**New Friendship Relations in Vietnam**

In April of 2009, Kitakyushu and Haiphong signed an agreement to cooperate as friendship-cities on issues, such as environmentalism and economics. Kitakyushu has sent several government officials to share and teach knowledge in fields such as urban development and efficient water services. Kitakyushu has also accepted several government officials from Haiphong to study specific fields of interest, acquire training, and learn more about the many eco-related programs.

Earlier this year, Mayor Kenji Kitahashi of Kitakyushu, the Council Chairman, and 11 other delegates were invited to celebrate the Haiphong 55th Liberation Ceremony that was held on May 13, 2010. The delegation arrived on May 11 in Vietnam and arrived back on May 15 in Kitakyushu. The delegation visited the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum, toured the industrial park, took part in the Haiphong 55th Liberation Ceremony, made courtesy visits to Mr. Nguyen Van Thuan, the Secretary of Haiphong Party’s Committee and the Chairman of Haiphong People’s Council, to Mr. Nguyen Van Thanh, the Chairman of Haiphong People’s Committee, and to the Japanese Embassy in Hanoi.

The trip was very educational and the conversations at the visitations were very fruitful. Kitakyushu looks forward to working with Haiphong for the next few years as they cooperate to clear each goal.

Mr. Nguyen Van Thuan and a delegation of 21 members will visit Kitakyushu in the beginning of August and go on an environmental tour to learn more about the eco-efforts of Kitakyushu.

**(Above: Mayor Kitahashi and Mr. Nguyen Van Thuan after the courtesy visitation.)**
Bridges

Kites made of bamboo and Japanese paper have been traditionally flown by children during winter break and many competitions and gatherings are held between January to February. Today, there are fewer children who play with cultural toys as everybody rushes to get the new gadget toy. There are only a couple specialized handmade kite shops in Kyushu Island.

The Kite House Magoji shop was made around 100 years ago by Mr. Magoji Takeuchi, who created the mascot kite, SEMI-DAKO, designed after the summer cicada (semi) and was originally intended as a personal kite. It has large lovely round eyes and uses simple but festive coloration on the body. The kite instantly gained popularity from its sharp turning abilities and became the shop’s signature kite. Since then the kites from this shop have been called MAGOJI-DAKO. There is also a SEMI-DAKO crafting kit for you to create your own originally colored cicada kite.

In 1930, Mr. Yoshihiro Takeuchi inherited the shop from his grandfather and has created many new additions, both traditional and original, to the shop’s selection. There are around 30 different Kitakyushu themed kites in the shop along with a wide selection of other kites varying in size, coloration, and shape. Mr. Takeuchi makes 1-2 new kites per year and is currently working on a rabbit kite, the 2011 animal of the Chinese zodiac. Inspiration for the design and coloration come from season, cultural, or well-known local festivals, myths, and mascots. His wife does the designing and painting, so they work together when creating new kite.

The two key materials used in making the kites are the local bamboo which Mr. Takeuchi gets from bamboo suppliers and the expensive high quality Japanese traditional paper (washi) that does not easily rip from the wind. He splits and smooths the bamboo and ties them to make the boning, about 10 minutes, then glues the paper on and lets it dry. His wife draws and paints the design then Mr. Takeuchi does the finishing touches of adding the strings.

One unique addition on these kites is a strip of bamboo that makes a buzzing noise when it flies in the sky, similar to many modern sports kites that make a buzzing or ripping noise when it cuts through the air. He makes about 7 kites in a day that total around 2,000 kites per year.

Mr. Takeuchi opens kite crafting workshops and visits schools to have more children appreciate crafting and traditional craft arts. He hopes for more people to become familiar with the SEMI-DAKO and to use traditional arts and crafts to deepen international exchange and interest, such as international kite festivals and contests that bring countries and cities together.

These kites make great gifts for foreigners, as they are light, not bulky, and yet very unique.

Kite House Magoji
1-6-4 Shin-ike, Tobata-ku, Kitakyushu City

Letter from Kitakyushu

Hello! I am Yannick McLeod.

I have come from Norfolk, Virginia, USA the sister-city of Kitakyushu. I have lived and worked in Kitakyushu teaching English and exploring Japan.

My experience with Kitakyushu has shown me a city brimming with possibilities. Ranging from the clustered city center of Kokura, to the countryside of Wakamatsu, to the suburbs of Yahata, to the seaside harbor of Moji, all around the city (often in the most random places) you will find the most beautiful of things.

