

Outside Tokyo

Kagoshima: Satsuma Revisited

Kagoshima, on the southernmost tip of Kyushu, has beautiful scenery, a mild climate and a fascinating history. Anyone who wants a taste of unspoiled Japan should put this city on his or her itinerary when visiting Kyushu, the third largest of Japan's four main islands.

If you travel to Kagoshima by air, be sure to ask for a window seat. The city is located on the shores of a calm blue bay, across whose waters rises an 1,100-meter-high live volcano, Sakurajima. The sweeping view from the plane window is one of the most dramatic such scenes in Japan.

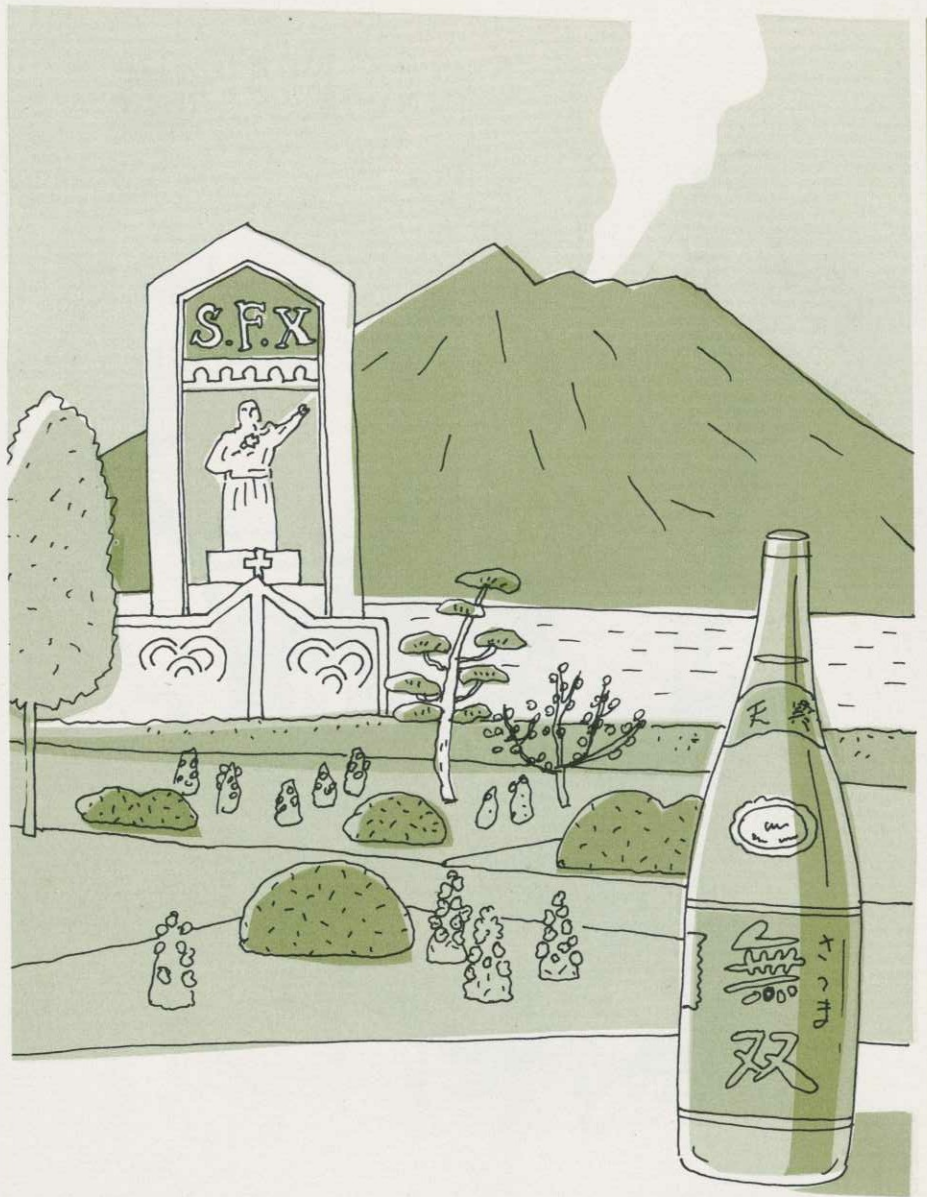
In the centuries before airplane travel, Kagoshima was even more of an international city than it is today. It was Japan's southern gateway in the era of sea travel. Numerous foreigners and foreign ideas first entered Japan by way of Kagoshima. Perhaps the most famous foreign visitor to arrive in Kagoshima was St. Francis Xavier, who arrived here in 1549 and became the first person to introduce Christianity into Japan.

As you tour this attractive city, with its broad boulevards and lush tropical plants, it helps to know a bit of local history, because many of the sights are in some way related to Kagoshima's remarkable past.

