

## Worlds Collide: Europe Meets Oita

The “Sakoku Period” (1633-1866) refers to the over two hundred years the Edo shogunate in Japan practiced a policy of isolationism. Foreigners were not to enter Japan, and the Japanese were not to leave. Any potential violators of this law would be harshly punished. To Westerners who already viewed Japan as a mysterious land, this only served to make Japan seem more unknowable and secret. Although Japan re-opened to the world following the visit of Commodore Perry and his Black Ships and the subsequent Meiji Revolution in 1868, to this day, the image of Japan is a closed off and hidden away country still resonates strongly to those in the West. Japan is seen by many as a country that experienced limited cultural influence from Europe before the late 1800s, and it therefore often comes as a shock to visitors to Kyushu when they see signs of European contact with Japan throughout the region. The legacy of these interactions can be found almost everywhere on the island and this is particularly true in Oita.

When I first moved to Oita, one of the things that surprised me most were the statues of Christian missionaries dotted around Oita City. I was aware that the Dutch had been permitted to trade on Dejima, a small island in Nagasaki, even during the Sakoku Period. However, I had not given much thought to the influence of European culture in Kyushu before the Sakoku Period, nor had I thought that such cultural influence played such an interesting role in Oita's history. With the recent “Cultural Understanding Event: Holland” at the Oita International Plaza and OPAM's Dutch design exhibition, I thought it was the perfect time to explore Oita's historical links to Europe. Here is some trivia about Oita's history of interactions with Europeans before the Sakoku Period.

- Saint Francis Xavier, a Spanish missionary in the 1500s, is famous for traveling extensively in Asia. Xavier visited Oita as part of his mission to spread Christianity in Japan. There remain signs of Xavier in Oita today. You can find his statue in Oita City. You can buy a delicious Oita omiyage (snack) called a “Xavier.” The little cakes were named in his honour and combine Japanese and European cake-making techniques.
- Ōtomo Sōrin served as the daimyō feudal lord of Funai, which is located in present-day Oita Prefecture, in the 1500s. Japan had many feudal lords during that period, but what differentiated Sōrin from many of his counterparts in other regions was his conversion to Catholicism following his meeting with Francis Xavier. It is said that his divorce second wife was due to her refusal to convert to Christianity.





● Visitors to the Sala de Usuki in Usuki City are greeted by an elaborate model of a large ship. This is a replica of the Dutch vessel *de Liefde*, which in the early 1600s ran into trouble in the shallow waters near Usuki. The crew were subsequently taken to Osaka, and this was one of the first interactions between Dutch traders and the Japanese. During the Sakoku Period, the only European nation permitted to trade with the Japanese on Dejima were the Dutch, meaning that the arrival of *de Liefde* in Usuki shows that Oita played an important role in Japan's early interactions with Europe.

● Did you ever wonder why Miyazaki Prefecture's famous chicken dish is called "chicken nanban"? Nanban is an old term referring to foreigners in Japan originating from Portugal and the goods that they brought with them to Japan. The Portuguese didn't invent chicken nanban, but the word nanban started to become affixed to dishes and products that had a foreign style or connection. The Portuguese also travelled to Oita Prefecture for trade or missionary work – and as a result nanban culture also flourished in Oita Prefecture.

Oita Prefecture is a treasure trove for anyone interested in history. Whether it is the ancient Buddhist relics in the Kunisaki Region, the beautiful Shinto shrines or samurai castles dotted throughout the region, or more modern historical artefacts such as those that can be seen on site of a Second World War airbase in Usa, there is something to interest all historians of Japan. I hope that this article has sparked people's interest in another fascinating aspect of Oita's history – its history involving Europe!

