

Series: My Favorite Kyoto

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How about exploring Kyōto*?

IWAI Nicolas (America)

I am a Japanese American from Illinois, USA. Since I am half Japanese, I was first introduced to Japanese culture at a very young age. I watched a lot of Studio Ghibli movies with my family and ate Japanese food, such as *umeboshi* and *ramen*. As I continued to learn more about Japan, my interest in the culture and language grew more and more. Naturally, I wanted to come to Japan to see all of the historical sites, learn the language, and meet my relatives, who live in Wakayama prefecture, for the first time. On July 23rd, 2017, I finally got my wish! I am now living in Kyōto City and working as an Assistant language teacher through the Japan Exchange Teaching (JET) Program. To fully enjoy my stay here, I have been exploring as much of Kyōto city as I can.

Since this is my first time in Japan, I am still getting used to my new environment and dealing with homesickness. To grow familiar with the city, I have kept myself busy. I am playing badminton with a club every week, visiting my relatives, and volunteering at the kokoka Kyōto International Community House. Kokoka helps foreigners who are travelling or living in Kyōto. They give advice on living in Kyōto and tourist sites. Moreover, they wish to help the spread of foreign cultures throughout Kyōto city. I have recently joined the “Life in Kyoto” newsletter team as a new English editor. Through this opportunity, I can meet new people, share my experiences with this newsletter’s readers and keep my English ability sharp.

In Kyōto, one of my favorite things to do is to see the amazing shrines and temples. There are two temples that I recommend to you. The first temple is Sanjūsangendō, also known as “The Hall of the Lotus King”. It is famous for having 1029 statues inside and being the longest (120 m/393 ft) wooden structure in Japan. In the middle of the temple, there is a giant golden statue of Kannon. On Kannon’s left and right side there are 1000 human-sized Kannon statues with 28 attendant and guardian statues standing in front. It is a breath-taking sight, that will



Me and my relatives from Wakayama



Sanjūsangendō Temple

*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

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Why not advertise your event, restaurant, language school, workshop, services and so on in our life and culture information publication, “Life in Kyoto”? Please contact us now, and let us introduce you to our readers in the next issue!

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Kyotō's Speciality: *Sugukizuke*

~ The Making of *Sugukizuke* ~

Have any of you ever eaten *sugukizuke*? All over Japan, many regions boast a variety of local *tsukemono* (Japanese pickles), and Kyōto also has many different types. In this article, I'm going to introduce *sugukizuke*, one of the three major pickles of Kyōto.

Upon writing this article, I visited Mr. Naotsugu Tani's workshop, who ships *sugukizuke*, and learnt about the pickle. *Sugukizuke* is made from *suguki*, a type of parsnip, and it is said that it originated from that that was originally grown at Kamigamo Shrine. Apparently, in the *Meiji* Era, people affiliated with the shrine pickled *suguki*, and this was passed on to neighboring farmers, and eventually ended up being made in the average household. Incidentally, the seeds for *suguki* are not sold commercially, so each year farmers take the seeds, and save them for use the following year. Mr. Tani explained to me, that because of this, the *suguki* leaves and the fleshiness of the turnip slightly varies from family to family.

The process of making *sugukizuke* starts from first growing the *suguki* itself. Every year around mid-August, from just after obon they plant the seeds over a couple of times, and harvest the turnip after roughly 70 to 80 days. Harvesting continues until December, and each year from October, the process of pickling the *suguki* begins.

Straight after being harvested, the *suguki* are peeled, have the corners rounded, and with the leave tops still intact, are salted in a large barrel, and then left overnight to be pre-pickled. The next morning from around 5 am, the *suguki* are removed from the large barrels, divided into smaller amounts, have weights placed on them, and are pickled for a week to 10 days. Following that, the *suguki* are then placed in a temperature controlled room, go through lactic acid fermentation, and are finally completed. Mr. Tani said that at his workshop, the finished *suguki* are mainly sold wholesale to pickle stores.

Every year, the *suguki* that have grown the strongest are turned over in the soil from the roots, and in the new year after the pickling process has been finished, the *suguki* are replanted in the soil. They then wait for the May flowering, and gather the seeds – apparently as *suguki* is part of the Brassicaceae family, they bloom yellow flowers. Every May, Mr. Tani is careful to not crossbreed the *suguki* with other Brassicaceae plants that are blooming at the same time.

