

Life & Cultural Information Newsletter

KOKOKA

Life In Kyoto

Autumn 2022

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01 My favorite Kyoto

Protecting nostalgic tradition through the Gion Matsuri Festival

Yu Yanghong(People's Republic of China)

Three years ago, I recall that during the parade of the Ato Matsuri, the last of the Gion Matsuri, the exhausted participants who had pulled the mountain-like ancient floats with all their strength throughout the day, were resting on the road, enjoying the setting sun and cool, pleasant wind with us. Together, we listened to a festival organizer speak.

At that time, with all of us gathered on the street, we were witnessing the end of the festival. In a sense, I felt like I had witnessed a scene from the same festival a thousand years ago. The people who participate in the Gion Matsuri from the participants to the audience, are people who cherish this tradition, and they are indeed the “main characters” of the annual event.

Originally from Nanjing, I am a Chinese master's student of mathematics at Kyoto University, and this is my fourth year in Kyoto. I am always touched by the people here keeping their traditional lifestyle through a strong connection with their traditional culture. Walking on the street of Kyoto, I sometimes feel a sense of nostalgia as many of the old temples reflect the history of my home country, China. In Kyoto, not only are the temples and shrines well preserved, but also many traditional festivals like the Gion Matsuri are still celebrated, and it is a common sight in daily life to see people wearing traditional Kimono. But at the same time, the people of Kyoto have adjusted western

contemporary and traditional living styles in order to achieve a delicate balance between the traditional and modern. This can especially be seen when one travels from Shijo to Shinkyogoku Shopping Street, as the decorations of shops in the area reflect this delicate balance between traditional and modern aesthetics.

Perhaps it can be said that globalization, on the one hand, has helped us to communicate with each other more conveniently than ever before, but on the other hand, it has made our lives more similar, and has put every country at risk of losing its cultural individuality. Since abandoning the old for the new has been occurring at the individual level, in the face of western technologies, how best to protect our tradition while incorporating new values, will be a difficult question for the global community as a whole.

“My grandfather, my father also participated in this festival...” said the speaker on that day three years ago. In these rapidly changing times, it may very well be that the unchanged is what is most important. When considering the unchanged, I also feel a sense of security in something that can be protected. I believe that by firmly holding on to tradition, the people of Kyoto will also earn the courage to face the future.



02 Opening a Bank Account in Japan

FUJIWARA Reiko

If you are planning to live in Japan for a long period of time, you should consider opening a bank account for your convenience. The following information may be useful to open a Japanese bank account.

Depending on your Japanese language ability, it could be a good idea to bring someone who can communicate in Japanese to the bank with you.

Eligibility: The applicants' period of stay in Japan must be longer than three months.

In principle, the three following documents will be required to apply for a bank account at a given bank in Japan:

1) Residence Card

2) **Proof of identity***: For those with a student visa, a student ID. For those with a working visa, an employee ID or other documents issued by your employer which

states your conditions of employment.

*A valid passport may also be required to confirm your identity.

3) Health Insurance Card etc.

Please also note the following:

A personal seal (hanko) may be required depending on the bank you choose.

If you wish to receive overseas remittances to your bank account, you may need a "My Number Card".

Online services to open a bank account are available at some banks, such as Japan Post Bank, known as "Yucho Ginko" in Japanese.

In general, if the period of your stay in Japan is less than six months, you can open a non-residence account. After six months of your stay, please visit the bank to renew it to the general account.

03 The Rock Band from Kyoto "Inuningenyonz"

SUZUKI Hidetoshi

Do you like listening to rock music? There are many rock bands in Japan including the ones based in Kyoto. Some of them are organizing music events by themselves to boost the music scene in Kyoto, such as "Inuningenyonz" which organizes "Samurai Rock Fest" every year in Kyoto.

Inuningenyonz is a four piece band formed in 2013. They are based in Kyoto, but performing live concerts in all over Japan. I went to their live concert recently, and had an interview with the member.

According to them, their main activity is the live concerts which they perform approximately 100 times every year. The audiences who come to their live concerts are not only young people, but many of those who are older than 40's. They also said "Since we are not a major band, our relationships with the audiences are very close. We know very well about how attractive persons they are".



