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My Third Visit to Kyoto

I have visited Kyoto as a tourist twice in the past. On both trips, I arrived at Kyoto station without doing any research about the city and only went around the city with the help of brochures which I got from the tourist information center. Definitely, as a tourist, it was not a good way at all. I still keep many pictures of Kyoto, but I do not actually know anything about the history or cultural value of the places I went to. I only remember some typical sightseeing place names, such as Kinkakuji Temple or Kiyomizudera Temple, and so on. Therefore, I had a very vague image in my mind that Kyoto is a tourist city, until my third visit to Kyoto from October this year which totally changed that image.

On this visit to Kyoto, I am not merely a tourist. The period of stay is not very long—only half a year—but I need to rent a room, and spend my time as a college student. In short, I have moved to Kyoto! Getting the opportunity to see the city of Kyoto as a resident, I can sense a totally different feeling for this place growing inside me.

Currently, I go to college from Shugakuin where I live by bike via Higashioji street. In the Shugakuin area, there are few tourists, and you can quickly tell that this place is a residential area of Kyoto's local people. You see many elderly people rather than young people here. Local supermarkets, vegetable stores, post offices, banks, and convenience stores are located next to each other so that the people can do everything they need to do together in one trip.

Around the Ichijoji area, you can see many *ramen* restaurants. The locals and also many tourists wait together in long lines in front of some popular ones and once you get inside, you will quickly realize that they are the very typical type of traditional Japanese restaurants. It makes sense that people, from both outside and inside Kyoto, are attracted by such kinds of nostalgic moods. Let us call this a kind of "Glocal"*.

Nguyen Van Phuc

(Socialist Republic of Vietnam)



The author visiting a bamboo forest in Arashiyama in 2014



Around Shugakuin area

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Body-Warming Dish: Taiwanese Spicy Braised Beef - “*Hong Shao Niu Rou* (紅燒牛肉)”



**The Ingredients for
*Hong Shao Niu Rou***



Hong Shao Niu Rou

When the weather gets cold, is it not customary for every country to eat meals with high energy and nutrition? Back in the time when Taiwan was still an agricultural society, there was no custom of eating beef. It was not until the 1950s that people started to see beef as a menu option on dinner tables. After the Second World War, due to the large influx of immigrants, a drastic transformation occurred in Taiwanese society, politically, economically and culturally. As a result, the culture of eating beef spread in Taiwan. Among the beef dishes that have become increasingly popular, “Hong Shao Niu Rou” has become particularly famous.

“Hong Shao Niu Rou” not only has a savory aroma but also its exquisite balance of spiciness and sweetness creates warmth to flow through the body. Also, since it is a combination of meat and vegetables, nutrition is conveniently provided in just one dish. Although it takes a while to make the dish, the making of it is very simple.

1. Dice the beef, carrot, white radish and green onion into bite-sized pieces, then slice the ginger thinly.
2. Heat the pot or pan, add oil, then sauté all the ingredients (except for carrot and white radish).
3. Pour in water and place the diced carrot and radish on top. Put the lid on and let it simmer until the ingredients are tender.

Et voila! Enjoy it with either rice, noodle or bread. “Hong Shao Niu Rou” warms the body very effectively, and at the same time, gives you hints about the taste of Taiwanese cuisine and its history. Please have a try of this delicious, exotic dish from the south!

KUO Sheng Hong

Ingredients (serves 4)	
Beef	350g
Carrot	1
Radish	1
Green onion	1/2
Ginger	5 slices
Oil	1 teaspoon
Chili bean sauce	2 table spoon
Chili oil	Proper amount
Sugar	1 teaspoon
Soy sauce	5 table spoon
Rice wine	30 ml
Water	300 ml

Plum Flowers You Can Lightheartedly View

When you find plum trees flowering even in the *sokobie* (penetrating cold) of Kyoto City, you can feel the approach of spring. In this article, a few of the many spots that you can casually enjoy plum trees flowering are introduced. The photos of this article show a few of the flowering plum trees and give the date which they were taken last year.

1. Kyoto Prefectural Botanical Gardens, *roubai*, January 26 th

Home page: <http://www.pref.kyoto.jp/plant/>



Roubai is not classified as a kind of plum. But, with its flowering season in winter and the plum-like fragrance it gives off, it seems natural to classify it as a plum variety. It is grown in the northern area of the Botanical Gardens in the “*Ume Garden*.” One month after *roubai* blooms, the plum trees will bloom.



