

Learning Food Education in Noma's Nature

Fully Satiated with Salt-grilled Sweetfish

August 26, Yasaka

On August 26th at the Yasaka Ikigai Exchange Center, the event “Noma River Sweetfish and Food Education” was held, allowing participants to enjoy and experience nature's bounty.

This event was planned by the Kyoto Ikimono Mikke Farm and the Noma Migration Promotion Committee, and seventeen people participated. The participants learned the basics from the staff, and all gave salt-grilling sweetfish a try themselves. They speared sweetfish on skewers cut from bamboo, sprinkled salt on the fish, and grilled them over a charcoal barbecue. Children who usually don't get a chance to touch sweetfish were puzzled, but satisfied when they got to eat them with bamboo skewers they made themselves. The delicious scent showed that the fish were cooked, and participants all sunk their teeth into the fish one by one. They shared their impressions of the fresh sweetfish as they ate, saying “The sweet flavor is super delicious” and “The slight bitterness draws out the umami flavor.”

Participants were also able to enjoy soumen noodles made with a stock from smoked, grilled, and dried sweetfish.

After the meal, the Noma Ward Association Chairman, Mr. Toshiaki Fujiwara, said “The nature around Noma has changed a great deal compared to my childhood 50 years ago. The river water is lower, and the flora and fauna have suffered serious damage. If the mountainside trees that rely on nourishment and water decrease in number, then the water will get dirty, and that negatively affect the cycle of water into the sea. Let this event inspire you to be aware of the importance of nature!”



↑ Participants salt-grilling sweetfish on bamboo skewers.

A Town Walk Through History

Komaneko Walk

September 10, Mineyama

On September 10th the “Mineyama Komaneko Walk” was held, based around historical buildings in Mineyama related to Tango’s silk crepe industry.

This is part of the “Komaneko Festival,” an effort to revitalize the region by utilizing the “Komaneko” guardian cat of Kotohira Shrine, a rarity even in Japan, run by the Komaneko Festival Committee. On this day, 35 participants listened to an explanation from a guide while looking around the shrine grounds. After that they visited the Yoshimura firm, a company involved with the manufacture and sale of Tango silk crepe, and the villa called “Ouzan,” or “Cherry Blossom Mountain,” built by the 4th head of the company, Isuke Yoshimura. The participants focused their thoughts on the history of a town that flourished through weaving.



↑ Participants listen to an explanation of the Komaneko in Kijima Shrine within the Kotohira Shrine grounds.

Anamonju Festival Marks the End of Summer

Traditional Festival Held by Dint of Region's Hard Work

August 24, Tango

On August 24th at Tango's Anamonju (Seiryozankuhonji Temple), the Anamonju Festival was held in a joint effort by the Owa and Sodeshi wards that manage the temple.

The principal deity of the temple is the bodhisattva Monju Bosatsu, who personifies wisdom. Underground below the main temple building is a large cave that continues on to the sea, hence why it earned the name Anamonju, as "ana" means "hole" in Japanese. There is a special way to worship here, which is to walk three times clockwise around the main temple building. On this day visitors came to the temple one by one to be blessed with wisdom.

Along the road approaching the temple were handmade lanterns, and food stalls lined up in the temple grounds while a local band and the US Army Band performed, and later fireworks were launched and visitors celebrated the end of summer with a Bon dance.



↑ Anamonju crowded with temple visitors.

Tango Sea Fully Loaded with Charm

4000 People come to the Furusato Sea Convention

September 10, Amino

The Furusato Sea Convention (sponsored by the committee of the same name) was held on September 10th in Asamogawa Fishing Harbor. To show gratitude for the blessings the Tango region receives from the sea, and to widely convey the charms of the region, as well as to advance the fishing industry, this event is held every year. This is the first time Kyotango City has hosted the event in four years.

On stage, Amino High School's Brass Band Club started off the event, and other performers included an auction, Urashima Taiko, and the Tango Komachi Odoriko Dance Group. There was a special area set up for petting starfish and octopi, and sabiki fishing rig were set up along the wharf. About 200 people, mostly children from Amino Kita Elementary School, participated in the annual practice of restocking the water with 2000 Japanese sea bream. There were also food samples of sillago fish dumpling soup and fresh shellfish caught in Tango and many visitors fully enjoyed the abundant blessings from Tango's sea.



↑ Top: Annual sea bream restocking. Bottom left: Sabiki rig lure fishing. Bottom center: Sea creature petting zoo. Bottom right: Auction.

Kids Enjoy Sweet and Juicy Snacks

Pear-picking in Kumihama Orchard

September 1, Kumihama

On September 1st, Kumihama Orchard officially opened for pear-picking. This is the 47th year that the Kumihama Orchard Association (Chairman: Hidekazu Shiraiwa) will be making pear-picking and grape-picking open to the public. At the anniversary ceremony of the opening of Mr. Kiyoto Nose's pear orchard, Chairman Shiraiwa said "The pears have grown big and juicy in the summer heat and rain. I want lots of people to taste them!"

To continue the ceremony, the 73 children invited from the local kindergarten participated in pear-picking. They picked the big ripe "Gold Nijisseiki" pears with both hands and bit right in. The children smiled and said "It's so sweet, like juice!"



↑ Children munching on freshly-picked Japanese pears.

Town Renewal Via “Diving Beetle Rice”

College Students Harvest Rice in the Morimoto Ward

September 16, Omiya

In Omiya’s Morimoto ward on September 16th, seventeen students from Ryukoku University’s Policy Studies Club participated in the rice harvest alongside local residents. Because the same students discovered some endangered species of diving beetles last year during a biological survey of the local environment, they are selling this rice under the new brand “Diving Beetle Rice” (temporary name) and cultivating it with consideration to the environment. Third-timer Sakura Kanamoto said “Through these efforts, many people will get to know the appeal of this region.”



↑ Ryukoku University Policy Studies Club students harvest rice along with local residents.