



# What's Up, OITA!

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

## 2025 Marks the 1,300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Usa Jingu's Establishment!

Usa Jingu is a major tourist site in Oita Prefecture and the head shrine of approximately 40,000 Hachiman shrines across Japan. It is also regarded as the birthplace of Shinto-Buddhist syncretism.

This year marks 1,300 years since Hachiman Okami was enshrined on Mt. Kameyama, and so many related events are planned.



1300  
YEARS  
USAJINGU



Sponsor: Usa Jingu

### Special Offering Ritual (Imperial Rite)

Once every 10 years, an imperial envoy attends this solemn ritual to present offerings from the Emperor. To celebrate this important occasion, events such as Yabusame horseback archery by the Ogasawara and Takeda schools, along with a fireworks festival, are planned.

【Timings】 Yabusame Horseback Archery Ritual : 4/10 (Sat) 13:30~  
(Momote-shiki Hundred Arrows Ritual 10:30~)  
Lantern Parade : 5/10 (Sun) 18:30~  
Celebratory Fireworks : 5/10 (Sun) 20:00~  
Special Offering Ritual : 6/10 (Mon) 10:00~

【Location】 Usa Jingu Shrine

There are plenty of related events, including a historical festival themed on ancient Usa, the Danjiri float dedication from Saijo City in Ehime Prefecture, and a dance by EXILE USA! For more details, please check the homepage on the right.

A sightseeing bus tour around Oita Prefecture and a digital stamp rally are also being held currently!



Usa Jingu  
1300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Special Website



気軽にふらっと楽しめる！  
大分県がもっと好きになる  
バス旅がはじまります。



大分ゆめバス

詳しくはホームページをチェック》



豆田町 (日田市)



宇佐神宮 (宇佐市)



温泉 (イメージ)



九重"夢"大吊橋 (九重町)

【本事業に関するお問い合わせ先】 大分ゆめバス運営事務局 (JTB 大分支店内)  
TEL 070-3200-4983 E-MAIL oita\_yumebus@jtb.com 営業時間 / 平日 10:00~17:00 ※土日祝は休日

宇佐神宮御鎮座1300年

## おおいたよりみち

### スタンプラリー

2025年9月1日(月)▶11月30日(日)

大分県の文化を体感したり、観光地を  
巡りながら、デジタルスタンプを集めよう!

田布院温泉

白杵石仏

ちよっとうめい賞品  
が当たるかも!?

宇佐神宮  
御鎮座  
1300年

主催 大分県

お問い合わせ先: 株式会社マイダスコミュニケーション  
TEL: 097-536-2677 E-MAIL: yorimichi@midas-net.co.jp

# 1300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Usa Jingu's Enshrinement

~Goshinko-sai Festival and the Yabusame Ritual~

Oita Prefecture CIR  
Hanyu Jin / Suyoung Ahn

## Usa Jingu



**Usa Jingu** is the head shrine of all Hachiman shrines in Japan.

Hachiman Okami, the deified spirit of Emperor Ojin, is said to have first manifested in Usa in 571. It is also believed that the goddess Hime Okami descended here in the age of the gods, making Usa an ancient place of settlement and worship. Later, a branch spirit of Hachiman Okami was enshrined as a guardian deity in the Heian capital, leading to the founding of Iwashimizu Hachimangu and, eventually, more than 40,000 Hachiman shrines across Japan.

The main hall, a National Treasure, is built in the distinctive Hachiman-zukuri style. Its vermilion shrine buildings, surrounded by ancient forests, create a majestic and timeless landscape.

For the 1,300th anniversary of Hachiman Okami's enshrinement, we visited Usa Jingu to watch the Yabusame ritual. Entering the evergreen oak forest, we were struck by the sounds of cicadas and the vivid contrast between the vermilion torii gates and the deep green leaves; it was like stepping into a painting.

## Yabusame

**Yabusame** is a traditional mounted archery martial art in which an archer shoots arrows while riding a horse at full speed.

The archer aims to hit three successive targets.

It flourished during the Heian period and continues today as an annual ritual at places like Tsurugaoka Hachimangu Shrine in Kamakura, Kanagawa Prefecture, carrying a long historical tradition.

