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Series: **My Favorite Kyoto**

## A Taipeiian's Walk in Kyoto

Chiu, Yun-Lung (Taiwan)

I flew to Japan and met my little girl who was living in Kyoto on Christmas Day; I wanted to be with her on my 71st birthday, which was coming up in about a week. Although flying alone for the first time made me somewhat nervous, I got excited and also had mixed feelings. It seemed like it had been a long time since I enjoyed a day with just my little girl. I used to take my daughter travelling around Taiwan, but this time my little girl played my role, showing me around Kyoto. It amazed me that I somehow thought I was familiar with this city.



I am in Kyoto Aquarium

I had always thought that the city of Kyoto was a city of history and culture, but I figured out that it has also been a city friendly to foreigners. Thanks to my little girl, I was also invited by the talented LIK volunteers to have a year-end party together with them. I enjoyed the warmth of the people in Kyoto. When I was leaving kokoka Kyoto International Community House, I turned around a few times and saw the words "once in a lifetime" running through my mind.

After having gone for sightseeing to the Nanzenji Temple, the Suikoku Aqueduct, and the Keage Hydroelectric Power Plant, I was exhausted. I chose to take a break at the Blue Bottle Coffee Shop, and I felt just like a time traveler from the *Heian* period, thru the *Meiji* period to the present time. I was so envious of the people in Kyoto who could enjoy their lifetimes in a city where history lives on.



Moreover, I think there are few cities that could protect their traditions while dealing with globalization. Two traditions in particular have been practiced for hundreds of years. One is called *Joya-no-Kane* (ringing the temple bell at midnight on New Years Eve) at the Chion-in Temple, and the other is called *Okera mairi* (a ritual prayer for health and a disaster-free year; people light a rope made from *Okera* roots to take home for cooking rice cakes) at the Yasaka Shrine. It is said that a person is fortunate to experience both of them. I felt peaceful, having been able to have a very different New Year than the noisy

The Instructor and I are in the event of Tea Gathering held by kokoka

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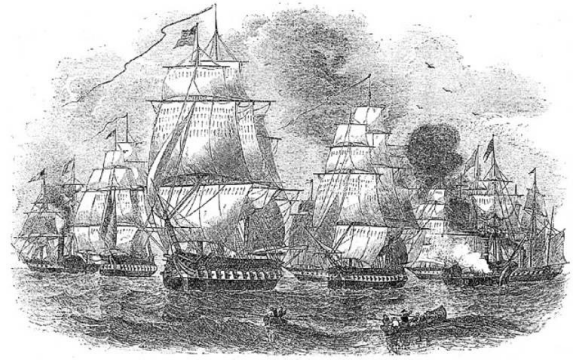


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# Sakamoto Ryoma - A Legacy of Pax Tokugawa\*- Part I

Sakamoto Ryoma epitomized the best of many men and women who came out of Pax Tokugawa, ingrained with the Japanese culture of hard work, intelligence, honesty and care for others. Ryoma dared to dream of a Japan free from the threat of oppressive violence of surrounding European nations in turmoil. Like the *Sengoku* Period, where the warring daimyos were endlessly causing grief and suffering to the people of Japan, the nations around the world posed a threat of such oppressive violence once again, because of the visit of Perry's black ships and their big guns. Seeing the danger, he bravely pursued solutions to end this threat, much like the Three Unifiers (Oda, Toyotomi, Tokugawa) dared to dream of a unified Japan, taming the *samurais'* oppressive violence, bringing in Pax Tokugawa.



Perry's black ships and their big guns

Source : Wikimedia Commons

The story of Sakamoto Ryoma will be framed in two parts, first from the perspective of the greatest strength possessed by Pax Tokugawa ruling with benevolence, and second from Sakamoto Ryoma himself.



*Sankin Kotai Daimyo*  
Procession to/from Edo

Source : Wikimedia Commons

The Japanese early in their history adopted a family structure of what's commonly called the stem family. This was the bedrock of Pax Tokugawa society on which everything Japanese was founded. The stem family was its greatest strength.

It can be described as a rule of inheritance, where the first-born son inherits all his father's house, land and assets. Other siblings were to leave the parental home, but may also live with the first born. The stem family had impacts on how Japan developed like no other nations, which is the main reason why Japan is such a unique country in the world.

Ruling with benevolence is about listening to subjects saying how they want to be governed by representatives who realize their wishes. The idea of 1-stem family, 1-voice was evolving. The Tokugawa Bakufu\*\* instituted Laws for the Warrior Households for about 260 or so daimyos in Japan, requiring alternate attendance or *sankin kotai*, where half of *daimyo* heads were to attend to the business of governing in Edo, every alternate year. These heads of *daimyo* were politically very active, vigorously advocating and formulating solutions, policies and edicts for the welfare of their own stem families, as well as, for the stem families of their domainal villagers. Through the voices of these 130 or so *daimyos'* in Edo, the voices of all the stem families in Japan were being heard by the Tokugawa Bakufu.



