

Life & Cultural Information Newsletter

Life In Kyoto

Winter 2021

kokoka

Contents

01 My life in Kyoto

02 Hiking around Kyoto

03 Snow Falling Softly

04 "Life in Kyoto" in kokoka Open Day

05 Eager to learn more
about Kyoto(2)

06 Glimpses of Japanese History

07 kokoPlaza Letter

08 Shichifukujin and Takarabune

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My life in Kyoto | Bryan Santoso



My name is Bryan Santoso, and I am from Jakarta, Indonesia. Because I am currently an undergraduate student in the College of International Relations at Ritsumeikan University, I live in Kyoto now. I like playing badminton, my favorite sport.

A lot of Indonesians like travelling and studying in Japan. I have been to Japan twice before studying in Japan. I think Japan is good place for me to study, which is why I am studying in Japan.

I think Kyoto is a most amazing city that I have ever lived. I can focus on my study in such a peaceful

environment. I can take photos with beautiful scenery, in particular, with sakura and red leaves. I can have a stroll around Kamogawa River.

There are a lot of Indonesians living in Japan with whom I make friends. I have been to various places with my Indonesian friends, such as to Hirano Jinjya Shrine, Kinkakuji Temple, Fushimi Inari Shrine, etc. Recently, I went to Amanohashidate by chairlift and cable car, and saw the beautiful sea. I had a great time.

Additionally, there are some Indonesian restaurants where I still can enjoy my hometown food even if I cannot go back home as frequently as before because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The restaurant I often go is Nettai Shokudo. You can see the Kamogawa River from the window, and the prices are not expensive. The restaurant provides authentic food for every customer.

I really enjoy my life in Kyoto, and I hope I could come back to Kyoto again after graduating from the school.



02 Hiking around Kyoto | MACHINO Yoichi

Kyoto is a town surrounded by mountains where we can enjoy nice and easy hikes. The trails have a historical and religious kind of atmosphere. Of course, you can also see forestry activities. As the town has a long history, many trails have been developed while others have disappeared. Sometimes you might see one too many trails while hiking, hence making you wonder which way to take. Fortunately, most of the main trails are marked. So, you just need to follow the marks which will lead you to your destination. The most popular trail is the Kyoto Isshu Trail.

Occasionally you may see a "bear warning sign" on the trails. Yes, Asian black bears (*Ursus thibetanus*) inhabit these mountains. But you hardly see them, they are far more afraid of you than you are of them. If you see one unfortunately (or luckily), please leave it alone and quickly leave the place, since you actually are invading its home. Also you might see Japanese macaques (*Macaca fuscata*) or sika deer (*Cervus nippon*) quite often (alike, do not disturb or feed them).

Most popular destinations are Mt. Daimonji, Mt. Hiei and Mt. Atago among others. Some trails are frequently used by trail runners and mountain bikers as well.

When you go hiking, please prepare enough and correctly (route choice and what to bring). There are hiking guides in English or Japanese available in books as well as on the internet. Unpreparedness can often lead to being lost in the mountains. A trekking bell is useful for avoiding a sudden encounter with a bear or a mountain biker.



Yamano Okami, an abandoned shrine, Mt. Hiei

03 Snow Falling Softly | KAWASAKI Masashi

In your country, how do you write the sound produced by dogs? In Japanese it is "Wan-Wan". Then, how about a chicken? The written sounds of dog are not so different from each other, but chickens' can be very different. In Japanese, the written sound of an animal is called "onomatopoeia", borrowed from the French pronunciation of onomatopée.

There are two types of onomatopoeia: words that describe the sounds heard, and words that describe a state or an emotion. In the Japanese language there are many words that express these inaudible sounds. Onomatopoeia is used in many conversations, on TV and in novels. However, there are many words that are not existed in the dictionary.

Even among Japanese people, there are some

onomatopoeias that are used frequently and others that are not. For example, snow in Kyoto is not much in winter. Therefore, people from regions that snow a lot such as Tohoku may say "Mossomo" as the onomatopoeia for snowing and it is difficult for people in Kyoto to understand.

Another expression for snowing is "Shin-Shin". This expression is used both in Kyoto and in the Tohoku region. Please try to ask your Japanese friends about the meaning of the "Shin-Shin". You may find out it requires a lot of explanation to describe a sound that cannot be heard.

Don't you think this is a good chance of communication?

04 “Life in Kyoto” in kokoka Open Day | SUZUKI Hidetoshi



On Nov 3, the annual event “Open Day” was held in kokoka. We, the group of “Life in Kyoto” (LIK), performed picture-story show, introduced LIK by panel exhibit and video, just as last year.

The picture-story show was performed in Japanese, English and Chinese, additionally it was also performed online with ZOOM. In the panel exhibit, the covers of several dozens issues among past LIK for

about 30 years was displayed. On the video, the process of making LIK and the voices of volunteer editors.

On the day, about 300 people came to the venue, as it was almost filled to capacity for a while. In the picture-story show, such as “Anpanman” were also performed, the children who watched it looked so pleased. The event was ended with great success.



05 Eager to learn more about Kyoto (2)

～ scenery with a museum in it: the KAWAI KANJIRO'S HOUSE ～

MIZUNO Hiroshi

If you take the Kyoto City Bus and get off at the stop Gojo-zaka, you will most likely cross the Higashioji-dori Ave, heading toward Kiyomizu-dera Temple. However, if you are interested in pottery, why don't you cross the Gojo-dori St and drop in at the KAWAI KANJIRO'S HOUSE.