My hobby is walking. I like to just stroll in the streets and be amazed by what I discover. Last year when I walked behind my apartment, spontaneously choosing roads, I found myself at the base of Kawanaz Mount (Yahatanishiku). There before me was a small children’s park and, behind it, a lovely Buddhist temple backed into the mountain creating an atmosphere of serene solitude, even though it sat on the corner of an intersection. It is stumbling across sites like these that invigorates me and makes me fall in love with Japan. These sites are everywhere!

So, go out and explore!

Joined the Japan Exchange Programme: August 2008
Hobbies: Hiking, Writing, Dancing
University & Major: Old Dominion University (Norfolk, VA);
BA in Studio Arts
Interesting fact: I was born in England to Jamaican parents with a Scottish last name, who decided to give me a French first name.

UP COMING EVENTS

Founding Festival 2010

November 5th – 7th
Around the Otani Baseball Stadium

The festival started in 1961 as a celebration of the completion of the Yawata Steel Works (now Yawata Works, Nippon Steel Corporation) factory with the citizens. It is now a locally beloved festival.

There is a vibrant atmosphere from the crowds of people with a wide variety of events and contests that everyone can enjoy, such as stage performances, kid’s events, dances, karaoke contest, fireworks on the last day, and a variety of over 260 stalls of food, goldfish scooping, and games light-up the area.

This festival also holds unique events, such as a 25 hour team running competition, meet sumo wrestlers, and touring the Yawata Works factory near the JR Space World Station. There will be a free shuttle from the station to the festival areas.

ANIUTA 2010

Anime is becoming a major attraction and interest worldwide. This BRIDGES editor went to her first anime song concert on March 14, 2010 at the ANIUTA KITAKYUSHU.

There were 14 voice actors and bands that have done various theme songs for anime, such as the Mobile Suit Gundam series and Transformers Animated.

The audience energetically waved light sticks in synchronized movements that created an exciting sea of dancing lights. It was a really fun experience of 4 hours of non-stop anime songs!

The 2011 concert is scheduled for February 12th (Saturday) at the Kitakyushu Media Dome.

If you get a chance, come check it out!

2010 website:
http://www aniuta.net/2010/index.html

(Handwritten note by Yannick)
A MISSION TO REDUCE CO₂

On June 4, 2010 the Kitakyushu Asian Low Carbon Center (also known as the Asian Green Camp) held its grand opening at the Kitakyushu International Association (KIA) in Yahatagishi Ward, Kitakyushu city. The center is the first of its kind in Japan with the mission to greatly reduce greenhouse gas emissions while maintaining comfort and convenience. The center strives to improve the utilization of current green technologies as well as creating a low carbon society through the reconsideration of our daily habits combined with new technologies, pollution solutions, and new business models.

On June 14th the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) signed an agreement of cooperation with the center.

The center is also dedicated to providing matching and transferring services of environmental and social technologies that meet the needs of the city or industry to promote a low carbon revolution within Asian. This helps to facilitate cultural development of new values to generate a greener society and new environmental businesses.

4th International Affiliation Exchange Commendation

This year the City of Kitakyushu received an award on May 31st for their efforts and achievements in sister-city exchanges from the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations. The award started in 2006 and is given to local authorities, NPOs, and international exchanges that contribute to regional internationalization through ingenious projects that are very inspirational or innovative. This time there were 21 entries and Kitakyushu is proud to be one of the few to be chosen.

One area that made Kitakyushu shine was their leading efforts in organizing the Pan Yellow Sea 10 City as a part of the Organization for the East Asia Economic Development for shared improvements in economy and environment. Another is the use of international exchanges to have each of the above 10 cities, which share the same sea, to cooperate in cleaning and maintaining a sea that can continue to be prosperous. This is very creative system may become the new method of tackling ocean pollution problems.

New Ferry: Mojì ⇔ Busan

This year in mid-May, a new ferry, SECOMARU, connecting the Port of Mojì and Busan, Korea started operations. The ferry runs once a day, 6 days in a week and can hold up to 640 passengers. There is a performance hall, restaurant, duty-free shop, shower rooms, karaoke singing booths, and a convenience store.

The SECOMARU leaves Mojì at noon, arriving in Busan at 7 pm and leaves Busan at 11 pm and arrives at Mojì at 7:45 am. The fare for second-class is about 8,000 yen for one-way for adults and half-price for children under 12. Using the new ferry, tourists can visit the historically rich Mojì Retro Area, Kokura Castle, and choose from a variety of local tours, including the popular industrial and environmental tours.

