

Etching One's Roots into the Future

Former Residents Erect the Chikaraishi Village Stone Monument

Former residents of the now-abandoned Chikaraishi Village erected a stone monument on its former grounds. An unveiling ceremony was held on April 7th.

Once known as a village of sericulture, Chikaraishi was nearly burned to the ground in 1957: 23 of its 26 houses went up in flames. Many residents left the village because of this, and the village was abandoned in 1965 due to a lack of inhabitants.

Last year, 5 former residents who wanted to share the history of their hometown to later generations proposed the stone monument and its caretaking organization. After collecting donations from other former residents, the proposal became a reality.

The words "Chikaraishi Village Stone Monument", a commemoration of the large fire, and a prayer for the village's restoration are engraved on the stone. Also, in addition to the erection of the stone monument, a commemorative magazine titled "Chikaraishi: The Village We Won't Forget" has been published.

Totaling 33, former residents and respective offspring attended the unveiling ceremony; they enjoyed their long-awaited reunion, reminisced about their home, and celebrated the completion of the stone monument.

Asanori Horie attended the ceremony with a picture of his grandparents, the last residents of Chikaraishi, in hand. He yearned for those days, saying, "This reminds me of how I would visit my grandparent's house every summer break."

Chairman of the monument's caretaking organization, Seiichi Nagae, commented, "The thoughts that former residents have for their home contributed to the long-craved construction of the Chikaraishi Village Stone Monument. I hope that this stone and commemorative magazine will result in future development, while passing on the story of Chikaraishi."



The Peak of Spring! Vividly Pink

Mitsuba Tsutsuji in Full Bloom at Higashiyama Park

Higashiyama Park, a well-known site for tsutsuji-viewing, is currently in full bloom. The beautiful sight of its flowers tickle the eyes of all who visit. Higashiyama Park is pristinely located atop a small hill, and boasts a superb, personal view of Kumihama Bay and Mt. Kabuto, with the Sea of Japan and Shotenkyo visible in the distance.

Roughly 15,000 Mitsuba Tsutsuji and Hirado Tsutsuji are planted in the park's grounds. They bloom vivid, pink flowers starting in the beginning of April. Manager of the park, Yoshio Nakamura, commented, "Regular pruning and weeding is necessary for a beautiful bloom. Please come on down and see our proud tsutsuji." One can enjoy mitsuba tsutsuji until the end of April, and Hirado Tsutsuji until the beginning of May.



Annual Spring Event at Tango Chirimen Corridor

First Opening since Registration as Japan Heritage Site

The 68th Tango Chirimen Festival (organized by its own executive committee) was held near Amity Tango on April 14th and 15th. This is an annual spring event aimed at stimulating the local economy, while having visitors from Kyotango and beyond experience the charm of Kimono.

On the 14th, a calligraphy performance by the Amino High School Calligraphy Club was conducted at the Amino Physical Education Center. It was the first time this effort was undertaken. Students vigorously wrote the lyrics of “Chirimen Kouta”, a song whose lyrics tell the history of Tango Chirimen, on panels to the beat of its music.

Due to some unfortunate weather, the festivities on the 15th were mainly held inside the Amino Physical Education Center. “Chirimen Kouta Dancing”, “Kimono Dress Show & Chorus”, and a musical performance by the Amino High School Marching Band were performed on stage. In addition, there was a photo gallery that told the story of the recently appointed Japanese Heritage Site, as well as the “Kimono Photo Calendar”, a booth where kimono-wearing visitors could turn their photos into calendars. The venue was bustling with attendants.



Children Call for Traffic Safety

“30-Zone” Designation Ceremony in Arayama

A section of the Arayama district has been designated as a “30-Zone”. On March 28th, awareness-raising activities such as street sign unveilings and commemorative ceremonies were conducted at several locations, including the Arayama Regional Community Center.

A “30-Zone” is a specified area whose speed limit is restricted to 30 kilometers per hour to ensure the safety of pedestrians, etc. on residential roads, and is determined by the Public Safety Commission. This marks the second area in Kyotango to be given this designation following the Sumiyoshi-Fukuda district in Amino-cho. Starting at the intersection in front of the former Arayama Nursery School, it stretches north on the Taiza-Omiya Kyoto Prefectural Road, and covers an area spanning roughly 23.7 hectares. Once the San-in Kinki Expressway Omiya-Mineyama Road, which is now under construction, opens for use, this area is predicted to see an increase in traffic.

Ward Mayor Shinsaku Ogino commented, “This designation is aimed at bringing peace of mind and safety to the residents of Arayama. We want to create a livable environment for children and the elderly.”

After the unveiling ceremony, those involved held placards and horizontal banners, conducting awareness-raising activities from the side of the road. Children appealed to those who passed with a sign that read “This is a 30-zone. Please drive slowly.”



Minekuen Sakura Festival

Festival Rooted in Gratitude Continued Again this Year

Kobe, Omiya-cho's "Minekuen Sakura Festival" was held on April 7th at the Kobe Community Center.

Organizations that participate every year (the local young person's association, the elderly association, "Chitosekai," etc.) opened up shop in a familiar way and greeted attendees. Visitors formed long lines, and freely stopped by the different booths.

Since 1990, this festival was conducted yearly at Minekuen (Tango Textile Manufacturing Association Central Manufacturing Plant), a garden thankfully landscaped by Mineyama Naval Air Corps officials for residents of the region. Due to the previous space becoming too cramped and its suitability for rainy weather, the venue was moved to the Kobe Community Center, where the festival is continued to this day.

Ward Mayor Shinobu Nishimura commented, "There are over 650 households in Kobe. The spring, summer, and autumn festivals, and events of the like, are precious opportunities where residents can see each other. I ask families new to the region to get accustomed to life here by utilizing these types of opportunities."



Safety-Ensuring Traffic Lights

Inobe-ku's "Japan National Route 482" Gets Traffic Lighting

The Inobe Intersection of the "Japan National Route 482" bypass has been outfitted with new traffic signals (4 for vehicle use).

In October 2016, the Takenogawaseigan Route was opened on this national road, which runs from Mineyama-cho to Tango-cho. Local residents started to call for the installation of traffic signals that would ensure the safety of passing traffic and pedestrians. The region's ward mayor, Akio Hirabayashi, celebrated the long-awaited installation, saying, "Now, even vehicles like slow agricultural equipment are able to have peace of mind when they cross the intersection."

