

THE TOMBO

Oita's English Newsletter

May - June 2014

Issue 73

The Agri-culture of Oita

Kunisaki Peninsula Usa area GIAHS



Living and working in Oita Prefecture, we often hear a lot about its *onsen*, particularly since the registration of the “*Onsen-ken Oita*” trademark. Perhaps a little less well known is Oita Prefecture’s remarkable agricultural heritage, in particular the Sawtooth Oak forests and interlinked irrigation pond system of the Kunisaki Peninsula Usa area.

This system has been fine-tuned by generations of local residents, in an area with a history of low rainfall and short, steep rivers that run quickly from Mt. Futago at the centre of the peninsula out to the sea. Faced with the challenge of securing water resources for crop cultivation, from the 11th century onward the area’s inhabitants opened land for crop cultivated and began devising an interlinked “*Tameike*” irrigation pond system in which multiple ponds were strategically built starting at the furthest upstream point of Mt. Futago. Today there are a total of 1,200 interlinked irrigation ponds connected by open channels to allow for maximum catchment area. Management of the ponds is carried out entirely by the local farmers with a designated “*Ikemori*” manager in charge of ensuring that the water is distributed equally and fairly to all farmers.



Tameike irrigation pond in the Tsunai region

exhausted, the logs slowly decompose and create a nutrient-rich layer of soil that retains rainfall more easily, and slowly recharges the underground water sources.

In addition to log wood Shiitake cultivation, for centuries the inhabitants of this region have grown crops selected for their complementary characteristics. The main crops are Shiitake mushrooms, *Shichitoui* grass (used for weaving high quality, durable sheets for *tatami* mats) and wetland rice. The labour intensive periods and high water usage periods of these crops do not overlap, meaning they can be grown simultaneously. Although *Shichitoui* was widely grown throughout Japan for centuries as a grass used in the weaving of *tatami* mat covers, it is no longer as popular as it is a highly labour-intensive crop and much of the maintenance and harvesting has to be done by hand. As a result, the one

Oita Prefecture is home to the largest stock volume of Sawtooth Oak forests in the country. These Sawtooth Oak forests were originally planted and nurtured as a source of charcoal and firewood, as well as log wood for the cultivation of Shiitake mushrooms. Although they are no longer used as a source of charcoal and firewood, since the 1880’s Sawtooth Oak trees have been actively planted for use as timber in the production of Oita Prefecture’s high quality log wood cultivated Shiitake mushrooms. Once cut down, the stumps of Sawtooth Oaks sprout new shoots that grow to a size suitable for Shiitake mushroom cultivation in around 15 years. Log wood for Shiitake production is carefully cut and prepared before it is inoculated with fungal filaments and then left to rest so that the fungus spreads through the entire log. These logs, now called “*Hodagi*” are relocated to the “*Hodaba*” production yards where they sprout Shiitake mushrooms for around three years. Once



Log wood cultivated Shiitake *Hodaba* yards

hectare of *Shichitoui* grown in this region is the last remaining crop in the country. However the *Shichitoui tatami* mats produced and woven in this area are highly valued throughout Japan for their outstanding quality and durability, and can often be found in many of the country's notable cultural assets such as temples and *jiyudo* halls.

The agricultural system of the Kunisaki Peninsula Usa area also supports a rich and varied ecosystem, and the region is home to a number of endangered species of plants, fish, birds, insects and amphibians. Local governments and communities work actively to educate their residents on the importance of this ecosystem and promote environmental preservation. Furthermore, the agriculture of this region is so intertwined with the local traditional culture that it is difficult to separate the two. Religious festivals and customs have centred on agricultural practices since ancient times, examples of which include the Doburoku Festival of Shirahige Shrine and the Shujo Onie Festival practiced at a number of temples in Bungotakada City. These festivals offer gratitude for the harvest of the previous year, often to the particular deity of that shrine, and include prayer for the prosperity of crops in the year to come. This region now boasts a rich 'agri-culture' that has been fine-tuned over hundreds of years, and passed down through countless generations of inhabitants.

Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System designation

In May 2013 the Kunisaki Peninsula Usa area integrated forestry, agriculture and fisheries system was designated as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS), an initiative of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations. To qualify for GIAHS recognition, an agricultural system must fulfil FAO's five selection criteria which include 1) food and livelihood security 2) biodiversity and ecosystem function 3) knowledge systems and adapted technologies 4) culture, value systems and social organisations and 5) remarkable landscapes, land and water resources management features. As in the name of this initiative, the designated system must have global importance and address global concerns. In the case of the Kunisaki Peninsula, the production of log wood cultivated Shiitake mushrooms on land that would otherwise be unsuitable for crop production has the potential to contribute to global food security. It is hoped that these skills and technologies can be shared domestically and internationally to assist other regions affected by similar issues such as limited water and arable land.



GIAHS designation ceremony, Ishikawa
International GIAHS Forum 2013

Is this the only GIAHS in Japan?

The Kunisaki Peninsula Usa area GIAHS is one of five GIAHS designated sites in Japan. The Noto Peninsula in Ishikawa Prefecture was the first Japanese site to receive GIAHS recognition, but other GIAHS sites can be found in Niigata, Shizuoka and Kumamoto Prefectures. As of May 2013 there are 25 GIAHS sites located throughout Asia, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and North, South and Central America.

What does this mean for Oita?

Japan is currently facing a future with an increasingly aging population and decreasing birth rate, not to mention the issues of globalisation and environmental degradation. As in many other prefectures, younger generations are moving to bigger cities, and there is a tendency toward a lack of interest in the farming, forestry and fishery industries. Now that Oita Prefecture has received GIAHS designation, it is hoped that with increased awareness of these issues, and attractive incentives from prefectural and local governments, younger generations will return to agriculture and farming. The Kunisaki Peninsula Usa area GIAHS Promotion Association which is comprised of prefectural and local government and local communities, is working on a dynamic conservation plan with four primary goals. These goals include the production of agricultural production and biodiversity conservation, the conservation and rehabilitation of sustainable biodiversity, traditional land use and cultural continuity, and complementary initiatives at national and international levels.



Kunisaki Peninsula Usa area GIAHS logo

Festivals and Events

Date	Event Description	Location	Contact #
May 3 rd ~4 th	Ebine Festival - there will be exhibitions, game competitions, stage events, fresh agricultural produce for sale and a <i>yakiniku</i> corner!	Kitsuki City Yamaga-Machi	☎ 0977-75-1211
May 3 rd ~6 th	Manbou Festa 2014 - the Oita Marine Culture Centre is holding its annual festival celebrating the <i>manbou</i> (sunfish). There will be events, workshops, lunches and a fish market (admission ¥350)	Saiki City, Kamae Marine Culture Centre	☎ 0972-42-1311
May 4 th	The 23rd Ebisudani Festival - come enjoy fun events such as <i>taiko</i> and <i>kagura</i> performances, <i>mochimaki</i> , a lottery draw and more.	Bungo Takada City Ebisuyaba-noson Kouen	☎ 0978-54-3111
May 4 th ~5 th	The 27th Kitsuki Castle Festival - centred around the castle town's "Edo village", there will be events such as basket races in addition to <i>taiko</i> performances.	Kitsuki City Kitsuki Castle vicinity	☎ 0978-63-0100
May 6 th	Bungo Takada Soba festival - a fun event in Bungo Takada: the prefecture's biggest producer of soba! There will be soba eating events and more.	Bungo Takada City Spaland Matama	☎ 0978-22-3100
May 10 th	Usa Air Base Peace Walk - a 10km walking tour will be held around the former Usa air base. The tour will include guided explanation of the area.	Usa City Yanagigaura high school	☎ 0978-32-1111
May 11 th	Hita flower festival - visitors can purchase fresh flower, enjoy a flower fashion show and maybe even win a prize in the lottery contest.	Hita City Rose Hill Amagase	☎ 0973-57-3147
May 17 th	Spring rice field exploration - a fun, educational activity for parents and children to learn about wildlife living in the local rice fields (participation fee ¥500, reservations necessary)	Kokonoe-Machi Kuju Furusato Shizen Gakkou	☎ 0973-73-0001
May 24 th	Kuju Furusato Shizen Gakkou rice planting - participants can experience planting rice by hand whilst learning about the local wildlife (participation fee ¥1,500)	Kokonoe-Machi Kuju Furusato Shizen Gakkou	☎ 0973-73-0001
May 24 th ~ May 25 th	Hita River Opening Festival & Fireworks - Performances and other festivities to take place to celebrate the lifting of the seasonal ban on <i>ayu</i> fishing. Don't miss the grand fireworks!	Hita City Mikuma-River	☎ 0973-23-3111
May 25 th	The 15th Himeshima Karei festival - there will be a Himeshima karei (flounder) tasting, as well as other attractions including a <i>Kitsune-odori</i> performance (flounder tasting participation cost approx. ¥1,500)	Himeshima-mura Ferry port	☎ 0978-87-2211
Jun. 1 st	Mt. Kuju opening - events will be held at the mountain summit to commemorate the start of the summer mountain season.	Kokonoe Town Mt. Taisen	☎ 0973-76-3150
Jun. 8 th	Tashibunoshou rice-planting festival - this is a yearly event where visitors can experience planting rice using traditional methods in the small historical rice-paddy village.	Bungo Takada City Ozaki area	☎ 0978-22-3100
Jun. 21 th	Kimono Appreciation - held on the third Saturday of each month, visitors can rent traditional kimono and have their picture taken. People in traditional Japanese clothing can receive free or discounted entry to a number of sightseeing spots throughout the city, as well as discounts at participating stores and restaurants.	Kitsuki City Castle town	☎ 0978-63-0100
Jun. 27 th ~ 29 th	The 17th Yufuin Culture Documentary Film Festival - historical and cultural documentaries will be screened each day in the Yufuin Kouminkan.	Yufu City Yufuin Kouminkan	☎ 0977-85-4464