Paper lanterns (chōchin) are traditional and cultural to Japan. They decorate streets during festivals, welcome visitors at temples, and invite customers to restaurants and stands, like ramen.

Mr. Tadao Hara is the 3rd generation owner of the over 100 year old Ebisuya Chōchin shop near the Nishikokura Station, the last traditionally handmade chōchin shop in Kitakyushu. He carefully handcrafts each one from raw materials. The 30 wooden frames of various sizes, hand-carved by his grandfather, are used to shape the boning of the chōchin.

The first steps is building the boning, then wrapping it in washi, adding the folding creases, then painting the letters or pictures straightly over the creased surface, and finally coating it in oil for preservation. Mr. Hara used to help his father in the shop when he was in elementary and gradually inherited the professional skills to maintain this traditional art.

One steady order that Mr. Hara gets are festival chōchin, because each one has its own symbol, letter, or colors. He knows all the possible orders he might get, and works year-round in preparing a head start before the order comes. You can get custom lettering and simple designs added onto your Chōchin.

Mr. Hara will make high quality chōchin as long as he can and hopes for users to continue to enjoy their warm light.

Today, traditional desserts are served at Japanese tea ceremonies, bought as gifts, and enjoyed with families.

Back in 1630, Mr. Tatsuyoshi Harada’s ancestors started a traditional dessert shop in the area now known as Saga Prefecture. In 1930 the family opened the Tsuruya shop, from the owner’s passion of tsuru (cranes), when the Yahata area was a thriving industrial city and has since been around for 90 years.

The shop’s signature is the Yahata Monji (sweet white bean bun), a local favorite, with Yahata written on it and about 10,000 are made per day. The production and ingredients have not changed since the shop opened. Other sweets include the Castella sponge cake, the Marubōto (flat round Castella cakes), and the order based ammonite shaped stuffed pie (Geppe) made from his interest in fossils.

Mr. Harada is very particular about the quality, flavor, texture, and the ingredients used, making them a little more expensive, but well worth the flavorful results. He wants his knowledge and skills to be inherited by his workers, bring joy and satisfactory sweets to his customers, and hopes for younger generations to enjoy traditional flavors as well.

Near the Yahata Station is a Tsuruya chain with delicious selections of cakes and traditional desserts. It is a great place to relax, meet-up with friends, or to hang-out and enjoy the free coffee and tea.

Tsuruya
1st floor, 1-3 Nishihonmachi, Yahatahigashi-ku, Kitakyushu
Kitakyushu Profile

I'm Here Co., Ltd.
Kyuushu Artist College
Kokura Sports 5th Floor, 1-12-13 Daimon, Kokurakita-ku, Kitakyushu
http://www.imhere.co.jp

Mr. Ohuchi manages the music production company and an artist college where students of all ages can polish their musical skills, learn to run concerts and recording sessions. One graduate, Kaori Hikita, gained popularity as a musician from her songs in anime shows.

He continues to release CDs, produce local concerts, and guest appearances at various events. In 1995, he made a song for the son of John Williams (the music producer for Star Wars), Joseph Williams (TOTO vocalist). As Kitakyushu’s first professional music production company, he became a forerunner in producing songs covered by foreign artists and the localized professional artist movement, who live locally, but go to work in Tokyo.

Mr. Ohuchi wants more people to realize that you do not need to move to Tokyo to succeed and make quality music. He strives to support localized talent and takes pride in being a part of his community and hopes for more artists to take a similar stance.

Interview:

Q1. What motivated you to pursue music?

A1. During my teens (late 1970’s), I learned to play the guitar like a lot of teens influenced by popular folk rock & pop rock bands, like the Beetles and Elivs Presley. In high school, I was scouted and debuted as a duo group called DU-PLEX.

In Tokyo, my work became stressful as I made songs after songs, but when I made the image song for the City of Kitakyushu in 1998, I realized the heart and passion of music and felt my calling to return to Kitakyushu and help spread the passion and skills of music locally. With the balance of work and volunteer work, I found my equilibrium of satisfaction in life.

Q2. How did you create the Giravan Kitakyushu professional soccer team song?

