

Series: My Favorite Kyoto

Publisher: Kyoto City International Foundation

<http://www.kcif.or.jp/en>LIK website: http://lik.kcif.or.jp/index_en.htm**A Dream Come True**

When I was a little child, one of the teachers at my school was a Japanese, and ever since then, I had always wanted to come and experience Japan, the Japanese way.

It has now been a year since I was able to make my dream come true, and I have experienced many wonderful and few painful "first times". Like riding a bicycle for the first time after 15 years, wearing a *yukata* for the Gion Festival, or suffering from cedar pollen allergy for the first time in my life.

Every day has been enjoyable. Kyoto is a city that offers something for every taste.

If you feel like taking time out and relaxing, you can take a walk through a small and quiet neighborhood but, if on the contrary, you miss some chaos in life, trying to walk without bumping into someone in Shijo Street is a good challenge.

I come from Mexico City, a very cramped and noisy place, so the thing I like most about Kyoto is being able to enjoy nature and take long, quiet walks along the many rivers.

At the end of April last year, I got on my bicycle and decided to ride along the Kamo River. I was out of breath since I had not done any exercise for years. So, I decided to stop at a place with many different and beautiful flowers. That's when I found out that Kyoto has its own marvelous "Kyoto Prefectural Botanical Gardens" (京都府立植物園) that is rarely mentioned in the tourist guide pamphlets. That means that it's a great place to get to know the local nature in a very local atmosphere.

I am very lucky to live near the Philosopher's Path (哲学の道), so I have been able to witness the changing nature

Sofia Castillon**(United Mexican States)**

Hanami in Maruyama Park



Practicing rakugo

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Advertise your activities in the "Life in Kyoto" newsletter!

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!

Tel: 075-752-3511 ("Life in Kyoto" staff)

E-mail: office@kcif.or.jp**We are looking for new members like you !**

Would you like to write, edit or translate articles?

Do you like to work on webpages?

Our volunteer team has people from many different cultures, why don't you join us?

Let's create new things together! :)

Contact us now ! TEL: 075-752-3511 E-mail: office@kcif.or.jp

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along the seasons. I am most impressed by the beauty of the *sakura* trees in full bloom and can't wait to go back and watch the kids catching the cicadas during summer.

When talking about all these beautiful places, one cannot forget to mention the cherry blossom viewing. Getting together with friends to just have a good chat while enjoying a picnic under the cherry blossoms is something that, in my country, can only be seen in the movies.

Of course, all of these activities are even more enjoyable thanks to the kind heartedness of the Japanese people. They are always willing to help a lost person, and I have been redirected to amazing, secret places by chatting with the elderly during my walks.

Since I came to Kyoto I have also had multiple opportunities to share about my own culture by volunteering in kokoka Kyoto International Community House. It is very heartwarming to know there are people here in Japan who are interested to know about my own country as I was interested to know about Japan before coming here.

In kokoka, I also got to meet my host family and many of the staff that have all become a part of my Japanese family.

The Door to a New World: Learning a New Language

I am a third generation Japanese-American living in Japan for the first time. Since my arrival, I have been able to visit my distant relatives in Wakayama four times. Since they cannot speak much English, I must use Japanese to talk to them. Therefore, the more I study, the better conversations I can have with them. My dedication has even encouraged one of my relatives to continue studying English. She has even started chatting with my mom through Facebook!

It has taken me many years and a lot of hard work to get to where I am with Japanese, but my greatest progress has come from living in Japan. Being immersed in the language and culture allows me to practice my Japanese every day and, most importantly, opens up many chances to make mistakes. Some mistakes can be funny—like mixing up *kawaii* (cute) and *kowai* (scary)—or embarrassing, but with each one I have learned something new.

While studying Japanese, I have realized a key part to learning a new language is to also learn the culture of that language. For every language, there is a culture which you need to know in order to properly communicate in that language's country. In Japanese, there is a perfect example of this: an expression "*yoroshiku onegaishimasu*". This phrase can mean "please", "nice to meet you", "I'm counting on you", and much more. Ultimately, "*yoroshiku onegaishimasu*"'s meaning depends on the situation and what kind of relationship you have with the person you are speaking to. So, "*yoroshiku onegaishimasu*" can be very difficult to use without a good understanding of Japanese culture and customs.

A good way I have found for me to study Japanese is to watch Japanese TV programs. While watching Japanese TV programs, I can improve my listening and—with Japanese subtitles—my reading ability. Most recently, I have been watching "Terrace House", a reality TV show which follows six people living together in the same house. Even though I often need to rewind to understand, this show is very useful for studying Japanese, because I can watch and listen to their natural Japanese conversations and see how they act in their everyday lives in Japan.

As difficult as it is to learn a new language, being able to speak multiple languages is a very powerful and rewarding skill; it allows us to meet and speak with people from completely different cultures and to gain a new-found respect for that culture and its customs. I hope I encouraged you to learn another language or at least gave you some good advice.

