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Series: My Favorite Kyoto

Living my dreams awake in Kyoto

Jyven Ghee Wan TAN (Malaysia)

While writing this article on the plane to Okinawa, moments of my first flight to Japan flashed through my mind. That was the year 2012, when Dr. YAMANAKA Shinya was awarded Nobel Prize, the catalyst that brought me to Kyoto. I am so grateful to MEXT scholarship, which enable me to live my dreams awake in Kyoto.

In 2006, I was enchanted by the movie "Memoirs of a geisha", so I started my *nihonbuyo* (Japanese dance) journey with *FujimaRyu* style under a retired *geiko* from Gion Higashi, who moved to Malaysia due to her husband's transfer. I also dabbled with *koto*, *shamisen*, *ikebana* and others.

Since coming to Kyoto, I had continued my training under Shisen Tatsumi sensei whom I met during a *nihonbuyo* seminar organized by "Kizuna" of Kyoto University. Since then I had been training under her at kokoka Kyoto International Community House or Hitomachi Korykan Kyoto every other Saturday.

Apart from classical dance, I also had been training pole dance in Kyoto.

The highlight was to perform at the Kansai Pole & Dance Festival on Pontocho Kaburenjo's stage, which is still a *maiko* and *geiko* dance theater until these

days. This event represents Kyoto's beauty so perfectly, harmonic clash of modern and tradition.

Besides arts, I practiced *iaido* (Ways of Drawing Sword and Responding to Sudden Attack) of the *TamiyaRyu* style at the Budo Center behind Heian Shrine, which is a *dojo* built in the 18th century, a important national cultural property of Japan. This *dojo* is usually closed to the general public; I was so lucky to be able to train inside sometimes. *TamiyaRyu* was made famous through the Battle of Sekigahara. This was the sword skill used by Tokugawa-clans of *samurais*.



Author at the entrance of Center for iPS cell Research and Application (CiRA) where she did her research



Author and her Nihonbuyo instructor Shisen Tatsumi at the backstage of ROHM Theatre with her friends who came to watch the performance

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Foreign Women's Association Paruyon

I sometimes wonder what kind of problems do foreigners encounter in Japan?

They might have language problems, and perhaps miss their country sometimes. I imagine that it could be very hard for women to raise their children in an unfamiliar environment. To understand the situation better, I visited "Paruyon", an association that supports foreign women who live in Japan.

"Foreign Women's Association Paruyon" has been working as a consultation counter and telephone support for foreign women. They also have an event, "Puhuu", where foreign women meet, talk about life in Japan, and share information.

The day I visited the association, Nina who represents the group was there with women volunteers.

Nina is from Finland. As an immigrant, she realized that foreign women need to have a community space to share and get information. Many of them have problems like managing marriage and divorce paperwork. They also have difficulties communicating with Japanese people and understanding Japanese etiquette. Nina said that there is not enough mental health support for foreigners who face those stressful situations in Japan.

This year, Paruyon started a telephone support service for foreign women. Nina says that anybody can call for any reason, even if they don't have problems. All volunteer members of the telephone support group participated in a peer counseling training. Nina encourages women to call the association even when they have a small trouble, before it gets bigger.

"Paruyon" means "a lot" in Finnish. This name contains the hope of having a lot of fun, and getting a lot of information, from a lot of friends.

< Telephone and Chat support for foreign women >

3rd Saturday and 4th Wednesday of the month, 9:30~11:30 am

Tel: 080-4021-3005 (English or Easy Japanese,
also Chinese and Korean on 4th Wednesday)

Fee: Free (by phone regular phone charges apply)

Skype: Peer Support Paruyon

LINE: support-paruyon

facebook: "Foreign Women's Association Paruyon"



Paruyon representative
Nina Hakkarainen

TOKUDA Motoko

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Hotto Chat's Flea Market (Children clothes, toys etc.)

This event shouldn't be missed by foreign parents raising children!!

This event is organized by kokoka's volunteer group "Hotto Chat" for parents who think, "Children's have grown up, but throwing away their clothes is wasteful. Also we need larger size clothes and shoes!"

