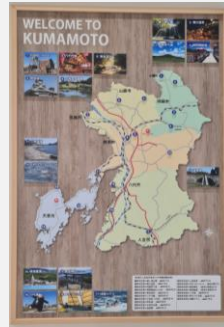


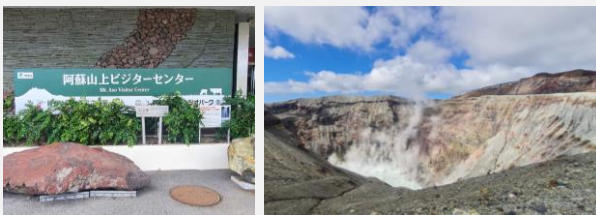
MPMA Summer Trip to Kumamoto



I was excited to join my second field trip, a summer journey to Kyushu Island. We flew from Haneda to Kumamoto, and upon our arrival, we were welcomed by the famous mascot Kumamon and even several characters from the popular anime, One Piece. I'd like to extend a huge thank you to Kataoka Sensei, Orihara-san, and Uehara-san for organizing this unforgettable field trip.



Our first stop was the magnificent Aso Shrine, which was rebuilt after a devastating earthquake. We were incredibly lucky to witness a special festival celebrating a good harvest. The sight of the rituals reminded me of my hometown in Bali. I also learned a unique local tip that a 5-yen or 50-yen coin is a special offering that can help connect your prayers. We spent some time strolling around, tasting the pure spring water, which is very refreshing, and exploring the charming shops and restaurants nearby.



Next, we visited the Aso Volcano Museum. This place was incredibly interactive, taking us on a journey through the volcano's history. We learned how the crater was formed, the different rock layers that make up the mountain, and the documented history of past eruptions. A documentary film on the volcano's impact provided even more fascinating insights.



After the museum, we started our trek toward the Aso Craters. The hike was a bit challenging, but the stunning views of the valley and rolling hills made every step worthwhile. We supported each other and made it all the way to the observation point, where we snapped some photos to capture the moment.

Our first day ended at the Kamenoi Hotel Aso. The hotel's onsen was a perfect way to refresh ourselves after a long day of trekking. Then, we enjoyed a delicious dinner together, followed by a late night of chatting and laughing with our friends, which allowed us to get to know one another better.



On day two, our adventure continued with a visit to the Earthquake Museum. I was deeply impressed by how Japan preserves evidence of past earthquakes. It's a powerful and practical way to educate future generations on the importance of disaster preparedness and mitigation.



Finally, we explored the grand Kumamoto Castle, which stands in the heart of the city. We climbed floor after floor, admiring original ornaments and learning about the castle's history. From the observation deck at the very top, we were rewarded with a breathtaking 360-degree view of the city.

We also visited the Wakuwakuza Museum, which located adjacent to the castle. Here where we saw an interactive exhibit detailing the castle's history and the damage it sustained during the 2016 earthquake.



These two days' field trip passed so quickly. As we headed back to Kumamoto airport to return to Tokyo, this journey felt like the perfect opportunity for us MPMA members to create lasting memories together.