

# A Bustling Wakayama

DANIEL MANUS ALLEN

My name is Daniel Allen and I come from Perth in Western Australia. I am currently studying as a MEXT Japanese Language and Culture student at Wakayama University. Before coming to Wakayama I have lived and studied in many different cities across Japan. Since coming to Wakayama I have experienced and noticed one or two issues, which I believe if changed, would improve the image of Wakayama and make it a fun place to visit and live in. But, seeing that Wakayama is a countryside city, it is impossible to alter it to match that of a bustling city like Tokyo and Osaka. After studying about Wakayama it has come to my attention that it is a very important historical place in Japan. For example, many of the poems in the “Manyoshu” were written about Wakayama and its importance in that era, which many are unaware about. Also, Places like Shirahama and Kumano, which are located at the south of Wakayama, are said to be some of Japan’s most beautiful places to visit. So, In order to make Wakayama more appealing I have written some propositions for change, which could help change Wakayama for the better.

## 1. Bus’s

The main issue that I have found inconvenient living in Wakayama is the bus system.

Seeing that Wakayama City is very large and spread out and many of the tourist attractions are located within the city, in order to travel around the bus is essential. But the problem is that the bus fares in Wakayama are too expensive. I am currently living in Wakayama University’s International House in Nishi-Takamatsu. Because the bus is too expensive I usually take the bicycle everyday which takes an hour, just one way. In the current summer’s temperatures going by bicycle is dangerous, harsh on our bodies, and tiring. There have been many cases where students cannot focus in class because they are exhausted. I have previously taken the bus to University during the raining period, and a return trip fare cost 660 yen, as student money is very important so I can rarely choose to take the bus.

In order to appeal tourists to come and visit Wakayama’s amazing tourist attractions , I believe that there should be a Tourist discount with coupons or a special bus card. For example, when you use the bus system in Kobe, No matter on how far the destination or where you go it will always cost the same 200-yen. Also they have special discounts for foreign travellers who can even ride the bus for free. If Wakayama’s bus system were like that of Kobe’s, I think taking the bus would be very convenient for everybody. But, The bus fare is not the only problem that I have experienced; the bus times are very inconvenient too. The last bus runs approximately at 10pm everyday in Wakayama city, if you are wishing to meet with your friends, you have to always worry about making it in time for the last bus.

Also, seeing that the bus is essential to visit the tourist attractions in Wakayama city, tourists may become lost or stranded if they miss the bus. Therefore I believe that the buses should run until

midnight.

## **2. Entertainment Venues**

After exiting Wakayama-shi and JR Wakayama stations it is often said that there is nothing appealing there. In comparison to other cities in Japan, You will always find entertainment like Izakayas, karaoke, round one, restaurants and cafes around the station. There is such entertainment in Wakayama but it is limited and there is not much variety. It is also difficult to tell if such entertainment is in business as Wakayama is surrounded with shopping arcades that are all almost closed. As tourists finish their sightseeing in Wakayama, many wish to relax in such entertainment venues, but as the choice is limited they often prefer to return to Osaka where they are spoilt for choice. This is why I believe that these shopping arcades should be renovated into entertainment venues, which are very modern and unique. If this change could happen I believe that the tourist numbers in Wakayama would increase, which is a great consequence for the economy.

If tourist numbers are to increase, the entertainment venues would not only be necessary but there will be a demand for Hotels. The hotels, which exist now, are very outdated and very small. If more modern and luxurious hotels were built in Wakayama City tourists would sure to want to stay here. I am not saying that these changes are to be made for foreigners but also for Japanese people too. I think it is also necessary to build new department stores and shops as the current ones appeal to the older population of Wakayama. The younger populations who live in Wakayama have no choice but to travel to places like Namba in Osaka, as there is more choice and styles for them there to choose from.

Seeing as these problems are minor, it would be very easy for change. Although Wakayama is in the countryside, if we could create a bustling city I think it could become a very popular place to visit and live in. After living in Wakayama for 1 year I was able to visit many wonderful places and meet some very caring and kind people. I wish that other people can come to Wakayama and share the same experience that I have had. I really believe that Wakayama can change, and soon Wakayama city will become one of Japan's most popular destinations to visit.