Life under the Shimazu

The most important fact to keep in mind about Kagoshima is that for 700 years it was ruled by the powerful Shimazu clan. At one time the celebrated Shimazu warriors were able to extend the clan's authority over most of Kyushu, but after warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi's invasion of Kyushu in 1587 the Shimazus were left in control of only the southern part of the island. This was no small area, however; southern Kyushu was one of Japan's major fiefs, and these extensive holdings made the Shimazu lords quite wealthy. Their wealth, and the great distance between Kagoshima and Edo, capital of Japan in the Edo period (1603–1868), enabled them to run Satsuma—as this district was known—as an almost semi-independent country.

To get an idea of the accomplishments of the Shimazu lords, visit Iso Park. This scenic park, right on the shores of the bay, was at one time a suburban villa of the Shimazu family. On a corner of the estate, the first western-style factory complex in Japan was built in 1857, designed by Lord Shimazu Nariakira himself. Among the items produced here were textiles, weapons, ceramics, glassware, telegraphic instruments and gas lamps.



The original building is gone, but the present factory building—now called Shoko Shusei-kan—was completed in 1865. Today it is a museum telling the history of Satsuma, and it should not be missed by anyone visiting Kagoshima. Also nearby is the Ijin-kan, or Foreigners' Mansion, built by the clan in 1867 to house foreign experts who were hired to help Satsuma become westernized and industrialized. The two-story frame building is quite charming. It is a brief walk from the park proper.

Iso Park is more than just a monument to westernization. It also contains part of the original Shimazu villa and a lovely garden. You can take a cable car up to a promontory behind the park for a fine view of the bay and Mt. Sakurajima across the water. Or you can visit the restaurant down near the water, and hope to get a window table.

This bay was the scene, in 1863, of one of history's most short-lived wars—a two-day war between Satsuma and Britain. The Anglo-

Satsuma War came about because a British citizen had been slain by Satsuma samurai en route to Edo with their lord. Charles Richardson, who happened to be riding along the Tokaido Road with some friends, did not follow established protocol and dismount while the daimyo's procession passed.

The British demanded indemnity, the shogunate agreed, but the Satsuma officials refused to pay. So Britain sent a fleet of seven ships to Kagoshima Bay. Satsuma was badly outgunned, and after the British shells—aided by a high wind—burned much of the town, the British ships sailed back to Yokohama and peace negotiations commenced. Despite their loss of the war, Satsuma was quite proud of having had the courage to take on the mighty British, and you will see several exhibits in local museums pertaining to this war.

Kagoshima's other major tourist attraction is Mt. Sakurajima. This volcano used to be an island, but a massive eruption in 1914 sent forth so much lava that the island became connect-

ed with the mainland. Sakurajima regularly spouts forth clouds of black smoke and ash. Tourist buses circle the volcano in less than two hours, traveling on roads built across the lava fields. Many travelers stay overnight at Furusato Hot Spring, on the southern coast of Sakurajima Island. There is frequent ferry service between downtown Kagoshima and Sakurajima Port; the ride takes 15 minutes.

Sights to see

Kagoshima has one of the best prefectural cultural museums in Japan. Called the Reimei-kan, it was opened in 1983 on the site of a former castle. The handsome building houses a broad spectrum of exhibits covering every aspect of local life and culture since prehistoric times. Among the items sure to catch your eye are the superb Satsuma ceramics. The Reimei-kan is open daily except Mondays, and has a restaurant on the premises.

The city also opened a new art museum in 1985, not far from the Reimei-kan. The striking granite building combines traditional and contemporary motifs, and contains a collection that is especially strong in paintings and ceramics. Among the works featured are those of Kuroda Seiki, who studied in France in the 1880s and introduced the Impressionist style into Japan. The museum (Shiritsu-bijutsu-kan in Japanese) is closed Mondays.

The tree-covered hill that rises in the background beyond these two museums is Shiroyama Park, which offers not only a bird's-eye view of Kagoshima, but also the city's finest hotel, the Shiroyama Kanko Hotel. Shiroyama is associated with Kagoshima's most famous native son, Saigo Takamori, one of the three great leaders of the Meiji Restoration. After helping to overthrow the Tokugawa shogunate and serving with distinction in the new imperial government, Saigo later resigned over a disagreement concerning policy toward Korea. He returned to Kagoshima, where discontented samurai persuaded him to lead an insurrection against the government he had helped create. The insurrection was crushed, and Saigo and some of his followers committed suicide on Shiroyama Mountain. A bronze statue of Saigo stands in the shadow of the mountain, and Saigo and his followers are buried at Nanshu Shrine, not far away.

Kagoshima's other famous native son is admiral Togo Heihachiro, who defeated the Russian fleet in 1904, thus helping Japan to gain international stature.