The basics are bartering, but just "give away" and just "get" are also OK.

When: October 5 (Sat.) ※ time is undecided yet, please inquire

Place : kokoka Special Conference Room

Who : Foreign parents raising children in Kyoto

Fee : Free, reservation in advance is required

Inquiry/Application : TEL.075-752-1187

Organizer : Kyoto City International Foundation



Flea market event last year

A Summer Sweets of Kyoto: *kuzukiri*

In the dark-lacquered bowl are large cubes of ice scattered about with transparent, gelatinous noodles wisping around these cubes, reflecting the light. Similar to the flow of sand surrounding the stones in traditional Japanese gardens, it takes only a glance at the dish to bring a creek into your mind and calm you. It is *kuzukiri*, a kind of sweets originated in Gion that always comes to mind when it comes to talking about sweets in Kyoto.

Kuzukiri is a thing of simplicity. To make *kuzukiri*, one needs only *kuzu* powder and water. And for that, it is refreshing regarding both its appearance and its flavor. Also, as *kuzukiri* itself is almost tasteless, it is served with *kuromitsu* (brown sugar syrup) which is used to be poured over the *kuzukiri* or to dip the *kuzukiri* in. This *kuromitsu* provides a perfect degree of sweetness and a rich, natural caramel aroma which envelopes the cold jelly noodles, creating a smooth texture. Furthermore, you can enjoy the alternating chewiness and melt-in-your-mouth texture of the *kuzukiri* inside your mouth.

If you are around Gion this summer, think about trying this hot-day-reserved sweets that concentrates “Kyotones” into one bowl, while costing you no more than a thousand *yen*. You can have the original *kuzukiri* at “Kagizen Yoshifusa,” located at Shijo-dori. As Kamogawa flows through Kyoto and chills the city, *kuzukiri* runs through your dry, fevered throat to give your stomach a pleasant chilling sensation.



Kuzukiri

KUO Sheng Hong

The Kyocera Gallery

The citizens of Kyoto have loved the Kyoto City Museum of Art, in the Okazaki section of Sakyo-ku, for the last 85 years. It has been renamed* the Kyoto City Kyocera Museum of Art, and it will be reopening in 2020, after renovation of the original building.

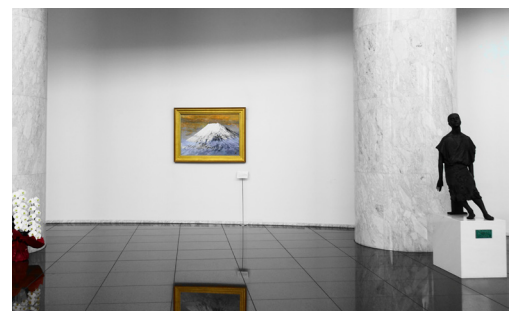
There is another Kyocera museum located at the Kyocera corporate headquarters in Fushimi-ku. The name of this museum was changed to the Kyocera Gallery in April 2019, to avoid confusing it with the recently renamed Kyoto City Museum of Art. This other gallery was set up for people to be able to appreciate art works more casually, as part of a cultural support project. Sculptures and paintings are displayed in the forecourt and lobby of the first floor, creating a relaxing atmosphere. When the Christmas season arrives, the whole area is illuminated with color, producing a fabulous fantasy world. Additionally, other special exhibitions are held several times a year. On the second floor, there is the Fine Ceramics Museum, which includes a display showing the historical transition of ceramics technology. It is simple and easy to understand, and is unlike any others worldwide. Anyone can learn something from this exhibit. Why not go there sometime, and see the Kyocera Gallery for yourself?

Admission is free. Closed on Saturday, Sunday, and National holidays (Special exhibitions may have different schedules)

*Naming rights gives a sponsoring company or person the right to place their name on a public facility, and provides that sponsor the benefits of name recognition and exposure, in exchange for providing the public facility with monetary support or services, usually significantly reducing their expenditures.