The archer's attire includes a special hat for yabusame and protective garments around the waist called *gyomaki*, giving the wearer a mystical aura as if they were characters from a legend. Once dressed, the archer holds a whip in the right hand and a bow in the left.

As the archer enters the course and begins to ride, you can see them nocking the arrow while loudly shouting, "Yin, Yang~!" This shout is called a *yagoe*.

The arrows and targets that are hit are treasured as charms, and after the viewing, they can also be purchased as souvenirs.



Brave Mounted  
Archer in Action



## Thoughts from our Coordinators for International Relations



Chinese CIR  
Hanyu Jin

This is a photo I really like. It's the moment when the rider stretches both arms wide, draws the bow, and releases the arrow. I was struck by the power of the scene, as the arrow hits the target and the board splits cleanly with a sharp "Pang!" sound.



On the other hand, there were riders who had to calm horses unwilling to run, retrying several times before finally hitting the target. There were three targets in total: some archers hit all three successfully, while others experienced ups and downs, sometimes hitting and sometimes missing. Despite the heat wave, the archers wore thick summer horsehair garments yet maintained perfect posture, approaching the sacred ritual with utmost sincerity. I even saw elementary school students participating. One shared his aspiration, saying, "I want to serve like my father in the future," and rode with great effort. Watching them walk carefully across the course with hands on their hips, I imagined they were telling themselves, "I can do this," and bracing themselves with determination.

This year coincides with the 1,300th anniversary of the enshrinement at the head Hachiman shrine, a rare and special occurrence. Perhaps my being here this year is also a precious connection of fate.



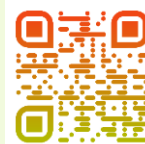
Korean CIR  
Suyoung Ahn

To celebrate 1,300 years since Usa Jingu's founding, I went to see the Yabusame horseback archery for the first time with Jin, the Chinese CIR. Despite the scorching heat, the archers' dedication was truly moving, and their shouts of "Yin! Yang!" still echo in my ears.

From children to students and the elderly, everyone's hearts came together to cheer for the archers to hit their targets. What left the deepest impression on me was how, whether they hit or missed, the archers and their horses were welcomed back with loud cheers and applause.

One memorable moment was seeing an archer wait for his heat-exhausted horse which to rest before starting. Yabusame requires not only skill but also a deep bond between rider and horse.

As I watched, I felt that "Life too isn't lived alone. We move forward by supporting one another, aiming for our goals as the archers aims for their targets." At the finale, the archers' sons appeared. Though they could not shoot arrows while riding yet, they drew strength from their fathers and families to complete the course on horseback, reminding us to never give up.



## Oita Yumeiro Music Festival 2025

10/25(SAT) ·  
10/26(SUN)

### Musical Town

#### 27 Street Stages Over 2 Days!

- Date/Time: 10/25(SAT) · 10/26(SUN)  
11:00~evening
- Location: Toyota Corolla Oita Festival Plaza  
JR Oita Station North Exit, and more



### Yumeiro Music Contest 2025

#### A Music Contest Supporting Musicians' Dreams♪

- Date/Time: 10/25(SAT) 18:00~
- Location: Toyota Corolla Oita Festival Plaza



### Final Night Jam

#### Festival Finale: Special Live! Featuring Four Amazing Guests!

- Date/Time: 10/26(SUN) 17:45~
- Location: Toyota Corolla Oita Festival Plaza



chay



Michiru Yuasa



Musicians from Austin, our sister city in the U.S., will also perform!



## Oita World Festa 2025

11/1(SAT)

### International Food Booths

#### Delicious flavors from around the world!



### Stage Performances

#### Enjoy music and dances from around the world!



### Interaction, Exhibition, and Sales Booths

#### Come, See, Learn — and Enjoy!



11/1 Sat. 10:30 AM START!

Venue Toyota Corolla Oita Festival Plaza▶



## Meditation Beside Japan's Largest Stone Buddha

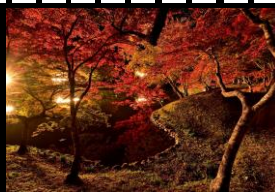
Bungoono City, Asajimachi's Fukoji

Temple offers the chance to experience "Ajikan", a Shingon Buddhist meditation practice. Next to the stone Buddha, refresh your body and mind as you take in the sound of birds and the beauty of nature.



