



What's up, OITA!

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

F.Y.
2022

International Policy Division

To everyone connected to Oita and thriving all across the globe, please allow us to introduce ourselves.



Director

**Koji
Mimata**

We live in unprecedented times. But there is a light at the end of the tunnel. We will work hard to maintain our bonds with you all and continue to provide information to facilitate peace, cultural exchange, and cultivate talent.



Associate
Director
(Head Manager)

**Hiroaki
Ikawa**

Main Responsibilities

- Passport inspection (coordinator)
- HR development in Passport Section



Assistant
Director
(Head Manager)

**Daisuke
Anami**

Main Responsibilities

- Overseas strategy promotion (coordinator)
- HR development in Int. Pol. Section



Division
Manager

**Motohiro
Yamasaki**

Main Responsibilities

- Overseas strategy promotion
- Employment and start-up business support for international students



Chief
Staff

**Kosuke
Kiyota**

Main Responsibilities

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



Senior
Staff

**Miyuki
Murakami**

Main Responsibilities

- Passport inspection and shipment
- Commission of passport work
- Budgeting for the Passport Section



Senior
Staff

**Mai
Abe**

Main Responsibilities

- JET Program
- Overseeing CIR activities
- International student scholarships



Senior
Staff

**Yayoi
Ito**

Main Responsibilities

- Oita Information & Support Center
- Hong Kong Fair
- Budgeting, financing, and audits



General
Staff

**Sae
Sawada**

Main Responsibilities

- Asia Business Collegium
- Nihongo Partners
- MOU with Thailand

CIRs

Coordinators
for
International
Relations



Noh Jiyoung



Austin Vaughn



Swara Fife

We've added new members and are doing our best to let Oita know even more about the world and the world know even more about Oita. We'd love to deepen our ties with everyone, so feel free to contact us!

Oita International Strategy for 2022-2024 is Now in Place!

Oita Prefecture's previous international strategy, as established in March 2019, has reached the end of its two year life cycle. With that, we've been receiving advice and suggestions from experts and business executives to improve our international strategy and are proud to announce our next phase, "**Oita International Strategy (2022-2024) ~Be on the Offensive~.**"

In this phase, we'll be adding a fifth pillar to the four that have held up our prior international strategies, "Promotion of Multicultural Coexistence." This pillar reflects our increased hopes for talented persons from abroad in this era of continued low birthrates, an aging population, and population decline.

With this strategy in mind, going forward, we will be working diligently with others to promote the export of local products, attract tourists from overseas (in anticipation of the end of the pandemic), promote the hiring of international students, support international students' start-up businesses, promote multicultural coexistence, and create memorandums of understanding in order to support the international expansion of local businesses.

We ask for your continued support in promoting Oita's international strategy!



<Pillars of International Strategy>

- Strategy 1 Adopt an International Energy
- Strategy 2 Take in Talented Persons and Technology from Abroad
- Strategy 3 Promotion of Multicultural Coexistence
- Strategy 4 Promotion of International Exchange and Contribution to International Society
- Strategy 5 Cultivate and Employ Talented Persons from Abroad

You can view and download the text of Oita's 2022-2024 International Strategy on the Oita Prefecture Website

[URL]

<https://www.pref.oita.jp/soshiki/10140/kaigaisenryaku2022-2024.html>



2021 Annual Beautiful Buddha Election starring National Treasures, Usuki's Stone Buddhas!

Within the population of Usuki's Stone Buddhas, there are 61 Magai Stone Buddhas, which are designated National Treasures. It is said that these were sculpted sometime between the latter part of the Heian Period and the Kamakura Period. This collection of masterpieces with vivid facial expressions strike an unparalleled tranquillity into the hearts of those who look upon them.

With the the Magai Stone Buddhas as the inspiration, the Annual Beautiful Buddha Election starring National Treasures, Usuki's Stone Buddhas, took place between August and October of 2021. Of the 61 Magai Stone Buddhas, nine put themselves forward for the title of Beautiful Buddha! Out of these nine, voters chose their favourite Buddha, with 9,057 votes in total.

The Magai Buddha with the most votes was Dainichi nyorai zazo, who ran with the slogan 'I'm going to try my best, even though I'm small, and carry the universe on my shoulders!'. There were many kind comments from Dainichi nyorai zazo's supporters, who remarked 'his religious headgear is so beautiful'; 'I regained energy just from his lovely countenance'; 'I think he would brightly

illuminate all those around him. From my own memory of coming here a long time ago, he was the one who stood out in the crowd'. In the Dainichi nyorai zazo, a new Prime Minister of Beautiful Buddhas has been born, receiving first place amongst the other 8 contenders as the head of the Beautiful Buddha Cabinet.