Oita Prefecture hopes to strengthen the branding of prefectural produce and increase recognisability of its products. A Kunisaki Peninsula Usa area GIAHS logo was unveiled at the GIAHS Symposium held in Kunisaki in October 2013. Each element of this mark symbolises an aspect of the agricultural system. The dark green represents the Sawtooth Oak forests, the light blue symbolises the *Tameike* irrigation ponds, and the light green and yellow areas represent the rice paddies and crops of the region.

Once designated as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System, the work of the region does not finish there. This is just the beginning of the revitalisation and strengthening of this region. For more information check out the Kunisaki Peninsula Usa area GIAHS homepage http://www.kunisaki-usa-giahs.com/en/about_giahs/



May.	Time	Artist/Event	Venue	Cost	Contact #
17 th	17:30	Every Little Thing- Concert tour 2014 'Funfare'	Iichiko Grand Theater	¥6,950	☎ 0985-20-7111
18 th	13:00	Live Kagura- traditional <i>Kagura</i> dancing performed by local groups	Kagura Kaikan	¥1,000	☎ 0974-35-2372
18 th	18:00	JiLL-Decoy Association	Cantaloop II	¥3,500 +drink	☎ 097-548-5363
27 th	19:00	Miliyah Kato- Loveland tour 2014	Iichiko Grand Theater	¥5,700	☎ 092-714-0159
31 th	14:00	Live folk concert- solo and group performances	Iichiko Otonoizumi	¥2,000	☎ 090-5489-3337
31 th	18:00	TAO Drum Rock- 'The Seventeen Samurai' show	Iichiko Grand Theater	¥3,000 – ¥7,000	☎ 097-537-5515
31 th	21:00	HAZE- DJ event ¥1,000 for entry with 1 drink, or ¥2,500 for males and ¥2,000 for females for all you can drink until 1AM.	PEI Pub	¥1,000 – ¥2,500	☎ 090-9409-0393
Jun.	Time	Artist/Event	Venue	Cost	Contact #
7 th	14:30	8th Symphony Concert- multiple performers	Iichiko Otonoizumi	FREE	☎ 090-6425-0350
15 th	12:00	Live Kagura 5 Year Gala Performance- featuring local groups	Kagura Kaikan	¥1,500	☎ 0974-35-2372
16 th	18:30	Chinese performing arts group stage performance	Patria Hita	¥2,500	☎ 0973-25-5000
21 st , 22 nd	13:00 + 18:00	Figure Skating Exhibition in Beppu- two performances per day by professional figure skaters	B-Con Plaza	¥7,000 – ¥16,000	☎ 0985-20-7111
21 st	19:00	Kzo Ishibashi- "Blue" tour 2014	Cantaloop II	¥2,500 +drink	☎ 097-548-5363
28 th	21:00	HAZE- DJ event ¥1,000 for entry with 1 drink, or ¥2,500 for males and ¥2,000 for females for all you can drink until 1AM.	PEI Pub	¥1,000 – ¥2,500	☎ 090-9409-0393

