

## Agility and Hardiness: Traditional Beppu Bamboo Craft

While most may know Beppu as a famous onsen town, the city is also a major production place for *madake* bamboo, also commonly known as the giant timber bamboo or Japanese timber bamboo. Throughout the centuries, locals have made use of this abundant resource and incorporated it into everyday life. Starting from crafting small artisan and everyday items, bamboo craft eventually flourished into an important local industry. Even in a world that favours mass-produced items, the beauty and strength of Beppu bamboo craft have withstood the trial of time and can be appreciated to this very day.

The history of traditional Beppu bamboo craft rose from modest beginnings. While the town has always harnessed its ample supply of bamboos, Beppu bamboo craft did not make a name for itself till quite recently in history. When travellers from around Japan visited the town in droves for its therapeutic onsen baths in the Edo era, the community got together to come up with a local product that is symbolic of the locality. Eventually, it was decided that bamboo craft would be the most suitable candidate. From that point onwards, objects of all shapes and sizes, ranging from functional everyday goods to artistic works were crafted from bamboo and actively promoted to visitors. The craftsmanship proved to be a big hit, thus paving the road for the craft to becoming a local industry.

Bamboo craft gradually became the talk of the town, and craftspeople from Oita prefecture travelled to other locations in Japan to study from more seasoned mentors. Many of them returned home after polishing their skills,

and the quality of Beppu bamboo craft took a huge leap within a relatively short span of decades. Valued for its practical and aesthetically pleasing qualities, Beppu traditional bamboo craft was eventually officially designated as a traditional craft by the Ministry of Economy in 1979.



***Shikainami*** (lit. "Waves of the four seas"), a popular and auspicious weaving design for *hanakago* vase holders.

For the common person interested in the artform, the Beppu City Traditional Bamboo Crafts Center situated in Beppu offers a small taste of the craft through its workshops. Under the patient tutelage of the staff member, I was able to produce a small *hanakago* vase holder with a traditional design known as the *Shikainami*



The design of the Oita Prefectural Art Museum's outer façade takes inspiration from traditional bamboo craft.

pattern, the mat pattern, the pine needle pattern, the chrysanthemum bottom pattern, and the bull's eye pattern.

With its rich history, bamboo craft has weaved its way steadily into people's hearts and become a ubiquitous element of Oita's culture. For instance, if you observe the outer façade and the third-floor ceiling of OPAM in Oita city, you may notice that bamboo craft is a running motif in their designs. The next time you explore the different parts Oita, it might be fun to spot the influences that bamboo has on the prefecture.

## Active Learning Experiences in the Beppu City Traditional Bamboo Crafts Center

■ Take-suzu (bamboo bell)	■ Shikainami
<p>The bell is made by weaving five coloured bamboo strands into a ball shape.            Fee: 400 yen            Time required: About 30 minutes            Suitable for elementary school students and above.</p>	<p>The base of the vase holder is prepared in advance.            Made by weaving bamboo strands woven in a circular motions, decorative flowers and small objects can be placed in the finished product to create a quaint atmosphere.  <i>Shikainami</i> is made at many important events and is a popular design for <i>hanakago</i> vase holders.            Fee: 1,000 yen            Time required: About 1 hour            Suitable for participants from ages 13 and up.</p>

*\*\* Please make reservations a week in advance. When making a reservation for ten or more people, an instructor will lead the class. Due to scheduling difficulties, the center may not be able to accommodate everyone.*

*Beppu City Traditional Bamboo Crafts Center*

*8 Chome-3, Beppu, Oita Prefecture 874-0836*

*Tel: 0977-23-1072*

*English site: <https://www.city.beppu.oita.jp/06sisetu/takezaiku/english/takezaiku.html>*

## EXHIBITIONS &amp; SCREENINGS

Date	Description	Place	Cost	Contact #
Mar 8 <sup>th</sup> – May 6 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Gold and Mummy: Ancient Civilization of the ANDES</b>	Gallery A (1 <sup>st</sup> floor), Oita Prefectural Art Museum (OPAM)	¥1,500 (600)	☎ 097-533-4500
May 18 <sup>th</sup> – Jun 30 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Japanese Bamboo Art from New York: The Abbey Collection – Gift to the Metropolitan Museum of Art</b>	Gallery B (3 <sup>rd</sup> floor), Oita Prefectural Art Museum (OPAM)	¥ 1,000 (500)	☎ 097-533-4500
Jun 29 <sup>th</sup> – Sep 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>MOOMIN: THE ART AND THE STORY</b>	Gallery A (1 <sup>st</sup> floor), Oita Prefectural Art Museum (OPAM)	¥ 1,400 (500)	☎ 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 &amp; MUSIC EVENTS

