

What's up,

OITA!

April & May 2021
No. 59

Bringing the latest from Oita, Japan to all those connected to Oita thriving all across the globe.



International Policy Division's FY2021 Staff Profile



Hirakawa Masanori,
Director

Mobility has become restricted in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is precisely in times like this that we want to cherish our connections by delivering the hottest local information.



Shimasaki Kazuo,
Associate Director

- Passport inspection
- Human resource development at the Passport Section



Anami Daisuke,
Head Section Manager

- Promotion of overseas strategies (coordinator)
- Human resource development at the International Policy Section



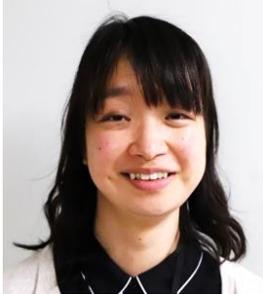
Yamasaki Motohiro,
Section Manager

- Promotion of overseas strategies
- Overseas promotions
- New faculty at APU



Sato Yoshika,
Assistant Section Chief

- Supporting foreign workers (support for foreigners living in Oita Prefecture)
- Tobitate! (Leap for Tomorrow) Study Abroad Initiative



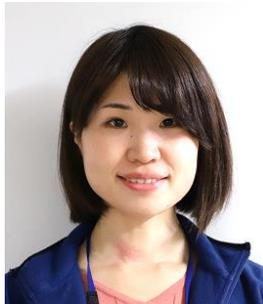
Murakami Miyuki,
Senior Staff

- Passport inspection and shipment
- Commissioning passport-related assignments
- Budgeting for the Passport Section



Abe Mai,
Senior Staff

- JET Programme
- Overseeing CIR activities
- Nihongo Partners



Shigeishi Mai,
General Staff

- Employment and business start-up support for study-abroad students
- Asia Business Collegium
- Communications with Hubei Province, China



Chihara Sae,
General Staff

- Oita Information & Support Center
- Scholarship grants for study-abroad students
- Budgeting, financing and audits

Though there is no onsen, Bungo-Ono is still Bringing You What's Hot!

What's hot lately? Outdoor saunas!



A movement, triggered by outdoor saunas, is recently in action at Bungo-ono.

The Research Lab for Good Saunas in Oita, which explores outdoor saunas, sparked the movement. Rather than bathhouses and onsen facilities, the lab is hoping to promote a new sauna culture, with an emphasis on the fact that sauna can be enjoyed in the midst of nature.



The region is home to rare saunas filled with character. From a karst cave sauna that makes use of the clear waters from brooks, to unique, quaint sauna cabins, the region has much to offer.

Come explore Bungo-ono, where you can use establishments that cannot be found anywhere else.



Website QR

First step to becoming an idol!

Bungo-ono's image character Heptagon, whose goal is to become an idol, has fulfilled his goal of debuting as a YouTuber.

Heptagon is currently doing his part to promote the highlights of Bungo-ono!



Heptagon's video

Bungo-Ono's YouTube Channel: Heptagon



YouTube page QR

Kyudai Main Line now fully operational



Station master and the married couple enacting as station master for the day

A ceremony commemorating the full operation of the Kyudai Main Line convened on March 1 at JR Yufuin Station.

Operations were suspended due to the effects of heavy rain in July last year. After 8 months of restoration work, the line is now fully operational.

On the day of the ceremony, affiliates and railway enthusiasts gathered on site, and the Yufuin no Mori sped off at the signal of the station master and the station masters for the day.

The locality looks forward to receiving great numbers of visitors once the COVID-19 pandemic is under control.

Going around town on fiacre

The horse drawn fiacres were also operation on the day.

While operations ran on a smaller scale compared to past years, upon the completion of the ceremony, the pleasant sound of galloping hooves echoed as the fiacres carrying affiliates travelled around the Yufuin basin, bringing the first notes of spring to residents who await the return of hustle and bustle to the locality.



Fiacre in action





Beppu in the Air

What's up, OITA! 2021 April, No. 59

Xin Lan Xie (CIR)