## EXHIBITIONS & SCREENINGS

Date	Description	Place	Cost	Contact #
Dec. 2 <sup>nd</sup> – Jan 22 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>Dutch Modern Design – Rietveld / Bruna / ADO – Playful Design and Life Art</b>	Oita Prefectural art Museum	¥1000	☎ 097-533-4500
Dec. 2 <sup>nd</sup> – Jan. 31 <sup>st</sup>	<b>OPAM Collection Exhibition Vol. V "Life Poetry Seen in the Collection"</b>	Oita Prefectural Art Museum	¥300	☎ 097-533-4500
Jan. 11 <sup>th</sup> – Apr. 9 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Fourth Collection Exhibition</b>	Oita City Art Gallery	¥300	☎ 097-554-5800
Feb. 3 <sup>rd</sup> – Apr. 4 <sup>th</sup>	<b>OPAM Collection Exhibition Vol. VI "Celebrating Spring"</b>	Oita Prefectural Art Museum	¥300	☎ 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 #
Jan.9 <sup>th</sup>	17:00	Recommended Japanese Music! Touch the Japanese Culture – Japanese Dance	iichiko Otonoizumi	¥1,000	☎ 097-533-4004
Jan.18 <sup>th</sup>	19:00	Beethoven – All String Quartet Compositions – First Night- Verus String Quartet	iichiko Otonoizumi	¥3000	☎ 097-533-4004
Jan.22 <sup>nd</sup>	18:00	Masaki Ueda R&B Band Tour 2017	Brick Block	¥6000 +drink	☎ 097-536-4852
Feb.5 <sup>th</sup>	N/A	Patria Music Festa Vol. 10	Patria Hita	¥500	☎ 0973-25-5000
Feb.15 <sup>th</sup>	13:30	One Coin Relay Concert - Harp	iichiko Otonoizumi	¥500	☎ 097-533-4004
Mar.11 <sup>th</sup>	N/A	Mozart's "The Magic Flute"	iichiko Grand Theater	Ticket prices vary	☎ 097-533-4004
Mar.20 <sup>th</sup>	N/A	Oita Broadway Musical Theater	iichiko Otonoizumi	v1000	☎ 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. "+drink" prices require the additional purchase of a drink. Times shown indicate start times, doors usually open 30 minutes beforehand. N/A indicates information was not known to the TOMBO at the time of going to print..

## VENUES

iichiko Grand Theatre= Oasis Tower 1F Oita City  
iichiko Otonoizumi=Oasis Tower 1F Oita City