Date	Time	Artist/Event	Venue	Cost	Contact #
Apr 25 <sup>th</sup>	Day session 14:00~16:50 (Admissions open 13:30)  Evening session 18:30~21:20 (Admissions open 18:00)	<b>iichiko presents:</b> <b>Shochiku Grand Kabuki – Live in Oita</b> <b>Featuring;</b> <b>Matsumoto Hakuō II</b> (formerly Matsumoto Kōshirō) <b>Matsumoto Kōshirō X</b> (formerly Ichikawa Somegorō) <b>*Stage names will be inherited in a grand name-succession ceremony.</b>	iichiko Grand Theater	¥1,000 -¥12,000	☎ 097-533-4004
May 28 <sup>th</sup>	19:00 (Admissions open 18:30)	<b>Leningrad Hotel</b>	iichiko Otonoizumi Hall	¥1,000 -¥3,500	☎ 097-533-4004
May 27 <sup>th</sup>	19:00	<b>'Workshop: Expressions of the Body' from the actors of Leningrad Hotel</b>	Rehearsal room, iichiko Culture Center B1F	¥500 -¥1,000	☎ 097-533-4004

\*\*\*Ticket prices range from student to most expensive general admission. Times shown indicate start times, doors usually open 30 minutes beforehand.\*\*\*

## VENUES

iichiko Otonoizumi Hall = iichiko Culture Center 1F, Oita City

iichiko Grand Theater = iichiko Culture Center 1F, Oita City

## Festivals and Events

Date	Event Description	Location	Contact #
Dec 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2018 ~ Mid May**	<b>Michi-no-eki Taketa ichigo-gari (strawberry picking activity)</b> Michi-no-eki Taketa's strawberry farm, situated alongside the National Highway 442, offers strawberry-picking experiences from late-December to mid-May every year. The restaurant on the establishment also sells sweets made from strawberries produced by the farm. **Business times and event ending time subject to production conditions. Please contact the establishment in advance.	* Ichigo Noen, Michi-no-eki Taketa, 1152 Yonai, Taketa-shi	☎ 0974-66-3003
Feb 16 <sup>th</sup> ~ Apr 7 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Kurushima Takehiko Memorial Hall Special Springtime Exhibition: Works by Kojima Yoichi</b> The exhibition will display 36 works by Kojima Yoichi, the legendary puppet maker who was active from the Meiji to the Showa era. Learn about Kojima's life's trajectory as you enjoy his skilled creations.	Kurushima Takehiko Memorial Hall	☎ 0973-73-9200
Apr 1 <sup>st</sup> ~ Apr 7 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Beppu Hatto Onsen Matsuri</b> A festival composed of several major events. Multiple public baths in the region can be entered for free during the festival period, and the mikoshi of the Onsen Jinja will be making rounds in town while locals douse it with onsen water.	Main street in front of Beppu Station and surrounding area	☎ 0977-24-2828
Apr 2 <sup>nd</sup> , fire is lit from 18:30	<b>Ogiyama Fire Festival</b> One of the main events of the Beppu Hatto Onsen Matsuri, the festival will welcome Spring with the silhouette of brightly lit flames burning in Mt. Ogi.	Mt. Ogi (Mt. Ohira), Beppu	☎ 0977-24-2828
Apr 7 <sup>th</sup> (Festival Eve) ~ Apr 8 <sup>th</sup> (Main Festival)	<b>Ken-Hachimangu Shrine Spring Grand Festival</b> With a history spanning over 360 years, the festival is a local favourite and warmly dubbed the Kenka Matsuri (Quarrel Festival). The enshrined sacred sword will be adorned and carried around in a Dashi while its attendants race around town.	Oita City, Higashi Tsurusaki, 3-7-6 Ken Hachimangu	☎ 097-527-4257
Apr 14 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Reaching-the-Peak-of-Mt. Tsurumi-in-One-Go Meeting</b> Local mountaineers, why not consider this meeting and take a walk from the Beppu Beach Sand Bath to the peak of Mt. Tsurumi, travelling from an elevation of 0m to 1,375m above sea-level? The walk is 12km in total and the only one in the nation that can be completed safely in one go without interference of oncoming traffic.	From Beppu Beach Sand Bath to peak of Mt. Tsurumi	☎ 0977-24-2828
Apr 28 <sup>th</sup> (Festival Eve) ~ Apr 29 <sup>th</sup> (Main Festival)	<b>Nosaka Shrine Spring Grand Festival</b> The origins of the festival stems from an intention to re-enact the <i>Gion Matsuri</i> in Kyoto. For two days, parades will carry on in the region featuring extravagantly carved <i>Dashi</i> floats fashioned in the shape of dolls and <i>taiko</i> drums.	Nosaka Shrine, Misa Oita	☎ 097-527-2955
May 12 <sup>th</sup> ~ Jun 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>MUSIC FESTIVAL Argerich's Meeting Point in Beppu</b> Sparking from the then Mayor of Beppu's inspiration of launching an international music festival locally, the world-renowned event is about to convene for the 21 <sup>st</sup> time. Join pianist Martha Argerich to embark on a journey of music here in Beppu city.	Shiiki presents Argerich's Haus, B-con Plaza and other locations in Beppu	☎ 0977-27-2299
May 13 <sup>th</sup>	<b>First Day of the Climbing Season for Mt. Yufu</b> Mt. Yufu, often nicknamed "the Mt. Fuji of Bungo", is a popular destination for many mountaineering enthusiasts. A commemorative meal of <i>tonjiru</i> will be given freely to the first 1,200 guests who arrive at the foot of the mountain to wish them a safe journey.	<i>Yufudake shomen tozan kuchi</i> (Front entrance to Mt. Yufu between Yufuin & Beppu)	☎ 0977-84-3111