Mr. Tani also grows cucumbers, tomatoes, and Kamigamo eggplants, so working around the time when *suguki* is planted, he harvests all of the other vegetables in August, and starts preparation for planting the *suguki*.

I am in fact from Chiba prefecture, so I had never tried *sugukizuke*, but upon writing this article, I actually tried it. The unique sourness and the texture of the *suguki* was very good, and it would not only be perfect for white rice, but also for *o-saké* – I think that I have found a new favorite food.

Sugukizuke, one of the *tsukemono* that Kyōto boasts. I hope that you all try it – you might just find the deliciousness addictive!

MARUYAMA Tōru, translated by HASHIMOTO Sayuli

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Scenes of Life & Culture Photography Exhibition at Kyoto International Community House (kokoka) –My Favorite Japan, China and Korea

All kokoka volunteers are planning a photography exhibition to introduce the life and culture of people in Japan, China and Korea.

© Scenes of Life & Culture Photography Exhibition

Exhibition Period: March 13 (Tue) – 18 (Sun) 9:00 - 21:00
(the final day close at 14:00)

Exhibition Place: kokoka Kyoto International Community House



Suguki plant ready for pickling



Pre-pickled *suguki* in the barrel



Pickling process old style (back) and modern style (front)



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Hina-Matsuri (Hina-Ningyō)

Do you know what day the 3rd of March is? In Japan, it is called *Hina-Matsuri*. Families who have daughters display traditional Japanese dolls, also known as *hina-ningyō*, in their houses. They do this to wish that their daughters grow up healthy.

Hina means "baby bird" or "child" and can also mean small or adorable, while *matsuri* means "festival". I think Japanese people find the word *hina* inherently cute. These days it is a common name for younger girls and can even be found in the top ten list of the most popular Japanese girl's names of 2017.

Hina-ningyō has a long and rich history in Japanese culture. It is said that since the *Edo* period (1603-1868) people have kept their *hina-ningyō* sets in decorated, shelved displays, as shown in the image. Do people still display these dolls today? Even though I am a girl, I didn't have a *hina-ningyō* in my house when I was a child.

However, there are still many Japanese households with these dolls. Depending on the family's preferences and how many daughters there are in the family, the type of dolls and way of displaying them may differ. To show how much these displays can vary from family to family, I interviewed my friends and coworkers, who are women in their twenties and thirties, and discovered they still have dolls in their houses. Their responses were as follows.



7 step *hina-ningyō* set



Ichimatsu-ningyō doll

Only child
(One daughter) Ms.Y

As a child, I had a 7 step *hina-ningyō* set.

I had a 7 step *hina-ningyō* set and my younger sister had an *ichimatsu-ningyō*.

Ms.F little sis

We shared one *hina-ningyō* and displayed it until we graduated elementary school.

Ms.Y little sis Two siblings

We shared one *hina-ningyō* in a glass case.

Ms.K little sis

Three siblings

big bro

little sis

Ms.M

We shared the same *hina-ningyō* when I was younger.

Now, I display *Odairi-sama* and *Ohina-sama* in a glass case for my 2-year-old daughter.

I had a 7 step *hina-ningyō* as a child. When we packed it away, we had to cover the dolls' faces with tissues. The small pieces, such as the swords, are so small we sometimes confused which parts belong to which dolls.

Ms.R big bro big bro

little sis

little bro

Ms.H

I had *hina-ningyō* as a child. My sister and I had dolls made to look like us.

There was a store where we could order dolls with similar features to our own.

My older sister had a 7 step *hina-ningyō*, and me and my younger sister had *ichimatsu-ningyō*. I intend on buying a small *hina-ningyō*, which does not take up too much space, for my 1-year-old daughter.

Four siblings
Ms.N big sis little bro little sis

Even though I was raised in Japan, I didn't know that many people bought *ichimatsu-ningyō* for their second daughters. The reason I didn't have *hina-ningyō* in my house as a child is because I was too scared of them, so my parents didn't buy any for me—horror stories in Japan often include dolls. There is not just one rule of *hina-ningyō* and the decoration style differs for each family. In my opinion, this makes each collection one of a kind.

