



Life In Kyoto

Life & Culture Information Newsletter

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Series: **My Favorite Kyoto**

The hidden good unknown place in Kyoto - Ichijoji

JANG Hyun Ah (Republic of Korea)

One day, I got a message and a photo on the LINE app from my friend in Korea asking, "Are you living in such a beautiful place?". The photo showed a scene of snow falling on Yasaka Street. I took a photo of the scene I can see from my window, and replied to the friend, "This is my town". And my friend replied "Is this place really Kyoto?".

The place where I live is called Ichijoji; it is in the Rakuhoku area of the city of Kyoto. I have lived here since I came to Kyoto in 2016. When thinking of Kyoto, I believe that many people first think of old temples or scenes from the Gion area. Before I came to Kyoto, my image of it was the same. The views of Kyoto which we see every year in the "Well, I will go to Kyoto" TV commercial for JR Tokai are quite beautiful, but I think they do not capture the whole of Kyoto. I have not lived in Kyoto for very long, but I think there are many nice places here which are still not well known. I would say Ichijoji is one of them.

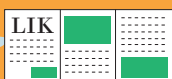
On the Eizan Railway from Demachiyana, you first pass Mototanaka and Chayama, before arriving at Ichijoji. After getting off the train, what catches your eye is the view of an easy-going residential area where you can feel warm and relaxed. Some people may think it is a common suburban living place, but lining the street running east and west from the station, many things can stimulate your curiosity. If you simply walk down this street, it takes only a few minutes, but if you walk slowly, enjoying it step by step, you can spend hours. There are many enjoyable things there, such as a simple, pretty cafe and restaurant, a stylish book store, and a quite unique variety shop. Although it is a common residential area, Ichijoji is a town where I can pass the time comfortably.



Author

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Food Culture of Nepal

It's no exaggeration to say that Nepal consumes most curry in the world because every dish there is seasoned with curry powder. In Nepal, curry is referred to as “Tarcurry” with more than 20 different kinds of curry dish, for example, Daal (Beans), Saag (Vegetables), Maccha (Fish), Maasu (Meats), etc. Vegetable curry is called Saag Ko Tarcurry.

Because rice is a staple food in Nepal, people there often eat curry rice. In regions where wheat is plentifully harvested, it's common to eat curry rice at noon and have curry with bread in the evening.

A friend often asks me, “Do you get tired of curry everyday?” Even if a single word, curry, is used, there are so many curry dishes with so many different ingredients, it may be better to say “curry dependence”.

I thought about the differences between the Japanese and the Nepalese curry. First of all, there are more than 10 different kinds of spices used in the Nepalese curry, prepared by housewives in each households. These are the curry powders used to make a mix called, Masala, which is the essential spice for the Nepalese curry.

Japanese curry often uses commercially available curry roux which is thick and has sweet taste. I like Japanese food but I also like the way Japanese eat curry very much. Curry rice, curry udon, curry ramen curry soba and curry pasta are all delicious.

Looking into the history of curry, fossils of curry were found from 2500 BC to 2300 BC in Southern India. In Japan, it's known that curry came from England at the end of the Edo Period. It spread from the British Navy to the Japanese Navy and then, to the Japanese people.

Because there are various different curries in the world, I think it's interesting to find the curry you personally like. Through curry, you may be able to become familiar with the food culture of the country.



Nepalese curry lunch



Curry & naan lunch plate



Curry & rice lunch plate

Raju BHANDARI

Sake in Kyoto

Have you ever tried *sake*? Many people are drinking beer and wine nowadays, but lately the number of *sake* drinkers has been decreasing. On the other hand, sales of *sake* for export to other countries have been growing, along with increased global interest in Japanese cuisine.

Sake is the national wine of Japan, made from fermented rice. It is served both cold and hot and can be used in cooking. *Sake* brewing started in the Yayoi Period (approximately 2000 - 2500 years ago). *Sake* placed on the altar of a shrine becomes a holy drink called *Omiki*. The sake breweries pray to the gods for making good *sake* before they begin the next brew. There is a strong connection between *sake* and the Shinto religion.

The city of Kyoto has the second largest production volume of *sake* in Japan. The city is surrounded by mountains, therefore blessed with a good supply of especially pure ground water. High-quality water makes better *sake*, since approximately 80% of it is water.

Fushimi is Kyoto's *sake* district; it has many *sake* breweries along the Kamogawa River. *Sake* made in Fushimi has a smooth, mellow taste. The ground water in Fushimi is of such good quality that many local people bring it home in plastic bottles for their personal use.

You can learn the history of *sake*, and how it is made, at some breweries. You can also do some *sake* tasting at breweries and bars in Fushimi. Please enjoy trying some *sake* with the local cuisine of Kyoto.



Sake barrels displayed at Chushojima Station



Sake



Sake breweries in Fushimi district

SATO Mina

kokoka news * * * Kyoto International Community House news * * *

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: Saturday, February 15, 2020, 13:00 - 17:00

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

Reservations: phone 075-752-3511

*Kamishibaiya no Otchan**1

In times past in Japan, it was common to have five siblings in a family. It was common to hear playful screams of naughty boys in the alleys. And, as soon as the sounds of wooden clappers*2 were heard, someone cried out “Here comes *Kamishibai Otchan*!”. Then, many children surrounded the *Kamishibai Otchan* all at once. *Otchan* was moving the miniature *Kamishibai* theater on his bicycle rack in the alley. And in a vacant lot, the *Kamishibai* was starting. The children were listening with enraptured eyes at the *Otchan*’s show. It was *Otchan*’s joy to see children with happy faces. And then, the miniature theater changed into a small candy store right away. *Otchan* made a living by selling candies. In the 1950s, it’s said that there were tens of thousands of *Otchans* of *Kamishibai* nationwide. As TV and games became widespread and birthrate declined, the *Otchan* of *Kamishibai* faded away before anyone noticed.



