

Bonjour! Expanding Sister-City Exchange with Tours



Impetus for Sister-City Relationship

The exchange between Takamatsu City and Tours City started in May 1986, when the Mayor of Takamatsu visited Tours through the Consul-General of France in Osaka and French-Japanese Society of Kagawa. Since then, the two cities have deepened their mutual understanding through subsequent reciprocal visits and other events.

Since Tours is the capital of Indre-et-Loire Department, and Takamatsu is the capital of Kagawa Prefecture in northeast Shikoku, the cities' social and economic situations have much in common, where increasing exchanges is most likely to lead to mutual improvement and development. More importantly, reciprocated visits and other events deepened an affinity to and an interest in each other, which enhanced opportunities for a city relationship. Under these circumstances, the two cities entered into a sister-city relationship on 3 June 1988.

Project Aims

To be a peaceful city open to the world, cultivate a rich international awareness among residents, and increase the exchange population through active exchanges with the sister-city Tours

Project Outline

Since forming the sister-city relationship, the two cities have deepened friendship and goodwill in a

wide range of areas such as culture, economy, and education. In recent years, new exchanges have started with food, castles, and gardens as themes, where resident-driven exchanges have grown.

◆ Commemoration

With every five-year milestone, a commemoration or a mutual visit is made to enhance friendship and goodwill. In 2018, the 30th anniversary of the sister-city relationship, a mutual visit and a commemorative event were carried out.

◆ Goodwill Trainee Exchange

In collaboration with Takamatsu International Association, two goodwill trainees have been sent to Tours each year since FY 2012, and they have expanded exchanges through the introduction of Takamatsu and homestays.

◆ Educational Exchange

Owing to the sister-city relationship between Takamatsu and Tours, Anabuki College and Touraine Aesthetic school have become sister schools, and the National Institute of Technology, Kagawa College and Tours University also solidified an academic exchange agreement for interaction.

◆ Exchange through food

- Exchange through cheese (from 2009 to 2010)

A cheese ripener in Tours visited Takamatsu, and expanded exchanges with many residents through a dietary education workshop with cheese at a

primary school.



Dietary education workshop for primary school students by a cheese artisan

- Bon Appétit project (2011)
For the purpose of promoting emotional development and dietary education for children as well as increasing international exchanges and international understanding, a Bon Appétit project was held, where primary school children in both cities exchanged vegetable seeds to grow, harvest, and cook vegetables.

◆ Cultural and economic exchange

- Participation in the Tours Fair
Takamatsu City participated in a fair held in Tours in 2007 in order to exhibit and sell its specialties and bonsais.

- Craftsman group Takumikumo

In 2013, Takamatsu City welcomed visitors from Tours in its hospitality event making use of lacquerware made by a craftsman group Takumikumo as a speciality of Takamatsu, and in 2016, a bonsai artist and other members of Takumikumo visited Tours to strengthen relations with local craftsmen and artists. Moreover, as the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the sister-city relationship, Takumikumo was sent to Tours to hold a hospitality and exchange project at Villandry Castle.



Hospitality and exchange project by craftsman group Takumikumo

◆ Japan-France Local Government Exchange Conference

In order to bring Japanese and French local governments together to report and discuss administrative challenges and advanced measures, the Japan-France Local Government Exchange Conference was collaboratively held in Takamatsu in 2014, and in Tours in 2016, which strengthened mutual exchanges.

◆ Exchange with castles and gardens as themes

- On 5 October 2016 at Villandry Castle, a collaboration agreement was solidified among Tamamo Park (Ruins of Takamatsu Castle), Villandry Castle as one of the old castles in Loire, and three gardens in Tours, for the purpose of sharing knowledge and technology on the management of castles and gardens, and deepening understanding and friendship through mutual exchanges.

Additionally, in 2017, a commemorative event was mutually held to mark the first anniversary of the conclusion of the collaboration agreement, where the castles and gardens were widely promoted among the residents of both cities.



Solidification of collaboration agreement among Tamamo Park (Ruins of Takamatsu Castle), Villandry Castle, and three gardens in Tours

Strengths and Innovations

The exchange with Tours has continued in the fields of culture, economy, and education, focusing on human exchange for 30 years since the sister-city relationship.

As one feature among others, these exchanges have extended their range to exchanges with castles and gardens as themes as well as those through food making use of urban characteristics.

Tours is geographically blessed with nature in the basin of the River Loire, where a gastronomic tradition including wine and cheese has taken root in life with fresh food. With Tours having such a cultural background, Takamatsu has had characteristic exchanges integrated with education and food such as exchange through cheese and a Bon Appétit project.

Moreover, the Collaboration Agreement among Tamamo Park (Ruins of Takamatsu Castle), Villandry Castle, and Three Gardens in Tours with castles and gardens as themes, has transformed the sister-city relationship, leading to the relationship with Villandry Castle in the Tours urban area.

Results of the Project

A 30-year-long exchange with Tours in diverse areas has improved the recognition and image of both cities, and also deepened cross-cultural understanding, leading to the cultivation of international awareness of residents and an increase in the exchange participants.

Further, such active exchanges with Tours were highly valued and awarded the Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications Award at the 12th International Exchange Commendation held by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, and the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations, which has led to the development of civic pride.

Problems and Responses

◆ Problems

Since it is difficult to have human exchange through frequent mutual visits on account of the long distance from Tours, it is necessary to review the project continuously in order to have effective exchanges.

◆ Responses

While continually exchanging of opinions and ideas, the Takamatsu will examine social media projects and exchange projects relating to a wide range of fields that emphasise the characteristics of the two cities.

Future Developments

With the cooperation of Tours, and a toy manufacturer deeply aligned with Tours, playground equipment made in France is planned to be installed in a park that is scheduled to open in Takamatsu in 2020.

With year-by-year expansion of the fields the exchange involves, such as exchanges with food, castles, and gardens as themes in recent years, a wide range of exchanges is to be continued in the future, and exchange featuring local characteristics is to be promoted in collaboration with residents and other concerned parties.

Reference URL

http://www.city.takamatsu.kagawa.jp/kurashi/shinot_rikumi/toshi/index.html

(Website of Takamatsu City)

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