NOGUCHI Lika, translated by HASHIMOTO Sayuli

Korean Envoys to Japan

TOYOTOMI Hideyoshi, who acquired political control of Japan in the 1580s, invaded Korea in the 1590s, and it is said that as many as fifty thousand Korean civilians were brought to Japan as prisoners.

TOKUGAWA Ieyasu, the first TOKUGAWA *Shōgun* took control after Hideyoshi's death in the 1600s. Since he valued the relationship with the Joseon dynasty, which was in control of the Korean Peninsula at that time, he immediately terminated the Japanese invasion into Korea.

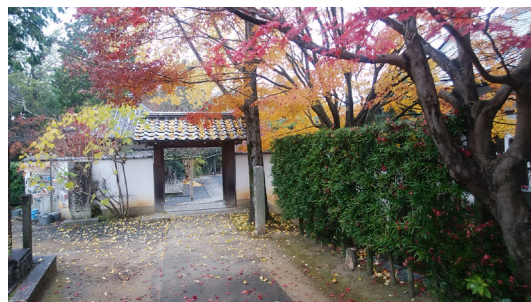
In order to return many of the prisoners, TOKUGAWA welcomed envoys from Korea and concurrently cooperated with the Korean dynasty to build a peaceful relationship. There were 12 envoys, which started from 1607 and continued until 1811. There were more or less five hundred participants per delegation.

Each delegation started at Seoul, continued on land toward Busan and began their voyage toward Japan. After a brief stop at Tsushima, they continued sailing towards Yodo port in Kyōto. While in Kyōto, they stayed at the Daitokuji temple, Honkokuji temple, and Honnōji temple. From then on, they travelled to Tōkyo and Nikkō through Tokaido, a road connecting Kyōto with Tōkyo, sharing their experiences with many people along their way.

At first, the purpose of the envoy was to bring prisoners back to Korea, and later to celebrate the new *shōgun* as he assumed the shogunate. From the side of the Tokugawa *Bakufu* (Tokugawa government), the envoy was a good opportunity for appealing domestically and internationally that Japan was under the governance of Tokugawa *Bakufu* and getting information on the Korean and Chinese political climates.

Although the primary purpose was to return prisoners, it is said that only seven thousand, five hundred Koreans returned to the Korean Peninsula while tens of thousands remained in Japan. There are many who continued to stay and pass along their culture and craft to the Japanese people. One of them, a Buddhist monk named Sōgon, founded the Saiuinin temple in Kyōto. He was kidnapped at Pyongyang when he was fifteen and brought to Japan. He travelled and lived all over Japan until ultimately coming to Kyōto when he was forty-one years old. I went to the temple at Kurodani in Sakyō ward, a beautiful place of autumn foliage, heard his life story from the staff of the temple, and visited the tomb where he sleeps eternally.

The diplomatic letters, sent from the Joseon Dynasty to Tokugawa *Shōgun*, allow us to understand the complexity of both cultures. The pictures of the proceedings of the delegations help show the large populations involved. UNESCO added these historical records to its Memory of the World Register in October, 2017. Let's take this opportunity to reevaluate the importance of peace and human right.



Saiuinin temple



Tomb for Sōgon,
founder of Saiuinin

FURUTA Tomiyoshi

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Scenes of Life & Culture Photography Exhibition –My Favorite Japan, China and Korea

© Photos Wanted!!

Theme: “Feel of City & Life in Japan, China and Korea” Photos should be of scenes of culture, custom or lifestyles of people.

Photo Rules: Maximum of 3 photos per applicant. Size of photo should be 2MB to 10MB.

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http://www.kcif.or.jp/HP/jigyō/volunteer/jp/event/shashin_bosyu2017.htm

Contact details: Kyoto City International Foundation (KCIF)

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Saint Valentine's Day

February 14th is Valentine's Day. It's a day for women in Japan to express their romantic feelings towards men they love by giving them chocolates.

The name Valentine is an English name from the Latin name Valentinus. What kind of a man was he? Legend has it that in the third century A.D. in Rome the Roman Emperor Claudius II was having difficulties enlisting young men as soldiers for war. Thinking that these young men were unwilling because they didn't want to leave their families or those they loved, the Emperor prohibited their marriages. However, Saint Valentine, a Christian cleric, secretly married these poor soldiers. When the Emperor, who was persecuting Christians, found out about this, he ordered Saint Valentine to acknowledge his misdeeds and renounce Christianity. Saint Valentine refused, so he was arrested and imprisoned.