Shopping and dining

For relaxation, dining and shopping in Kagoshima, visit the downtown area called Tenmonkan. Here you will find the city's major department stores and a large array of shops, boutiques, restaurants, cinemas, bars, clubs and discos. Tenmonkan is a stop on one of Kagoshima's few remaining streetcar lines. This is a delightfully nostalgic way to get around town. An equally nostalgic way, if you

don't mind paying a bit more, is to hire Kagoshima's one authentic London taxi.

If you want to sample local cooking, the Satsuma-ji restaurant in Tenmonkan offers a special course: the *Toku Satsuma Teishoku*. Local delicacies include *sake-zushi*, which is sushi flavored with sake instead of vinegar; *tonkotsu* (not *tonkatsu*), which is pork ribs boiled gently for almost 24 hours and served with a special sauce; and *satsuma-age* (locally called *tsuke-age*), deep-fried cakes of minced fish mixed with tofu. All of this should be washed down with Kagoshima's most famous drink: *shochu* or distilled white liquor. Satsuma is noted for its sweet potatoes, from which *shochu* is made. A bottle of this is always a much-appreciated gift in Japan, if you're looking for an *omiyage* (gift) to carry home.

The other item that is frequently carried home from Kagoshima is Satsuma pottery. There are two kinds: the elegantly painted white (*shiro*) Satsuma and the rustic black (*kuro*) Satsuma. Shiro-Satsuma is known worldwide, and most people have seen some of it long before coming to Japan. But in Kagoshima, you will see varieties of Shiro-Satsuma that you never knew existed. The shops and department stores at Tenmonkan have a good selection, and there are several kilns in the city. Four major kilns are Urashima Toge, Chotaro-yaki, Kinko Toge and Tanoura-gama. Chotaro and Kinko are located near the Oshima Silk Factory, where you can watch luxurious silk pongee being made.

A bit outside of the city, but well worth the travel for lovers of fine ceramics, are Ryumonjigama at Kajiki-cho and the Naeshirogawa pottery at Higashi-Ichiki-cho, both known for their handsome black Satsumaware. Just down the road from Naeshirogawa is the Ju Kan To-en, where white Satsumaware is made by a 14th-generation potter of the Chin family. This family is generally credited with having introduced this style of pottery into Japan from Korea. The first Mr. Chin was one of the potters brought to Japan after Hideyoshi's attempted invasion of Korea.

The main building at the Ju Kan To-en contains a small museum upstairs showing pieces made by different generations of Chins. Among the items on display are a vase made for the bride of a Tokugawa shogun and several pieces that were exhibited overseas. There is a certificate from the 1904 St. Louis Exposition, where the 12th-generation Chin won a silver medal, and another certificate from the 1902 Hanoi Exposition. Downstairs is a shop selling ware currently produced at this kiln.

Kagoshima's largest festival, the Ohara Matsuri, takes place every year on November 2nd and 3rd. The big day is the third, when groups of *yukata*-clad dancers parade through the streets dancing to local folk songs. The city's other major festivals are in the summer. In late July an unusual festival takes place at night on the banks of the Kotsuki River. Called the Umbrella-burning Festi-

val, young men clad in loincloths parade around a huge pile of burning paper umbrellas to commemorate the courage of the Soga brothers in the late 12th century in avenging their father's death. A lantern festival is held at several shrines and temples on most nights during July.

The Kagoshima Airport is one of Japan's few international airports. Japan Air Lines offers service from Kagoshima to Hong Kong and then on to Bangkok or Singapore, and also to Hong Kong and Bangkok by way of Okinawa depending on the day of the week. There are also flights to Okinawa on All Nippon Airways, with connections to Taipei on Japan Asia Airways or China Airlines. Air Nauru flies from Kagoshima to Nauru by way of Guam. Thus, people who don't have the time or money to travel all the way down to Kagoshima and then back to wherever in Japan they live can combine a stop in Kagoshima with one of their overseas trips. Keep Kagoshima in mind the next time you are heading for Southeast Asia; you'll be glad you did.

Anne Pepper

A freelance journalist based in Tokyo who writes frequently about off-the-beaten-track destinations in Japan

Bookshelf

Industrial Groupings in Japan Seventh Edition (1986/87)

Edited and published by
Dodwell Marketing Consultants
1986, Tokyo
533 pages; ¥70,000 or \$450

Foreign observers have long been interested in Japanese corporate management and industrial structures. While some of this interest stems from an academic thirst for knowledge about the secrets of Japan's rapid economic growth and corporate success, much of it is grounded in the desire to learn more about Japanese business as partners and competitors. Despite its late start in modern industrialization, the Japanese economy has succeeded so well that people around the world are looking to its industrial structure and corporate organization for hints and weaknesses alike.

In Japan, just as in any other industrial country, the company is basically an organization to provide goods and services in the capitalist economy—an actor on the market stage. However, the historical process of modernization has meant that each country has evolved distinctive forms differing to some degree from