



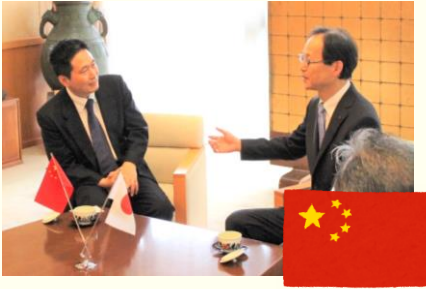
What's up, OITA!

Bringing the latest from Oita, Japan to people around the globe!

Countries from Around the World Visit to Congratulate Governor Sato

June 9, China

Consul-General of the People's
Republic of China, Fukuoka

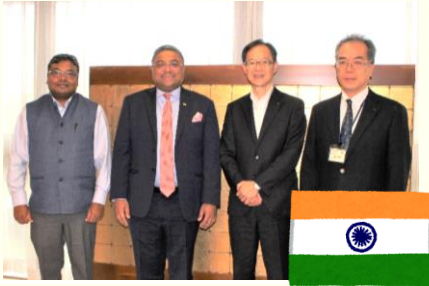


June 16, Thailand
Royal Thai Consul-General,
Fukuoka

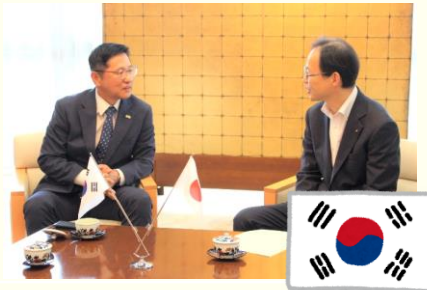


July 5, India

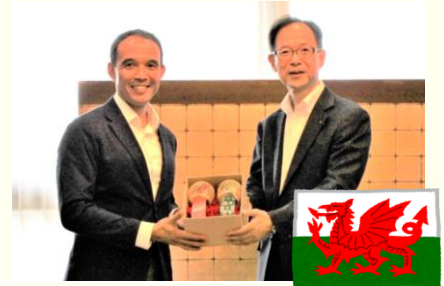
Ambassador of India to Japan
Consul-General of India,
Osaka/Kobe



July 31, Republic of Korea
Consul-General of the
Republic of Korea, Fukuoka



August 21, Wales
Senior Representative of Wales
in Japan



Hearing of Governor Sato's inauguration, ambassadors and other government officials came to Oita to congratulate the new governor. The governor talked with them about their respective governments' relations with Japan and of further exchange in the future. They also exchanged gifts to further the bonds between Japan and their countries.

What's Up in Oita? 国際交流員だより

◆ The Cats All Sing...

American CIR Austin Vaughn



The other day, I went to a cat café for the first time with a friend of mine. I was always interested in them, but for some reason, I just couldn't go to one on my own, so even though I knew there was one in OPA ever since I got here, actually going to it took me a year and a half. But I'm glad I finally went. It was all-you-can-pet and the cats were adorable. At the same time, it seems like the cats had already been played with so much that they had no interest in cat toys. On the other hand, they were very much interested in catnip. The catnip we bought was inside capsules, and just with the sound of us opening them, cats would gather around us. It was perfect. Until we ran out of catnip and the cats stopped paying attention to us... Cats really are just big tsunders. That's what's so cute about them though.





Bay 100 Project Begins



Bay 100
Website

400 years have passed since the creation of “Saiki’s version” of SDGs. This year marks the beginning of the Bay 100 Project so that everyone can enjoy the bounties of the mountains, rivers, and the sea.

We’ve created a new tourism concept for Saiki as well as a design and logo using the motif of a *tairyo-bata* (big catch flag) to bring it to life.



■What is “Bay 100”?

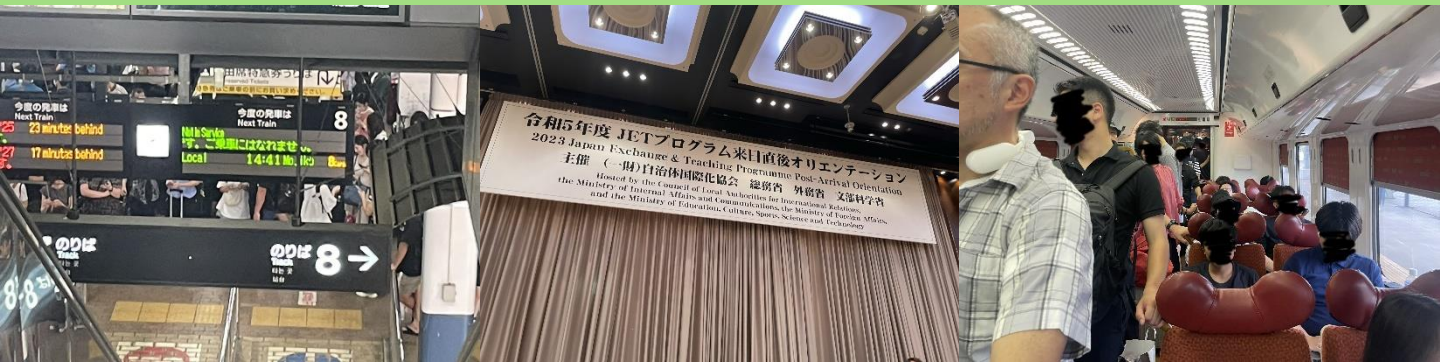
Bay 100 is the Saiki Tourism Association’s project to create “100 actions to preserve the bountiful bay for over 100 years.” Saiki, Oita, famous for Saiki sushi, has abundant mountains, rivers, as well as a bountiful sea. Natural treasures so great that it was once said, “The lord of Saiki is sustained by the bay. The bounty of the bay is sustained by the mountains.” In 1623, the domain of Saiki issued a decree to preserve the forests in order to protect sea life. It could be said that this was a forerunner to today’s SDGs. 400 years later, the Saiki Tourism Association began to think of the next 100 years. “What can be done about human action to preserve the bay 100 years into the future?” To that effect, we have started a tourism program using the natural cycle of the mountains, rivers, and the sea, in order for others to experience the bounty of nature Saiki has to offer. A portion of profits will go towards protecting the mountains, rivers, and the sea.



