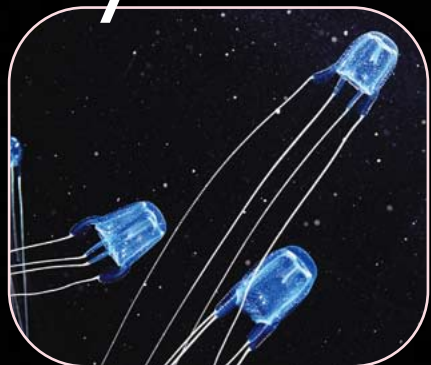


Jellyfish



Prove

Tourist



Magnet

Photo Tatsuo Murakami

A tiny old aquarium located in Tsuruoka, Yamagata Prefecture, is gaining popularity. The draw at Kamo Aquarium is its exhibition of jellyfish in which Curator Tatsuo Murakami takes pride.

The number of visitors has been on the increase particularly since Japanese scientist Osamu Shimomura, professor emeritus at Boston University, was named in October 2008 as a recipient of the 2008 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for his discovery of the mysterious green glow of a jellyfish—the green fluorescent protein (GFP).

Murakami expects the number of visitors in 2009 to exceed 200,000, a remarkable number for a city with a population of just over 140,000.

The aquarium began displaying jellyfish around 1999. It now displays around 40 different varieties, claimed to be one of the biggest in the world.

The jellyfish exhibition hall is called clanelarium, a word coined from Japanese "kurage." Popular species on display are "mizu kurage" (moon jelly), "kabuto kurage" (comb jelly) and "aka kurage" (brown jelly). It is something fantastic to




see, from the dusky exhibit hall, jellyfish with transparent bodies and long feelers drift slowly in a tank. Visitors say they never get tired of looking at those creatures.

Shimomura used "owan kurage," a kind of crystal jellyfish, for his research on the green fluorescent protein. As the crystal jellyfish at the aquarium were raised through artificial breeding, they did not produce luminescence. On his advice, the aquarium added a substance called coelenterazine into feed. The crystal jellyfish then began emitting sickly green light. The light-

emitting crystal jellyfish have now become the main attraction at the aquarium.



Aquarium visitors enjoy watching jellyfish swim.

 On the Internet

http://www.shonai.ne.jp/kamo/clanetarium/index_E.htm