The slogans of each Cabinet Minister of the Beauty Cabinet can be viewed on the Annual Beautiful Buddha Election homepage. Further, if you wish to meet the Prime Minister of the Beautiful Buddhas, please do come on down to Usuki to visit him!



Taketa: A Saffron Saturated Spring

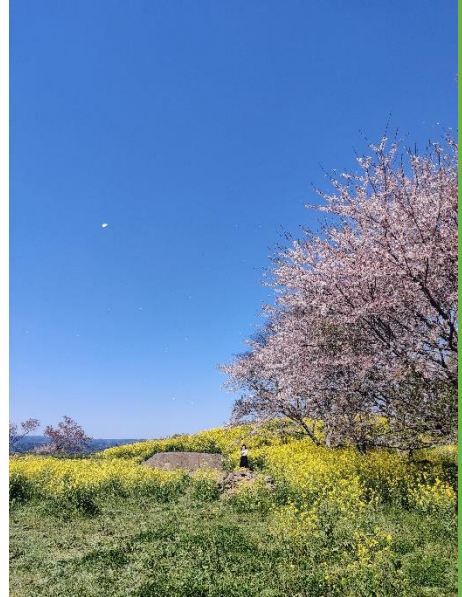
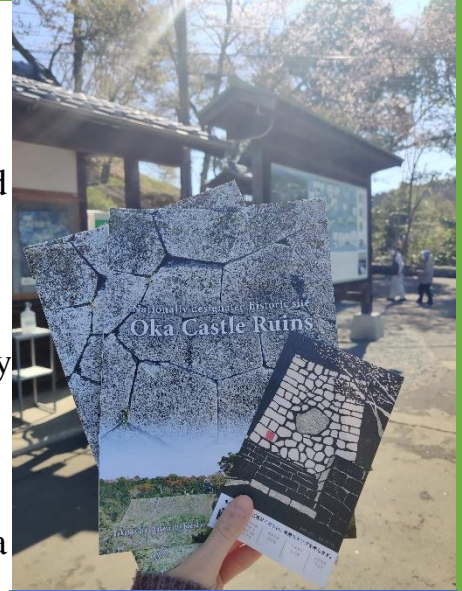
When one conjures to mind Taketa, images of the countryside, that one famous musician – Rentaro Taki – and the delicious chicken chain Marufuku will most certainly come to mind in some order or another. While I did find these, a deep, earthy, and bold yellow was what served as the thread that weaved my day in Taketa together. My original thought was to write about the cherry blossoms (because who doesn't love pink and flowers?!), however these are notoriously ephemeral and bloom at most unpredictable speeds, differing vastly even within the same prefecture. Alas, despite pouring over timings and countless forecasts, we were a week late and most of the petals had already fallen. The few that stubbornly clung were whipped off their branches in the softest breeze; though this in itself was a wonder to see. Standing in the middle of the uppermost reaches of Oka Castle Ruins – less of a ruin and more of a field on a hill – was like standing in a dreamlike bubble of bliss. Looking up, delicate baby pink petals spiralled from the treetops, speckling the vibrant blue

sky with the markings of spring. In that moment, I felt like a character in an anime, or Animal Crossing, enjoying a leisurely moment removed completely from all the stresses and disturbances of daily life and society; time stood still.

Through the spiralling petals, a sea of deep golden 'na no hana' spread as far as the eye could see. Soft pink and vibrant yellow provided quite the

contrast, though it was a welcome one. The flow of spring in Japan along with its many shades is truly a wonder, and though this is only my second time experiencing this kaleidoscope of sensation, I have a feeling it is something I will be able to enjoy time and again.

Svara Fife
Coordinator for
International Relations



Taketa: A Saffron Saturated Spring

In places once bustling but now enclosed by nature such as Oka Castle Ruins, I always fancy I can sense echoes of the past through a ray of light hitting a crumbling stone wall, or in the whisper of the wind through the grass. It is in places such as these I feel a sense of peace and tranquillity. In fact, when we stopped for a rest under a grove of tangled vines overlooking the mountainous basin of Kuju, my hands opened towards the heavens as a natural instinct took me and I fell into a meditative state, letting thoughts pass in and out my mind, like a thread through fabric.

Bold yellow continued to be a hallmark of our day. We took lunch at a nearby restaurant specialising in a saffron rice meal set. Taketa's famous saffron dyed pearly white grains of rice a deep but soft golden yellow and lent to it a slightly earthy and spiced kick.