I also asked about their future dream, they answered "We want to continue the band forever. If no audience would come to listen to our music, it would be difficult to continue. So we try to keep our band mobilizes the audience to our concerts as long as we perform". On the other hand, they said for foreigners "If you are foreigner, you may not be able to understand the meaning of the lyrics; however we still believe you can enjoy music, even if you can't understand the meaning of lyrics".

Speaking of the live concert I went, the performance of Inuningenyonz was so powerful and the audiences were so excited raising their fists to the music. Among the audience, there was the one even came from Kanto area who said, "Each of four member is so attractive, so I have come to their live concerts many times".

Regarding "Samurai Rock Fest" which I mentioned at the beginning of this article, I heard is organized wishing to make the music scene in Kyoto interesting by themselves. They also aim to attract those who usually do not experience live concerts and make them feel like coming.

There are many rock bands in Kyoto other than "Inuningenyonz", and I think it would be great to listen to various rock music performed by them as well.

04 Learning in Kyoto

(1) Kyoto University of Advanced Science

ISHIHARA Keiko

Marharyfa N.Kuline is 18 years old. She is from Lugansk in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine. She came to Japan in June to study at Kyoto University of Advanced Science (KUAS) and entered its international student dormitory. Incidentally, she is one of the 22 four-year engineering students whom KUAS accepts under its "Ukraine Student Support" program.

Marharyfa is currently* studying the Japanese language all day long. "Kyoto is surrounded by mountains and I find it pretty relaxing. People here are kind and polite and I really appreciate it". However "Japanese climate is unusual for me, so I'm trying to get used to it. Also, a big problem is the great cultural difference between Europe and Asia". *As of July 31, 2022.

Yet, at the Faculty of Engineering of this University, half of the students are from abroad. "I'd really like to meet people from different countries and find out about their habits, customs, and cultures, as well as travel a lot through Japan and explore it to the fullest".

When asked what she would like to be in five years' time, this young girl replied with earnest words that made the LIK reporter deeply reflect. "Considering the situation in Ukraine, it is pretty difficult to answer. So now I try to live my life and enjoy every little moment".

At the Faculty of Humanities, KUAS also hosts one Ukrainian female researcher who came to Japan along with her child.

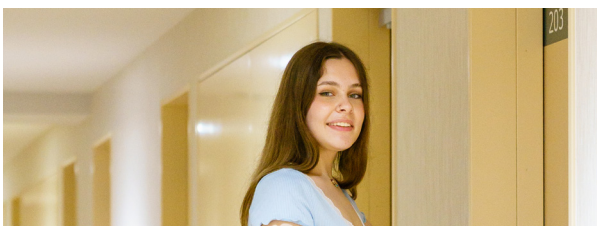
KUAS will continue to provide full support for all the 23 students over the next four years, underwriting their tuition, dormitory fees, and travel expenses to Japan, as well as supporting their living expenses and daily necessities. It must be quite a task. The person in charge of the program said emphatically: "The program is not only to support the reconstruction of Ukraine but also to nurture human resources who will support the future society of the world and Japan".

MIURA Eima is from Tokyo and he is 20 years old. He is a third grader in the Faculty of Engineering. His classes are from morning till 5:30 in the evening. MIURA engages in wind band club activities or part-time jobs before returning home somewhere between 8 to 10 p.m.. Then he works on his assignments until around midnight. He says: "Busy days, but fulfilling".

Classes at the Faculty of Engineering are conducted in English. There might be some difficulty in that aspect, but he said: "Studying together with students from various countries makes me realize that we are all the same. If there is a problem we can't solve, we worry about it together, and if we succeed, we rejoice together. As we share joy and laughter, the language barrier disappears".

Asked about his projects in five years from now, MIURA said: "I'd like to be enthusiastically challenging on something that no one has ever done before, with people from all over the world".

International Student Dormitory



05 Let Us Wear a Kimono | IKEMIYAGI Yasuko

It is a dream for young Japanese girls to take a walk in a *kimono* in the ancient city of Kyoto. They take photographs of themselves to post on Instagram.

