
THE TOMBO

Oita's English Newsletter

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Issue 82

☆ Walking in Oita Prefecture ☆

Oita Prefecture is famous for its bountiful nature and beautiful scenery. With the arrival of spring and warmer weather, there are many activities that people can enjoy outside. For those who enjoy walking in the countryside, Oita offers beautiful walking trails for people of all levels of physical fitness. Walking routes are often only a short train or car ride away, and so it is worth getting in touch with tourist offices in Oita to check out potential rambling routes.

To hopefully get people inspired to get outside and enjoy a leisurely hike in Oita, I would like to write a little about two very different hikes I took in Oita Prefecture in November 2015.

☆ Kyushu Olle Okubungo Course

A hike between Bungo-Ono and Taketa

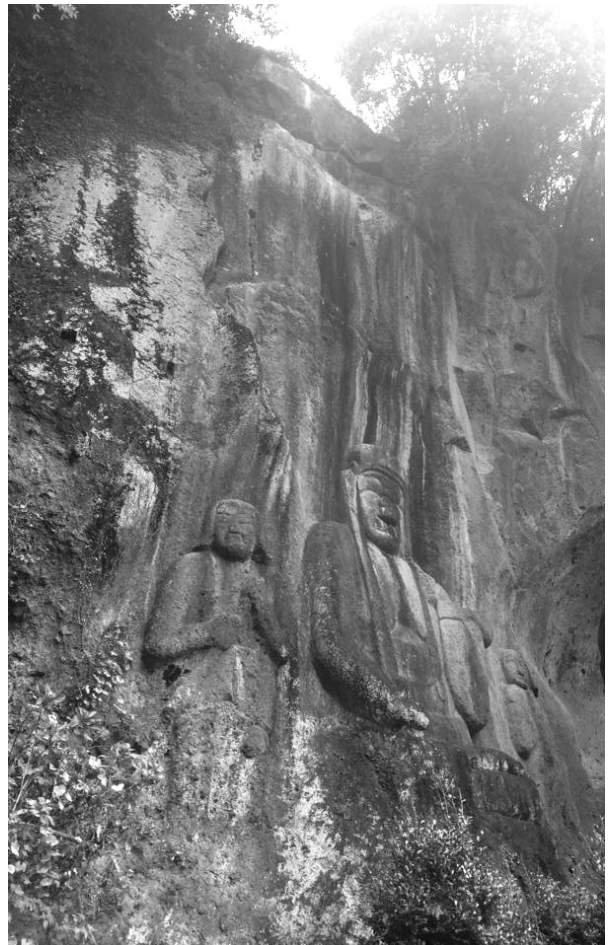
The Jeju Olle Foundation in South Korea has spread its famous walking routes to Oita Prefecture, and the Okubungo Course is a perfect way to experience both the natural beauty and the culture of Oita Prefecture in a single day's walk.

My friend and I started the approximately 12km walk from Asaji Station, where friendly staff members provided us with maps and took commemorative photos. We then set off, quickly entering the countryside as we rambled up a grassy hillside path shaded by trees.

With ribbons placed at regular intervals to mark our way, the course was easy to follow (we only got briefly lost once!). Additionally, our guide, who occasionally caught up to us in his car to show us the way and teach us about the history of the area, ensured that we had a greater understanding of the area we were trekking through. While some parts of the walk are steep, the walk is mainly along smooth or grassy paths, meaning that there is no scrambling. It is a perfect course for beginners or those who are not confident in their fitness level.

What really made the walk special were the landmarks. The purpose of the Olle course is to incorporate places of historical and cultural importance into a nature walk. We therefore enjoyed several amusing diversions during our walk, such as visiting the stone Buddha at Fukoji Temple and wandering among the Oka Castle ruins in Taketa. It was an amazing experience to be walking along country paths and then to suddenly enter the Fukoji Temple and see the giant Buddhist image carved into the mountain.

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Fukoji Temple Buddha (top), Autumn leaves at Oka Castle Ruins (bottom)

My favourite part of the walk came towards the end. As we approached Taketa City, we walked up a steep forest hill until we came to the Oka Castle Ruins. For a small fee, we were able to leisurely explore the old castle walls and take in the beautiful surrounding views. Although only some walls of the castle remain, from their scale it was possible for us to get a sense of the vastness of the old castle. The area of the ruins is famous for both its autumn leaves and for its cherry blossoms, making it the perfect end to an autumnal or spring hike.

We finally made our way to Taketa City at the end of the route, just as the lanterns were being lit for the Chikuraku Bamboo Lantern Festival. Tired from our walk, we walked through streets paved with glittering lamps, feeling almost as if the lights were guiding us to the station and the train that would take us back to Oita City. It was an atmospheric and wonderful experience.