A2. I made two cheer songs for this team, one in 1996 and another that was released in spring of 2010. For the recent release, I took supportive messuge applications from the citizens, collaborated the messages, keywords, hopes, and the passion of the supporter into the lyrics, making a song from the hearts of the citizens and myself, which I think is a new perspective of lyring writing.

Q3. What is a music producer’s job like?

A3. In this field, the longest time I normally have to create a song is 1 week, but usually I get 2-3 days to make the song, and the shortest I get is within 1 day. I have even produced a whole album within 3 days. Music producers usually keep a good stock of music, melodies, and some lyrics to be prepared for the sudden job or request that may come your way. This is what is expected of us, so it is advised that producers listen to a wide variety of music for future inspirations.

Q4. What advice do you have for artists?

A4. I have noticed good changes in the line that divide amateurs and professionals are less distinct. A new line is beginning visible between the musically talented and technicians who are skilled in synthesizing and mixing music for accuracy and synthesized sound.

Youtube is a good example of how amateurs can become professionals scouted overnight. With the advancement of technology, you do not need to be a perfect singer, because programs can change and clean your voice to make it sound perfect.

I think these changes give more people a chance to use their talents, have fun, and succeed. You never know what will happen unless you try. I think in mind that the half of the challenge is to find what people want. However, I hope that you will not forget the heart of music and to enjoy art.

Q5. Local Harvest from the Land & the Sea

The City of Kitakyushu is leading a project to spread the appreciation and awareness of the benefits of consuming local produce, like less CO2 emissions from shipment, local networking, and knowledge of product production.

One of the projects includes the introduction of local produce in school lunches in 2001, such as rice, cabbage, potatoes, and mushrooms. The hope is to have more children appreciate, grow interest, and eat local produce. By bringing it into the classroom, many parents feel reassured knowing the origin of the foods their children are consuming. More and more local products are being sold at grocery stores, served in restaurants, and occasionally the office cafes have lunches made from all local ingredients.

Local produce are usually sold on-line, at farmer’s markets, and grocery stores usually have a banner, flyer, or a sign that has the project logo. There are only a few stores that sell all organic or local produces. The next step will be the additions of logo stickers on the produce for clarification and to have more people recognize the logo.

Kitakyushu Central Wholesale Market

Freshly harvested produce from all-around Kitakyushu and seafood from the Genkainada Sea are sold at the Central Wholesale Market, located by the Kannon Strait Ferry that connects Kitakyushu with Shimomoseki, the southern most city of mainland Japan.

In April of this year, the market handled 12,409 tons of produce and 2,106 tons of seafood. The most handled are various kinds of mackerel, cabbage, onion, banana, and mandarin oranges. The fastest auctioned produce between late-summer to fall with high bids include various melon fruits and matsutake (pine) mushrooms. The auction enamel pads are even custom designed for convenience. The produce auctions start with the auctioneer giving the starting price, where it is from, how many per unit, and how many units are available. The auction is a single chance bet, where the highest price is taken. The seafood auctioneer starts with the highest price and gradually lowers it. The person who says he will buy it gets first pick, so the challenge is to wait for it to get cheaper, without having it all taken.

The -30°C and -50°C large freezers and access to the sea is great for maintaining fresh and healthy seafood via direct shipment, freezing, or storing in fish farming nets in the sea.

Next to the market is Asa-Town, an open market publically accessible from 10am - noon, where vegetables, fruits, and seafood are sold at a much cheaper price and are served in the restaurants.

(Auctioning method using single samples to sell large quantities.)

(Above: Local produce appreciation events, like oyster farming.)

From JR Kokura Station, take Nishi-Shinbashi bus #99 going to the Central Wholesale Market and off at the last stop (limited service).
**Local Harvest from the Land & the Sea**

The City of Kitakyushu is leading a project to spread the appreciation and awareness of the benefits of consuming local produce, like less CO₂ emissions from shipment, local networking, and knowledge of product production.

One of the projects includes the introduction of local produce in school lunches in 2001, such as rice, cabbage, potatoes, and mushrooms. The hope is to have more children appreciate, grow interest, and eat local produce. By bringing it into the classroom, many parents feel reassured knowing the origin of the foods their children are consuming. More and more local products are being sold at grocery stores, served in restaurants, and occasionally the office cafeterias have lunches made from local ingredients.

Local produce are usually sold on-line, at farmer’s markets, and grocery stores will usually have a banner, flyer, or a sign that has the project logo. There are only a few stores that sell all organic or local produces. The next step will be the additions of logo stickers on the produce for clarification and to have more people recognize the logo.