Forecourt



Lobby



Christmas illumination

YAGI Takashi

An Amendment on the Immigration Control Act

~kokoka's Support Service for foreign nationals regarding legal and visa issues~

The immigration control act on residence status of foreign nationals was amended in April of 2019. The reason for this amendment is the domestic decrease of workers in Japan. It gives a status of residency of up to five years to foreign nationals who possess an advanced and/or specialized skill covering a variety of industries.

As for the status of residency and visas, kokoka Kyoto International Community House holds free consultations for foreign nationals on Japanese laws related to immigration, such as visas, on the first and third Saturday of every month. I interviewed Ms. Olena, who is in charge of this service in kokoka, about these free consultations. She stressed, "When you face any problems, it's best to immediately consult with an expert." Although visa issues are too complicated to understand and their laws often change, experts advise people on how to prepare documentation to find a solution. There are translators for English and Chinese on standby, but for other languages, special arrangements are necessary. Of course, all personal information is kept confidential. If you want to know more information, please visit the website below**.

*Details related to the new status of foreign national residency, such as what is required to be a "Highly Skilled Professional" for the Immigration Bureau. <http://www.moj.go.jp/content/001293198.pdf>

**Advice on Immigration Laws in Japan: <http://www.kcif.or.jp/web/jp/support/counselling/>

FURUTA Tomiyoshi

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kokoka Kyoto City International Foundation 30th Anniversary Commemorative Event

Date: September 22 (Sunday), 2019; From 1:00 p.m. ~ 4:30 p.m.

Place: kokoka Kyoto International Community House

Fee: Free

1) Opening ceremony (at the first floor lobby, from 1 p.m. ~ 2 p.m.)

- * Welcome speech: kokoka's message for its 30th anniversary about the coming era of multicultural coexistence
- * Singing: kokoka volunteers and foreign residents will sing / perform
- * Reading: kokoka's original picture books will be presented and put on display
- * Fashion show: children wear and present various traditional clothing from different countries

2) The Global Session: "Influence of parents' languages on their childrens' development"

(at the special conference room, from 2:00 p.m. ~ 4:30 p.m.)

This is a seminar and group session where participants will discuss how parents' culture and language impacts their kids who have foreign background. Japanese and foreign residents can discuss and exchange opinions, and share various ideas and thoughts.

Participants: up to 50 people, reservation required via kokoka website or phone: 075-752-7511

3) An event for parents and kids: "Get to know about the world!" (first floor lobby, from 2 p.m. ~ 4 p.m.)

In the newly-opened Kids' Space, foreign students from Vietnam, Georgia, and other nations, will read picture books and introduce their country's culture.

4) Art Exhibition in commemoration of kokoka's 30th anniversary. There will be about 30 pieces of lithographs (which are ink wash paintings) and other styles of visual arts at the Sister City Corner / Exhibition Room on the second floor.

Exhibition Period and Time: From September 18 (Wednesday) through September 22 (Sunday), from 9 a.m. through 9 p.m. (through 4 p.m. on the last day)



translated by SUZUKI Shoichiro

Introducing kokoka

Do you know about Kyoto International Community House, or kokoka, near Keage Station? The philosophy of kokoka is bringing to reality a community where individual views and thoughts are exchanged so people from all over the world can interconnect with each other.

In line with this philosophy, we convey the charms of Kyoto, engage in the cross-cultural exchanges through events, and setup a consultation desk to support foreign residents living in Kyoto City.

At this time, we would like to introduce two kokoka matters related to Kyoto International Community House.

Firstly, kokoka is a nickname for Kyoto International Community House. This nickname comes from the first 2 letters of the words in the name “Kokusai Koryu Kaikan (This is the Japanese name for Kyoto International Community House.). This nickname was selected through open entries in the commemoration of our twentieth anniversary. And this year marks our thirtieth anniversary. In September, there will be commemorative ceremony, announcements of 10-year plans, choir recitals, and fashion shows featuring children wearing traditional folk costumes.