Nowadays, the Japanese motto in wearing a *kimono* is "The easiest way is the best."

Thus, we separate the long *kimono* into two pieces, making it into a jacket and skirt accompanied by an attached sash.

Concerning *kimono* material, now we have denim and synthetic materials which are comfortable just like western wear and washable *kimonos* which can be washed in the washing machine.

While visiting the Kyoto International Community House, I watched European women learning how to tie a sash. Copying the instructor, they placed it around their waist, tied, folded, and arranged it into a pretty shape.

When asked, "Why don't the ladies just wear an

attached sash?" the instructor answered,

"They feel they are following Japanese tradition by tying it the authentic way."

While walking together in our *kimonos*, we can share time and become friends. Our friendship lasts through email after some of the students go back to their home country.

For those who haven't tried wearing a *kimono* yet, the first step may be to try a rental *kimono* with a sash and accessories and get dressed by an attendant. But why don't you try an easy *kimono* like a *yukata*, often worn in the summer, to learn how to wear a *kimono*?



Kyoto International Community House

06 kokoPlaza Letter

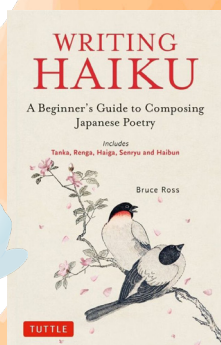
Writing Haiku: A Beginner's Guide to Composing Japanese Poetry

By Bruce Ross. Tokyo, TUTTLE, 2022. Language: English

In all these cases, 'Sumaho' (short for "Smartphone"), 'makudo' (short for "McDonald's") and 'naruhaya' (short for "narubeku hayaku"), the Japanese has a penchant for saying words as short as possible. The tendency of the Japanese to communicate in as short, as simple and as few characters as possible may come from the Japanese Haiku poem.

In Haiku of just 17-characters can be found all the essence of the beauty of the seasons intermingled with the emotional abundance of poet's intimations conveyed in its message. This book explains the appeal of Haiku and how to compose it in an easy-to-understand English.

Even if you don't understand Japanese, why not create your first English Haiku that expresses your everyday emotions and feelings of the heart?



In the space of books "kokoPlaza" on the second floor of kokoka, the books which introduce the culture of Japan or foreign countries, the books to know about life in Japan (law, visa, education, parenting, disaster prevention, etc.), the books for study of Japanese language and so on are available. We hope you will make use of them.

[Hours] 9:30 ~ 17:00

Closed on Mondays, last day of every month, new year holidays

[TEL] 075-752-1187

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*Books are not available for check-out.

07 Upcoming! kokoka Open Day 2022

KAWASAKI Masashi

This year's kokoka Open Day where you can meet many people from different countries and regions is upcoming soon. You can enjoy music and dance stage performances, as well as variety of foods at stalls from different foreign lands. You can also experience wearing ethnic costumes from around the world.

Life In Kyoto (LIK) will co-host an event called "Welcome to kokoka Playground". Picture-story shows for kids, video introduction and panel exhibitions of kokoka volunteers will be presented for your enjoyment. Let's play together with kokoka volunteers at the Event Hall on the Ground Floor.

Some other interesting events are also being prepared by kokoka volunteers, like "Flea Market" where you can find inexpensive goods, "Speech Room" for those who are studying Japanese, and so on.

This year's Open Day will also feature "Peace in Ukraine!" event organized by Ukrainians living in Japan. It will include workshops and a simple Ukrainian language course to let you know more about Ukraine. We will be ready to have the "Open Day" with all kinds of measures to prevent Covid-19 infections. Looking forward to seeing you!

Date: November 3 (Thursday, Holiday) 10:00-16:00

Venue: kokoka Kyoto International Community House (6-minute walk from Keage Station on the Subway Tozai Line)



For more information, please check the QR code.

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International Students Job Expo Kyoto 2022

10.13 Fri ONLINE 11:00 ▶ 16:20
10.15 Sat In-person 10:30 ▶ 15:00

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<https://www.kcif.or.jp/web/en/publications/#lifeinkyoto>



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Back numbers are also available.

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