**Kitakyushu Central Wholesale Market**

Freshly harvested produce from all around Kitakyushu and seafood from the Genkainada Sea are sold at the Central Wholesale Market, located by the Kannon Strait Ferry that connects Kitakyushu with Shimomosuki, the southern most city of mainland Japan.

A new line is becoming visible between the musically talented and technicians who are skilled at synthesizing and mixing music for accuracy and synchronized sound. You Tube is a good example of how amateurs can become professionals sentenced overnight. With the advancement of technology, you do not need to be a perfect singer, because programs can change and clean your voice to make it sound perfect.

I think these changes give more people a chance to use their talents, have fun, and succeed. You never know what will happen unless you try, but keep in mind that the challenge is to find what people want. However, I hope that you will not forget the heart of music and to enjoy art.

The project also encompasses the City Brand’s local produces. The first product was registered in 1987, the bamboo shoots from Onna which are famous and used in traditional Japanese dishes even in Kyoto and the Kansai region of Japan. The bamboo shoots are made carefully with organic fertilizer and are well-known for its soft yet crunchy texture, rich fragrance, and flavorful taste. Some of the top sellers that have high reputation from specialists are the Oetop from the Kannon Straight, Kokura beef, blue swimmer crabs, and oyster from Moji.

(Above: Local produce appreciation events, like oyster farming.)

---

**Interview with Mr. Ohuchi**

**Q1. What motivated you to pursue music?**

A1. During my teens (late 1970’s), I learned to play the guitar like a lot of teens influenced by popular folk rock & pop rock bands, like the Beatles and Elvis Presley. In high school, I was scouted and debuted as a duo group called DU-PLEX.

In Tokyo, my work became stressful as I made songs after songs, but when I made the image song for the City of Kitakyushu in 1998, I realized the heart and passion of music and felt my calling to return to Kitakyushu and help spread the passion and skills of music locally. With the balance of work and volunteer work, I found my equilibrium of satisfaction in life.

I also have experience working as a stagehand for a concert production company and learned a lot of the fundamental concert skills that I use today as a producer, like the importance of lighting, wiring equipment, lowering props, and managing the sound board.

**Q2. How did you create the Giravanz Kitakyushu professional soccer team song?**

A2. I made two cheer songs for this team, one in 1996 and another that was released in spring of 2010. For the recent release, I took supportive message applications from the citizens, collaborated the messages, keywords, hopes, and the passion of the supporter into the lyrics, making a song from the hearts of the citizens and myself, which I think is a new perspective of lyric writing.

---

**Kitakyushu Profile**

I’m Here Co., Ltd.
Kyuusu Art College
Kokura Sports 5th Floor, 1-12-13 Daimon, Kokurakita-ku, Kitakyushu
http://www.imhere.co.jp

Mr. Ohuchi manages the music production company and an artist college where students of all ages can polish their musical skills, learn to run concerts and recording sessions. Graduates, Kaori Hikits, gained popularity as a musician from her songs in anime shows. He continues to release CDs, produce local concerts, and guest appearances at various events. In 1995, he made a song for the son of John Williams (the music producer for Star Wars), Joseph Williams (TOTO vocalist). As Kitakyushu’s first professional music production company, he became a forerunner in producing music covered by foreign artists and the localized professional artist movement, who live locally, but go to work in Tokyo.

Mr. Ohuchi wants more people realize that you do not need to move to Tokyo to succeed and make quality music. He strives to support localized talent and takes pride in being a part of his community and hopes for more artists to take a similar stance.

---

**Q3. What is a music producer’s job like?**

A3. In this field, the longest time I normally have to create a song is 1 week, but usually I get 2-3 days to make the song, and the shortest I get is within 1 day. I have even produced a whole album within 3 days. Music producers usually keep a good stock of music, melodies, and some lyrics to be prepared for the sudden job or request that may come your way. This is what is expected of us, so it is advised that producers listen to a wide variety of music for future inspirations.

**Q4. What advice do you have for artists?**

A4. I have noticed good changes in the line that divide amateurs and professionals are less distinct. A new line is becoming visible between the musically talented and technicians who are skilled at synthesizing and mixing music for accuracy and synchronized sound. You Tube is a good example of how amateurs can become professionals sentenced overnight. With the advancement of technology, you do not need to be a perfect singer, because programs can change and clean your voice to make it sound perfect.