☆ Mt. Tsurumi

A steep climb from the base of Mt. Tsurumi to its peak (1375 metres)

In contrast to the Okubungo walk, the other walk I embarked upon that same month was a lot more challenging. My friends and I decided to hike Mt. Tsurumi, the large and beautiful mountain that stands proudly over Beppu City.

We started off bright and early, ready to take on the mountain. The hike up Mt. Tsurumi is by no means a gentle one, and almost immediately we were huffing and puffing our way up a steep incline. The vast majority of the walk is in heavily wooded areas, through which we were often forced to scramble on our hands and knees (I recommend taking a pair of gardener's gloves or similar). It was hard not to occasionally consider packing it all in, when no matter how high we climbed, the peak seemed to never get any nearer. Although the friends I was climbing with are very fit, I am definitely less so, and my morale wasn't helped by occasionally running into spry and fit hikers, who seemingly without breaking a sweat would cheerily greet us as they walked down the mountain.

However, when we occasionally stopped to catch our breath and have some water, we caught glimpses of the beautiful views between the trees, giving us new energy and motivation. We carried on clambering over rocks and branches, until eventually the trees began to disperse and suddenly we were on an open, mist-shrouded path leading to the top of the mountain. We were ecstatic to reach the top (see the photo below for evidence of our smiling faces) and the views from the top of the mountain were, though misty, beautiful.



The misty view from the top of the mountain



My friend at the top of Mt. Tsurum

We hurriedly ate our lunch in the cable car station before beginning the long descent down the mountain. There is a cable car service that runs up and down Mt. Tsurumi, but we decided to go by foot. The way down was difficult, especially for someone as clumsy as me (I often had to half-slide on my back down some of the rockier scrambles). When we eventually reached the bottom of the mountain, we were exhausted but triumphant, and went to eat a large meal of Indian food to celebrate. I would also recommend any potential hiker to go to one of Beppu's wonderful onsen to rest their weary legs.

Climbing Mt. Tsurumi isn't an easy hike, and I would encourage only those with a degree of physical fitness to attempt it, but it was a wonderful experience. Now whenever I see views of the mountain from Beppu or from my home in Oita City, I always smile remembering how exhausted and happy we were on reaching its peak. In the spring, the views from the top must be particularly spectacular – it's almost enough to tempt me to tackle the mountain again!

I hope that these stories have inspired some of you to investigate hiking routes in Oita Prefecture to enjoy this spring. I know that there are lots of hikes I've already planned on and can't wait to get walking. --- Miri

EXHIBITIONS & SCREENINGS

| Date | Description | Place | Contact # |
|---|---|------------------------------------|----------------|
| Apr. 8 th – May 8 th | OPAM x NOSE ISEO Theater in Museum | Oita Prefectural Art Museum | ☎ 097-533-4500 |
| Apr. 15 th – May 31 st | Collection Exhibition I | Oita Prefectural Art Museum | ☎ 097-533-4500 |
| Apr. 30 th – Jun. 26 th | Themed Exhibiton I – Sake for a Special Day (an exhibition about <i>sake</i>) | Oita Prefectural Museum of History | ☎ 097-549-0880 |
| May 18 th – Jun. 5 th | Artists of NITTEN in the OPAM Collection | Oita Prefectural Art Museum | ☎ 097-533-4500 |
| Jun. 11 th – Jul. 18 th | Auspicious Celebration of Lives – Installation of 12 Pillars + Performances of Encounters | Oita Prefectural Art Museum | ☎ 097-533-4500 |

Most Museums and Centres 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 # |
|-----------------------|-------|--|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Apr. 10 th | 19:00 | H Zettrio Wonderful Tour 2016 ~Acoustic & Electric~ | Brick Block | ¥5500 | ☎ 097-536-4852 |
| Apr. 30 th | 18:00 | Coast! Party Maus Ken Aniki Matsuri | T.O.P.S BittsHall | ¥4000 +drink | ☎ 097-533-0467 |
| Apr. 30 th | 14:00 | Asame Hirayama Piano Recital | iichiko Otonoizumi | ¥2000 | ☎ 097-542-5509 |
| May 4 th | 13:30 | One Coin Relay Concert ~Piano~ Rika Miyatani | iichiko Otonoizumi | ¥500 | ☎ 097-533-4004 |
| May 6 th | 19:00 | Cantaloop II – Music Airport <<Flying over the May Sea! Spread Your Wings and Travel the World>> | Cantaloop II | ¥2500 +drink | ☎ 097-548-5363 |
| May 14 th | 18:00 | Best of Best Series – Vol. 4 Argerich & Repin, Chamber Music Concert | iichiko Grand Theatre | Prices vary | ☎ 0977-27-2299 |
| May 28 th | 18:00 | Drum Tao: The Art of Drum | iichiko Grand Theatre | Prices vary | ☎ 097-537-5515 |
| May 29 th | 14:00 | Oita Chamber Orchestra 10 th Anniversary Concert – Brahms Symphony No. 1 | iichiko Otonoizumi | ¥1000 | ☎ 050-5880-2004 |
| Jun. 9 th | 13:30 | One Coin Relay Concert ~Bandoneon~ Nestor Eude Marconi and Kazuma Miura | iichiko Otonoizumi | ¥500 | ☎ 097-533-4004 |
| Jun. 22 nd | 18:30 | La Compagnia Lirica Italiana di Roma – Puccini's La Bohème | 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

