

Series: **My Favorite Kyoto**

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Rendezvous with Fushimi Inari Taisha Shrine

Liu Sijia
(China)

I came here from China, because I like the Japanese language, and I hope to understand Japanese culture more deeply, so I enrolled in a language school in Kyoto to study Japanese. Although I have lived in Kyoto for about half a year now, every time I stroll along the streets and lanes, I get nostalgic, but I also feel like I'm making new discoveries. Truly, in Kyoto there are too many beautiful scenes to see, and too many charms to appreciate. However, in my heart, the most favorite one is still the Fushimi Inari Taisha Shrine.

Before I came to Japan, though I don't remember when it was, I saw some photos of the Fushimi Inari Taisha Shrine. Later, those scenes always came back to mind, such as the sunset, with sunlight filtered through the vermilion *torii* (Shintō* shrine archways) all standing in a line and coming down along the winding stone steps, or the shrine maidens wearing full-sleeved white blouses and red skirts with *gohei*** in their hands ascending the stairs.

About one and a half years ago, when I traveled to Japan with my friends, I stood for the first time in front of the gate of the shrine at the foot of Mt. Inariyama. Even now, I can't easily forget how moved I was. At that time, there were three of us; we went through two large *torii*, and then stepped over the threshold of the red main gate. After seeing some visitors wash their hands and gargle the water, we copied them, and then came to the front of the main shrine building. Even though I don't have any religious beliefs, through this simple ceremony I faintly felt some kind of



Liu Sijia in the Senbon Torii

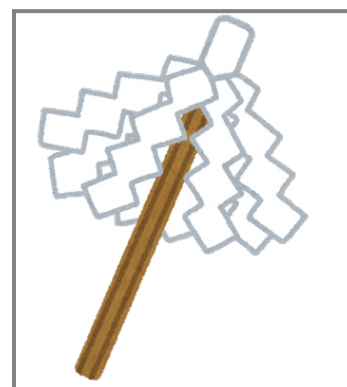


Illustration of gohei

* Pronunciation tip: any vowel with a macron over it (ā, ī, ū, ē, ō) has a "long" vowel sound, 1.5 to 2 times longer than the regular vowel sound

** *gohei*: a wooden staff with plaited white paper attached, used in Shintō ceremonies

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Nishiki Market – the Kitchen of Kyoto

The Nishiki Market is a large food market in Kyoto that has more than 400 years of history. The market runs from Takakura Street on the west side to Teramachi Street on the east; it is about 350 meters long, and has more than 130 shops. One feature of Nishiki Market is that it has good quality food, because the original market had many fresh fish sellers. In January of 2005, the market got its first trademark, “*nishiki ichiba*” (Nishiki City Market), and the second trademark, “*kyo no daidokoro nishiki*” (Nishiki - Kyoto’s Kitchen), was granted in January of 2015.

Many Japanese-style restaurants and Japanese-style hotels in Kyoto buy their food supplies from the Nishiki Market. Also, many residents of Kyoto go to Nishiki Market at the end of the year to get ingredients to prepare food for the New Year’s Day celebrations. I also go to confectionery shops in Nishiki Market to buy hard-to-find foods, such as *a-mondo kozakana* (almond slivers with tiny dried fish). In recent years, there are many shops where you can walk up and buy something ready to eat, so many tourists and students on school trips come to the market for this. These walk-and-eat foods can be: sweets made from *tōfu* (soybean curd) like soymilk doughnuts, *tamagoyaki* (rolled, fried egg batter), *takoyaki* (octopus dumplings), *tempura* (batter-dipped deep-fried fish and vegetables), *nikuman* (steamed, meat-filled buns), and *yakizakana* (grilled fish). Moreover, there are *mochi* (sweet rice dough) shops where you can see them pounding the rice to make *mochi*.

The Nishiki Market has many kinds of shops and some delicious, rare foods. So, how about going to the market sometime to enjoy these?



West entrance of Nishiki Market



Soymilk donuts

KANAYA Chinami

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kokoka news * * * Kyoto International Community House news * * *

Counseling Day for Foreign Residents

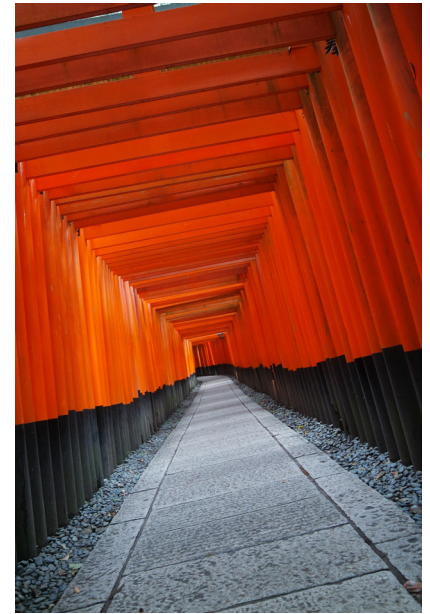
Do you have any questions or concerns regarding legal issues, visa problems, taxes, insurance, your pension, etc.? Are you worried about something? Professionals in those areas can discuss any of these with you. Interpreters will be available on request. Advanced reservations are required. We will protect your confidentiality.