IWAI Nicholas

Special Lunchtime Places of Kyoto

Kyoto, one of the most famous tourist destinations in Japan, surely has many top-level gourmet restaurants. There are delicious restaurants ranging from old-established ones to everyday gourmet restaurants, which are beloved by the locals. In this article, I would like to introduce some tasty and affordable lunch spots where you can stop by anytime with anybody, no matter who or the number of people joining you.

1. "Marutamachi Jyunidanya" (丸太町十二段家)

When it comes to "Marutamachi Jyunidanya", their *ochazuke* is a must-eat. *Ochazuke* is made by pouring Japanese tea over cooked rice in a bowl and eaten with Japanese pickled plums and assorted vegetables. This restaurant—founded 100 years ago during the Taisho period—has a retro-modern, quiet ambience. When you come into this restaurant, you will truly feel like you are in Kyoto. Especially, while waiting to eat and listening to the sound of food being prepared which will surely fill your heart with joy.

HP: <http://www.m-jyunidanya.com/>

2. "Kyosaimi Nomura" (京菜味のむら)

Healthy, delicious, and just enough to be full. If you ask me for a lunch recommendation near Karasuma Oike, I will definitely give you "Kyosaimi Nomura". In the display case, there are ten of the day's special *obanzai*—light Kyoto-style home cooking with boiled vegetables and marinated food—displayed. At "Kyosaimi Nomura", you can choose *obanzai* based on your desired texture and seasoning. If you go alone, you can sit down at a counter seat and enjoy an elegant lunch while facing a *karesansui* garden—a traditional Japanese-style rock garden.

HP: <http://www.nomurafoods.jp/>

3. "GYOZA OHSHO Karasuma-Oike" (GYOZA OHSHO 烏丸御池店)

Attention: this is not an ordinary "Gyoza no Ohsho"; it is a "GYOZA OHSHO"! In other words, a chic, lady-oriented version of "Gyoza no Ohsho". Although the taste is still of "Ohsho" style, the waiters' and waitress' uniforms are café-like and the atmosphere is brighter, which gives the restaurant a more refined feel. Even more so, there are also garlic-free dumplings available for those who want their breath to stay fresh. After eating there myself, I realized how this restaurant appeals to women. All in all, it is an amazing place in many aspects. **HP:** <https://www.ohsho.co.jp/shop/detail.html>

4. "Daikon no Hana" (だいこんのはな)

"Daikon no Hana" is a lunch place I randomly found while going to a Mibu garage with my friend in order to retrieve her smartphone, which she left on the bus. We ordered a *tonkatsu*—a deep-fried pork cutlet—and *mabo* hamburger steak set. Once they arrived, we were extremely surprised by the amount of food in each set. They were so big we were even afraid we could not finish them! Not only is the food delicious and served in abundance, the owners of the restaurant are a very kind elderly couple. Sometimes they are willing to talk with us about everyday stuff, which gave me the feeling of eating at my grandparents' house; it cannot be more stress-relieving. Funnily enough, my friend realized she left her smartphone once again, after already leaving the restaurant. Thankfully, the kindhearted Granny ran out of the restaurant and returned my friend's smartphone. What a sweet Granny! In the end, because of the huge amount of food we both did not eat dinner that night.

Place: Kyoto, Mibu, Bojo-cho 48-3. Tel : 075-822-8700

Please find the time to eat at each of these places I have recommended, and leisurely enjoy the delicious cuisine they offer for your lunchtime.



"GYOZA OHSHO" lunch



"Daikon no Hana" lunch

ZHANG Xiangyu

kokoka Overnight Evacuation Training Program 2018 **“Spend the night in a shelter!”**

When a serious disaster occurs, such as a large earthquake, kokoka soon be available as an official evacuation shelter. How about staying overnight at the kokoka shelter to perform a disaster drill with the Fire Department and participating in a disaster preparation workshop? Then, you will have a better idea of what to do when a major disaster strikes.

When: June 16 (Sat.) from 4 p.m. to June 17 (Sun.) 10 a.m.

Where: kokoka Kyoto International Community House

Fees: Free. Dinner and breakfast (survival food) provided.

Sleeping bags provided and you may be taken home after the training.

Bring or wear: flat-soled shoes and long slacks/pants

Target participants: non-Japanese residents/students; anyone who does not understand Japanese

How to apply: online (through kokoka website) or by phone: 075-752-3511

Program Content

- Earthquake simulator – experience the feeling of a large earthquake
- Life-saving training – cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) practice
- First-stage fire-fighting training – training to use a fire extinguisher
- Survival food introduction – familiarize yourself with the shelter’s survival food
- Disaster workshop – training for when a disaster occurs
- Shelter living practice – realistic experience staying in a shelter

We will address the following questions and concerns:

- Oh, a big earthquake! What should I do first?
- I don’t understand Japanese!
- There’s a fire! People are injured! What should I do now?
- What is the shelter like?
- I want to help people too!