Kamishibai at Kyoto International Manga Museum

But, there was an *Otchan*, even while being laughed at by his family and friends that it’s impossible to make a living doing *Kamishibai* anymore, who passionately talked about wanting to “spread the appeal of the *Kamishibai* around the world.” It was nicknamed “Yassan’s *Kamishibai*”, popular with the children. Then, keeping up with the times, he created a series of new styles of *Kamishibai*. The *Kamishibai* was always about the interactive communication space between the performer and the audience, sharing and creating. And how many minds of children and adults alike were thus comforted.

In 2006, in the Kyoto International Manga Museum, the Mecca of the anime fans around the world, Yassan and his pupils, “The *Kamishibai* of Yassan’s Company” started to perform on a permanent basis. In addition to the regular oral performances at the Kiyomizu Temple, about a hundred oral performances were scheduled and performed annually. Yassan has also performed abroad in the US, as well as in other places. He performed an unprecedented “Silent *Kamishibai*”. Even though words were not spoken, the performance gave a deep impression to many people around the world. Unbounded by common sense imagination, flexibility, and complete freedom were exactly the specialties of the live *Kamishibai* show which made it unique. Unfortunately, Yassan died in 2012. “The desire to continue spreading the appeal of *Kamishibai*” has been passed down to Yassan’s pupils, and today, you may happen to see the happy faces of children in the street corner somewhere.



Children watching *Kamishibai*

*1 *Kamishibaiya*: *Kamishibai* is a Japanese name for a miniature theater consisting of pictures drawn on rectangular cardboards depicting a story. “ya” here means “store” in Japanese. *Otchan* is a term of endearment for *Ojisan*. Younger people use this term not only for their uncles but also for middle aged men who are familiar friends. Often called *Otchan* in Kansai area and *Ojichan* in Kanto area.

*2 Wooden instrument clapped together to signal children to gather around, so *Kamishibai Otchan* can entertain them with a story and sell them candies.

Reference:

The *Kamishibai* of Yassan’s Company <https://kamishibai-y.com/>

Kyoto International Manga Museum https://www.kyotomm.jp/en/event/per-eve_kamishibai/

YAGI Takashi

Authentic Thai Food Flavor You Could Experience in Kyoto

Thai food restaurants have increased in number these days, and among them, Thai food of Bangkok Garden tastes very authentic. It is a five-minute walk from Marutamachi station of Kyoto Subway, along the Yanagino Banba street across from the Goshō Minami Elementary School.

The entrance of the restaurant is where the national flag of Thailand is fluttering by the street, and entering it, I could hear someone in the kitchen speaking in Thai. Two Thai cooks told me that they prepare special flavor of real Thai food. The base of spicy taste is prepared in the kitchen while the served food could be further seasoned as guests prefer by adding spices and fish sauce placed on the table.

I ordered a lunch. Once, when I lived in Thailand, I had come to very much like a soup, tom yam kung, which was spicy and sour. White noodle in the soup was made from rice. Coriander, of course, was on top of the soup.

Why not taste the authentic Thai food as if you are in Bangkok in Thailand.

The restaurant is closed every Sunday.



Thailand national flag by the street



Lunch dish

FURUTA Tomiyoshi

kokoka Kyoto International
Community House Library

Library Letter

2020/2 - 3

 kokoka recommends this book

Bilingual Guide to Japan JAPANESE CRAFTSMANSHIP

Author: SAWADA Mieko
Publisher: Shogakukan, 2018



This book has easy-to-understand explanations in both English and Japanese for about 100 types of Japanese crafts. Looking at so many beautiful craftworks will deepen your respect for the craftsmen.

By the way, kokoka's favorite craft is called *tofu sukui* (tofu scoop). kokoka wants to learn directly from a craftsman how to make it. Everyone, please come to our kokoka library and read this book.

※kokoka is Kyoto International Community House mascot.

“World's Foods Picture Book (5) MEXICAN FOOD”

(Author: GINJO Yasuko, Illustrator: TAKAMATSU Ryomi,
Publisher: Noyama Fishing Village Cultural Association Japan, 2007)

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the sister-city relationship between Guadalajara, Mexico and Kyoto, Japan. Why not take this opportunity to learn about Mexican food culture? So, you can find out what are Mexican people's usual meals. Please, by all means, read this book.

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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An area of Ichijoji which I recommend seeing is the little road that runs along a small canal. The nice, beautiful scenery there changes with the seasons. Various flowers of the different seasons color the road here and there along the canal; just seeing this scene relaxes me. And when I am depressed or worried, by just walking slowly down this street, I can encourage myself and get a positive attitude. It is the best place for healing.

The last introduction I will make is an enjoyable place in Ichijoji where there are *ramen* shops all along Higashioji Street. It is even called “Ichijoji Ramen Street”, and when people hear of Ichijoji, many of them probably think of this place. For someone like me who likes *ramen*, from Takano to Shugakuin is just like a theme park, where *ramen* shops stand in rows along the road. Each *ramen* shop is like one of the attractions, and depending on my mood that day, I can enjoy a variety of them. I often eat *ramen* here, but when I feel like a change of pace, I go to the *soba* shops on the ramen

street. And especially on days of heavy rain, when I eat hot *soba*, I feel so happy. I think it can be said that Ichijoji is a town which fully satisfies heart and stomach.

How would it be if everyone spent some relaxing, comfortable time in Ichijoji, one of the good, hidden, unknown places in Kyoto?



The canal along Ichijoji

Translated by SUZUKI Hidetoshi



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