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

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

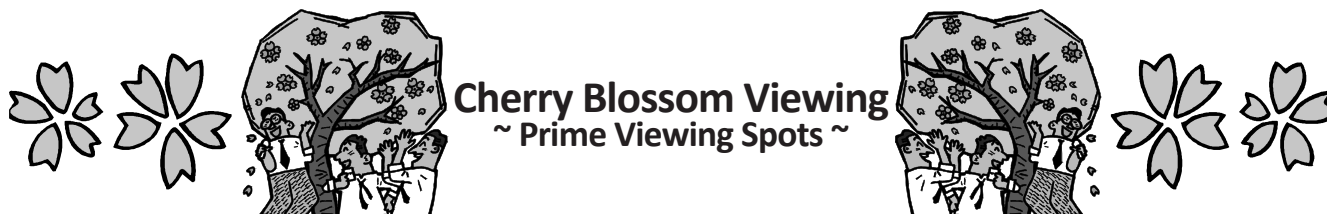
## Festivals and Events

Date	Event Description	Location	Contact #
~Mar. 31 <sup>st</sup>	<b>'Burari-hito-tsumami'</b> - Enjoy eating and drinking Taketa's food and drink! You buy 3 tickets for 300 yen (1 ticket = 100 yen). This will be a big chance to find something special among Taketa's local snacks or drinks.	Taketa City Various locations	☎ 0974-63-0585
~ Jan. 3 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>Free hot springs entrance</b> - 7 Municipal Hot Springs - Takegawara Onsen (except the sand bath), Tanoyu Onsen, Furosen, Kaimonji Onsen, Nageshi Onsen, Hamada Onsen, and Hamawaki Onsen - will have free entry!	Beppu City Various locations	☎ 0977-21-1129
Jan. 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>First sunrise of the new year</b> - The Beppu ropeway to Mt. Tsurumi will open at 4:00AM giving visitors the chance to make their first sunrise of the year a memorable one. Come along and enjoy the beautiful view.	Beppu City Mt. Tsurumi	☎ 0977-22-2277
Jan. 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Usa Shrine New Year visit</b> - Every year around half a million people visit Usa Shrine on this day to pray for good fortune and for things such as the health of their family, business prosperity, road safety and success in their studies.	Usa City Usa Shrine	☎ 0978-37-0001
Jan. 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>New Year Shonai Kagura</b> - This will be the first Shonai Kagura performance of the New Year.	Yufu City Shonai-Machi	☎ 097-582-1111
Jan. 15 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Houran-Enya Boat Festival</b> - Vibrantly decorated boats float down Katsura River accompanied by traditional flute and drum music, dancing and more! This is a very colourful, lively event.	Bungotakada City Ebisu Bridge ~ Katsura Bridge	☎ 0978-22-3100
Jan. 21 <sup>st</sup> Feb. 18 <sup>th</sup> Mar. 18 <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
Jan. 28 <sup>th</sup> ~ Feb. 5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Oita Fugu Festa</b> - Selected famous fugu (blowfish) restaurants throughout Oita City will be offering discounts on fugu cuisine so that everyone can taste the deliciousness of fugu.	Oita City Participating restaurants	☎ 097-537-5764
Feb. 5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>The 66th Beppu Oita Mainichi Marathon</b> - Well known as a stepping stone for marathon newcomers. Held alongside the Beppu coast, come along to cheer on the runners (if you're not already competing!).	Oita City Umitamago Aquarium ~ Oita Athletic Stadium	☎ 093-511-1119
Feb. 12 <sup>th</sup> ~ Mar. 5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Yoshino Japanese Plum Blossom Festival I</b> - During this festival there will be events such as kagura and taiko performances every Sunday amongst the some 450 plum blossom trees.	Oita City Yoshino bai-en	☎ 097-597-1000
Feb. 19 <sup>th</sup> ~ Mar. 19 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Hita Ōyama Japanese Plum Blossom Festival</b> - The Ōkubo and Furuya plum blossom parks will hold events such as outdoor tea ceremonies (Mar. 5th), poem-reading meetings and blossom viewing walks.	Hita City Ōyama-machi	☎ 0973-52-3101
Mar. 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Tsujibasha opening</b> - This day marks the beginning of spring in Yufuin, when the horse drawn carriages recommence operations. A ceremony will be held.	Yufu City JR Yufuin station	☎ 0977-85-4464
Mar. 18 <sup>th</sup> ~ 20 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Night at the Sea Hell</b> - Three Fantastic projection mapping Shows event for children, parents, and tourist to enjoy. Participation fee is 600yen (Incl. admission fee). 19:20~/20:00~/20:40~/21:20~	Beppu City Sea Hell	☎ 0977-66-0121

## Hina Doll Exhibitions

The Hina Doll Festival is a yearly tradition beginning in mid-February and continuing until mid-March. Families display Hina dolls to celebrate Girl's Day on March 3rd. Displays feature a number of tiers, and each doll represents a different figure from the Emperor and Empress, to court ladies and samurai.