Apply here:



cardiopulmonary resuscitation; CPR



earthquake simulation vehicle

A Rainy Day is a Flower Day

Every year in Japan, the rainy season falls on June, leading to many rainy days. When it rains, we cannot hang our laundry outside and we need to use an umbrella. Compared to sunny days, it is dark inside and outside of the house which gives us the blues. When I use an umbrella, I often look down as I walk.

Nevertheless, I try to focus on the nature around me as I walk; in the rain, all of the plants look more vivid than usual. It is enchanting to watch the raindrops fall from the leaves making them oscillate up and down. Even more so, you can see a shimmer in each raindrop owing to the stars on a moonless night. Hydrangeas, the symbol of the Japanese rainy season, look especially like big, radiant fireworks in the night sky. I can picture a fireworks festival being held while listening to the hydrangeas repel the raindrops and watching their dazzling dance. Maybe some snails are peacefully enjoying this fireworks festival somewhere. There is a hidden story within each rainy day. If you can imagine this, you can get excited for rainy days.

After enjoying this lovely story of nature, I recommend you to go to a flower shop and buy the flower which calls to you. When you come home and put it in a special place, you may notice that the flower brightens up the atmosphere of the room. You may discover a Japanese flower you didn't even know about.



Cooperation, photos : Hanakobo Kyoto Honten
<http://hanakobo.co.jp/>

OKAYAMA Kazuki in cooperation
with Nicholas IWAI

kokoka Kyoto International
Community House Library

Library Letter

2018/6・7

 kokoka recommends this book

KYOTO LIBRARY GUIDE

Publisher:
GENKOSHA, 2013



This time, we have something to boast about: kokoka's library is mentioned in this book! Isn't that cool? We will be very happy if the library gets to be known by more and more people and receives more and more visitors.

In Kyoto, there are many other wonderful libraries. After reading this book, we recommend that you go to visit some of these. Libraries have some peaceful atmospheres there, don't they?

Do you know these languages: Ladakhi, Dohoi, Popoloca, Nanai, and Domaaki? The book "World's Vanishing Languages" (Author: YOSHIOKA Noboru, Publisher: SOGENSHA, 2017) introduces many little-known languages from around the world. These languages have been vanishing one after another, and it is sad to see languages disappearing. By all means, please visit the library to read this book.

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.

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Visiting Sekihoji Temple and the Gohyaku Rakan, a Memento of Ito Jakuchu

I visited Sekihoji Temple which is well-known for Jakuchu's stone Buddhist statues. Ito Jakuchu was a famous Japanese painter from the Edo period. Once arriving at the Fukakusa station via the Keihan train line, I headed east walking across a canal to Shidan road. After 10 more minutes I arrived at the temple entrance. From there, I went up 80-steps and found a gate with a shape and color unique to the Obakushu sect. I passed through the gate and saw the temple's office on the left side. At the front, there was a small hall for the practice of Zen meditation (The main temple of Obakushu Zen meditation is at Manpukuji). There were cushions on each side of the Shaka Nyorai (Buddha) statue on which practitioners can meditate.

The healing Buddha had been revered as the principal object of worship until a fire destroyed the temple in 1979. After the Shaka Nyorai statue was found in the ground, the temple has been dedicated to it instead.

I climbed up the steps from the west side of the hall and found another gate. After going through the gate and going up a 30-step staircase, stone statues of Rakan surrounded by bamboo trees suddenly came into view.

It is said that Rakan are saints who listens to Shaka's sermons and can reach Nirvana. Stonemasons carved the statues of five hundred Rakan statues, known as The Gohyaku Rakan, based on Jakuchu's design. The arrangement of the Rakan expresses each moment of Shaka's life from being born to entering Nirvana. The Gohyaku Rakan have been weathered into round shapes by the wind and rain, and covered with moss. This gives them a certain charm. After moving forward 20 meters on the right side of the Rakan statues, I found Jakuchu's grave.

Ito Jakuchu, a Japanese painter of the mid-Tokugawa period, was born as the eldest son of a successful produce vendor of Nishiki Market. He took over the family business at the age of 23. He encountered the Zen monk Daiten in his thirties and started practicing Zen meditation. It was Daiten who gave him the pseudonym, Jakuchu. When he was in his 40's, Jakuchu devoted himself entirely to his painting. Meanwhile, his younger brother took over the family business. Near the end of his life, his house burned down and he relocated to a hut in Sekihoji Temple. He made a living by exchanging paintings for 15kg bags of rice.

Joe Price, who is an American art collector, spread the word of his art around the world. The works owned by Shokokuji and the Imperial Household Agency are well-known. If you visit Nishiki market after closing time, you can see Jakuchu's art impressively displayed on many stores' shutters.

IKUTA Minoru, translated by TANIGUCHI Chisato

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QR code for LIK on the Web

On the WEB you can read LIK in
English, Japanese and Chinese



■ Publisher: Kyoto City International Foundation

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