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Series **My Favorite Kyoto**

My strategies to enjoy time with local communities

Zhao Fudie (People's Republic of China)



Although I have lived in Denmark and Britain as an international student, I spent most of the time on campus and did not have much contact with the local people. Lacking the connection with the neighbourhood, I felt lost and alienated. "This time I will give it a try." After half a year, my efforts to increase contact with the locals have been rewarded with countless delightful moments. What I learned from my experience is that even if one is not good at speaking Japanese or is shy and introverted in nature, one can find an approach that suits your character best in enjoying time with the local communities. I would like to share with you my tricks in this article.

First, the most important trick is to relax and take it easy. "Here comes a local. I will make sure to turn this person into my friend." This way of thinking, unfortunately, does not work well. Your strong will may make the locals choke under pressure. Instead, it is better to find a place where you can spend time with them without being intrusive.

For example, one of the choices is to participate in activities held by local communities. If you are not confident with your Japanese (like I am), I would recommend starting with a hobby. I chose dance and it worked. My friend found a Zumba dance class run by amateur local dancers on 'Meetup', an app full of information about local gatherings. "Probably people who are doing Zumba are passionate in nature and therefore less shy." I thought to myself, and went to the class with my friend. Since I only needed to follow the instructor's dance steps without



Author

continued on page 6

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Providing Information by Multilingual Videos “ Living in Japan TV ”

Recently, you may have had many opportunities to watch videos on YouTube and so on. Perhaps some of you may even have made and published your own videos. Today, anyone can use video to disseminate information to the world, and video has become an effective way of providing information. In this environment, a new video channel which provides information to foreigners living in Japan by narration in their native languages was launched. Here, I introduce a new channel “Living in Japan TV”.

“Living in Japan TV” is a channel that was started April this year. It makes videos in 13 languages and publishes them on YouTube. Because each video is about three minutes, you can watch them with ease. Currently, it mainly provides information about COVID -19 and support of administration. “Living in Japan TV” is operated by volunteers. In addition to seven Japanese staff, about 30 foreigners are participating as paid volunteers. At this occasion, I interviewed the staff including the founder, Ms. MORITA Miduho.

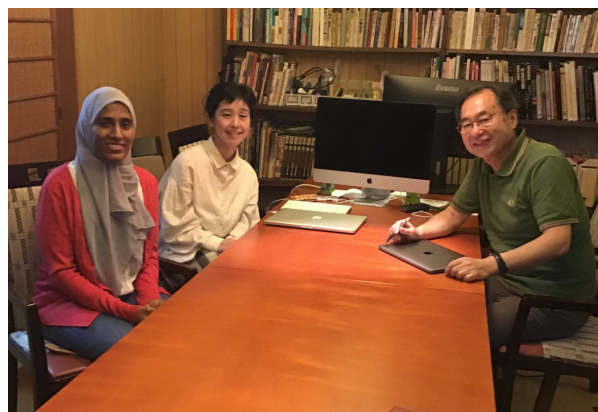
First of all, I asked why they started “Living in Japan TV”. They said “Various information about COVID -19 is provided in Japan, but it is difficult for foreigners who don't know neither Japanese nor English to understand. So, we wanted to disseminate information to such foreigners living in Japan by starting this channel”. In addition, when I asked about the making of the videos, they said that the contents in the videos are translated from Japanese, and in order to intelligibly convey the information more easily understandable, they are trying to use easy Japanese. Also, the videos aren't intended to explain everything but they provide clues to further look for more information. Incidentally, the most popular video up to now is the one explaining in Indonesian the symptoms of losing the sense of smell and taste from the effects of COVID -19.

From among the foreigners who are participating in this activity, I also interviewed an Egyptian lady, Ms. Heba Abbadi. Ms. Abbadi joined this activity from an introduction of a friend. Currently, she appears in the Arabic videos. Regarding this activity, she said “It is a good idea to provide the same information in multiple languages from one location”. She also talked about her feelings on participating in this activity, “It is a pleasure for me to be able to help other people”.

“Living in Japan TV” is a channel that just got started. From July, the podcast “AudiTip Nippon” has also started. While trying various things such as what kind of information should be disseminated and how they can provide information more easily understandable, they are groping in proceeding with these activities. Then, as the Japanese and foreigners collaborate in their activities, they are aiming to make a network in which Japanese and foreigners can think together and cooperate with each other as citizens living in the same area. “Living in Japan TV” is accepting people who can cooperate and work with them for such tasks as translation and narration. If you are interested in these activities, please contact the following website and email address for inquiries.



