



# Life In Kyoto

Life & Culture Information Newsletter

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<http://www.kcif.or.jp/en>

Series: **My Favorite Kyoto**

## Pictures of Kyoto

**Manon Cortaud (French Republic)**



**Author**

Two years ago, I took a flight from France to Japan, and after travelling for a couple of months, I settled in Kyoto during *banshun* (the end of Spring). My first impressions were of wooden houses, cherry blossoms, and light rain.

I started my journey as a volunteer at a guesthouse in Ishida, in southern Kyoto. At that time, my Japanese language ability was very poor, but I met co-workers there who were as motivated to learn English, as I was to learn Japanese. We met regularly after work for tea, coffee and cakes, making great memories, and learning from each other.

I love tea, so I spent the whole summer drinking *hojicha* (roasted green tea). Kyoto seems to be the best place for this, and you can easily reach the neighboring town of Uji to get the best *matcha* (green tea). But surprisingly, I found myself loving coffee too, thanks to living in Japan. If you look carefully while strolling near the Yamashinagawa River, you can find a small coffee shop

named Heroes Coffee, the perfect place for enjoying coffees of various origins in a peaceful and friendly atmosphere.

One thing I enjoyed in this quiet area of Kyoto was walking (and sometimes running) near the river, it goes from Yamashina to Ujigawa. Also, I liked riding a bike and exploring between Fushimi-Momoyama and Higashino. This is how I discovered what I called "Cat Alley", not far from Rokujizo Station. A gang of cats was always standing there. I saw them frequently when riding my bike, and they were always staring at me when I passed by.



**Residents of "Cat Alley"**

continued on page 6

## Thoron onsen (spa) INARI



**In Japan only in our sento there is a thoron hot spring (an artificial hot spring) !!  
Free rental of towels and other bathing tools.**

Kyoto City Nakagyo-ku Sanjo Shinsen Nishi-iru Sagaru  
Imashinzaike Nishimachi 4 TEL : 075-841-6653

Admission fee 450 yen

Weekday PM3:30-PM11:30  
Sun. AM9:00-PM11:30 / Fri. closed



# Fusion of Buddhism and Pop-Idols

## Pop-Idols featuring Jodo Buddhism “TERA\*PALMS”

There are many temples in Kyoto. From ancient times, Kyoto has had deep relationships with Buddhism, and the culture of temples and Buddhism had developed in its long history. And now, here in Kyoto, there is a female idol group doing unique activities incorporating elements of Buddhism.

“TERA\*PALMS” is the name of the female idol group formed in 2016. Originally planned to be formed as an event fusing Buddhism and art. Since then, they call the fans “Sattva”\*, and under the concept “Train with Sattva”, they do things to make opportunities for people to come in contact with the culture of temples and Buddhism.

So, “TERA\*PALMS” often performs live concerts at temples. At one such performance, I also went to see their live concert at a temple. On this day, the venue was in the main hall of the temple with the stage in front of the Amida statue. There were about 20 in the audience at the venue. When the live concert began and “TERA\*PALMS” appeared, their costumes caught my eye. I’ve heard these costumes image the celestial nymphs. Many of their songs were pop and the appearance of their singing felt as if lively celestial nymphs were singing and dancing in front of the Amida.

Also, on this day, their new song “Onegai! Amida Senpai” (Please, Mentor Amida) was unveiled. Including this song, the lyrics of their songs were so unique, many Buddhism words appeared. But they were actually love songs. The members wrote lyrics by themselves, but some songs were written by the chief priest.



During the live concert, they let the audience strike wooden gong, and let shouts of “Saiho-Jodo!” (Western Pure Land)\*\* fly, so the live concert incorporating the elements of Buddhism in various ways was novel and enjoyable. The fans at this live concert also talked about their attractions, saying “The unique combination of pop idols and temples was interesting”.

After the live concert, I interviewed all the members of the group. When I asked what was fun in doing these activities, they said “It’s so fun to discover lot of things about Buddhism, things we didn’t know about.” Also, they talked about their dreams of their future “I want to train and get closer to Amida, refine my heart and become a fine person.”, “I want to play live concert in various temples”.

When you hear of Buddhism, you may feel somewhat constrained. But at the live concert of “TERA\*PALMS”, you don't have to think about difficult things. It is an enjoyable live concert where you can feel closer to Buddhism. The members of “TERA\*PALMS” also said that they want as many people to know them, feel at ease to come and watch their performances. Why not you also go watch the live concert of “TERA\*PALMS”? For the schedule of live concerts and so on, please confirm on the official website.

“TERA\*PALMS” official website    <https://terapalms.themedia.jp/>

\*Sattva: All living things. Generally, it means “common people”.

\*\*Western Pure Land: The pure land where Amida is living, said to be in the far west.