Kyoto ware used to be fired in climbing kilns. In the early 20th century about 20 kilns are said to have operated in the Gojo-zaka area. Once the kiln was fired, clouds of smoke billowed from the kiln, and more people came in and out of the pottery. People who visited the area in those days, therefore, would have realized more fully that they were in a pottery town.

KAWAI Kanjiro, who was from Shimane Prefecture, was a potter. A certain time after he learned pottery at Tokyo Higher Technical School, he worked as an advisor on glaze at KIYOMIZU Rokubei's pottery, during which time he got a chance to buy the climbing kiln from the KIYOMIZU family, and that made him decide to settle down in Kyoto. In later years, the typhoon hit Kyoto, causing damage to his house, which is why he designed on his own and had it rebuilt. The remodeled house is preserved, as the KAWAI KANJIRO'S HOUSE,

almost as it was at that time, and open to the public.

When you get in through the front door, you'll see the wooden floor on your right, in whose corner the open hearth is set. Beside it is the side door, from which through the courtyard, you can go to the workshop and to the climbing kiln further to the back. There were many people involved in climbing kiln firing, like experts in kiln firing, and such a layout of the house shows how important the partnership formed through the climbing kiln was considered.

The doors at the entrance are the black lattice ones beside the information board. If you step inside, you are bound to find another charm of Gojo-zaka.



06 Glimpses of Japanese History | ISHIHARA Keiko

(1) Daitoku-ji, the statue of Nobunaga

Located in Kita-ward, Kyoto city, Daitoku-ji (the Temple of Daitoku) is one of the major Zen temples of this ancient capital, and has been deeply involved in the 16th century history of Japan. That was an age of constant warfare, when the various local military warlords competed for hegemony over the country. One of them, Nobunaga (ODA Nobunaga), was able to take a firm grip on power, and enter Kyoto. But ten-odd years later, quite unexpectedly, he was killed by a vassal of his.

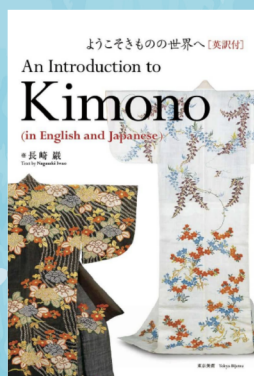
This vassal was swiftly attacked and beaten by Hideyoshi (TOYOTOMI Hideyoshi), also one of Nobunaga's retainers, who was therefore able to proclaim himself the successor of Nobunaga, for whom he held a grand funeral in Daitoku-ji.

Since the corpse of Nobunaga was missing for unknown reasons, some kind of substitutes were in need. A sculptor of Buddhist images, who had happened to see Nobunaga once, was ordered to carve two wooden statues of Nobunaga. Upon having a look at the finished work, Hideyoshi gave a nod of approval, saying "Yes". One of the two wooden statues was used for cremation, while the other is still preserved in Daitoku-ji.

A portrait of Nobunaga has been left till today, too. Despite of his innovative and often cruel tactics on the battlefields, in this drawing he shows a soft expression. On the other hand, severe lines appearing in between his brows on the blackish life-size statue tell us the regret of a man who lost overnight the throne of his glory. A special public exhibition of Nobunaga's statue is held in spring and fall in the Soken-in, a small temple in the precinct of Daitoku-ji.



07 kokoPlaza Letter



“An Introduction to Kimono” (in English and Japanese)

Text by Nagasaki, Iwao, Tokyo Bijutsu, 2020

One of Japan's traditional outfits, the Kimono, color and design has been constantly changing over the years. We will introduce its material with some colorful images using English and Japanese.

Seasons which has its background and flowers expressed through the Kimono and all kinds of related fairytales which will help deepen your understanding of Japanese traditional green tea ceremonies and other cultural Japanese practices. Want to peek in to the interesting world of kimono?

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※The books are available for library use only.

08 *Shichifukujin* and *Takarabune* (Seven Deities of Good Fortune and Treasure Ship)

NISHIKI Mie

Do you know what “*Shichifukujin*” is? *Shichifukujin* is a group of seven deities of good fortune dating back from long ago. The seven deities are *Ebisuten*, *Daikokuten*, *Bishamonten*, *Benzaiten*, *Fukurokuju*, *Jyurojin*, and *Hoteison*. One of the New Year's customs is called “*Shichifukujin-Meguri*” or “Tour of the Seven Lucky Deities”. *Shichifukujin-Meguri* means to visit the shrines and temples where the Seven Lucky Deities are enshrined because people believe when they do so, they attract good fortune. This custom can be found nationwide these days, but it originated in Kyoto.

Also, some people imagine “*Takarabune*” or “Treasure Ship”, when they hear the word *Shichifukujin*. *Takarabune* refers to the ship carrying the *Shichifukujin* and the treasures. From long ago, it is said that putting a picture of *Takarabune* under the pillow sleeping in the New Year makes you have a great “*Hatsuyume*” (the first dream of the year).



Hatsuyume refers in general to the dream you have from the New Year's Day to the 2nd. People believe that if you have a great *Hatsuyume*, it is the sign of a good year.

By the way, what do you think are the Big Three items in *Hatsuyume* to dream about? There is a traditional expression “*Ich-Fuji Ni-Taka San-nasubi*”, which means Mt. Fuji is the best, hawk is the second best, and eggplant is the third best, to dream about in *Hatsuyume*. Why don't you put a picture of *Takarabune* under the pillow on New Year's Day so that you can have a great *Hatsuyume*? I hope 2022 will be a wonderful year for you!

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