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

Cantaloop II=3-2-30 Miyako-Machi

Nakayama Dai 5 Building 6F Oita City

iichiko Grand Theatre= Oasis Tower 1F Oita City

iichiko Otonoizumi=Oasis Tower 1F Oita City

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

Some other events you might be interested in:

● International Exchange Workshop

Date/Time: May 21st (Sat) 14:00-16:00

Place: iichiko Culture Center, B1F, Small Projection Hall

Cost: Free

Inquiries: Oita International Plaza (097-533-4021)

● "The Global World Expanding from Books - Spring 2016 Books Recommended by Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers,"

● "Exhibition of Photographs from Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers ~ From Oita to the World"

Date/Time: April 10th (Sun) – May 9th (Mon)

Weekdays: 9:00-20:00

Weekends and Holidays: 9:00-17:00

Place: Oita Prefectural Library, 2F, Lobby

Inquiries: JICA Desk Oita (in the Oita International Plaza) (097-533-4021)

● International Understanding Event – Film screening of "Living in Niger"

Date/Time: April 28th (Sat) 14:00-16:00

Place: iichiko Culture Center, B1F, Small Projection Hall

Inquiries: JICA Desk Oita (in the Oita International Plaza) (097-533-4021)

Festivals and Events

| Date | Event Description | Location | Contact # |
|--|---|---|----------------|
| Apr. 1 st | Mt. Ogi Fire Festival - Ogi-yama mountain will be set aflame as part of the Beppu Hot Spring Festival. Scenes of the mountain on fire and the hot spring steam rising provide great photo opportunities! | Beppu City Ogi-yama mountain | ☎ 0977-24-2828 |
| Apr. 1 st ~ 3 rd | The 102nd Beppu Hot Spring Festival - This festival will include a number of events and attractions, including free entrance to approximately 88 designated hot spring locations. | Beppu City City-wide | ☎ 0977-24-2828 |
| Apr. 2 nd ~ 15 th | Tulip Festa 2016 - The tulips in this rural town are in full bloom in April. Fun events for visitors will be held each Saturday and Sunday for the duration of the festa. | Bungo Ono City Ogata-machi, near the Harajiri falls | ☎ 0974-42-2111 |
| Apr. 3 rd | Taketa Okajyou Sakura Festival - Events will be held around the castle from 11:00AM | Taketa City Okajyou | ☎ 0974-63-2638 |
| Apr. 16 th May 21 st Jun. 18 th | Kimono Appreciation Day - Held on the third Saturday of each month, with special offers and discounts for on kimono rental and professional photography. | Kitsuki City Jouka-machi | ☎ 0978-63-0100 |
| Apr. 16 th ~ 17 th | The 16th Cento Miglia KAMITSUE - A gathering of cars and culture. This event promises to be great fun. | Hita City, Kuju-Aso Area, and more | ☎ 045-591-6235 |
| May 1 st ~ 26 th | The 18th MUSIC FESTIVAL Argerich's Meeting Point in Beppu - A music festival featuring a number of performances by famed pianist Martha Argerich herself and affiliated musicians. | Beppu City, Oita City, Kitakyushu City (Fukuoka) and Shinjyuku-ku (Tokyo) | ☎ 0977-27-2300 |
| May 3 rd ~ 4 th | Onta-yaki Pottery Karausu Festival - A great opportunity for anyone who wants to learn more about Oita's traditional arts. Ceramics on sale and for free visitors can try their hand at the spinning wheel used for making this classic craft. | Hita City Motoe-machi | ☎ 0973-22-2036 |
| 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 4 th | The 25th 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 Koun | ☎ 0978-54-3111 |
| May 4 th ~ 5 th | The 29th 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 8 th | Hita Flower Festival - Visitors can purchase fresh flowers, enjoy a flower fashion show and maybe even win a prize in the lottery contest. | Hita City Rose Hill Amagase | ☎ 0973-57-3147 |
| May 14 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. The schedule is subject to change. | Usa City Yanagigaura high school | ☎ 0978-32-1111 |
| May 14 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) 13:30-16:30 | Kokonoe-Machi Kuju Furusato Shizen Gakkou | ☎ 0973-73-0001 |
| May 18 th ~ 24 th | Mankoji Temple Market - This gathering has taken place since 1425. Come to exchange goods, compete in costume and karaoke contests, and more. | Oita City Sakanoichi | ☎ 097-537-5764 |
