

Life & Cultural Information Newsletter

KOKOKA

Life In Kyoto

Winter 2022

Contents

01 My Favorite Kyoto

02 Let's Follow the Saba Kaido Highway

03 Kyoto City KYOCERA Museum of Art

04 Glimpses of Japanese History

(3) Age of the Kyogen: Taro, his master and scary wives

05 Beautiful Winter Sight
in Amanohasidate

06 kokoPlaza Letter

07 kokoka Open Day

01 My Favorite Kyoto

Kyoto Martial Arts Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Dojo MIBURO

Harvey Liam

I have been training Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu at "Kyoto Martial Arts Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Dojo MIBURO" for around six months now, and feel like it has become a big part of my life in Kyoto. I previously trained Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu in Australia for one year and decided I wanted to continue it in Japan. At the beginning I was nervous about if I would fit in to the Dojo. I did not know if the style of training or the overall atmosphere suited me or not, but after taking a trial lesson I knew it was the place for me. The training was great and everyone was very welcoming. I was also surprised to see that there were many foreigners training there too.

Whilst living in Kyoto, I have been studying at university and also undertook an intensive two month internship at Kyoto International Community House. Although I have been quite busy, I have been consistent in my training, and feel like I have got a lot out of it. It has not only become a place for me to learn Brazilian Jujitsu, but also a place for me to exercise, release

stress, and socialise with many people from various paths of life. Overall, I feel like it has become a place where I belong. What makes the club special for me is the people. There are many locals of Kyoto, students from other parts of Japan, and many people from other countries too, representing a very similar demographic of Kyoto itself. With this being said, there is a strong common drive to improve together, which brings everyone together.

After training I often go to the nearby Ume-yu public bath, which is popular among the Dojo members. In fact, the owner and one of the workers of the bathhouse both train at the Dojo. The owner of the bathhouse was once kind enough to show me the fireflies outside of the bathhouse, which became a special memory of Kyoto for me.

I am looking forward to continuing my experience at MIBURO and my life in Kyoto.

Kyoto martial arts Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Dojo MIBURO webpage : <http://miburo-kyoto.com/>



02 Let's Follow the Saba Kaido Highway | IKEMIYAGI Yasuko



Why don't you follow the Saba Kaido highway? It can be either on foot or by car. Saba Kaido is a name of the highways that brought fish caught in the rich Wakasa Bay to Kyoto. There were many routes. In particular, many marine products were transported from Obama on Wakasa Bay to Demachi, the entrance to Kyoto. The Wakasa Kaido and the Harihatagoe are famous for their routes.

Let's follow the Wakasa Kaido from Obama as the starting point. "Even if Kyoto appears to be far away, it is 18 leagues", it means even if Kyoto is far away, it is not that far at the distance of about 18 leagues (about 70 km), the seoi (*people carrying mackerel and seafood on their backs) had powerful legs and went back and forth on the highway. The seoi wore black trousers, the same as black coats of *Kimono* style, traditional *tabi* socks and *zori* foot wear made of straw. There is a life-size mannequin wearing this historic costume at the Kumagawa-juku Museum (Shukuba-kan).

The seoi laid bamboo leaves on the bottom of the bamboo backpack and put mackerel on the back so that mackerel would not spoil by human heat. This type of transport on foot took just one day and night to reach Kyoto. It was said that the salted mackerel had a delicious taste as the salting time was merely 24 hours, time for bringing to Kyoto. The salted mackerel were used on top

of rice which was called mackerel *sushi*, still popular today. After leaving Obama, the next stop is Kumagawa-juku. This was a trading hub of sea products. Even now, there is a long cityscape that retains the vestiges of those old days.

The next stop of Kumagawa-juku is Kutsuki Village. When you drive a car along the national route and enter the village, you will see a peaceful landscape. The Western-style Maruhachi Department Store, built in 1933, remains in the center of the village and is now a tourist information center. The women who were born there and have seen the changes of the village tell the visitors about their old lives.

When you reach Demachi through Wakasa Kaido, you can feel the bustle of Kyoto by the willow trees, Masugata Market, and the wave of people on Demachi Bridge.

Recently, the course of Harihatagoe (through Hatihata Pass), which is different from the Wakasa Kaido, has also attracted attention. Every year in May, Saba Kaido Ultramarathon is held and runners run from Izumi-cho (of Obama) to Kamo Ohashi-shita Park in Kyoto by Harihatagoe. In addition, Saba Kaido Experience Walking is also held in May, and it takes two days to reach Kyoto by crossing the same pass. Through the ultramarathon and walking, people follow the way the seoi once walked.