All roads lead to Kyoto (and Edo) in Pax Tokugawa

So, how did Sakamoto Ryoma fit in with his stem family and with Pax Tokugawa? This may be taking artistic, poetic license to a high degree with one possible interpretation of events during Pax Tokugawa, but it's a very dramatic and interesting one. Stay tuned for the next issue of "Life in Kyoto" for the exciting finish, the *pièce de résistance\*\*\**, of the story of Sakamoto Ryoma.

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\* Pax Tokugawa: Period of peace enjoyed by the Japanese people from when Tokugawa Ieyasu became *shogun* in 1603 until the *Meiji* Restoration in 1868, more commonly known as the *Edo* Period.

\*\* Tokugawa Bakufu: Government of Japan at the time when Perry sailed into *Edo* with his black ships.

\*\*\* *pièce de résistance*: A noun meaning main, outstanding feature.

SANADA Seiji

## World Autism Awareness Day

Have you heard of the word “autism”? People with autism, a developmental disorder, have certain problems, such as difficulty communicating or concentrating too much on one thing, because their brains develop in different ways than other people. However, looking at it another way, mental traits such as paying careful attention to details and conscientious adherence to rules can be viewed as mental strengths.

As a result of differences in brain development, the degree of severity and the types of developmental disorders are different for each individual. Therefore, there are some who live normally with few problems, while others have difficulty in their social lives, and require appropriate support. At present, including these variations, a term called “Autism Spectrum Disorder”, is used to describe a condition that includes a wide range of mental development disorders.

Every year, the United Nations designates April 2 as “World Autism Awareness Day” and has adopted April 2 through April 8 as “Developmental Disorder Awareness Week”. Even in Japan, the “World Autism Awareness Day Executive Committee in Japan” was established to organize awareness campaigns to deepen the understanding of developmental disorders, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder and learning disabilities.

During the “World Autism Awareness Day” and “Developmental Disorder Awareness Week”, awareness campaign events and illumination light-up events are planned in various places throughout Japan. In Kyoto City, an awareness campaign event is planned at Station Square in the Kyoto Station Building on April 2. Blue illumination light-up events are planned for April 2 as well at the Kyoto Prefectural Office, at the Southwest Watch Tower of Nijo-jo Castle, and at the Kyoto Tower (also planned for April 3). If you encounter an awareness campaign event or see a blue illumination light-up event, please remember that there may be people around you who have developmental disorders. Those people can live more comfortably when appropriate support is provided, such as being given instructions that are easy to understand and, as much as possible, being kept away from difficult to deal with situations, including crowds, loud noises and bright flashes of light.

For more detailed information on “World Autism Awareness Day” and planned campaign events, please check the website below.

World Autism Awareness Day Executive Committee in Japan  
<http://www.worldautismawarenessday.jp/htdocs/> (Japanese only)  
Kyoto Autism Association  
<http://as-kyoto.com/> (Japanese only)



KANAYA Chinami



# Marchés of Kyoto



People from a little shop at Yoshida Marché



Yoshida Dormitory cafeteria crowded with people



Free play area for children at the event

Did you know that there are a lot of unique marchés (French for “markets”) in Kyoto?

Each marché has a different style, and is full of delicious foods and the nicest things people have ever seen. So, you can understand why so many people visit them.

What is interesting about each marché in Kyoto is also the setting.

People can enjoy the shops in a marché, not to mention the culture and the beauty of the landscape when it is in a temple, a shrine, or at a *machiya* townhouse.

The other day, I visited a somewhat unusual marché.

It is called the “Yoshida Dormitory Marché”. It was held in a dormitory of Kyoto University on the Yoshida Campus. It is the oldest college building in Japan, and is also famous for housing the student government. Some years ago, the university planned to demolish the dormitory because of the age of the building, so students and volunteers who wanted to keep the dormitory tried to manage and organize various events there.

This led to the opening of the Yoshida Dormitory Marché; streets vendors from Kyoto and all over Japan came to open their shops, and there were visitors from various other countries. Some people came because of the good atmosphere of the marché, and some came because they were interested in the history of this dormitory of student government. I feel that this marché plays an important role in letting people know of the existence and the value of the Yoshida Dormitory. There are not only shops there, but also places where children can play, as well as *rakugo*, dance and music performances to entertain visitors.

Refreshing our everyday lives are the marchés in Kyoto. Which one is your favorite?

※ If you are interested in Yoshida Dormitory Marché please check their Facebook page .

(frequently updated)

※ Information site about marchés in Kyoto <http://www.kyotodekuraso.com/>

TOKUDA Motoko

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ones in Taipei where people count down and set off fireworks.