**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

B-Con Plaza= 12-1 Yamanotecho, Beppu City

Cantaloop II=3-2-30 Miyako-Machi

Nakayama Dai 5 Building 6F Oita City

Iichiko Grand Theater= Oasis Tower 1F Oita

iichiko Otonoizumi=Oasis Tower 1F Oita City

Kagura Kaikan= 810 Kiyokawa, Bungo Ono

City

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

P.E.I Pub= Miyako-Machi 2-5-3 Shirogane

Bld2F, Oita City



EXHIBITIONS & SCREENINGS

Date	Description	Place	Admission	Contact #
Apr. 25 th – Jun. 1 st	The 8th local artists' exhibition- showcasing works by Oita artists Kie Miyazaki and Reiko Kan	Oita Art Museum	¥500	☎ 097-554-5800
Apr. 25 th – Jun. 29 th	Oita's Food Culture and 'Utsuwa' Bowls- a collection of bowls and vessels traditionally used not only for food but for religious celebrations and ceremonies	Oita Prefectural Museum of History	¥310	☎ 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.

What's Going On?

From the Plaza

Free Legal Consultations

The Oita International Plaza is holding free legal consultations on **May 21st & Jun. 18th** 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: **Jun. 1st / 13:00 - 16:00**

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

Free Tagalog Consultations

Date: Saturday **May 10th** & Tuesday **May 20th**

Saturday Jun. 7th & Tuesday Jun. 17th

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/Time: **Jun. 17th / 14:30 - 15:30**

Oita International Plaza (iichiko Culture Center, B1F)

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

(*Subject to change. Please call to confirm before coming.)

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 Fukata Miharuru 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 and Events

Happy Talk

Come practice speaking Japanese with other learners and native speakers. Reservations not required, just show up on the day. Held every 2nd Saturday of the month at the Oita International Plaza, the date of the next session is **May 10th**

Time: **13:00 - 14:30**

Please bring your own drink if you like. Participation is FREE. For more details contact Sunny: orixbluwaves@gmail.com or visit the Facebook page:

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

べっぷはち Beppu Rainbow Society

If you are looking for a way to take part in the local cultural events and make friends, this is the place. "

べっぷはち Beppu Rainbow Society" is where you can make international friendships through multicultural events. We also provide lots of information about events of the city as well as living information to help each other. To join, "Like" us on Facebook!

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



The Oita International Plaza International Festa 2014

Call for volunteers

The Oita International Plaza is looking for volunteers for this year's International Festa. The International Festa is a yearly event featuring activities for children, traditional Japanese cultural workshops for international residents and cultural demonstrations from around the world in the form of song, dance and art.



This year's International Festa will be held on October 26th from 11:00 – 16:00.



We are looking for volunteers who are willing to share a performance or demonstration on stage of a traditional song or dance etc. from their home countries. We are also looking for volunteers who can teach children traditional games or arts and crafts from their home countries.

If you are interested in volunteering or would like more information, please contact
Ms Saya Watanabe at the International Plaza
TEL: 097-533-4021 Email: in@emo.or.jp

国際交流センター

公益財団法人
大分県芸術文化スポーツ振興財団

大分市高砂町2-33 OASISひろば21(B1F)

☎ 097-533-4021 FAX:097-533-4052

Oita International Plaza

**Oita Prefecture Arts, Culture & Sports
Promotion Foundation**

OASIS Hiroba21 (B1F) 2-33 Takasago-Machi, Oita-Shi 870-0029

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:

Oita International Plaza
Oita Prefecture Arts, Culture & Sports
Promotion Foundation

2-33 Takasago-Machi

Oita-Shi Oita-Ken 〒 870-0029

☎ 097(533)4021

Fax 097(533)4052

E-MAIL: in@emo.or.jp

<http://www.oitaplaza.jp/english/>

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).