Maruhachi Department Store



Saba Kaido Experience Walking

03 Kyoto City KYOCERA Museum of Art | FURUTA Tomiyoshi



The captioned museum is located at the Okazaki area near the Heian Jingu shrine and the ROHM Theatre Kyoto stand. Since the establishment in 1933, many works of art from not only domestic, but also overseas artists, have been exhibited. Several hundreds of thousands of people visit the museum every year. In 1964 the Venus de Milo of the Louvre museum in Paris was specially exhibited and as many as nine hundred thirty thousand people, including myself, visited. It really was extreme congestion to get to see it. In 2000, the annex museum located immediately east of the ROHM Theater Kyoto was added to the

main museum. Not in order to look back, but more importantly looking ahead for Kyoto, in 2020 the main museum was renovated under the concept that the museum should be freshly designed and modified.

The number of the exhibition rooms increased and, walking through the spacious hall, visitors get in front of the transparent glass window through which they can enjoy the view of the Japanese garden and the borrowed scenery of the Higashiyama Mountains.

As thus, there are some Instagrammable spots in the museum. Additionally, people located far from Kyoto can enjoy the online tour of the in housed arts. The foreign students with the "okoshiyasu Kyoto pass" can enjoy free visit to some designated cultural places including the museum.

Unexpectedly, as a group, not well known, people can use the museum facilities for exhibiting their works in the museum. The availability of that is uploaded to the museum's homepage. Please apply soon, because it will be quickly occupied especially in sight seeing season.



04 Glimpses of Japanese History

(3) Age of the Kyogen: Taro, his master and scary wives | ISHIHARA Keiko



"Busu" courtesy of Shigeyama Kyougenkai

Every year, on new year's day, NHK airs a program on "Noh and Kyogen". "Noh and Kyogen" are two of the most representative classical Japanese performing arts, both with a history of over 600 years. While Noh is characterized by its solemn atmosphere, Kyogen is a comedy, showing the reality of human nature and behavior as they are. In these plays, very often you can see people of lower rank exercising sarcasms and mockery toward those above them. Scenes that depict wives loudly criticizing their husbands, sometimes even resorting to violence, are not unusual.

At around the 15th century in Japan, when Kyogen came to have its present form, the development of economic activities in the agriculture and handicraft industries gave ordinary people some strength, making them not so much afraid of authority and power.

There is a Kyogen play entitled "Busu". A man fears that, while he is away on some business, his servants may eat the sugar which he treasures. Sugar was a precious commodity in those days. So, he warns them before leaving home, saying "This is a deadly poison called Busu. You will definitely lose your life if you eat it".

But, Taro and his co-worker see through the lie and eat all the sugar up. Then, they deliberately destroy valuable tea utensils and other properties of their master. When the master returns home, they cry loudly claiming that "We tried to kill ourselves by taking the Busu poison to apologize to you for having broken your valuable utensils. Nevertheless for some unknown reasons we are still unable to die".

The play ends with the master scolding and chasing away his two servants, crying "Never let you up! Never!".

In Kyogen, you may also notice that women express



"Hanago" c Halca Uesugi

their emotions in a very straight way. This is because in those days the Confucian morality which holds that men are honorable and women are inferior, has not yet become commonplace.

In the play "Hanago", a husband has a mistress. He deceives his wife and goes out to meet the woman, whose name is Hanago. As the wife finds out about this, she gets furious out of jealousy and anger. The man get scared and is chased around by the woman who tries to punish him severely.

But, this story works, roughly, only until the end of the 16th century. In Kabuki, a new form of theater that flourished most in the 18th century, you frequently see scenes in which a wife, forced by the moral code of obedience and self-sacrifice, just silently cries while enduring insolence of her husband..

What a thing to say! The status of women in Japan had declined during that time. Regretfully, this fact still casts shadows over the status of Japanese women in this 21st century. Let's hope for a more free and equal future Japanese society.

For starters to enjoy Kyogen, you can watch "Bilingual Kyogen Busu" on YouTube. In Kyoto, there are some theaters specialized in Noh and Kyogen. I had a good time while seeing "Busu" and "Fumizumou" at Kongo Noh Theater, located near Kyoto Gyoen.



"Fumizumou" courtesy of Shigeyama Kyougenkai

05 Beautiful Winter Sight in Amanohashidate | YOKOTA Kanon

If you have ever spent a winter in Kyoto, you would know that it is cold to the core from December to February because it is located in a basin surrounded by mountains. However, there exists a beautiful place that makes you forget the bitter cold. This is Amanohashidate, located in Miyazu City in the northern part of Kyoto.

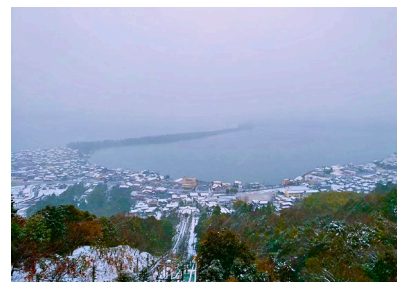
Amanohashidate is one of Japan's famous "three scenic views", along with "Matsushima" in Miyagi Prefecture, and "Miyajima" in Hiroshima Prefecture. Amanohashidate is a unique geographical feature, with approximately 5,000 pine trees growing on a narrow sandbar stretching nearly 3.6 km in length. This feature is a mysterious formation created by nature over thousands of years, and the name "Amanohashidate" (Heaven's Bridge) comes from the fact that the unique topography looks as if a bridge is spanning the heavens.

