

Thai High School Students Perform a Dance
A Combined Act of Harmonica and Traditional Dance
December 7, Amino

On December 7th, the harmonica club “Kumihama Brothers and Friends” performed at Tango Special Nursing Home, alongside a dance by Thai high school students. These performances are regularly held, and this was the 106th show. This time five Thai high school students who had come to Tango also performed, so that the nursing home residents were able to interact with a foreign culture.

After the musicians played “Snow” and “Mother’s Song” on the harmonica, the Thai students appeared in traditional dress. The five of them introduced themselves, gave speeches in Japanese about their dreams and treasures or Japan’s four seasons, and then gave a performance of traditional Thai dancing. About 40 people watched the brightly dressed performers and cheered as they danced around.

The five students came to Japan through the NPO Japan-Thailand Education Exchange Society (President: Shigayo Kimura), in order to exchange with Japanese high school students through a homestay, and to experience and study Japanese culture. The students, who stayed for about 2 weeks, shared their impressions of Japan, saying “I was surprised by how delicious Japanese food is, and how cold the winter is!” and “I want to come again in a warmer season.”



↑ Top: The Thai students who performed traditional dances



↑ Bottom: Club members playing the harmonica

Grappling With Earthworms While Planting Flowers

40 Kindergarteners Participate in Flower Planting

November 17, Mineyama

On November 17th, 40 kindergarteners from Yukari Kindergarten came and volunteered to plant the flower beds in front of City Hall. This is part of the larger plan to use the flower beds to welcome visitors to the building, and the children planted colorful pansies and tulips after being taught how by the adults. Even though sometimes the children would dig up earthworms or bugs with their shovels and shout out “Gross!” and “Scary!” they still did their best to continue their work. The children were fighting heavy odds, saying “The dirt is hard, so digging is hard too!” but with the volunteers’ support, all the flowers were successfully planted, and their eyes glittered as they said “We did a good job!” The best time to see the flowers will be in April.



↑ Kindergarteners plant pansies with serious expressions on their faces.

Men Only! Expanding Knowledge and Communication

“Temple Café and Lecture Meeting” Held for First Time

November 28, Omiya

Temples from 5 locations in Omiya came together on October 20th to start a five-part series of “Temple Café and Lecture Meetings.” This was to learn information and knowledge necessary for living, and it was held due to the cooperation between the Kyotango City Council of Social Welfare (Chairman: Kazuhiko Fujita) and the Omiya Buddhism Association. The special feature this time was that the meeting was limited only to men, who usually are less likely to go out compared to women. From all the regions in the city, a total of 50 men came to participate, and the lecturers changed each day, covering topics like Buddhist cuisine, stenography in the National Diet, practical uses for vacant houses, and preparing for one’s death.

The final meeting was on November 28th, in Choufukuji Temple (Okuono ward, Omiya) where the Chief Priest Hiroyoshi Iwasaki gave a lecture about the history of the temple. Participants listened intently and asked plenty of questions. After the lecture, participants drank green tea and enjoyed pleasant conversation. One participant said “I learned a lot hearing stories I wouldn’t normally get to listen to. I hope they hold this event again.”



↑ Participants listen to the speech of Chief Priest Hiroyoshi Iwasaki in front of the principal images of the temple

The Traditional Maruko-Bune Boat is Reborn!

ART CAMP TANGO Project

November 23, Kumihama

Situated just east of the house of the tycoon family Inaba is the East Inaba estate's Japanese-style boat workshop, where on November 23rd, a completed maruko-bune boat was displayed. This was one of the projects of ART CAMP TANGO (Chairman: Kouji Kubo), a program created by artists living in Kyotango City. The artist Mr. Tomohiko Ogawa (a resident of Kyoto City) became interested in maruko-bune and the way they are made that has been passed down, so he decided to build one for real and lived in Kumihama since last August to build it. The main part was completed in about three months. Mr. Ogawa eagerly said "The shape and method of construction of this region's maruko-bune is unique. It wasn't easy to build without a blueprint, but with the cooperation of the local people I was able to complete it. I hope I can start rowing it out on Kumihama Bay in the spring."

The materials for the maruko-bune and the use of the workshop were provided with cooperation from the NPO "Exciting Kumihama Community Group," and the group's members rushed to come and celebrate the completion of the boat.

※This project was realized using the "Kyotango City Kantetsu Town Development Funding Project Subsidy."



↑ Commemorative photo of everyone gathering around the Maruko (center: Mr. Ogawa)

Pounding Mochi with a Mallet and Mortar

Making Mochi at Taiza Community Center

December 3, Tango

On December 3rd at the Denshuukan building, Taiza Community Center (Director: Yoshinori Nakae) sponsored a mochi-pounding event.

The event was started last year as an opportunity for parents and children to interact with others, and this second year event was attended by eighteen people, mostly elementary schoolers and their parents. After the participants had used their mallets on the 4 steaming containers of mochi rice, they flavored their own mochi with their favorite toppings, like sweet red bean, roasted soybean flour, cheese, seaweed, and grated radish, and they enjoyed the delicious flavor of the fresh rice cakes.

Rio Okumura (5 years old), who participated with his family for his first time making mochi, said with a smile “The mallet was a little heavy, but it was super fun! It was soft and delicious!”



↑ Everyone challenged themselves to make delicious mochi!

Wishing for Safety and Success this Season
Swiss Village Ski Resort's Safety Prayer Festival
December 17, Yasaka

The prefecture's only ski resort, Swiss Village, held a Safety Prayer Festival on December 17th to mark the beginning of the season. Amidst about 30 centimeters of fallen snow, attendees held a Shinto ritual in which the branch of a sacred tree is used as an offering, and they prayed for safety and prosperity for this season. The executive director of Swiss Village's management association, Mr. Toshitaka Oe, said that this year the snowfall had come early, and "We hope that this year we will have no accidents and many visitors."

※ For inquiries about operations, contact Swiss Village Ski Resort's General Information Office (TEL 66-0036)



↑ After the Safety Prayer Festival, the first lift underwent a test run.