Enjoy Bungoono City as Autumn Deepens.

▲ Tourism Information Here







## The World Dream One Kanji Character Contest

This year is the 18<sup>th</sup> “World Dream One Kanji Character Contest.”

This project encourages participants to express their personal “dream” with a single kanji character, aiming to boost motivation toward achieving their goals, inspire the discovery of new dreams, and foster self-realization. Additionally, as a global initiative open to participants of all nationalities, it also seeks to promote international exchange through the cultural art of calligraphy.

### 2024 Project Results

- Organizer: Kunisaki Peninsular Ai Renaissance Federation
  - Details: Participants submitted a postcard with a single kanji character (written with brush) and the reason for their choice
  - Entry Period: December 1 ~ December 31, 2024
  - Total Entries: 7,261 ※an increase of 596 from last year
- <Breakdown> Japan: 2,655 Taiwan: 4,451 Cambodia: 74  
Germany: 50 France: 20 Italy: 11  
Elementary School: 2,707 Middle School: 1,271 High School: 2,058  
University: 753 General/Public: 472



**Entries are accepted every December. You are the creator of your life! Can you capture your dream in a single kanji? We look forward to receiving many entries!**

Entry period varies each year.

For more details, please contact the following ▶ Entry Details: <https://www.kunisakiairune.com/yumehitomoji/>

### Kunisaki Peninsular Ai Renaissance Federation

489-1 Furuichi, Musashi-machi, Kunisaki City, Oita Prefecture  
873-0412  
Office Miho Maki Phone Number: 090-9492-9167

### Kunisaki Board of Education, Social Education Division, Social Education Section

160-2 Tsurukawa, Kunisaki-machi, Kunisaki City, Oita Prefecture  
873-0503 Phone Number: 0978-72-2121

# News from Himeshima Village

Himeshima  
Village  
Homepage



## Himeshima Tiger Prawns



Himeshima Tiger Prawns



Himeshima Tiger Prawns  
shabu-shabu

The cultivation of tiger prawns, which started by using salt pans, has grown into a key industry in Himeshima Village alongside coastal fishing industries, and the name “Himeshima Tiger Prawns” is now known nationally. They are sold fresh for a limited time and frozen in vacuum packs year-round.

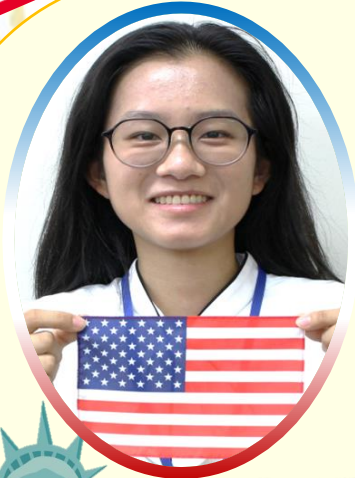
Tiger Prawns are best enjoyed in “shabu-shabu” hot pot. Through quickly passing them through hot water, shabu-shabu allows you to enjoy their plump texture and rich sweetness.

Every October, Himeshima Village holds a “Tiger Prawn Festival”, where you can enjoy bento packed with various Sashimi and fried Tiger Prawn dishes. It will be held on Sunday the 19<sup>th</sup> of October 2025.

# Greetings from the New CIR

Introducing this year's new Oita Prefecture CIR who arrived in July!

## Welcome to Oita

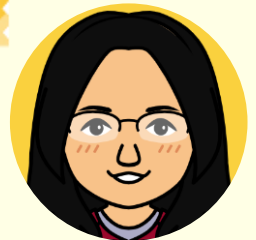


American CIR

**Aliceana Lin**

Hometown: USA (New York)

Hobbies: Running, Pikmin (game)



**Hey everyone,  
nice to meet you!**

My name is **Aliceana Lin** and I'm from New York, USA. This year, I'll be working as a Coordinator for International Relations at the Oita Prefectural Office.

