

【Cruise ship launches from Kyobashi in the city centre to Setouchi Inland Sea】

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

Okayama Kyobashi Cruise went on service on 26th April 2019.

The service schedule is corresponding to the session period of Setouchi Triennale 2019 held in spring, summer, and autumn. The cruise ship connects Kyobashi in the city centre, Inujima: one of the stages of the Triennale, and Ushimado in Setouchi City.

Kyobashi Bridge was built across over Class A River Asahigawa. Until around 1960, the area used to be the port which Sanyo Expressway went through the bridge to suffice to be the centre of transportation. The development of Castle Town Okayama emerged exactly from the Kyobashi area. Currently, street cars run over the retro bridge and Kyobashi Asaichi morning market is held every first Sunday of each month around the base of the bridge.

Looking around Okayama City, the daytime population tends to concentrate in the central area near JR Okayama Station. It is necessary to make more ease of mobility of citizens throughout the city.

Thus, it is essential to find more appealing points of 'Former Castle Area' which has Okayama Castle, Korakuen Garden, and Omote-cho Shopping Street.

In this coming autumn, Okayama Art Summit 2019 will be held in the area of Okayama Castle and Korakuen Garden. At this time Setouchi Inland Sea has been famous globally; the Kyobashi Cruise Ship ideally connects Setouchi Triennale 2019 and Okayama Art Summit. More and more domestic and foreign tourists will visit Okayama,

and that will hopefully facilitate the mobility in Okayama City including Omote-cho Shipping Street, and create more attractiveness and popularity.

In addition, we are eagerly working on establishment of Okayama Art Theatre (provisional) to be the new centre of culture and art which will open in 3-chome area of Omote-cho near Kyobashi in autumn 2022.

I would like to promote effective collaboration between the municipality and the related organisations which are specialising in the local development. At the end, I would like to make Okayama City a more wonderful city with its matured history, art, and culture.