The rice was complimented by various small dishes arranged haphazardly onto a tray by a little old lady. Our 'Castle Town Passport' not only granted us access to the main tourist attractions in Taketa, such as Oka Castle Ruins and Taketa Museum of History and Culture, but also gave us a coupon for a free mini dessert and coffee afterwards – be sure to make use of this when visiting Taketa, as many restaurants offer such benefits for passport-holders.

Continuing on into the afternoon, our leisurely pace was uninterrupted as we entered the old residence of famous musician Rentaro Taki. After investigating the inside of the traditional wooden house he lived in before his premature death at age 23, we perched on his veranda soaking in the sunshine and looking over his garden, just sitting in and enjoying the peace of the moment as he had once done over 100 years ago. Nature once again

surrounded our senses and I have to admit it took some time to move on; nothing quite beats the sensation of becoming languid under the sun's golden rays with full bellies and all the time in the world.

Taketa: Castle Town Passport

Price: Includes admission to:

Adult/800¥ ☆ Oka Castle Ruins

Child/500¥ ☆ Hanamizuki Hot Springs

☆ Sato Yoshimi Memorial Hall



☆ Taki Rentaro Memorial Museum

☆ Taketa Museum of History & Culture

*Purchase at any of
the below
attractions!!*

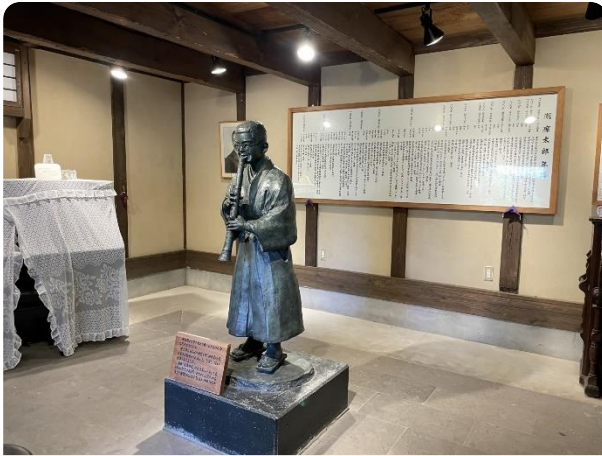
Taketa: History is Here



Austin Vaughn



Rentarō Taki Memorial Museum



Rentarō Taki was, among other works, the composer of *Kōjō no Tsuki* (The Moon over the Ruined Castle), the first Japanese song to use a western scale. The “ruined castle” mentioned in the title is Taketa’s very own Oka Castle. In 1891, due to his father being appointed as the mayor of Naoiri District, Rentarō and his family moved into the official residence for the district mayor in Taketa. Rentarō’s stay in Taketa as a boy left quite the impression on him, and today, this residence is the Rentarō Taki Memorial Museum. In this museum, you can see documents and letters written by Rentarō that you cannot see anywhere else, as well as what life would have been like for the young Rentarō all those years ago. You enter the complex through the main building, which has the bulk of the documents and exhibits. There is then a very peaceful garden, where as a boy Rentarō fed foxes *abura-age* (fried tofu). Cutting through the garden, there is another building with a video that gives an overview of the life of Rentarō Taki. From the second floor of this building, you can also open a window to get a good view of the garden. Both the complex itself and the story it tells of the tragically short life of the man who once lived there makes going to this museum well worth the visit.

Taketa: History is Here



Taketa History and Culture Museum

Near the Rentarō Taki Memorial Museum is the Rentarō Taki Tunnel, which plays some of his most famous works, such as *Kōjō no Tsuki, Hana* (Flower), and *Mizu-asobi* (Playing in the Water). On the other side of the tunnel, a short walk away, is the Taketa History and Culture Museum. At this museum, you can learn more about the history of Taketa and Oka Castle. It gives the background of Oka Castle, why it was built, who ruled it, why it fell into ruin, and so on through an animated video. Next to this room is an exhibition hall where, during April and May, on display were works of art and other historical documents from the collection of the Furusho family of Sumikamado in Taketa. There is also the Bell of Santiago (an Important Cultural Property), a bell made in 1612 by *kirishitan* (early Christians in Japan) and thought to be from the Santiago Hospital in Nagasaki, which was completely destroyed by 1620 after the banning of Christianity in 1614. Finally, there is a gallery of works by Taketa citizens, which can be viewed for free and regularly gets new exhibits. At the time we visited the museum, the exhibit was of old Japanese armor, but the current exhibit is works left behind by a local calligraphist, as well as new works from their daughter. Even though it's a *history* museum, there's always something *new* to learn about here.

