

Solidarity! A Climactic Sports Festival

About 1000 Taiza Residents Take Part in a Sports Festival

October 9, Tango

On October 9th at Taiza Elementary School's sports ground, Taiza district residents held a town sports festival. This festival, which drew in about 1000 residents from all seven wards that comprise Taiza (Oganari, Tani, Mukaiji, Kodomari, Komahigashi, Komanishi, and Sunagata), is customarily held every year on the day following the Autumn Festival, to use that lingering excitement to fuel the enthusiasm for competition. Every time the win-or-lose results are announced, a big cheer rises from each team's tent.

First-time head judge Mr. Hideyasu Murota, the principal of Taiza Elementary School, said "Everyone is having fun while competing in earnest. You can see the teamwork and enthusiasm, and feel the nervous tension for the announcements of the results," and the ward chairman of Taiza, Mr. Kazuhiko Azuma, said "The Autumn Festival and Sports Festival are Taiza's biggest events. A sense of regional unity is born from the competition, there is an opportunity for exchange between different generations of people, and it is absolutely indispensable for invigorating the Taiza region.

The Kodomari ward won first place in the competition, and together the wards carried out a splendid series of sporting events.



↑ Left: The Tani team, champions of tug of war

Right: Minato-cho team plays a fishing game

Parents and Children Have Fun Learning Disaster Awareness
Mineyama Elementary PTA Runs Parent-Child Disaster Education Event
September 30, Mineyama

On September 30th at Mineyama Elementary School, in an effort to teach about disaster safety, the Home Education Committee sponsored a “Parent-Child Disaster Education” event.

Committee members spoke to the children about how terrible disasters can be, while mixing in quizzes on the subject. After that, they learned how to make a stretcher out of a blanket to carry an injured person, and how to make paper utensils out of newspaper to eat food that their parents make during a disaster.

There was also a time prepared to try using a water extinguisher and an earthquake simulation vehicle. Participants were able to experience a magnitude 7 earthquake like the one that struck here in Tango many years ago. The children chattered about their experiences, saying “It shook so much!” and “It was very scary.”



↑ Children play a game in teams, competing to carry their stretchers made from blankets the fastest without shaking it.

Professional Pianist's Melody Charms Students

Kyotango-native Mr. Tomohiko Adachi Holds a Concert at His Old School

September 27, Yasaka

Kyotango-native international pro pianist Mr. Tomohiko Adachi visited his old school, Yasaka Junior High School, on September 27th and held a piano concert.

While mixing together stories about junior high school and explanations of the music, Mr. Adachi performed 6 pieces, including Mozart's "Turkish March," Chopin's "Polonaise Héroiïque," and Beethoven's "Für Elise."

Mr. Adachi made a speech to the students, and said "Please experience many different things so that in the future you will be able to come back here, and teach something to future students."

This concert marked the 10-year anniversary of Mr. Adachi's debut in Japan, and he also performed at Tango Junior High School, and four city elementary schools, including the school he composed the school song for, Yasaka Elementary School.



↑ Mr. Adachi plays with a delicate touch during his performance

Shouts Ring Out “Heave-ho!”

Children’s Tarumikoshi Sets Out for the First Time in Nishihonmachi

October 7, Kumihama

On October 7th in Kumihama’s Nishihonmachi ward, the “Children’s Tarumikoshi” was paraded through town. A mikoshi is a portable Shinto shrine that is carried around during festivals, and a tarumikoshi is a special type that carries a barrel of sake.

This event was held for the first time this year, on the 7th and 8th, planned by the same committee that organizes the Kumihama Ikku Fall Festival (Chairman: Kiyoshi Taniguchi). They believe this will foster in the children feelings of love for their hometown, and encourage them to participate more in festivals when they reach adulthood.

The tarumikoshi was donated twenty years ago by Mr. Hiroshi Wada and the late Mr. Kiyoshi Hayata of Nishihonmachi, who made it by hand. To prepare for the parade, it was decorated with red and white ropes, bells, and bamboo grass upon which children hung up their handwritten dreams for the future. 36 elementary school children from Nishihonmachi and neighboring wards participated. Local people applauded and watched as the children clad in *happi* coats all paraded around to the flute music and shouts from the taikodai, a large float used to carry taiko drums. The group received prayers for safety and good health at Kamitachinomiya Shrine, and safely finished their route. The first leader of the team, Kouichi Taniguchi (Kumihama



Elementary, 6th grade), said “This was our first time taking out the tarumikoshi, but everyone had fun. I want this to continue every year.”

↑ Preparing the taikodai (top right) while the children parade the tarumikoshi around.

Praying for Children's Health

Amino Kagura Preservation Society Performs at Nursery School

October 6, Amino

On October 6th, the Amino Kagura Preservation Society (Chairman: Yoshihisa Okisasaki) visited 6 different elementary schools, kindergartens, and nursery schools to hand down the tradition of kagura by performing the Shinto theatrical dance for the children.

Amino Kagura is a traditional art form in which the performers dance around to flute and taiko drum music while wearing lion masks, and it is believed to have begun in the Edo period, for celebration and luck for good health. The Amino Kagura Preservation Society's main focus is the Amino Shrine Festival in October, when they go to houses and businesses in the region to perform, as a Shinto offering. They also perform for nursery schools and the like every year, so that young children can feel familiar with kagura.

At Amino Minami Nursery School, about 90 children watched the kagura performance. The children were overwhelmed by the big lion masks and the passionate dance, and some even cried mid-performance.

After the dance, the children lined up in front of the lions to have their heads "bitten," which is believed to make them wise. Nami Takatani (5 years old), who had her head bitten by one of the lion masks, said with a smile "I was scared, but I tried my best to not be! I think it's good that I got bitten."



↑ Left : Children watch the dance with serious expressions (at Amino Minami Nursery School) / Right : Amino Kagura being performed at the Amino Shrine Festival on October 9th (Pictured: the mugitsuki dance, one of four different dances)