When: Sunday, June 4, 13:00 – 17:00

Where: kokoka Kyoto International Community House, 3F, Conference and Counseling Rooms

Reservations: phone 075-752-3511

holiness and solemnity. We visited the main shrine, and then the three of us travelers, who had not studied anything ahead of time, discussed whether the stone statues standing everywhere in the shrine were actually foxes or dogs. After looking at the large and small shrine buildings along the way, we came to the *Senbon Torii* (*torii* corridor). Uncountable *torii* successively covered everything, like a tunnel without an end. Although some were faded by the weather, they still showed their strong vermilion color, everything around them flourishing and bursting into bloom as if in competition. The power of nature reached into my mind through the beautiful colors and moved me deeply, making me smile. Turning back in the direction from which I came, I saw many black *kanji* letters painted on the vermilion posts, and I could clearly read the names of the offerers and the dates of the offerings. Being in that fantastic place where the red glow sparkled, it was as if I became connected with the strangers inscribed on the posts, who were beyond time and place.



Long, straight section of the *Senbon Torii*

I went through the *Senbon Torii* and passed by Kumatakasha, an inner shrine area, and the vermilion still continued, but only a few visitors could be seen there. However, as I continued to walk farther up the winding path to quiet seclusion, some stunningly beautiful scenery spread out in front of me. In a hidden stone cave, the mountain spring water ran down through a bamboo pipe and flowed into the stream stretched along the cobbled path. Bending down and looking carefully, I could find one or two small crabs walking sideways on the rock wall. I walked some steps forward, and a cheerful old man suddenly talked to me; he guided us on a climb up a narrow trail, coming to a giant stone with *shimenawa* (braided straw festoon) wrapped around it. He told us that if young people stroked the stone with both hands while praying earnestly, they could receive power from it. I thanked the old man for his kindly explanation, and we continued to walk forward. At first, we went up to the higher ground and looked down upon the entire view of Kyoto. Then, after passing over the peak, we went down the mountain along another route and returned to the main shrine. If there had been more time, we wanted to enjoy walking along the mountain paths in the comfortable afternoon sunshine, seeing the forest scenery, listening to the flowing stream and the birds chirping, and watching the stray cats playing on the mountainside.



Water flowing from mountain stream

One year later, I came to Kyoto again by myself, but I never imagined that I would begin a new life at the foot of Mt. Inariyama. Maybe memories of the deep, infinite vermilion had brought me here. This time, I would like to appreciate and savor the charms of Kyoto, not like a hasty tourist, but going more slowly, taking my time.



Shimenawa draped around a giant rock

Public transportation in Kyoto

All of you foreign students, how is your new life in Kyoto? When you get used to the way of living, how about making your way around the old capital? The public transportation here consists of JR (Japan Railways), the Kyoto Subway, the Kyoto City Bus, the Kyoto (Prefectural) Bus, and privately owned railways, such as Kintetsu, Keihan, Hankyu, and Eiden.

In Japan, each transport line's ticket system is somewhat complicated. Basically, there is one type of ticket for each line. However, there are some tickets that can be used on two different lines, and some tickets that can be used on multiple lines; those are called "common" tickets. We will now introduce three of the most popular ones.

The first one is the ICOCA (IC card), which is very convenient; you buy it for a fixed amount, and you can use it to ride many times for the price. You can also use the card to buy things at railroad station kiosks. When the money on the card does not cover the fare, you can add money at a machine near the exit gates before going out. Recently, ICOCA can now be used in the Kanto area of Japan. Also, you can use the card on the Kyoto City Bus.

The second type of card is a set-time or fixed-amount discount ticket. Within Kyoto, you can get a 1-day subway pass for 600 yen, getting on and off wherever you wish. Some sightseeing places, such as museums, also offer reduced price entry when you show them your discount ticket. Some tickets also cover various bus lines, and private railways also issue similar types of discount tickets.

The third type of card is called *kaisūken* (multi-trip ticket). Because you are buying a fixed number of rides in advance, you get a good discount on the ticket price. For example, you can ride eleven times for the price of ten trips. Also there are *kaisūken* that can be used only for: daylight hours, weekends, and holidays. However, there may be time limits, such as a year, on using *kaisūken*, so please pay attention.