Growing up surrounded by friends coming from different cultures and backgrounds, I learned it's important to accept differences and understand others. From those experiences, I naturally became interested in cultures different from my own, and so I began studying Japanese in high school. The more I studied, the more I became interested in Japanese culture, daily life and more. When I was in college, I had the chance to go on two short-term study abroad programs. Through spending time in Fukui and Kyoto, I experienced first-hand the traditions and daily life in Japan. This made me think "I want to be more deeply involved with Japan."

While enjoying Oita's hot springs, abundant nature, and local food, I hope to share American cultures and values, and deepen our mutual understanding. Although there are still many things I don't know and I feel a little nervous, I hope to deepen my connections with everyone in the community through my life and work in Oita. I look forward to working with everyone!







# Made to Your Taste?! Soy Sauce Kani Shoyu



British CIR  
Rosa Boutelle



I recently went to “Kani Shoyu” in Usuki City (a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy since 2021). Kani Shoyu was founded 420 years ago, and its products are made in-store. They care deeply for their customers, and I was touched by their dedication to Soy Sauce and Miso.

In this article I will be introducing Kani Shoyu through the 3 sections of their store:

“Making”, “Buying”, and “Eating”

## Making

From production to bottling, Kani Shoyu handcrafts each of their products in the factory attached to their shop.

When I visited, they had just started a batch of *amazake* (sweet fermented rice drink).

They make it by mixing cooked mochi rice with koji (a fermentation starter made from rice mold) and keeping it warm for 2 days to ferment.

Seeing the workers labor with such care during a heatwave, I thought, this must be delicious!

Their soy sauce, ponzu, miso, dressings, and even a “Shibotta dake no” (“just squeezed”) additive free soy sauce (pictured on the right) are all made in-house.

Raw Koji sold by the gram



Handmade *amazake*



Additive free “Shibotta dake no” soy sauce



## Buying



Kani Shoyu sells a whopping 40+ products. Until recently soy sauce in the U.K. could only be found in the forms of “Light Soy Sauce” and “Dark Soy Sauce” at Asian supermarkets, so this was my first time seeing so many different types!

Currently their best-seller is “Kurodashi Bancho” which is a soy sauce which can be used in many different types of cuisine. However, Kani Shoyu’s charm isn’t just its fixed store products. When customers request “I want a kind of soy sauce to fit this specific dish”, Kani Shoyu will make a soy sauce matching their request and sell it. Being able to get your hands on a soy sauce which matches your personal tastes is a big plus. I’m sure you’ll be able to find a seasoning which fits you perfectly. Furthermore, they don’t just sell soy sauce, they also have unique mixed miso pastes, and delicious looking salad dressings.

Their products also have playful names with dad-joke twists on celebrity names, making them perfect souvenirs.

## Eating



Kani Shoyu also has a café, “Cafe Kagiya”, serving dishes made from their in-house products.

One standout is the “miso soft serve ice cream” which is the ultimate combination of cool ice cream drizzled with a sauce made by simmering 2 types of miso, and topped with pieces of crispy miso crunch. Not only is it delicious, but it’s also fun to watch as the staff bring it balanced on an empty soy sauce bottle.

I was touched by how much love is poured into Kani Shoyu’s products, and it has inspired me to eat more fermented foods. Please do visit Kani Shoyu, I’m sure the perfect seasoning is waiting there for you!

## My Adventures in Usuki City



So  
Lovely!

Usuki Station is filled with origami cranes!



Usuki park was so green, and I even found part of the Usuki Stamp Pilgrimage there

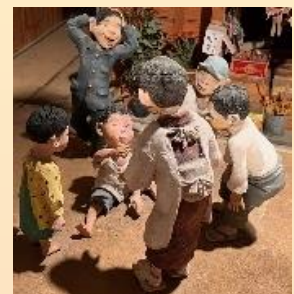
The stamp  
I got there



Chinese CIR  
Hanyu Jin

On a weekday morning, with no tourists around, the town was quiet. As I walked, I came across fish shops and confectioneries displaying retro signs, and I couldn't help but pause, charmed by the nostalgic Showa-era atmosphere.

Today's main stop was the **"Showa Town Exhibition Hall,"** where I got a glimpse of life in the Showa era.