SUZUKI Hidetoshi



# Vegan Life in Kyoto

Kyoto is a place where many international tourists visit. I often see foreigners who enjoy traveling everywhere in the city. In recent years, an increasing number of people have become vegetarians. This change is not only for religious reasons, but also because of young people's awareness of health and environmental concerns. To meet various dietary needs, a number of restaurants and cafes where vegetarians can enjoy meals are increasing along with accommodations.

The group of people with the strictest dietary restrictions are called vegans. They do not eat animal protein such as meat, fish, eggs, and dairy products, as well as animal broth. It's sad that vegans can't eat general Japanese food that has fish stock, and they can't enjoy eating out in Japan. But in the last few years, more shops are available for vegans to choose from. Even ordinary cafes, restaurants, and ramen shops are starting to offer vegan menus.

Sunny Place, a vegan restaurant near Kyoto university, opened in 2001. At that time the word "vegan" was rarely known in Japan. However, many foreign customers supported the restaurant's vegan menu. A lot of international students still visit this restaurant and share vegan information with the shop owner, Yuumi, who is also a vegan, and with regular customers they meet.

"Diet Helper" is a website recommended not only for tourists, but also for vegetarians and vegans living in Kyoto. The website creator, Mrs. Tamaki, introduces the shops suitable for vegetarians and vegans that she has actually visited. The variety of vegan dishes available seems like they can lead us to healthy life.

Sunny Place <https://www.sunnyplacekyoto.com/>

Instagram account :sunny\_place\_kyoto

Diet Helper <http://diethelper.jp/>

Instagram account : diethelper

TOKUDA Motoko



**Yumi san, the owner of Sunny Place**



**Beautiful and healthy vegan food**

## **kokoka news \* \* \* Kyoto International Community House news \* \* \***

In the Kids' Space on the first floor of kokoka, we're holding events in which the parents and children can attend. Neither registration, nor participation fee is required. It's first come first served. Please feel free to join us!

◎ Together with Children ♪ [Magic Hug Touch Match] Dec.7, 2019 (Sat.) ① 10:00~11:00 ② 11:00~12:00

◎ Parents and Children Learn Together! [Disaster Prevention Café] Jan.18, 2020 (Sat.) 10:00~12:00

◎ Readings of Picture Books in Your Mother Tongue! Jan. 26, 2020 (Sun.) 10:00~12:00

To get details on each event, please see the home page of <http://www.kcif.or.jp/>

Place: kokoka Kyoto International Community House (5 minutes walk from Keage Station on Tozai Subway Line)

Inquire: Kyoto International Community Association Tel: 075-752-3511

## SENTO 1010

Nowadays most houses have baths and showers. But, more than 100 *sen*to (public baths) are still open in Kyoto city. Have you ever wondered how they manage to stay open for business? Some people come to *sen*to bothering to take a car from far away, despite having a bath at home. Many bathrooms in urban houses are small. On this point, *sen*to provides unmatched relaxing spacious atmosphere and nice comfortable time taking baths.

When I was a child, there were what's called naked friendships, and I went to *sen*to with few friends. It's not only the space you can't enjoy and taste the *sen*to experience at home. There were bubble baths, sauna baths, and so on, which we could enjoy like a playground at *sen*to.

Now this time, I interviewed unique King of 1010 FUNAOKA- ONSEN (*sen*to) in Nishijin area. Originally, a *ryori-ryokan*\*1 with a retro entrance of Karahafu style\*2 building the bathroom uses exotic majolica tiles, the dressing room has decorations of openworks with design motif of festival of Imamiya shrine, and so on. The bathroom and the dressing room has been designated as a Registered Tangible Cultural property.

Many people come into the *sen*to who bring washbowl\*3 with slippers on, riding on *mama-chari*\*4, from the time when the sun haven't even set yet. Recently, tourists from both within Japan and abroad often come to take baths at the *sen*to, as a hidden tourist spot, admiring and longing for the popular culture of the good old days. By the way do you know why it is 1010? 1000 is pronounced "sen", and 10, "to" in Japanese, so 1000+10=1010 is sen+to=*sen*to. What a clever play on word sounds, right?



**Funaoka-Onsen Karahafu Style Entrance**



**Dressing Room**

FUNAOKA- ONSEN <http://funaokaonsen.net/>

\*1 *Ryori-ryokan* is high-class Japanese style restaurant with an attached inn.

\*2 Karahafu style is one of the roof styles, it's often used in Japanese shrines and temples.

\*3 Bring washbowl is what it means that bring a bath equipment set.

\*4 *Mama-chari* is a popular nickname for a bicycle with a basket which is used in daily life.

The word origins from two words "mama"(mother) and "chari" or "charinko", a slang word for a bicycle.