I think these changes give more people a chance to use their talents, have fun, and succeed. You never know what will happen unless you try, but keep in mind that the challenge is to find what people want. However, I hope that you will not forget the heart of music and to enjoy art.
A MISSION TO REDUCE CO₂

On June 4, 2010 the Kitakyushu Asian Low Carbon Center (also known as the Asian Green Camp) held its grand opening at the Kitakyushu International Association (KIA) in Yahatahigashi Ward, Kitakyushu city. The center is the first of its kind in Japan with the mission to greatly reduce greenhouse gas emissions while maintaining comfort and convenience. The center strives to improve the utilizations of current green technologies as well as creating a low carbon society through the reconsideration of our daily habits combined with new technologies, pollution solutions, and new business models.

On June 14th the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) signed an agreement of cooperation with the center.

The center is also dedicated to providing matching and transferring services of environmental and social technologies that meet the needs of the city or industry to promote a low carbon revolution within Asian. This helps to facilitate cultural development of new values to generate a greener society and new environmental businesses.

4th International Affiliation Exchange Commendation

This year the City of Kitakyushu received an award on May 31st for their efforts and achievements in sister-city exchanges from the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations. The award started in 2006 and is given to local authorities, NPOs, and international exchanges that contribute to regional internationalization through ingenious projects that are very inspirational or innovative. This time there were 21 entries and Kitakyushu is proud to be one of the few to be chosen.

One area that made Kitakyushu shine was their leading efforts in organizing the Pan Yellow Sea 10 City as a part of the Organization for the East Asia Economic Development for shared improvements in economy and environment. Another is the use of international exchanges to have each of the above 10 cities, which share the same sea, to cooperate in cleaning and maintaining a sea that can continue to be prosperous. This very creative system may become the new method of tackling ocean pollution problems.

New Ferry: Mojí vs Busan

This year in mid-May, a new ferry, SECOMARU, connecting the Port of Mojí and Busan, Korea started operations. The ferry runs once a day, 6 days in a week and can hold up to 640 passengers. There is a performance hall, restaurant, duty-free shop, shower rooms, karaoke singing booths, and a convenience store.

The SECOMARU leaves Mojí at noon, arriving in Busan at 7p.m. and leaves Busan at 11p.m. and arrives at Mojí at 7:45a.m. The fare for second-class is about 9,000 yen for one-way for adults and half-price for children under 12. Using the new ferry, tourists can visit the historically rich Mojí Retro Area, Kokura Castle, and choose from a variety of local tours, including the popular industrial and environmental tours.

Paper lanterns (chōchin) are traditional and cultural to Japan. The decorate streets during festivals, welcome visitors at temples, and invite customers to restaurants and stands, like ramen.

Mr. Tadao Hara is the 3rd generation owner of the over 100 year old Ebisuya Chōchin shop near the Nishikokura Station is the last traditionally handmade chōchin shop in Kitakyushu.

He carefully handcrafts each one from raw materials. The 30 wooden frames of various sizes, hand-carved by his grandfather, are used to shape the boning of the chōchin.

The first step is building the boning, then wrapping it in washi, adding the folding creases, then painting the letters or pictures straightly over the creased surface, and finally coating it in oil for preservation.

Mr. Hara used to help his father in the shop when he was in elementary and gradually inherited the professional skills to maintain this traditional art.

One steady order that Mr. Hara gets are festival chōchin, because each one has its own symbol, letters, or colors. He knows all the possible orders he might get, and works year-round in preparing a head start before the order comes in.

You can get custom lettering and simple designs added onto your Chōchin. Mr. Hara will make that quality chōchin as long as he can and hopes for users to continue to enjoy their warm light.

Today, traditional desserts are served at Japanese tea ceremonies, bought as gifts, and enjoyed with families.

Back in 1630, Mr. Takayoshi Harada’s ancestors started a traditional dessert shop in the area now known as Saga Prefecture. In 1930 the family opened the Tsuruya shop, from the owner’s passion of tsuru (cranes), when the Yahata area was a thriving industrial city and has since been around for 90 years.

The shop’s signature is the Yahata Manju (sweet white bean bun), a local favorite, with Yahata written on it and about 10,000 are made per day. The production and ingredients have not changed since the shop opened. Other sweets include the Castella sponge cake, the Marubōto (flat round Castella cakes), and the order based ammonite shaped stuffed pie (Geppel) made from his interest in fossils.

