact #
Sept. 25 <sup>th</sup> ~ Jan. 6 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Tetsu Etou exhibition</b> - a collection of the Oita Prefecture local's works, featuring many beautiful landscape paintings.	Oita Art Museum	¥300	☎ 097-554-5800
Oct. 29 <sup>th</sup> ~ Dec. 8 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Marc Chagall exhibition</b> - featuring 272 oil paintings.	Oita Art Museum	¥1,000	☎ 097-554-5800
Dec. 10 <sup>th</sup> ~ Feb. 11 <sup>th</sup>	<b>"Miyako no oshie, Bunzen Bungo no inori"</b> - an exhibition on the history of Tennen Kyoyu, a monk who opened a temple in Oita many years ago.	Oita Prefectural Museum of History	¥300	☎ 0978-37-2100

Oita Art Museum= Oita-Shi Bijutsukan 大分市美術館 Oita Prefectural Museum of History= 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

Nov.	Time	Artist/Event	Venue	Cost	Contact #
8 <sup>th</sup>	20:00	<b>Kyle Shepherd piano trio Japan tour 2013</b>	Brick Block	¥4,500	☎ 097-536-4852
10 <sup>th</sup>	13:00	<b>Yuuhei Hanaoka and company special concert</b>	iichiko Grand Theater	¥7,000	☎ 03-3658-3333
23 <sup>rd</sup>	14:30	<b>Ladies Music Festival vol. 14</b>	Cantaloop II	¥1,800+drink	☎ 097-548-5363
Dec.	Time	Artist/Event	Venue	Cost	Contact #
4 <sup>th</sup>	18:30	<b>"Kawaita Taiyou" (Sweet Bird of Youth)</b>	iichiko Otonoizumi	¥7,000	☎ 097-533-4004
12 <sup>th</sup>	20:00	<b>Hirofumi Okamoto</b> - Okamoto Island	Cantaloop II	¥4,300+drink	☎ 097-548-5363
TBC	TBC	<b>Heart of Christmas 2013</b> - to be held in late December, a number of art performances will take place	iichiko Atrium	Please inquire	☎ 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

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

Cantaloop II=3-2-30 Miyako-Machi

Nakayama Dai 5 Building 6F Oita City

iichiko Atrium= Oasis Tower Ground Floor,

Oita City

iichiko Grand Theater= Oasis Tower 1F Oita City

iichiko Otonoizumi=Oasis Tower 1F Oita City

(Continued from page 2)

It reminds me that each of our journeys here in Japan is unique. Although we may see the 'same' statue or temple or shrine or tree or blossom, could it be that they are there to speak to something intimate within each of us that our soul is yearning to connect with? I hope that sharing my dance walk adventures might

open you to that sense of finding your unique way of dancing through your days and discovering parts of yourself through your Japan Journey.

This fall, won't you dance with me?

----Article by Joanne G. Yoshida

To see Joanne's 'Miyajima Dance Walk' or other dance walks referred to in this article, watch JoannesDanceWalk on YouTube (search 'Joanne G. Yoshida, You Tube')

Join Joanne and Shake Your Soul in Oita during Beppu Art Month on November 10 in front of Tokiwa Beppu \*(details on Festivals and Events Page)

## What's Going On?

### From the Plaza

#### Free Legal Consultations

The Oita International Plaza is holding free legal consultations on **Nov. 20<sup>th</sup> & Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>** 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: **Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup> & Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>** from **13:00~16:00**

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

#### Free Tagalog Consultations

Date: Saturday **Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup>** & Tuesday **Nov. 19<sup>th</sup>**  
Saturday **Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>** & Tuesday **Dec. 17<sup>th</sup>**

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

#### Notarial Services for Filipino residents

Notarial services such as passport processing, registration of children's births, marriage etc. for Filipinos living in Oita Prefecture and surrounding prefectures will be offered on **January 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>**, 2014. Prior to processing date (Jan. 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>) required documents must be submitted before mid-December 2013. Applications accepted at the Oita International Plaza on **Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>** and **Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>** (13:00-17:00).

For passport renewal, applicants must have; application form (available on the day), copy of passport and a return envelop with ¥900 stamp OR ¥500 letter pack.

Place: TBC

For more information contact Rhodora Yoshitake 090-9797-6217

#### International Understanding Seminar

The International Plaza will be holding an International Understanding Seminar event on **Saturday Nov. 23<sup>rd</sup>**. The guest speaker, an APU student, will be giving a speech on Sri Lanka. For more information contact the International Plaza  
TEL: 097-533-4021

### 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](mailto: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](mailto: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 and Events

#### 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.

#### Happy Talk

Come practice speaking Japanese with other learners and native speakers. Reservations not required, just show up on the day. Held every 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month at the Oita International Plaza, the date of the next session is **Nov. 16<sup>th</sup>**.

Time: **13:00 – 14:30**

Please bring your own drink if you like. Participation is FREE, for more information contact Sunny email: [orixbluwaves@gmail.com](mailto:orixbluwaves@gmail.com) or visit the Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/goto.hanasou>

#### べふはち Beppu Rainbow Society

The “べふはち Beppu Rainbow Society” is a place where you can make international friendships through multicultural events. They hold many events throughout the year such as beach parties, concerts, craft-making, cooking classes and much more.

For more information, check out their Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/beppu.rainbow.society>

## Beppu Art Month 2013

Beppu Art Month is a yearly event held throughout Beppu City which is known as one of the world's leading hot spring locations. From November 1<sup>st</sup> (Friday) to December 1<sup>st</sup> (Sunday), visitors will be able to enjoy a variety of exhibitions, dance and music performances, film screenings, and hands-on workshops. For more information and specific event dates and details, refer to the Beppu Art Month homepage: <http://www.beppuartmonth.com/>.



There are simple search options for finding events to suit your schedule, and interests. You can find events by searching for what's happening on particular dates, or by the genres of talks/symposiums, participation events/workshops, exhibitions/viewings, dance/performance and art/film. If you've never been to Beppu, or haven't visited in a while, then this is a great opportunity to learn about or rediscover the rich, creative local culture.

公益財団法人 大分県芸術文化スポーツ振興財団  
**国際交流プラザ**  
 大分市高砂町2-33 OASISひろば21 (B1F)  
 ☎ 097-533-4021 FAX:097-533-4052

**Oita International Plaza**  
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 Promotion Foundation  
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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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<http://www.oitaplaza.jp/english/>

HOURS: Monday-Friday 9:30am-7:00pm

(closed weekends and the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays of each month. We are open on the Saturdays before these Mondays)

Closed national holidays & Dec 29<sup>th</sup> - Jan 3<sup>rd</sup>

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