While Saint Valentine was in prison, his prayers to God miraculously cured the sight of his jailer's blind daughter. The rumors of this reached the ear of the Emperor and Saint Valentine was executed on February 14th, 269 A.D.. Before his execution, he sent a letter signed, "From your Valentine", to the cured daughter, which is said to be the origin of the Valentine's Day tradition in Western countries, where special cards are sent to loved ones on February 14th.

In Japan, chocolate has become the symbol of Valentine's Day. This is said to have started in 1958, when a chocolate company launched a Valentine's Day chocolate sales campaign in a department store in Tokyo. These days, many Japanese people now enjoy this new tradition. Although this started as a chocolate industry's marketing strategy which doesn't have much to do with the original Valentine's legend, the part about expressing feelings of love to those you care about is still the same.

So, how do people in your country express their feelings of love to those they care about?



"For my dear papa!"

NAKAMURA Yōko, Translated by Sho

kokoka Kyoto International
Community House Library

Library Letter

2018/2 - 3

 kokoka recommends this book

Kyotō Short Stay Guidebook –Small accommodations selected by travel lovers –

Author/Editor:

Arica

Publisher:

Mitsumura Suiko Shoin Co.Ltd.,
2011



When you find out that your family or friends from overseas are coming to enjoy Kyotō, how about selecting accommodations from this Guidebook for their stay? They may be a little inconvenient compared with hotels, but why miss this charm of Kyotō! It's more enjoyable for your guests to feel Kyotō not only by sightseeing and shopping but also by the charm of Kyotō's accommodations. There are variety of places to stay, from whole *machiya* (traditional wooden houses or merchant houses in Kyotō) to guesthouses to pilgrim's lodgings.... Yes...they are all worth looking into, making us feel like staying there ourselves.

Congratulations! This year, the City of Kyotō and Paris, France will celebrate the 60th anniversary of their sister-city relationship. At this opportunity, why not find out more about the city of Paris by reading "Revised edition: Paris, Not in Guidebooks (Author: Inaba Koji, Publisher: Hankyu Communications, 2012). In this book, you will find not only the beauty of Paris, but will also see other images of Paris not easily found.

While reading this book, you may feel unknowingly drawn to visit Paris.

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.

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make it hard to look away.

The second temple is Konkai Kōmyōji. I think that less people know about this temple. I have met people born in Kyōto who have not gone to Konkai Kōmyōji! In my case, I accidentally found this temple when I was on my lunch break. I was walking around my school's neighborhood when I found a patch of temples with a large *sanmon* gate (a gate which symbolizes the path to Buddhist enlightenment). Upon entering the temple, you will see a massive *washitsu* (traditional Japanese style room lined with *tatami* floor mats) with two large, decorated pillar-like structures hanging from the ceiling and stone statues standing along the back wall. There is a peaceful beauty to this temple that I enjoy. After admiring this temple's beauty, I recommend getting *mitarashi dango* (grilled rice dumplings served with sweet and salty sauce) at the shop right in front of the temple entrance. It only costs 100 yen for three skewers!

I am very happy that I get to live in Kyōto city. Even though I have already found so much, there is still plenty hidden in this wonderful city. As you enjoy Kyōto, don't forget to see Sanjūsangendō and Konkai Kōmyōji. They both have a peaceful and spiritual atmosphere that you must experience. After seeing these temples, I challenge you to find a temple yourself! With all of the temples and shrines in Kyōto city, it shouldn't be difficult.



Konkai Kōmyōji temple entrance

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New classes are starting this April. Please apply at the reception counter (1F) after March 1st.

Please check the websites below.

“Hajimete no Ocha”

<http://www.kcif.or.jp/HP/jigyotabunka/en/fureai/index.html>

“Easy Japanese-Yasashii Nihongo”

<http://www.kcif.or.jp/HP/jigyotabunka/en/yasashii/nihongo.html>

Contact : Kyoto International Community House

TEL : 075-752-3511 E-mail office@kcif.or.jp



“Hajimete no Ocha” -
Japanese Tea Ceremony
Class

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