Mr. Harada is very particular about the quality, flavor, texture, and the ingredients used, making them a little more expensive, but well worth the flavorful results. He wants his knowledge and skills to be inherited by his workers, bring joy and satisfactory sweets to his customers, and hopes for younger generations to enjoy traditional flavors as well.

Near the Yahata Station is a Tsuruya chain with delicious selections of cakes and traditional desserts. It is a great place to relax, meet-up with friends, or to hang-out and enjoy the free coffee and tea.
Kites made from bamboo and Japanese paper have been traditionally flown by children during winter break and many competitions and gatherings are held between January to February. Today, there are fewer children who play with cultural toys as everyday rushes to get the new gadget toy. There are only a couple specialized handmade kite shops on Kyushu Island.

The Kite House Magoji shop was made around 100 years ago by Mr. Magoji Takeuchi who created the mascot kite, SEMI-DAKO, designed after the summer cicada (semi) and was originally intended as a personal kite. It has large lovely round eyes and uses simple but festive coloration on the body. The kite instantly gained popularity from its sharp turning abilities and became the shop’s signature kite. Since then the kites from this shop has been called MAGOJI-DAKO. There is also a SEMI-DAKO crafting kit for you to create your own originally colored cicada kite.

In 1930, Mr. Yoshihiro Takeuchi inherited the shop from his grandfather and has created many new additions, both traditional and original, to the shop’s selection. There are around 30 different Kitakyushu themed kites in the shop along with a wide selection of other kites varying in size, coloration, and shape. Mr. Takeuchi makes 1-2 new kites per year and is currently working on a rabbit kite, the 2011 animal of the Chinese zodiac. Inspiration for the design and coloration come from season, cultural, or well-known local festivals, myths, and mascots. His wife does the designing and painting, so they work together when creating new kite.

The two key materials used in making the kites are the local bamboo which Mr. Takeuchi gets from bamboo suppliers and the expensive high quality Japanese traditional paper (washi) that does not easily rip from the wind. He splits and smooths the bamboo and ties them to make the boning, about 10 minutes, then glues the paper on and lets it dry. His wife draws and paints the design then Mr. Takeuchi does the finishing touches of adding the strings.

One unique addition on these kites is a strip of bamboo that makes a buzzing noise when it flies in the sky, similar to many modern sports kites that make a buzzing or ripping noise when it cuts through the air. He makes about 7 kites in a day that total around 2,000 kites per year.

Mr. Takeuchi opens kite crafting workshops and visits schools to have more children appreciate crafting and traditional craft arts. He hopes for more people to become familiar with the SEMI-DAKO and to use traditional arts and crafts to deepen international exchange and interest, such as international kite festivals and contests that bring countries and cities together.

These kites make great gifts for foreigners, as they are light, not bulky, and yet very unique.

KITE HOUSE MAGOJI
1-6-4 Shi-ike, Tobata-ku, Kitakyushu City

UP COMING EVENTS
Founding Festival 2010
November 5th – 7th
Around the Otani Baseball Stadium

The festival started in 1901 as a celebration of the completion of the Yawata Steel Works (now Yawata Works, Nippon Steel Corporation) factory with the citizens. It is now a locally beloved festival.

There is a vibrant atmosphere from the crowds of people with a wide variety of events and contests that everyone can enjoy, such as stage performances, kid’s events, dances, karaoke contest, fireworks on the last day, and a variety of over 260 stalls of food, goldfish scooping, and games light-up the area.

This festival also holds unique events, such as a 25 hour team running competition, meet sumo wrestlers, and touring the Yawata Works factory near the JR Space World Station. There will be a free shuttle bus from the station to the festival areas.

Hello! I am Yannick McLeod.
I have come from Norfolk, Virginia, USA the sister-city of Kitakyushu. I have lived and worked in Kitakyushu teaching English and exploring Japan.

My experience with Kitakyushu has shown me a city brimming with possibilities. Ranging from the clustered city center of Kokura, to the countryside of Wakamatsu, to the suburbs of Yahaha, to the sea-side harbor of Mojiko, all around the city (often in the most random places) you will find the most beautiful of things.

My hobby is walking. I like to just stroll in the streets and be amazed by what I discover. Last year when I walked behind my apartment, spontaneously choosing roads, I found myself at the base of Kawanami Mountain (Yahatanishiku). There before me was a small children’s park and, behind it, a lovely Buddhist temple backed into the mountain creating an atmosphere of serene solitude, even though it sat on the corner of an intersection. It is stumbling across sites like these that invigorates me and makes me fall in love with Japan. These sites are everywhere! So, go out and explore!