| May 21 st | Kuju Furusato Shizen Gakkou rice planting - Participants can experience planting rice by hand whilst learning about the local wildlife (participation fee free, reservations necessary) 10:00-17:00 | Kokonoe-Machi Kuju Furusato Shizen Gakkou | ☎ 0973-73-0001 |
| May 21 st ~ 22 nd | Hita River Opening Festival & Fireworks - Performances and other festivities to take place to celebrate ayu fishing. Don't miss the grand fireworks! | Hita City Mikuma-River | ☎ 0973-23-3111 |
| May 22 nd | The 17th Himeshima Karei Festival - There will be Himeshima <i>karei</i> (flounder) tasting, as well as other attractions including a Kitsune-odori performance (flounder tasting participation cost approx. ¥1,500) | Himeshima-mura Ferry port | ☎ 0978-87-2211 |
| Jun. 5 th | 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. 12 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. 18 th | Lake Kagurame Iris Viewing Festival - A chance to see some eighty different types of irises, numbering more than 15,000 in total. Many events, such as tea and Kagurame Dango (sweet rice dumpling) service will be held. | Kitsuki City Castle town | ☎ 0978-63-0100 |
| Jun. 24 th ~ 26 th | The 19th Yufuin Culture Documentary Film Festival - Historical and cultural documentaries will be screened each day in the Yufuin Kouminkan. The Schedule is Subject to Change. | Yufu City Yufuin Kouminkan | ☎ 0977-85-4464 |
| Jun. 26 th | Ro-ten-buro No Hi (Free "Open-air bath" Entrance) - 4 different facilities open their doors for bathers for FREE on this day every year. | Nakatsu City Yabakei-Machi | ☎ 0979-22-1111 |
| Jun. 25 th ~ 26 th | The 23rd Lavender Festival - 6,600 purple lavender trees at Oita's Kenmin no Mori Forest Park are a sight to see! Come pick your own lavender for FREE (up to 100 branches)! | Oita City Oita's Kenmin no Mori Forest Park | ☎ 097-588-0656 |

What's Going On?

From the Plaza

Free Legal Consultations for International Residents

The Oita International Plaza is holding free legal consultations for foreign residents on the *third Wednesday of every month*.

- When: **April 20th, May 18th, and June 15th**
- Time: **13:00-16:00**
- Consultant: **Sei Ito (Administrative Solicitor)**
- Venue: **Oita International Plaza (iichiko Culture Center, B1F)**

Free Consultations in Chinese

The Oita International Plaza is holding free consultations in Chinese *every Thursday*.

- When: **Every Thursday**.
- Time: **10:00-13:00**
- Consultant: **Wenyu Kodama**
- Venue: **Oita International Plaza (iichiko Culture Center, B1F)**

Free Consultations in Tagalog

The Oita International Plaza is holding free consultations in Tagalog. **Please note that the times for the consultation on April 30th are different to the usual times.*

- When: **April 2nd, April 30th, May 7th, May 17th, June 4th, and June 21st.**
- Time: **13:00-16:00 (*except April 30th, which will be 9:00-17:00)**
- Consultant: **Rhodora Yoshitake (President of the Oita Philippines Friendship Association)**
- Venue: **Oita International Plaza (iichiko Culture Center, B1F)**

Free Consultations Regarding Immigration, Residency, and Citizenship

The Oita International Plaza is holding free consultations regarding immigration, residency, and citizenship on the *first Sunday of each month*.

- When: **April 3rd, and June 5th.**
- Time: **13:00-16:00**
- Languages available: **Japanese and English**
- Interpretation into **languages other than Japanese** and English may be available with a reservation (there are no guarantees). The reservation must be made **2 days prior to the consultation day**.
- Venue: **Oita International Plaza (iichiko Culture Center, B1F)**

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.

Please bring your own drink if you like. Participation is FREE. For more details and information on when Happy Talk is held, please visit the Facebook page:

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

A black and white photograph of a narrow alleyway in a traditional Japanese town. The alley is flanked by buildings with tiled roofs and wooden walls. A stone wall is visible in the foreground on the left.

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