

21 Years since Heavy Oil Spill

Commemorative Exhibition at the Kotobikihama Singing Sand Museum

Until January 25, Amino



- ① Museum curator Mr. Kubo reflects on the incident in front of the exhibit panel
- ② Rocky area where heavy oil drifted ashore (Mitsu coastline at the time of the accident)
- ③ Exhibited objects with heavy oil stuck to them

A memorial exhibit about the Nakhodka tanker oil spill 21 years ago was held at the Kotobikihama Singing Sand Museum up until January 25th. The exhibit focused on photos from the disaster, polluted sands, tarballs, and objects that were covered in oil.

The exhibition was planned to be around the same time that the accident occurred, so that memories of it do not fade, and generations that didn't experience it can learn more. The museum curator, Mr. Fujio Kubo, thought back on the recovery efforts he participated in, saying "We used sieves to remove the oil from all the sand on the entire beach. Even when the beach was clean, big waves would push more oil ashore, so it seemed endless. But everyone kept trying, because we wanted to restore it to the beautiful beach that we remembered." and "From now on I would like to continue to regularly hold a memorial exhibition like this."

Nakhodka Oil Spill Incident

On January 2nd, 1997, a Russian oil tanker “Nakhodka” ran aground in the Sea of Japan near the coast of Shimane prefecture, and spilled over 6000 kiloliters of heavy oil, which washed up on shores from Shimane all the way to Akita prefecture in the north. Local and national volunteers rushed to assist in cleanup efforts, with a total of 31,000 volunteers in the Tango region persevering to clean up 1,169 tons of heavy oil. The beach recovered enough that it was possible to open it that summer for public swimming.

47 People Compete Fiercely in Ski Slalom

32nd Tango Ski Tournament

February 11, Yasaka

The 32nd Tango Ski Tournament (sponsored by the Kyotango City Ski Association) was held in the Swiss Village Ski Resort on February 11th. 47 people from the city competed for the best time in a slalom competition.

At the opening ceremony, the Ski Association’s chairman, Tomio Yura, said “I want everyone to enjoy skiing to their heart’s content on the slopes of Swiss Village. I hope that someday an Olympic athlete will emerge from the competitors in this tournament.” Then the oldest competitor, Keizou Kitagaki (81) led the other athletes in a pledge for fair play.

The tournament was held on a 400 meter course, and men and women of all ages competed fiercely as they swerved around the 10 gates.



↑ A competitor shows off her sharp turns

Praying to Prevent Illness in Traditional Style

Traditional “Hyakudouchi” Event in Oganari, Tango

February 2, Tango

In the Oganari ward of Taiza, in Tango, on February 4th, the traditional “Hyakudouchi” event was held to pray for illness prevention.

In this event, it is the custom for local men to don *keshoumawashi*, ornamental aprons used mostly in sumo wrestling, and run about the Taiza ward to make offerings of coastal pebbles at three different shrines.

At 7am, the temperature was a frigid 1°C (33.8° F), and 10 men ranging in age from their 20s to 40s set off from the ward’s community center. Residents along the route watched attentively as the men ran and their shouts echoed. They picked up pebbles at Nochigahama Beach, and then did a circuit to Mihashira Shrine, Inari Shrine, and Hayao Shrine. After safely finishing the event, one representative, Keiichi Kawato, said “We were able to pray so that everyone in this area will stay in good health this year.” First-time participant Sadaharu Gotou said, short of breath and with a vivid expression, “I’m glad I was able to cleanse any bad influences before I’m inaugurated as the next PTA chairman!”



↑ The men running in their *keshoumawashi*, enduring strong winds from the sea

Tasting Fresh Kumihama Oysters

Buying Directly from Cultivators in Marine Plaza

February 11, Kumihama



↑ Cultivator Yasunari Tomikawa explains the appeal of Kumihama oysters to visitors

In Marine Plaza (Minatomiya) on February 11th, a direct sales shop for Kumihama oysters was set up, and many sightseers and local residents came to visit.

The inaugural event was planned by the Shotenkyo Tourism Association, and focused on four oyster cultivators who manage their own aquaculture and want people to know the deliciousness of Kumihama oysters. The cultivators themselves manned the storefronts to sell their goods.

One cultivator, Mr. Makoto Hamagami, said “Oysters cultivated in Kumihama are special because they are very big, and even if you heat them up, they don’t diminish in size. Around the end of last year, I didn’t have a very good haul, but right now the oysters are growing very well, and their size is superb. I have taken great care in raising these oysters and I’m proud of them, so I want everyone to try them!”

Despite being an inaugural event, the “Kumihama Oysters” attracted a crowd of about 300 people, who had fun chatting with the cultivators as they bought oysters in the shell and oyster rice.

Keigo Fujiwara, who visited from Osaka with his family, tried the steamed oysters and said with a smile, “They’re really big and substantial. The texture is very tender and the flavor is the best!” You can enjoy “Kumihama Oysters” until early May.

Climactic Karuta Card Games!

Karuta Tournament at Omiya Minami Elementary

February 7, Omiya

On February 7th, Omiya Minami Elementary School held a Karuta tournament. Karuta is a traditional Japanese card game, and the tournament is held every year so that the children can have fun learning about traditional Japanese culture. The students chose to participate in a 40-card or 50-card course according to their own abilities, and then competed in groups of three or four. Tensions rose as the kids competed for the most cards.

After the tournament, the children shared their thoughts, saying “It was fun to play with everyone!” “I did way better than the practice rounds!” and “I’ll do the course with more cards next time.”

Sen-no-Rikyuu, the half-farmer half-comedy duo living in Okuono, also participated. The children who were in their groups said “Even though they’re grown-ups, they were really trying to get the cards, and that’s not fair!” and the class dissolved into laughter.



↑ Children competing to grab a card with Miku from Sen-no-Rikyuu

Tango Kingdom Ogres Spread Smiles

Mamemaki Bean-Throwing for Daytime Nursing Home Users

January 29, Mineyama



↑ Users of the facility have fun throwing beans at the ogres

In Mineyama, on January 29th, early Setsubun celebrations were held with a *mamemaki*, or bean throwing, event at “Day Salon Nonno-nonna,” a daytime care facility for the elderly. Ogres deployed from Tango Kingdom appeared in the facility’s lobby. The red and blue ogres waved their clubs around while asking the residents “Are you eating your meals properly~?” and the facility users immersed themselves in throwing beans at the duo, while praying for good health and safety. One man who uses the facility said “Everyone was smiling when the ogres showed up. I want to have a good year so that I can enjoy next year’s event too.”