Roubai

2. Kyoto Gyoen, the Public Garden, a pair of plum trees, March 14 th

Guide map: <http://fng.or.jp/kyoto/common/files/kyotogyoenmap.pdf>



In the northeastern corner of Kyoto Gyoen, there remains the house of the aristocrat, Nakayama, where the Meiji Emperor was born. In the house’s garden, a pair of flowering plum trees grow. One of these trees blooms in red and the other in white. Although it is not allowed to go into the garden, you can still appreciate these trees and the serene atmosphere of their garden. If you have the time, you can also visit the plum trees in the southwest corner of Gyoen.



A pair of plum trees

3. Ootoy Shrine, drooping plum and *sakura*, March 22 nd

In Kyoto, *sakura* regularly blooms at the end of March. On the other hand, plum trees bloom in mid-March. Of course, due to the weather they may bloom a week earlier or later. In the Ootoy Shrine, which is near the Philosopher’s Path, a pair of drooping plum and *sakura* trees grow. Once every ten years, they will bloom at the same time. Last year, the blooming of the *sakura* was forecasted earlier than usual, so it was expected that they would both bloom at the same time. But, what regrettably happened was that when the plum trees were in full bloom, the *sakura* were only budding, as shown in the photo.



Drooping plum and *sakura*

Let us pay attention to the blooming calendar, so this year we can go out and enjoy these beautiful trees in full bloom.

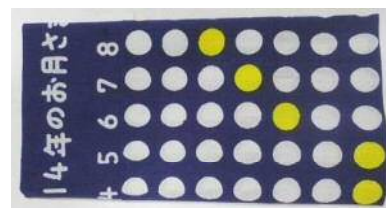
FURUTA Tomiyoshi

English *Rakugo* (Comic Story) Performance

It's said that laughter is superior to any other good medicine, laughter enriches our life. One of those which make you laugh, *Rakugo* is Japanese original one man show while seated. In the 17th century, it's being passed down that ANRAKUAN Sakuden who was the priest of Seiganji temple* at Shinkyogoku was the founder of *Rakugo*. The sermons of that priest had a good reputation for being really amazing, and a lot of people came to that temple. Thereafter, the street performance called *tsujibanashi* was born that TSUYU no Gorobee and others started taking money from the audiences, talking about funny stories and parodying *Kabuki* in Kitanojinja Shrine and Shijo Ohashi Bridge. In addition, contemporary *Rakugo* style was changing in entertainment venues called *yose* by the professional entertainer who was called *hanashika* or *rakugoka*.

Rakugo has two features. One is storytelling by imitating voices, where one player performs a multiple roles. Another one is gesture. Props are only *sensu* fan and *tenugui* towel. Sometimes, a fan can transform into chopstick or ballpoint pen and a *tenugui* into wallet or letter. The performance sparks the audience's imagination with gesture-like pantomime. And now, *yose* is held in *senjo* public baths as well as in other large entertainment venues. It's still familiar to us even now. Moreover, *Rakugo* in English is performed overseas. And today, there are also rare English *Rakugo yose* performed domestically.

By the way, I went to interview the members of a unique Rafurafutei English *Rakugo* Club ** in Kyoto. "Could you tell me how you got started with English *Rakugo*?", I asked. Then everyone answered in the same way, "We love English, and we want to send a laugh to a lot of people through English *Rakugo*". And there are regular events (*yose*) in that Seiganji Temple and others. You would like to go and see *Rakugo*, wouldn't you?



**Rakugo Props:
Tenugui Towel**



Sensu Fan

* Seiganji Temple

<http://www.fukakusa.or.jp/>



**Rafurafutei English Rakugo Club

<http://2laughtei.blog.fc2.com/>



**Yose by Rafurafutei
performer**



Practicing *Rakugo*

YAGI Takashi

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Counseling Day for Foreign Residents

Do you have any questions or concerns regarding legal issues, visa problems, taxes, insurance, your pension, etc.? Are you worried about something? Professionals in those areas can discuss any of these with you. Interpreters will be available on request. Advanced reservations are required. We will protect your confidentiality.