## 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 7<sup>th</sup>, June 2<sup>nd</sup>**
- Time: **13:00-16:00**
- Consultant: **Sei Ito** (Administrative Solicitor)
- Venue: **Oita International Plaza (iichiko Culture Center, B1F)**

#### Free Tagalog Consultations

The Oita International Plaza is holding free consultations in Tagalog.

- When: **April 6<sup>th</sup>, April 16<sup>th</sup>, May 11<sup>th</sup>, May 21<sup>st</sup>,  
June 1<sup>st</sup>, June 18<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 Chinese Consultations

The Oita International Plaza is holding free consultations in Mandarin.

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

(\*Dates and times are subject to change. Please contact the Oita International Plaza before coming.) TEL: 097-533-4021

#### International Event Notifications

The Oita International Plaza will be announcing some international events that take place within Oita Prefecture on our social media pages in order to support organizations proactively fostering international relations.

Facebook - <http://www.facebook.com/oitaplaza>

Twitter - <http://twitter.com/oitaplaza>

If you are interested in relaying information about an event, please send e-mail at the Plaza.

Mail: [kobayashi-ikuyo@emo.or.jp](mailto:kobayashi-ikuyo@emo.or.jp)

### 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 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)

Now that the cherry-blossoms are on full display, let's check out some *hanami* spots in the prefecture from late March to early April.

#### Oita Castle Ruin Park (Oita Joseki Kou'en), Oita City

Every year, the warm winds of Spring bring a carpet of cherry-blossom petals to the grounds of the Oita Castle Ruin Park. Conveniently situated at the heart of the city, the Park is popular with flower-viewing enthusiasts.

#### Peace Citizen Park (Heiwa Shimin Kou'en), Oita City

With more than 800 cherry blossom trees on show, the Peace Citizen Park can be reached in 20 minutes on foot from the Maki Station. The park also features Chinese architecture representative of Oita's sister city Wuhan.

#### Beppu Park, Beppu City

Equipped with sports fields and plenty of green space, over 100 some-yoshino cherry-blossoms put on a full show at the Beppu Park every Spring. Highly recommended to those who like to picnic out on a fine day.

#### Usuki Castle Ruin, Usuki City

Built by the feudal lord Otomo Sorin, the castle is the most popular cherry-blossom viewing spot in the south of the prefecture. The restored castle-keep is adorned with the vibrant colours of Spring every year.

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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-6:00pm  
 (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).

