

Email Newsletter from Mayor of Okayama (94) November 30, 2017 Issue

【The Book Breathing New Life into Bizen Okayama Domain and the History of Ancient Kibi】

Hello, I'm Masao Omori, Mayor of Okayama.

I would like to introduce a collection of short stories “The Story of Okayama Domain / In the Wind of Kibi” written by Ms. Atsuko Asano. She is based in Okayama and well known as a novelist and a writer of children’s literature.

The City of Okayama asked Ms. Asano to write stories in hope that the content would be dramatic and attractive, but still based on historical fact. And it has been released just three days ago.

With the themes of “nation building by Bizen Ikeda family and Gundai Tsuda Nagatada\*” and “the prosperity of the ancient Kibi Province” to make the most of local history and cultural resources, Ms.Asano produced six stories, three in each theme.

(\*Gundai is a post of controlling territories of Japanese feudal government.)

These stories are rich in contents so readers would never get bored. For example, they are about a conflict of Ikeda Mitsumasa and his son Tsunamasa as lords, a woman who became a human sacrifice for the reclamation of Okishinden and tragic love of Ura (the model of the ogre in Momotaro legend) and his wife Azome. All the characters are attractive and their feelings are described lively and freshly.

I was deeply moved and thrilled at the same time by this collection. What I had been perceived just as a history was given new life by Ms. Asano to reborn as the stories in

which we almost could see people and scenery.

One of the officials of the City of Okayama shed tears while reading.

In the talk between Ms. Asano and me at the event to commemorate the publication, she said very impressive words; “I have not been attracted by local history that much although I was born and raised in Okayama. However, more I knew it through this work, more I was fascinated by it. I was able to cast fresh eyes on Okayama, the place I live. I would love to write about Okayama again in future.” Her comment gave me a very important awareness. No one but people living in Okayama should learn about the golden age of local history and culture, and have pride in them.

These short stories are open online for free\*\*. Furthermore, by distributing books to libraries and schools in neighborhood local governments and prefectural libraries across the country, I would like as many people as possible to read the stories and visit the places associated with it.

I also hope these short stories will help citizens rediscover the fascination of Okayama.

\*\*Okayama ebooks (a portal website for electronic books as a cooperative project by Okayama Prefecture)

[https://www.okayama-ebooks.jp/?post\\_type=bookinfo&p=15863](https://www.okayama-ebooks.jp/?post_type=bookinfo&p=15863)