Finally, we will introduce some warnings and cautions:

- 1) When riding, keep your backpack in front of you.
- 2) Pay attention when bringing a roller bag. Accidents with other passengers have been increasing.
- 3) Please don't run when getting on board. Please go to your desired boarding position ahead of time.
- 4) Japan has public transport riding manners; please line up with the painted platform markings.
- 5) Please check in advance to make sure you have bought the right ticket for your destination.

Kyoto City Bus & Subway Information Guide Website

<http://www2.city.kyoto.lg.jp/kotsu/webguide/en/index.html>

(There are Chinese, Korean and Japanese webpages as well)

IKUTA Minoru

Okazaki Flea Market

Using the theme of “Pass on your unnecessary items to people who need them”, there are many flea markets held in Kyoto. Reusing things is always environmentally friendly, and you may find something you have always wanted. Feel free to go and take a look!

Where:

Okazaki Kōen Park (south of Heian Jingū Shrine)

Schedule for 2017:

April 15, Saturday (if rain: April 22, Saturday)

May 7, Sunday (if rain : May 27, Saturday)

May 20, Saturday (if rain : May 27, Saturday)

June 11, Sunday (if rain : June 24, Saturday)

June 17, Saturday (if rain : June 24, Saturday)

The market will continue after June; schedule to be published later.

Open hours:

10:00am – 3:30pm

There will be about 160 booths/spaces

This flea market will be held 16 times during 2017 at the Okazaki Kōen Park.

The flea market held in the square in front of Kyoto City Hall has been suspended, due to construction.

Organizer:

Kyoto-shi Gomi Genryō Suishin Kaigi (Waste Reduction Promotion Conference of Kyoto)

Website: <http://kyoto-gomigen.jp/> Tel: 075-647-3444

Support:

Plus One Network

Website: <http://ameblo.jp/kyoto-plusone/>



Okazaki Flea Market in Okazaki Park

kokoka Kyoto International Community House Library

April / May 2017

Library Letter

 kokoka recommends this book

“BUSHCRAFT MANUAL, outdoor play guide for adults”

Author:

KAWAGUCHI Taku

Publisher:

Seibundō Shinkōsha, 2016



Do you know about a new style of camping, called “BUSHCRAFT”? “Craft” means the fun of creating the tools from within your environment for providing the necessities of food, clothing and shelter, and “bush”: generally means the outdoors, although it can have a broader meaning. This book will introduce you to the knowledge and the tools for making your outdoor living comfortable, and show you how to make them. For both the experienced campers and the beginners interested in starting camping, how about reading this book?

If you prefer reading books in a leisurely manner rather than moving your body, how about reading the book: “A tour of used book stores in the Keihanshin area” (Author: KOYAMA Rikiya, Publisher: Hon-no-Zasshisha, 2016)? This book will introduce you to about 200 used book stores, mainly in Kyōto, Ōsaka, and Kōbe. You may be able to find a book that you have really wanted at one of these book stores. When you are visiting used book stores in Kyōto, please also come to the kokoka library here!

The following items are also available:

Books for foreigners to help their daily life in Japanese, study Japanese, learn about Japanese law, visas, Japanese culture and sightseeing in Kyoto.

Books for Japanese to learn about foreign countries, overseas travel, extended stays, studying abroad, working holidays and volunteering.

Newspapers and magazines from all around the world.

Books are not available for check-out.

[Hours] 9:30 a.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Closed on Mondays & last day of every month

[Tel.] 075-752-1187 [Fax.] 075-752-3510

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***Kodomo-mirai-kan*, a childcare and play center Kyoto City's integrated center for helping parents raise children**

Kodomo-mirai-kan, a childcare and play center that opened in 1999, is jointly operated by city staff and volunteers. It was founded so that babies can be born safely and kids can explore how to play socially, adapting to the various changes in society. I interviewed one of the center's staff to understand how they use this facility.

If you walk southeast for three minutes from Karasuma Marutamachi Station of the Karasuma Subway Line, you will end up in front of the center, in a nice area south of the Gosho (old Imperial Palace). Many bicycles with child seats will be parked in front of the center, showing how popular it is.

Entering the first floor, there is *Kodomo Genki Land* (children's vitality land), where kids, accompanied by their parent, can play using a slide, wooden horses, and other toys. Please note that this area is restricted to kindergarten students.

Going up to the third floor, there is the *Kosodate Toshokan*, a library for kids that is full of illustrated books. Those books may be taken out on loan to Kyoto residents. In addition, a picture card story-telling show is held twice a day in the library. Also, if citizens want some advice for raising children, counselor consultation is available once or twice a week. Dedicated parking lots are available. It is open on holidays, but closed every Tuesday. For more information, see below.



Front entrance of *Kodomo-mirai-kan*



Kosodate Toshokan Library



Kodomo Genki Land play area

Official website (Japanese language only):

www.kodomomirai.or.jp

Phone:

075-254-5001

FURUTA Tomiyoshi

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