

Walking Tour Guidebook of Kumihama's Ikku Ward Published

Walk About Town with the “Kumihama WAN ONE Guide”

April, Kumihama

In order to allow visiting tourists to experience the neighborhood of Ikku, Kumihama's nature, history, and heart, and to introduce the “number ones” of the region, the Kyotango City “Kyoto-by-the-Sea” Implementation Council has just published the walking guidebook “Kumihama WAN ONE Guide.”

Local volunteer tour guides focused on editing for approximately half a year. The title “WAN ONE” encompasses many meanings, such as Kumihama Bay (Kumihama-wan), Ikku (ward one), Number One, and Only One. The guidebook introduces thirteen of the region's proud locations, such as “Kumihama's Number One Power Spot, Kamitani Iwakura,” a large rock thought to be the dwelling place of a god, and “Kyoto's Number One Wealthy Merchant House, Inaba Honke.” As well as proposing those “number one” spots as destinations for an example walking tour, the book also introduces other available experiences and fine foods.

A member of a local revitalization group and the guidebook's editing staff, Kanae Fujiwara, said “From the perspective of this guide, you'll be introduced to the charms of Ikku. If visitors are able to enjoy walking about Kumihama with this guide in hand, I will be very pleased.”

The guidebook is half the size of a sheet of A5 paper, twenty-four pages long, and 8,500 copies have been printed. They are available for free at the house of the tycoon family Inaba, the Tourism Association, and roadside rest areas.

Contact: Kumihama General Tourism Information Desk (TEL82-1781)



↑ Local revitalization group member Fujiwara.



↑ Tourists having fun in town walking around with the guidebook in hand.

Wishes with the Blue Light

April 2nd was “World Autism Awareness Day”

April 2nd, Tango

Tango’s first autism awareness event was held on April 2nd on World Autism Awareness Day, sponsored by the NPO Raising a Child with Autism in Tango Group (Representative: Yuuko Iwabuchi), in order to deepen understanding of developmental disorders such as autism.

Participants wore blue, the symbolic color for the day of awareness. At the coastline near the mother and child statues of Empress Taiza and Prince Shōtoku, participants passed the time while watching the sun sink down to the sea, and then surrounded the statues with blue lights held up to the sky, while reciting aloud a wish for a society in which anybody can live happily. Representative Iwabuchi said “We were able to show our efforts from Kyotango and spread knowledge. I would like to continue this activity every year in order to broaden the understanding of developmental disorders.”



↑ Facing the sea around the mother and child statue, participants read their message aloud.

Showing the Charms of Kimono from “The Hometown of Silk”

Parade and Stage Show Fascinate Kimono Fans

April 8-9, Amino



↑ The chirimen (silk crepe) parade.

The 67th Kyotango Chirimen Festival (Sponsored by the Kyotango Chirimen Festival Committee) was held on April 8th and 9th in the neighborhood around Amity Tango (Amino), and the event was bustling with many visitors.

It has been 297 years since the first chirimen (silk crepe) was woven in Tango. After that, chirimen production spread throughout Tango, and it developed into the region’s key industry. Even now, Tango holds one sixth of all shares in Japanese-made white cloth in Japan, and is the biggest producer of silk goods in the country.

The festival is held with the goal of promoting the region and its textile production through Tango’s chirimen and kimono. This is the 67th festival since it was started in 1951, and the main celebrations were held on the 9th. It was full of fun events such as brilliant dances and performances like the “Koto no Hanabira Concert,” “Chirimen Kouta Dance,” and “Tango Komachi Odoriko Team Dance” as well as workshops and experiences such as “Handloom Weaving,” “Cocoon Crafts,” and “Textile Dyeing.” “I wanted to try handloom weaving, so I attended the event” said one man, who took the opportunity to try using a handloom for the first time, and under the teacher’s instruction, wove himself a coaster. Also, in the traditional Chirimen Festival Parade, the Tango Kimono Queen and the Tango Komachi Odoriko Team started it off, and many kimono enthusiasts in glamorous kimono marched along, while other fans along the parade route recorded the kimono on camera.

Kuchiono Castle Site Assembly Hall and Taniguchi Library Construction Completed

A Place to Be Used for International Exchange and Lifelong Learning

April 9, Omiya

Inside the Castle Site Park in Kuchiono, Omiya, the advancing maintenance of the Kuchiono Castle Site Assembly Hall and Taniguchi Library was completed, and a ceremony for its completion was held on April 9th.

The wooden building is single-story, spans 249.1 square meters, and was being used as an office for Ono Shrine before the repaired facility was inherited by the Kuchiono ward. The facility was opened to the public to be used as a community space and as a hub for lifelong learning where everyone from children to seniors can gather.

Also, the Taniguchi Library has been established as an annex within the building to display the over 1000 books collected by prestigious resident and writer Ken Taniguchi (raised in Omiya).

To celebrate the completion of the construction, ward officials and related personnel were invited, as well as Mr. Taniguchi, who now lives in Gifu.

The ward's chief administrator Hitoshi Komaki extended his gratitude to the attendees, starting with Mr. Taniguchi, and said "I want many residents, children and seniors, to use this facility as a meeting place to befriend one other."

Taniguchi Library will be open from May 10th onwards, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, 1-5-pm. For more information, contact the ward office (TEL64-2137).



↑ Related personnel celebrating the completion of Kuchiono Castle Site Assembly Hall and Taniguchi Library.

Ana Jizō and Yearning For One's Hometown
The Arrival of Yoshitsu's Ana Jizō, 150 Year Festival
April 16, Yasaka



↑ Mr. Yoshioka tells the festival's origin and memories of Yoshizu.

On April 16th, a festival was held in Yasaka's Tōrakuji Community Center to celebrate the appearance of Ana Jizō in Yoshizu 150 years ago.

At the festival, people connected to the 400-meter high mountain town of Yoshizu (now a ghost town) came to pray to and renew their old friendship with Ana Jizō. (Jizō is the bodhisattva of children and travelers, and *ana* means “hole” in Japanese, because it was dug up from the ground.)

A picture book was made from the legend of Ana Jizō saving Yoshizu village from disease. There is an English version of the book, as well as an audio CD in Japanese, English, and Mandarin, which were displayed to the forty participants gathered there.

The festival's sponsor Mr. Yoshioka said “As population ageing continues, we don't know how long festivals like this will be held. I think by passing on the tale of Ana Jizō's legend, people become more connected to each other.”

A New Determination for the Next Year

Course Completion Ceremony at Kyotango City Education Support Center Mugiwara

March 27, Mineyama



↑ Students listen to the Assistant Director's congratulatory address.

On March 27th, the course completion ceremony for the 2016-17 fiscal year was held at the Education Support Center Mugiwara. Instructors, faculty, guardians, and graduates watched as fourteen students received diplomas. The Assistant Director of Education extended his congratulations, and the children now face the coming year with a new determination.

At the exchange meeting following the closing ceremony, everyone reminisced on the year's activities while looking at photo slides and competing in an exciting bingo tournament.

Students and their guardians expressed their gratitude by saying that they "gained confidence," "came to understand their studies," and were "always warmly welcomed."