Secondly, there is a big stone in the front garden of the Kyoto International Community House. This stone was made in the image of a “seed” that would grow sprouts of international exchanges with unlimited potential for the future. And, the image character related to this stone exists. Its name, kokoka, perfectly fits! Some say that kokoka is a mysterious creature that lives all around the stone. Also, its appearance looks like a round stone.

By all means, please come to the Kyoto International Community House and meet kokoka!



kokoka seed



kokoka mascot

MIKAWA Yurina

kokoka Kyoto International
Community House Library

Library Letter

2019/8・9

kokoka recommends this book

“The Traditional Costume for Children in the World”

(Supervised by International
Society of Fashion and Design,
published by X-Knowledge, 2016)

kokoka→



This book of photo collections introduces bright colourful traditional folk costumes from around the world.

Children wearing traditional folk costumes are adorably cute, the costumes matching charmingly well.

Nowadays in many areas around the world, the traditions of wearing folk costumes are disappearing, but it would be great if they could be inherited to last forever.

When looking at this photo collection, kokoka also feel like wanting to try on various ethnic costumes.

※kokoka is Kyoto International Community House mascot.

“Grandma is Okay”

(Author: Akiko Kusunoki, pictures: Ishii Tsutomu, publisher: Doshinsha, 2016)

This is a picture book with “dementia” and “nursing care” as themes for problems which many people cannot avoid as they grow old. We strongly recommend everyone to come to the Library Reading Room and read this picture book. The interaction between the main characters, “Tsubasa” (Grandson) and “Baaba” (Grandma) would surely move readers’ hearts. This book was made into a movie and won an award at the Milan International Film Festival.

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.

[Hours] 9:30 a.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Closed on Mondays & last day of every month

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translated by YAGI Toshiyuki

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If you are a student in Kyoto, check out “Zephyr” airport. You will be blown away seeing Kyoto from an elevated angle in the sky. I myself was amazed by those breathtaking views.

Since I acquired level N2 for JLPT before even stepping foot on this land of the Rising Sun, and also having acquired level N1 for JLPT soon after I arrived in Kyoto, wishing to be able to give back to Japan, I volunteered to help in MEXT Scholar Association (MSA), serving as the Kansai region finance coordinator.

Like many students, I also worked part-time, I was a *ninja* in the Samurai and Ninja Museum, where I trained customers with *ninja* martial skill and briefed them through the history of *samurai*. I was so lucky to have landed this part-time job. Through this, my understanding of Japan has gone deeper. I could identify the different *yoroi* (the *samurai* armor) and the *katana* or *wakizashi* (the short version of *katana* that is part of the paired swords owned by a *samurai*) traced back to the Muromachi period.

The spotlight of my life in Kyoto was living in a traditional *ryokan* in Gion. Dressing in a *kimono*, gliding through the flower districts on an almost daily basis, apart from my usual research and studies in the Center of induced-Pluripotent stem cell Research and Application at Kyoto University, makes my life in Kyoto truly Japan. I live in Gion Ryokan Q-beh



Author and her friend at the entrance of Gion Ryokan Q-beh, where she lived



Author and her instructors after Japan TamiyaRyu iaido training in the head quarter

for free in exchange with some help with the translation and passing keys to the late check-in guests. This enabled me to make so many friends around the world and placed myself in a vacation mood every day. This *ryokan* is very close to my favorite temple, Reizan Kannon, where I pray and get in touch with my inner peace. I am so grateful and blessed to have been living here in Kyoto.

Lastly, I would like to give an advice to students or expatriate living in Kyoto as someone who has lived in Kyoto for 8 years. Please don't lock yourself in the laboratory or office, and remember to explore this beautiful city and learn her arts and traditions. You could study or work anywhere in the world, but there are things that could only be experienced here in Kyoto.

■ Writers, Editors and Contributors

FURUTA Tomiyoshi / IKUTA Minoru / KANAYA Chinami / Karl JANSMA / KAWASAKI Masashi / LIN Hsiu Feng / MIKAWA Yurina/ Nicholas IWAI / PARK Sumin / PK Katharason / SUZUKI Hidetoshi / SUZUKI Shoichiro / 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 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