I had heard that all 550 dolls had different expressions, so I took my time examining them. There were happy faces, anxious faces, and faces of relief. Between the prewar and postwar exhibition areas, there is a narrow space of about one meter, but I imagined that stretch, though short in reality, must have felt like an endlessly long, hellish path.



### Experiencing Showa Era's School Lunch



"Blue Whale," Whale Tatsuta-age Set Meal  
from the shopping district

I learned that whale was once an important source of protein in Japan. It brought to mind my grandmother's stories of a time in China when people could only eat tree bark. Sitting up straight, I said "Itadakimasu" and savored the meal more than usual.

What exactly is true wealth? It's "chisoku joraku"—finding joy in contentment with what you have!





# Oita Preserving Tradition Oita City Heiwa Citizen's Park Noh Theatre



Korean CIR  
Suyoung Ahn



Bungo Yuusoukai  
exhibition flyer



Bungo Shibori  
(Indigo Dyeing)

The Bungo Shibori (Indigo Dyeing) exhibition was held at the Oita City Noh Theatre.

“Bungo Shibori” (Indigo Dyeing) is a dyeing technique that developed mainly in Oita City’s Tsurusaki area during the Edo Period and gained national recognition. By gathering the fabric before dyeing, patterns naturally appear (sometimes even resembling zebra stripes!).

Although once buried in history, Bungo Shibori was rediscovered by Mr. Ando of Bungo Yuusoukai. Today, the people of Oita continue working together to preserve this important cultural heritage. Viewing the beautiful indigo-dyed works at the Noh theatre, I sincerely wished for Oita’s regional culture to be handed down for generations to come.

From the Muromachi Period to today, “Noh” masked plays are still cherished.

They have a charm unlike musicals and movies!

The main actor (*shite*) and supporting role (*waki*) enter from different doorways. Noh theatres across Japan are said to be almost identical in stage size and facilities.

I was touched to be able to enjoy traditional Japanese culture even now.



Noh Stage

I tried on a beautiful  
woman’s Noh mask!



## Experiencing Oita’s History Oita Prefectural Buried Cultural Properties Center



“The Development of Earthenware”

The Buried Cultural Properties Center features exhibits of cultural properties excavated and carefully restored in Oita Prefecture.

From coins and clay dolls to bones of pig-like animals and more... my eyes were drawn to many mysterious, fascinating exhibits.

As I looked at various precious national cultural properties, I found myself experiencing living history in real life.

I carefully looked around, touched by the knowledge that so many precious cultural properties had been buried underground across Oita.

Opening Hours: 9:00~17:00

Closed: Mondays

Address: 1-61 Makimidorimachi, Oita City, Oita Prefecture.

\* Please refer to the homepage for details



You can enjoy miniature making experiences based on cultural properties for reasonable prices! Same-day participation is also possible, so definitely try it!



←The “Cultural Property Protection Symbol” attached to cultural properties.

# From Our Reporters



## Welcome to Oita!

British CIR **Rosa Boutelle**



I recently went to Tokyo to pick up the new Assistant Language Teachers (ALT) and Coordinators for International Relations (CIR) who will be working in Oita Prefecture. Holding a sign with “OITA” in big letters, I felt both nervous and proud. Just 4 months ago I was in their shoes being picked up, and yet this time I was there for the first time as a “senpai”, hoping that the new ALTs and CIRs will like Oita. I was also glad that the knowledge gained through my work enabled me to recommend many region-specific specialties and festivals to the ALTs and CIRs placed all over Oita. At the same time, guiding them made me realise and appreciate my own growth. I found myself thinking “I’ve grown more than I thought. I can’t wait to go back home to Oita!”.

I’m looking forward to seeing the new ALTs and CIRs grow, and I hope they have many wonderful experiences in Oita!



Greeting with this sign



Me mid-explanation



First step into Oita!!



## A Symbol of Summer

Chinese CIR **Hanyu Jin**



This summer, I went to the Nagahama Shrine Summer Grand Festival for the first time!

As I was filling my tummy with things like takoyaki, I heard festival music from the direction of the shrine, and at the same time, the kagura performance began.