Date	Event Description	Location	Contact #
Feb. 10 <sup>th</sup> ~ Mar. 20 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Usuki Hina-meguri</b> - Hina dolls will be displayed at various locations throughout the city.	Usuki City Various locations	☎ 0972-64-7130
Feb. 11 <sup>th</sup> ~Mar. 12 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Kitsuki Hina-meguri</b> - Hina dolls will be displayed at various locations throughout the city. And the Hina dolls that were owned by a feudal lord will be displayed at Historical Museum.	Kitsuki City Various locations	☎ 0978-63-0100
Feb. 15 <sup>th</sup> ~ Mar. 31 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Hita Hina Doll festival</b> - Families in Mameda-Machi and Kuma-Machi will display their hina dolls to the public.	Hita City Mameda, Kuma	☎ 0973-23-3111
Feb. 25 <sup>th</sup> ~ Mar. 12 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Castle town Nakatsu Hina Doll festival</b> - Various events will be held to coincide with the local hina doll displays.	Nakatsu City Various locations	☎ 0979-22-3060



In Oita Prefecture, cherry blossoms (sakura) begin blooming from late March, and the blossoms generally last until early to mid April. Below is a short list of some well-known cherry blossom viewing spots in Oita Prefecture. These spots are ideal for enjoying your own little hanami (cherry blossom viewing) party with friends, food and drinks.

City	Location	Blossom period	Address/directions	Number of trees	Contact #
Beppu City	Beppu Park 別府公園	Late March ~ Early April	15 minutes by car from Oita IC 5 minutes by bus from JR Beppu station	100	☎ 0977-21-1111
Beppu City	Mt. Ogi Sakura Garden 扇山さくらの園	Early April	5 minutes by car from Beppu IC 20 minutes by bus from JR Beppu station	6000	☎ 0977-21-1111
Kunisaki City	Aki Dam Park 安岐ダム公園	Early ~ Mid April	30 minutes by car from JR Kitsuki station 20 minutes by car from Oita Kukodouro Aki IC	3000	☎ 0978-72-5168
Nakatsu City	Nakatsu-kita Park 中津北(二の丸) 公園	Late March ~ Early April	15 minutes on foot from JR Nakatsu station	150	☎ 0979-22-1111
Oita City	Heiwa-shimin Park 平和市民公園	Late March~ Mid April	15 minutes by bus from JR Oita station (to 'Hanazuru' bus stop) 20 minutes by car from Oita IC	650	☎ 097-558-8135
Taketa City	Oka Castle Ruins 岡城跡	Early April	20 minutes on foot from JR Bungo Taketa station	1500	☎ 0974-63-0585
Usa City	Usa Shrine 宇佐神宮	Early April	10 minutes by bus from JR Usa station	1200	☎ 0978-37-0001
Usuki City	Usuki Castle 臼杵城跡	Late March ~ Early April	10 minutes on foot from JR Usuki station	1000	☎ 0972-64-7130
Tsukumi City	Youra Peninsula 四浦半島	Mid-February - Early March	25 minutes by car from Tsukumi IC	3700	☎ 0972-82-9521



## Did you know?

Japanese cherry blossoms are loved for their beauty and because they signal the coming of spring and warm weather. But cherry blossoms have also been historically revered because they represent the transience and beauty of life. They bloom only for a short while before they fall from the tree. Traditionally, it was believed that this symbol of life's fragility and impermanence was tragic but also beautiful. Sometimes it's hard to remember the deeper meaning behind the history of cherry blossom viewing when you're sitting on a picnic blanket below beautiful blossoms and enjoying your food and drink! Even though cherry blossoms symbolise life's brevity, in a way you could say that cherry blossoms connect us to earlier generations – both hundreds of years ago and today, people in Japan stop to appreciate the beautiful pink blossoms.

## 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: **January 18<sup>th</sup>, February 15<sup>th</sup>, March 15<sup>th</sup>**
- 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.

- When: **January 7<sup>th</sup>, February 4<sup>th</sup>, March 4<sup>th</sup>**
- Time: **13:00-16:00**
- 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: **February 5<sup>th</sup>, March 5<sup>th</sup>**
- 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](mailto: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](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 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>



# Happy New Year!

The TOMBO would like to wish all of its readers a very happy new year! We hope that everyone has a brilliant 2017!

あけまして❀  
❀おめでとう!

**おおいた国際交流プラザ**  
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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.

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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).