Joined the Japan Exchange Programme: August 2008

Lobies: Hiking, Writing, Dancing

University & Major: Old Dominion University (Norfolk, VA); BA in Studio Arts

Interesting fact: I was born in England to Jamaican parents with a Scottish last name, who decided to give me a French first name.

ANIUTA ANIME FESTIVAL 2010

November 14 – 15
Kitakyushu Media Dome

Anime is becoming a major attraction and interest worldwide. This BRIDGES editor went to her first anime song concert on March 14, 2010 at the ANIUTA KITAKYUSHU.

There were 14 voice actors and bands that have done various theme songs for anime, such as the Mobile Suit Gundam series and Transformers Animated.

The audience energetically waved light sticks in synchronized movements that created an exciting sea of dancing lights. It was a really fun experience of 4 hours of non-stop anime songs!

The 2011 concert is scheduled for February 12th (Saturday) at the Kitakyushu Media Dome.

If you get a chance, come check it out!


(Asanaka, Yannick and friends)
New Friendship Relations in Vietnam

In April of 2009, Kitakyushu and Haiphong signed an agreement to cooperate as friendship-cities on issues, such as environmentalism and economics. Kitakyushu has sent several government officials to share and teach knowledge in fields such as urban development and efficient water services. Kitakyushu has also accepted several government officials from Haiphong to study specific fields of interest, acquire training, and learn more about the many eco-related programs.

Earlier this year, Mayor Kenji Kitahashi of Kitakyushu, the Council Chairman, and 11 other delegates were invited to celebrate the Haiphong 55th Liberation Ceremony that was held on May 13, 2010. The delegation arrived on May 11 in Vietnam and arrived back on May 15 in Kitakyushu. The delegation visited the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum, toured the industrial park, took part in the Haiphong 55th Liberation Ceremony, made courtesy visits to Mr. Nguyen Van Thuan, the Secretary of Haiphong Party’s Committee and the Chairman of Haiphong People’s Council, to Mr. Nguyen Van Thanh, the Chairman of Haiphong People’s Committee, and to the Japanese Embassy in Hanoi.

The trip was very educational and the conversations at the visitations were very fruitful. Kitakyushu looks forwards to working with Haiphong for the next few years as they cooperate to clear each goal.

Mr. Nguyen Van Thuan and a delegation of 21 members will visit Kitakyushu in the beginning of August and go on an environmental tour to learn more about the eco-efforts of Kitakyushu.

(Above: Mayor Kitahashi and Mr. Nguyen Van Thuan after the courtesy visitation.)

Kitakyushu in a FLASH!

Designated as Japan’s model environmental city

POPULATION
1 million
The 13th largest city in Japan

SISTER-FRIENDSHIP CITIES
Taiwan, Washington, U.S.A.
Nordly, Virginia, U.S.A.
Delnon, China
Ibaran, Korea

CITY FLOWER
Azalea
Sunflower

CITY TREE
Tosozouz Oki

INTERNATIONAL ACCES
Environmental Model City National Government Award 2008 Earth Summit 2002 Sustainable Development Award UNCED Local Government Environmental Award UN Global 500 Award for Environmental Cleaning

INDUSTRIAL TRADITIONAL BASE
Steel & metal, ceramics, machinery, chemicals, shipping.

NEW INDUSTRIES
Computer software, environmental technologies, optics, automotive, aviation technologies

URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS
Hiraki Container Terminal
Kitakyushu Airport
East Kyushu Expressway
Kitakyushu Science and Research Park
Kitakyushu Eco-Town Project

UPCOMING EVENTS!
Green Technology Exhibition (December 1 - 15)
Mojiko Retro Countdown (December 31)
Hinata Water Fireworks Festival (Mid-February)

What’s New, KitaQ?

• Keeping the Tradition
• Kitakyushu Profile
• Local Produce
• KitaQ News

Published by: International Policy Division, City of Kitakyushu
I-1 Juna, Kokurakita-ku, Kitakyushu 803-8301 JAPAN
PHONE:+81-95-852-2146 FAX:+81-95-852-2175
URL:http://www.city.kitakyushu.jp/eng/ (In English, Chinese, Korean)

Edited by: Bareka Kobayashi
E-mail: clair@mail2.city.kitakyushu.jp
No: kq035
Published 2010/03