On the morning of my birthday, I received some Japanese sweets called "Unryu" ("dragon in the cloud"). I never dreamed that one kind of sweets here had the same name as mine (雲龍<sup>うんりゅう</sup>). In the afternoon, we went a little farther to the Byodoin Temple, registered as a world heritage site, in the city of Uji. Seeing how astonished I was at the beauty of the architecture, my little girl pointed her finger toward the two phoenix figures high on each end of the roof, telling me that some noble person built the Phoenix Hall as an embodiment of paradise. Because it is believed in Taiwan that "dragons" and "phoenixes" are the messengers of God, it is common to say, "I hope my son can be a dragon and my daughter can be a phoenix", when parents expect their kids to have great success in the future. As I also expected my little girl to become successful in the same way, I named her "Phoenix" (鳳<sup>ほう</sup>). It seems our destiny is here in Kyoto! I appreciate Kyoto a lot because I never dreamed those happy days with my little girl could come again.



I am in Byodoin Temple.

The twelve-day trip ended too soon, but it was the best gift for this old man. Even after arriving home, I have had the same dream a few times, in which I was walking with my little girl in Kyoto.

translated by LIN Hsiu Feng

kokoka Kyoto International  
Community House Library

# Library Letter

2019/4・5

 kokoka recommends this book

## "World's Unique Cafes and Restaurants"

**Author:**  
PIE Books  
**Publisher:**  
PIE International, 2016



This book introduces many of the world's unorthodox cafes and restaurants. One of them maybe on top of a bluff, another a glass-walled enclosure under the sea. In addition, some cafes and restaurants have stunning and gorgeous interior. That is to say "Unorthodox".

Please come to our library to read this book. You're sure to find at least one cafe or restaurant you'll want to visit.

Congratulations! In 2019, Kyoto and Boston in the USA celebrate 60th anniversary of their sister city relationship. It is a chance to get to know about Boston and US Capital, Washington, D.C. through reading the book "Boston • Washington, D.C. \*Benricho 2017 vol.13" (Y's Publishing Co., Inc. 2017). It includes lot of information about Boston and Washington. By all means, please read this book.

\*Benricho ... convenient 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.

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# Food Culture Rooted in Kyoto



coffee with sweets

After hearing of a sophisticated café in the south western area of Gojo-Nishioji, I decided to give it a visit. It is the original café of Ogawa Coffee\* which started business in Kyoto in 1952 and expanded domestically and even to Boston, US. Upon entering the shop, there are a variety of coffee beans showcased at the front counter, which were probably grown in the Middle East, Indonesia and Latin America. There is a factory for roasting coffee beans near this location. There is also a variety of homemade pastries, such as a multilayered

cake with *matcha*—a kind of Japanese tea—and chocolate filling. I ordered two cups of coffee and a multilayered *matcha*, chocolate cake. Both coffee cups and their saucers were *Kiyomizu-yaki* porcelain, which have been made in Kyoto for a long time, decorated with flowers and birds. Once I had a sip of the coffee, the sweet flavor and aroma filled my senses. When I had a bite of my multilayered cake with *matcha*-cream and chocolate, bitter and sweet flavors were blended in harmony in my mouth. Then, I had another sip of the coffee and its strong flavor and aroma filled my senses once again, replacing any traces of the cake.

Not only are their coffee and pastries delicious, but, more impressively, Ogawa Coffee gets their coffee beans globally while utilizing Kyoto tradition; there is a Kyoto-like atmosphere in their store, there are *matcha* flavored pastries and they use domestically made porcelain. I truly admire how they developed a new culture of food by combining these elements.



coffee beans



sweets

\*[https://www.oc-creates.jp/shop/kyoto\\_honten/](https://www.oc-creates.jp/shop/kyoto_honten/)



FURUTA Tomiyoshi

## Writers, Editors and Contributors

FUJITA Aoi / FURUTA Tomiyoshi / HU Kan Xin / IKUTA Minoru /  
KANAYA Chinami / Karl JANSMA / KAWASAKI Masashi / KOSONO Miki /  
KUO Sheng Hong / LIN Hsiu Feng / NAGATA Hikaru / Nicholas IWAI /  
PARK Sumin / SUZUKI Hidetoshi / SUZUKI Shoichiro / TAMURA Kazumi /  
TOKUDA Motoko / YAGI Takashi / YAGI Toshiyuki / YUZAWA Kimio



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TEL: 075-752-3511 FAX: 075-752-3510

E-mail: [office@kcif.or.jp](mailto:office@kcif.or.jp) Website: <http://www.kcif.or.jp/en/>

Torii-cho 2-1, Awataguchi, Sakyo-ku, Kyoto, Japan 〒 606-8536

6 min. walk North from [T09] Keage Station, Tozai Subway Line