I watched the whole sequence, from the Opening Rite of the Five Directions to the Kami Send-Off. This is my first time seeing a kagura, so I found everything to be very interesting, but the most memorable part was the elderly playing the taiko drums. In the humid weather, they played the taiko drums in the same posture until the end of performance. Though they must have been drenched in sweat and with sore backs, they watched over the young performers with gentle smiles as they danced.

There are also many traditional performing arts in China, but I was moved by how they are passed down from generation to generation in the same way in every country, and without thinking, I bowed towards the stage.



Takoyaki and me

### Kagura



Opening Rite of the Five Directions



Kami Send-Off



# From Our Reporters



## Nostalgic School Meals: The Taste of Torijaga

Korean CIR **Suyoung Ahn**



I often ate “*torijaga*”(chicken and potato stew) as a student. It’s really easy to make. You fry chicken thighs, cut up the potatoes, carrots, and onions, and then simmer it all with some sauce. Bon Appetit. The aroma of the vegetables and the savory taste of the chicken wrapped in the richness of miso and soy sauce, brings back memories of my student days.

As a student, whenever lessons would end, I would rush to the APU university cafeteria and eat *torijaga* and white rice.

I’m no longer surrounded by lively university friends, but this *torijaga* is still just as delicious as ever. Maybe it’s because it’s wrapped up in so much nostalgia. Next time I cook I think I’ll make the meal I ate the second most during my student days: hamburger steak with a grated onion sauce.



Ingredients Prepped ~ 🎵



Start Cooking!



Finished ☆ ≡



## Oita Life START !

American CIR **Aliceana Lin**



Time passes so fast. I arrived in Oita City at the end of July, and about a month has passed since then. This time, rather than visiting as a tourist, I am actually living in Japan, and I’ve come to realize once again just how many things are different from my home country. However, with the stress and anxiety that comes with moving abroad, I also found warmth and comfort during my first week here.

I didn’t have any kitchen utensils in the beginning, so I ate out a lot. One soba restaurant that I went to left an especially strong impression. I was the only customer in that night, so I was very nervous. When the waiter learned I just arrived in Japan, he kindly showed me how to properly enjoy the cold soba set. He explained everything—from how to use the dipping sauce, how to mix in onions and grated radish to season it, to adding a touch of wasabi on the noodles before eating, and even that the tempura could be enjoyed with matcha powder. This was my first time eating soba this way, and it was so delicious and eye-opening.

At the end of the meal, he brought out soba-yu, which is the hot water from the soba and told me to mix it with the leftover dipping sauce to make a savory broth. Delicious soba, a calm atmosphere, and kind staff. They treated me with such warmth that I felt at ease. I will definitely come back to eat again. And while spending time in Oita, I hope to meet many friends and have many new experiences, that will make this city feel like my second home.



Seiro-mushi



With matcha powder... 🎵



## CIR Dispatch Available!

The International Policy Division is providing opportunities to learn about different countries' culture and daily life through dispatching **Coordinators for International Relations (CIR)** as lecturers! Do you want to learn more about culture and lifestyles from around the world? **Possible CIRs for Dispatch: British, American, Chinese, Korean**

### Overview

- Target Audience: Oita Prefecture Schools • Regional Organizations • Community Centers etc.
- Time: Weekdays 9:00 ~ 17:00 (flexible upon request)
- Contents: CIRs will introduce culture, tourism, food, pastimes and more about their home countries!
- Cost: Dispatch is free of charge! (Excluding transport/material costs)

### Application Process

- ① First consult via phone!
- ② Confirm the date and contents, then submit the application form at least one month in advance.
- ③ Coordinate with the CIR by email, etc.
- ④ On the day of, the CIR will visit! Enjoy learning together.

### Things to note

Depending on the date/time and content of the dispatch, there may be cases where we cannot accept the request. Please feel free to inquire for more details!



[Request a CIR Here](#)



## Want to be featured in What's Up?

Kenji-kai events? News about former international students? If you've got something you want to tell the world about Oita, let us know!

(Any format is accepted)

### 【Submissions/Inquiries】

International Policy Division  
c/o Fujikawa, Nakayama

【E-mail】 [a10140@pref.oita.lg.jp](mailto:a10140@pref.oita.lg.jp)

**Recruiting!**