YAGI Takashi

**Thoron Onsen(Hot Spring) INARI** TEL 075-841-6653

**Would you like to relax in the public bath?**

The Japanese traditional bathing culture "sen

If you would like to take a bath anyway, please enjoy the artificial hot spring "Thoron Onsen Inari" with weak alkaline components !



MAP

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in the "Life in Kyoto" newsletter !!



We publish newsletter every other month.  
Advertising rate starts at 10,000yen !

☎ 075-752-3511 ✉ [office@kcif.or.jp](mailto:office@kcif.or.jp)



# On the 30th Anniversary of kokoka, Kyoto International Community House

This autumn, kokoka has become 30 years old. Congratulations!

To commemorate the anniversary, a large-scale ceremony was held on Sunday, September 22. It started with the opening address by Mr. SEN Genshitsu, who has been the chairperson of kokoka since its founding, to convey words of gratitude to the volunteers. After that, a chorus was performed by a group of volunteers who had gone through a lot of practice despite the terrible heat of this summer. Then, there was a fashion show starring very cute children who were lovably dressed in their ethnic peoples' costumes. Led by their hands held by their mothers, the children happily walked along the runway bringing smiles to everyone along with unceasing shutters of cameras and waves of applause. The audience was warmly embraced in happiness by the beautiful scene which we all shared. Also, in the special meeting room, foreigners residing in Kyoto were very interested in hearing stories about their child-rearing experiences, educational policies, and daily living issues they are currently facing, and more.

The ceremony ended with a presentation of the vision of kokoka's next ten years, in a picture-book slide format. The cartoon-styled slides explained that, promoting mutual prosperity by means of accepting the differences of appearances and life styles, and creating an easy-to-live, friendly society together with those who have different cultural backgrounds, are what we are after.



As the amendment of the immigration law was enforced on April, 2019, it is predicted that there will be increasing number of foreign workers here in Kyoto, as well as other places in Japan. We believe that kokoka will continue to evolve as a place where people, not only international students but also foreign workers, can come to get aid both in the easiest way and as the last resort. We hope that our "Life in Kyoto" will provide help, no matter how little it may be.

We are sincerely hoping that those who read this newsletter will say "Yes, let's go to kokoka!"

Koh, translated by YABUTA Keisuke

kokoka Kyoto International  
Community House Library

## Library Letter 2019/12 - 2020/1

 kokoka recommends this book

### “Do You Know Japan?” ～ Let's Learn, Let's Talk, About Japanese Things ～

(Editor and Publisher: JASSO  
[Japanese Language School], 2019)

kokoka→



To all foreigners! Do you want to learn Japanese cultures, customs, and rules with this book? Also, to persons who already know Japan quite well, please figure out the questions in this book. The questions are rather difficult.

= For example, this question about Sumo.=

【What is the cooking sumo wrestlers eat called?】

What do you think? Do you know the answer?

■ The answer : Chanko

※kokoka is Kyoto International Community House mascot.

### “Most Beautiful Theaters in the World.”

(Publisher: X-Knowledge, 2015)

This book introduces opera houses, theaters and concert halls carefully selected from all over the world. Their exterior and interior decorative designs are so gorgeous and beautiful! The entire building looks like a work of art.

By the way, kokoka recommends Guangzhou Opera House in Guangzhou, China. The interior decorative design of this opera house is of shining gold, and the form is quite innovative. It's a place you want to visit someday.

### 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

[Tel.] 075-752-1187 [Fax.] 075-752-3510

[URL] <http://www.kcif.or.jp/en>



Residents of "Cat Alley" 2

cat's house, and when heading back in the afternoon, I would deliberately get lost in the surrounding small streets. In that way, I could discover the traditional ambiance of the ancient houses, the *kissaten* (tearooms or cafés), the quaint, tiny shops, the *jinja* (Shinto shrines), and the otera (Buddhist temples). Although I love rain, the brilliant sunshine made my path even more enjoyable.

At the end of the summer, I took a walk on a road not far from the Keage subway station. My goal was to reach the Higashiyama Mountain Peak Park. However, I had an unusual encounter; farther up the road, I discovered a strange place: an aquatic center covered with lush greenery. It looked beautiful and, mysterious; I tried to imagine what it might have looked like in the past. Finally, I reached the summit, and enjoyed the view of Kyoto by night.

This is one of my last images, among the memories that fill my mind whenever I think about my past life in Kyoto, and I still have this special feeling of *nagori* (nostalgia) when summer leaves.

I could imagine them saying to me: "Beware human, you are entering our territory".

There are indeed many cats in Kyoto, and in the middle of the summer, I did some 'catsitting' (cat babysitting) near Senbon-dori, in a nice area, with a large street that goes all the way into northern Kyoto. Every morning for two weeks, I walked from the subway station to the



Remains of the Higashiyama Aquapark

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■ On the WEB you can read LIK past issue

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