When: Sunday, February 24, 13:00 - 17:00

Where: kokoka Kyoto International Community House, 3F, Conference Room and Counseling Room

Reservations: phone 075-752-3511

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Ramen district in Ichijoji



"Uwasa no Yaoya Ken-chan in Tanaka" greengrocer

Heading further to the South of Higashioji-street, you can see more young people, such as college students. Here stands one of my favorite greengrocer which is trying hard to compete with the big supermarkets. Its name is "Uwasa no Yaoya, Ken-chan in Tanaka". You might already feel something very intimate from the shop's name. Here you can not only buy good quality fruits at a cheap price but also get a unique thanks, "*Ookini, arigato~!*" from an old lady, who I guess is the owner's wife, when you leave the shop. The shop has a strange charm, which makes you unconsciously go there again and again.

I have, to think of it, firmly grasped a non-touristy side of Kyoto through the experience of living in this city as a resident. I have been here for three months, but have not visited all of the sightseeing spots yet. However, I found some peaceful spots in my daily life and it is one of the best things of my third visit to Kyoto.

* "Glocal" is a combination of "Global" and "Local". Here it means the characteristic of being both rooted in a specific local community and interacting with the overseas at the same time.

kokoka Kyoto International
Community House Library

Library Letter

2019/2・3

 kokoka recommends this book

"Kyoto's children's songs Let's sing together"

Editor:

Mikami Keiko

Illustrator:

Fujihara Nojiko

Publisher:

Kamogawa Publishing, 2018



In this book, they will introduce 59 children's songs that have been handed down and sung continuously in Kyoto.

Because the book includes a CD, by all means, listen and try to sing along. If you like some of these children's songs, it is a good idea to teach someone how to sing them.

Also, there are illustrations that show children playing and having fun singing. Please come to the kokoka Library and read this book!

"In Her Kitchen; Stories and Recipes from Grandmas Around the World"

Author : Gabrielle Galimberti,

Publisher : Kawade Shobo Shinsha, 2016

The author traveled all over the world, getting to know 58 grandmothers and the dishes they made. They are introduced in this book, along with the recipes and photographs. Grandma's dishes were made with plenty of love, and any of them must be absolutely delicious. I want to eat all of them!

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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Kotatsu and Ondol

How do you live with the harsh, cold weather in the middle of winter? People from most countries have been using various ways to stay warm in their houses during winter, and I will introduce two different heating systems used in Japan and Korea.

First, the traditional Japanese home or room-heating source is called a *kotatsu*. It has been in use for more than 600 years, and is simply a heat source under a low four-leg table frame, covered with a large quilt (to prevent the warmth from escaping), and a square tabletop. Originally, it was used with a charcoal fire, and the families could use it to cook their food, as well as to stay warm. In modern times, *kotatsu* are almost all electric, with controls for the amount of heat desired.

The *kotatsu* represents the heart of the Japanese home during winter, and is an important element of Japanese culture. Family members often gather around the *kotatsu* and enjoy their time together by watching television, eating mandarin oranges, or playing games, to give a few examples. In addition, the *kotatsu* has been shown to be the best way to stay warm for the lowest cost during the cold winter.

Second, in Korea, people have been using a heating system called *ondol* to keep themselves warm during the winter. *Ondol* in Korean means ‘warm stone’ and it dates back to the Bronze Age, or about

1000 BCE. In this traditional method, *ondol* utilizes the heated air and smoke from a fireplace on one side of the house, spreading it under the floor to heat the thick stone or masonry floor of the house, and then lets it out into a chimney on the opposite side of the house and fireplace.

Instead of stone floors, modern houses and apartments in Korea are often built with hot water pipes embedded in the floor, so you can turn on the heat simply with the push of a button. Similar to the *kotatsu* in Japan, the *ondol* system has had a great impact on the Korean life-style. Since the floor is warmer than the indoor air, *ondol* has been the comforting way for people to talk and eat or sleep on the floor. Koreans often cover it with a thick bed quilt called an *ibul*, in order to keep the floor even warmer. When family members come back in from the outdoors, they put their cold legs under this blanket to enjoy the comfortable warmth together.



Kotatsu



Ondol

Park Sumin

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