

# “Let’s Begin Tambo Art (Rice Field Art)!”

## Project for Realising the Evolution of Kagamiishi as Part of the Exchange Programme for Reconstruction

### Kagamiishi Town



### Background

Initially, this project was scheduled to start as the main project in the town’s policy “Making This Town a Place where People Want to Get Off the Train, Walk Around, and Live” of all the new projects planned for FY2011. However, the Great East Japan Earthquake on 11 March, 2011 destroyed the pipelines from the Hatori Dam which were the source of water for the rice fields, which made it impossible to plant about 80% of the town’s rice fields, including those designated for Tambo Art. One year later, the pipelines were restored and the agricultural fields were decontaminated. In FY2012, this project was started with a multi-faceted approach in mind, including new “Tourism Resource Development”, “Eliminating Reputational Risks” owing to the nuclear power plant accident, “Local Production and Local Consumption”, and “Sixth Industrialization”.

### Purpose of Project

Kagamiishi Town, located in the central-southern part of the Fukushima Naka-Dori area, is a very livable “town” with easy transport links, including the Tohoku Expressway, National Highway No. 4 and other highways, and the JR Tohoku Main Line. Blessed with the climate and its natural features while enjoying its geographical advantages, people here have long lived peacefully by growing rice, vegetables and fruits, and raising livestock. In this town you can find “Iwase Farm”, known as the birthplace of modern dairying, as well as sporting and leisure facilities which make the most of the natural environment. Here you can feel

refreshed upon finding an unfolding landscape with a garden-city-like atmosphere.

In order to utilize these regional characteristics, the town plans to restart the “Tambo Art” project in order to raise public awareness of agriculture and invigorate the central part of the town surrounding the station. They also aim to promote this project as a “Symbol of Fukko (Good Luck Revival and Regional Reconstruction)” by developing unique sightseeing spots as well as boosting the level of interest in agriculture among the local residents including the children through offering farming experiences such as rice planting and harvesting. This will provide publicity for “Delicious Rice”, the chief crop of Kagamiishi Town.



Tambo Art “Urashima Taro” in 2015

### Outline of Project

“Tambo Art” refers to the art of painting various pictures on rice fields, which are regarded as the canvas, using different coloured rice stalks instead of paint. Considering the geographical characteristics of Kagamiishi Town, the Tambo Art starts on the east

side of Kagamiishi Station on the JR Tohoku Main Line, and is painted with the concept of “Picture Books Seen from the Window – Another Library” and with the theme of children’s songs and children’s stories (painted like a picture book series) so that everybody, from children to adults, can easily understand at a glance when they see the art from the fourth storey windows of the Kagamiishi Town Library.

- 1) Seeding, raising seedling, and picture pattern measuring: These activities are carried out as a practical lesson at Fukushima Prefectural Iwase Agricultural High School (from late April to late May).
- 2) Agricultural experience event 1): Rice Planting Festival Praying For a Good Harvest (held in late May with approx. 200 to 300 participants)



Rice Planting Festival Praying for a Good Harvest

- 3) Public Viewing: From June to Mid-October (the peak time: July and August)
- 4) Tambo Cafe: During the peak period (from mid-July to mid-August), we have a mobile kitchen in the grounds of the library to create an open café atmosphere and at the same time we do a PR job for Kagamiishi Town and sell local products.
- 5) Agricultural Experience Event 2): “Thanks for the Good Harvest! Rice Harvest Festival (held in mid-October with approx. 200 to 300 participants)” The green pattern background part is made from food rice (Fukushima original rice called “Ten no Tsubu”)

- 6) Completed 3D Tambo Art: With the colored pattern parts left on the rice field, you can see the picture in three dimensions (until mid-November)
- 7) Utilizing the harvested rice 1): Using the Tambo Art rice (newly harvested rice) for school lunches at the primary and secondary schools in town
- 8) Utilizing the harvested rice 2): Processing the newly harvested rice into rice flour to make sixth industrialisation products including Tambo Art rice flour bread and dango (sweet rice dumplings) with the aim of expanding the business
- 9) “Kira Kira” Twinkling Art: Illuminating the Tambo Art picture patterns with LED light bulbs, which started in FY2016 (16:30 to 18:45 from December to the end of January).