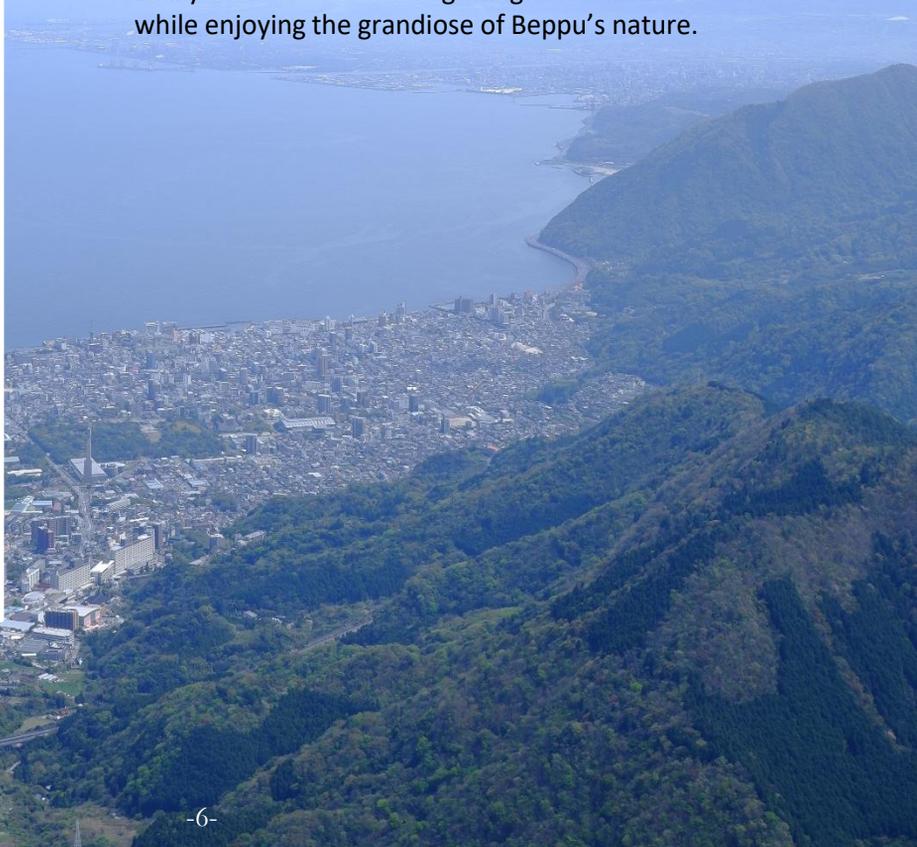
Mt. Tsurumi, an active volcano that serves as the source to Beppu's onsen, is situated on the east of the Aso-Kuju National Park. By taking a ride on Kyushu's largest cable car system that has a maximum capacity of 101 passengers, one can reach the peak of the mountain with an altitude of 1375m within 10 minutes. In this issue, we will be introducing the Beppu Ropeway run by the Kintetsu Group.



Beppu Ropeway has run for more than 50 years since operations began in 1962. On its 50th anniversary in 2014, the cable cars received a facelift both internally and externally in commemoration of being the largest gondola in western Japan. The Turumi car is named after Mt. Tsurumi and themed in pink, while the similarly named Yufu car is themed in blue. Gazing at the young green mountain as the car slowly climbed its way up, I could feel the breath of spring more than ever. The park on the top of the mountain offers an excellent vista. Other than Oita City and Beppu City, one can see as far as the Kuju Mountain Range, the Chugoku Region and the Shikoku Region on a clear day.

I had visited when the wild cherry blossoms and the fuji cherry blossoms were blooming, and the mountain was splashed in the colour of their pink petals and red leaves. Besides cherry blossoms, Mt. Tsurumi has something to offer every season, with wild azaleas showing off their best throughout May to June, cool breeze sweeping the slopes in summer, and rime ice formations in winter.

It is worth noting that Mt. Tsurumi has been regarded as a sacred mountain since ancient times, and various Shinto and Buddhist deities are still worshipped on site. By visiting the religious artefacts, one can complete the Seven Lucky Gods Tour or the Pilgrimage Tour in around an hour while enjoying the grandiose of Beppu's nature.



Kuju Flower Park

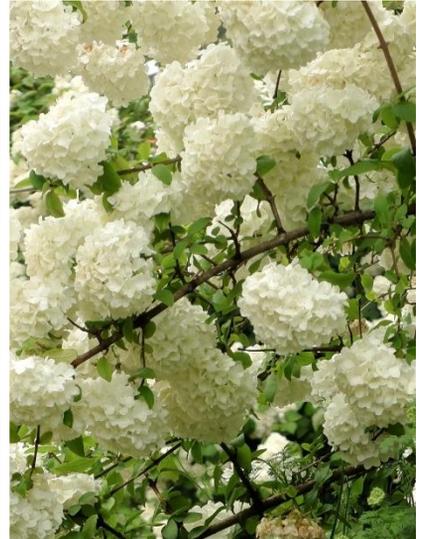
Above the Clouds

Xin Lan Xie (CIR)



May brings in the cool breeze. All around us flowers are bursting into bloom and the landscape is gradually filled with lush greenery. In this season filled with life, the flowers at the Kuju Flower Park in Taketa City are also at their best.

Situated on the Kuju Plateau, Kuju Flower Park is a part of the larger Aso-Kuju National Park. On a clear day, one can see as far as the Five Peaks of Aso and the Kuju Mountain Range. As luck would have it, I had visited on a cloudy day where the skies in the distance were filled with a leaden colour, and although it was already early summer, there was a coldness to the mist that shrouded the mountains. Standing in a sea of flowers that bloomed in the mist, I felt as if I were in another world.



I had just come in time for the Baby Blue Eyes Festival, and was able to enjoy the impressive sight of countless small flowers blanketing the hills. Other than the baby blue eyes, poppies of various colours also bloomed vibrantly in their own field, while begonias flowered in the greenhouse. What stood out to me the most was an area called Kuju Garden, where rows of dewdrop covered snapdragons, foxgloves and hydrangeas swayed gently in the rain. The landscape really brought me home, as it had reminded me of cottage gardens commonly sighted in Australia.



While I am sure that the flowers would look even more vibrant under a clear sky, Kuju Flower Park engulfed in sheets of fog was charming in its own ways. The misty hills, with blurred silhouettes like a washed out watercolour painting, gave off a serene air. I can only imagine how pleasant it would be to enjoy the sunflowers in summer, the cosmos in autumn, and the wind that sweeps across the plateau in winter.

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