Amanohashidate has two observation decks; one in the south and the other in the north. Kasamatsu Park, a popular observation deck, offers a panoramic view of Amanohashidate on the north side. It is also famous as the birthplace of "Mata-nozoki", where the view of Amanohashidate looks uniquely different when you bend over and view

them between your legs. The "Mata-nozoki" view of Amanohashidate is called the "Shouryukan" (View of the Ascending Dragon) as the sandbar looks like a dragon rising towards the skies.

Another observatory, Amanohashidate Viewland, is located on the summit of Mt. Monjyusan and offers a magnificent view of Amanohashidate from the south. When you look down into the sky from this observatory, you can enjoy a view called "Hiryu-kan" (View of the Flying Dragon), because the sandbar looks like a dragon dancing in the sky.

Of course, beautiful scenery can be seen in the summer, but there is also spectacular snowy scenery that can only be seen in the winter. The snow falling on each pine tree planted in Amanohashidate is breathtakingly beautiful, just like a watercolor painting. This snowy scene is called the "Maboroshi no Hiryu-kan" (Illusionary View of the Flying Dragon) because the snow melts soon after the sun rises. These beautiful winter sceneries attract many tourists, even in winter. If you have the opportunity, why not visit Amanohashidate, a spectacular winter scenic spot in Kyoto.



06 kokoPlaza Letter

The Ninja FAQ100

TSUCHIYA Haruhito, SAKAMOTO Minako, BC Publishing, 2018

"Ninja" - The mysterious special operative which had been moving long history of Japan from behind secretly. By using various art, such as making themselves invisible, walking on the water, flying the sky sometimes, their special ability also has been told in many stories. This book explains the history and thought regarding Ninja, skills and tools of Ninja. You may be grieved that there are no Ninja, though you came to Japan. No no, there are many things regarding Ninja still remain now, such as place names, legends, customs and life styles. Reading this book, you may also be able to become a strongest Ninja.



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 [FAX] 075-752-3510

*Books are not available for check-out.



Life In Kyoto

Life & Cultural Information Newsletter
Winter 2022

Kyoto City International Foundation

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

E-mail : office@kcif.or.jp

Torii-cho 2-1, Awataguchi, Sakyo-ku, Kyoto, Japan
6068536

6 min walk North from [T09] Keage Station

Tozai Subway Line

Open 9:00am - 9:00pm Close on Mondays

(Open Monday if Monday is a National Holiday)

It is my first time participating in the kokoka Open Day this year. I am from China, so when I saw Jianbing guozi (煎餅菓子, Deep-fried dough sticks rolled in a thin pancake), traditional instruments and dances, and played the game of Jianzi (毽子, Its appearance is similar to a shuttlecock, you kick it with your feet to keep it from falling to the ground), it reminded me of my hometown with great nostalgia. Even though I was in a foreign country here in Japan, I felt a sense of familiarity and warmth. I am sure there are many people who feel the same way as I do.

I think this event is a good opportunity to experience, deepen understanding towards, and appreciate other cultures. I performed Japanese Kamishibai (紙芝居, Picture story-telling) as a volunteer in "Life in Kyoto". I had never done Kamishibai myself before, but when I saw how much the children enjoyed it, it encouraged me to read the stories out with more passion to entertain them even more. It comes to mind that many things can entertain people regardless of nationalities.

This year, an event with the theme of "Peace for Ukraine" was organized. People from many countries wrote messages such as "NO WAR" on blue and yellow heart-shaped sticky notes and stuck them on a paper-cut tree with only trunks and branches at the beginning on the panel. Each heart-shaped note filled with everyone's wishes was like a leaf, one after another, spreaded from the trunk to the tips of the branches, and eventually, all leaves together made it a big and lush tree, as if they were hoping the prayers could reach Ukraine. May peace come to Ukraine as soon as possible!

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



You can also read LIK online.

Back numers are also available.

Writers, Editors and Contributors

FUJITA Risa / FURUTA Tomiyoshi / Huihua (Lisa) Zhou

ICHINOMIYA Keiko / IKEMIYAGI Yasuko / IKUTA Minoru

ISHIHARA Keiko / ISHIHARA Shiena / KANAYA Chinami

KAWASAKI Masashi / KOSONO Miki / KOTANI Hitomi

LIN Hsiu Feng / MACHINO Yoichi / MATSUO Yukiya

MIZUNO Hiroshi / NISHIKI Mie / OKAMOTO Keisuke

SATO Mina / SAWADA Atsumi / SUZUKI Hidetoshi

YAGI Toshiyuki / YOKOTA Kanon / YU Yang Hong / YUZAWA Kimio