Kira Kira Twinkling Art

## Progress and Achievements

- 1) Area of the agricultural field: Approx. 50 are (approx. 1.2 acres) Area of the picture pattern: Approx. 33 are (approx. 0.8 acres) (the roof of the library blocks the view of the lower part of the picture pattern.)
- 2) Rice types used: 7 types (black, yellow, red, white, orange, green, dark green)
- 3) Picture patterns are designed with perspective in such a way that the view from the fourth storey windows is best.
- 4) You can enjoy the changes from “Showing” Tambo Art, to “Walking” Tambo Art, to “Eating” Tambo Art”. We are promoting local vitalization, starting with

Tambo Art, through which we can first “watch”, and then “walk” in the town, and finally “eat”.

- 5) In FY2016, the art further evolved into “twinkling” Tambo Art. We attached “message cards” to the lighting devices from the children at primary and secondary schools in the town and prefectural high schools, and with the thought that these devices were “seedlings of hope”, we held a rice planting (installation) event.
- 6) The “Vegeful Campus” programme is part of the Fukushima Support Project run by “Team Fukushima” which consists of vegetable sommeliers in Tokyo and university students mainly from the Kanto Region who support the purpose of Tambo art. This programme is carried out with the greetings “I’m back” and “Welcome home” as watchwords through agricultural experiences and homestays centered on involvement with Tambo art.



Picture taken from a drone

## Effects of Project

Number of visitors to the Tambo Art Festival from June to November

In FY2012, the Tambo Art Festival with the theme of “Landscape of Pasture” was attended by 5,613 visitors (296 (5.3%) from other prefectures)

In FY2013, the Tambo Art Festival with the theme of “Momotaro (a folklore hero)” was attended by 13,092 visitors (887 (8.8%) from other prefectures)

In FY2014, the Tambo Art Festival with the theme of

“Kintaro (a folklore hero)” was attended by 16,943 visitors (1,299 (7.7%) from other prefectures)

In FY2015, the Tambo Art Festival with the theme of “Urashima Taro (a folklore hero)” was attended by 20,924 visitors (1,832 (8.8%) from other prefectures)

In FY2016, the Tambo Art Festival with the theme of “Kaguya-Hime (a folklore heroine)” was attended by 22,436 visitors (2,552 (11.4%) from other prefectures)

## Problems and Responses

- 1) Securing sufficient numbers of staff: We need to think of a better way to secure sufficient manpower because picture pattern measuring and rice planting are critical to the creation of Tambo Art.
- 2) Effects caused by weather conditions: A water shortage due to a succession of fine days in the summer, a long spell of rain in the autumn, and frequent typhoons (although none hit the area directly) all had effects on the working process in terms of agriculture. We pray for the right weather in the right season because any unexpected rainfall reduces the number of visitors significantly.

## Outlook

Kagamiishi Town is considering expanding the area of Tambo Art and designing a newsworthy picture pattern with real impact for the commemorative project of Kagamiishi Town’s 55th anniversary in FY2017. Starting with this Tambo Art, we are planning to expand this project to have a ripple effect on other soft projects and increase the number of visitors.

## Reference URL

Website of Kagamiishi Town:

<http://www.town.kagamiishi.fukushima.jp/>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/kagamiishimachi>

Website of KAGAMIISHI Tourism General Incorporated Association: <http://www.kagamiishi-kanko.jp/>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/kagamiishi.kanko/>

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## **Meaning of Terminology/Coined Words Used in this Report**

- Fukko ⇒ Wishing Fukushima Prefecture Good Luck...
- “Showing” Tambo Art ⇒ Tambo Art itself
- “Walking” Tambo Art ⇒ This phrase has a broad meaning from “Making This Town a Place where People Want to Get Off the Train and Walk Around” to various walking events tied up with other organizations (such as the prefecture, the towns and JR)
- “Eating” Tambo Art ⇒ The green rice used for the pattern backgrounds is a type of Fukushima original rice called “Ten no Tsubu”. This rice is then used for school lunches as a local product for local consumption. Processed into rice flour, this rice is also used to make and sell rice flour bread and dango (sweet rice dumplings) which adds to the value of “Tambo Art”.