Find Mejiron!

Welcome to Oita!

Austin Vaughn



Long Way Home

Every year in August, new people come to Oita via the JET Programme, a program designed by the Japanese government to take native English speakers from around the globe and place them in schools and government institutions across the nation. Or at least, that's normally how it's supposed to go. For the past few years, the way people have arrived has been haphazard at best.

However, this year things went as planned, and 26 new JETs arrived in Tokyo from countries such as Canada, South Africa, the UK, and the US. I went there to guide them to their new home, Oita. The JETs were split into two groups, 12 leaving for Oita on August 2 and 14 leaving on August 9. The first group went off without a hitch, my supervisor and I took a plane to Tokyo, fielded questions from the excited new civil servants, then took a plane back to Oita. Simple is as simple does. The second group, however, was an entirely different story. I was going alone and there was a storm brewing. Literally. A typhoon was heading into northern Kyushu and we weren't even sure if I would make it to Tokyo. Luckily, the planes were still running when it was time for me to leave, so I was able to make it there. Unluckily, they stopped after I got there, and I was stranded with 14 people, mostly brand new to Japan, wondering what to do next.

Back at HQ, my supervisor was working hard with the travel agency to figure out how to get us home. With yet another stroke of bad luck, it turned out that every plane to Oita was pretty much fully booked. That's what we get for flying during both a typhoon and *obon*. So instead there was only one practical way to get back to Oita: by *shinkansen* (bullet train).

It was a long journey back. We gathered early in the morning at the lobby of the hotel everyone was staying in and I guided everyone to Shinjuku Station to catch the train. There was a tunnel directly to the station next to the hotel, so this part was simpler than I hoped. The trouble started when we needed to switch trains in Kyushu. The high winds from the typhoon made it so no trains would be departing until the afternoon. Not only that, but so many people were delayed the platform was literally overflowing with passengers. Nearly three hours later, we somehow managed to rush our way onto a train, but people were standing in the aisles of reserved cars, sitting in the luggage areas. It was crazy. But the JETs were able to bond and have fun along the way, and I'm sure none of us will ever forget the experience we had going home to Oita.



Oita JETs Website
(Unofficial)





Your New Home

Now with everyone in Oita, it was time to get everyone acclimated to their new abodes. Normally every year there would have been an orientation where all the new JETs met their regional advisors, their two prefectural advisors (a Oita Pref. Board of Education JET and myself), and learned more about life in Oita while making connections with other JETs.

Unfortunately, for obvious reasons, this hasn't happened for the past few years, leaving JETs to their own devices to build networks and make friends. Needless to say, this isn't optimal, so I'm glad that this year we were able to have a normal orientation. I've previously asked my friends what they knew about prefectural advisors and the answer was usually, "What on earth is that?" so it's nice to know that from this year forward, JETs will know that there's a support network for them to turn to if something goes wrong.

As for the contents of the orientation, there were three presentations, one from me about the basics of the new environment JETs are coming into, one from the police about general safety and getting a driver's license, and one from my fellow prefectural advisor, Ashe, about the day in the life of an ALT (Assistant Language Teacher) which is what the majority of JETs are.

The presentation I did was a funny one that my predecessor put together on the idiosyncrasies of working as a civil servant in Japan, such as the high standards they're held to, or the types of leave they're entitled to, but probably won't get unless the situation is absolutely dire.

The presenters from the police were great at making everyone feel at ease with the police force in Oita. Doing some *kendo*, messing with the audience, but teaching them about the law at the same time.

Finally, the last presentation from Ashe I feel was really helpful in letting everyone know what kind of work to actually expect to do, which is something I could have never explained. I'm also part of the JET Programme, but as a CIR (Coordinator for International Relations), my job duties differ very much from what is expected from an ALT. I'm very grateful that she went out of her way to make such a great presentation for our new friends. But what I'm most thankful for is that everyone had a chance to talk with one another and make new bonds. I think with the more events like this there are, Oita JET will become even stronger. At least now people know I exist.