【Living in Japan TV management office】
E-mail : teamd.i.morita@gmail.com
【Living in Japan TV】
<https://www.youtube.com/c/LivinginJapanTV/>



Staffs (Ms. Heba Abbadi, Ms. MORITA Miduho,
Mr. SAITO Osamu)

SUZUKI Hidetoshi

Uzumasa, Once Known as the Hollywood of Japan

What were your favourite movie genre when you were growing up? Westerns? Epic Dramas? Mysteries? Sci-Fi? Animation? Mine were Japanese Samurai movies and American Westerns. I grew up in late 1950s and 60s, as a young boy in Japan and as a teen in Canada, watching these movies in theaters from a time when black and white TV just came to be on display at my village book store for the first time. Simple story lines of the good triumphing over the wicked. Don't you just love a strong, finely skilled samurai giving the bad guys their just desserts after their evil, wicked acts were perpetrated on the innocent people? Take this and that, you evil monsters! I loved it as a young boy.



Author, age 7 in village

My formative years were strongly influenced by the good vs evil morality of these movies, the good always winning over evil. Boys were always to be good and kind, protecting the weak, especially girls. And boys don't cry, can bear any pain, were always fair and just, righting all injustices. These were very simple times for boys with clear what's right and wrong. Nowadays, girls don't need any protection, and boys are useless.

I loved the grandeur of the panoramic vistas of the American West with its sweeping mountain ranges and vast desert-like expanse with one lonely cowboy on horseback or a thin blue line of US 7th Cavalry galloping in a row kicking up dust. The Yellow Rose of Texas, High Noon, Shane, Gunfight at the O.K. Corral, are all Western classic movies. I loved them all. It had everything, action, drama and adventure, including cowboys saving damsels in distress.

Did you know that Uzumasa, a district in Kyoto, was once known as the Hollywood of Japan? Opened in 1929, a great movie industry thrived there. I watched movies of young samurais defending the weak from wicked men plotting to swindle decent people out of their money or entrapping young pretty daughters into their grubby hands. Many such samurai movies were produced in Uzumasa, Ichikawa's Nemuri Kiyoshiro series, Mifune's Miyamoto Musashi and Sanjuro. I watched these movies as a young teen thinking, this is what Japanese men should aspire to become when you grow up. Kurosawa's Seven Samurai, Rashomon, and Yojimbo are all Japanese movie classics, which had strong influences on the movie industry in Hollywood, California, on such movies as Eastwood's A Fistful of Dollars and Lucas' Star Wars.

Once a center of thriving movie making, Uzumasa has lost lot of its former glory. However, you can still feel some of the excitement and glitz of the past glamour. There are still 2 major studios, Toei Studios of Kyoto and Shochiku Studios few blocks away, located there. There's also a nice museum containing memorabilia's of cinema in Japan and also, of Shozo Makino, the father of Japanese cinema, who directed and produced Kyoto's first film, Honoji Gassen, in 1908.



Author, age 18 on mountain top in Canada

The Toei Uzumasa Eigamura is a 5 minute walk from Uzumasa-Koryuji Station on the Keifuku Arashiyama Line or a 10 minute walk from Uzumasa Station on JR Line. It can also be reached by Kyoto City Bus.

Why not take in little of the excitement and history of movie making at Uzumasa?

The White Cane

Try to imagine. Could you go down the stairs with a blindfold? I was given an opportunity to experience learning about matters that the visually challenged person feel daily. I was very worried whether I would miss a step on the stairs. Though I was scared, I held the handrail in one hand, and went down the stairs while checking each step carefully holding on to the caregiver.

The other day, a visually challenged person had an accident, unfortunately falling off a platform and hit by a train. There were Braille Blocks* for the visually challenged persons on the platform. Why did he fall off, even though he frequently used the station? As they always walk using the white cane and slide their feet to make sure of the location of Braille Blocks, even a slightly raised surface, that an ordinary person would barely notice, can be dangerous. To prevent repeat accidents, platform screen doors have been installed at major stations. But this is just a small part of the story. In other cases, on roads near where they live, bicycles suddenly pass by, making them have terrifying experiences. They always walk very anxiously with the help of the white cane and the surrounding sounds.



Platform Door Umekoji Kyotonishi Station

If you happen to see a person with the white cane at the street corner, you want to pro-actively call out to them like “Do you need any help?”. First, please confirm their intentions. And then, if they reply they would like help, say, “I’ll guide you, please hold on to my elbow.” and slowly walk half a step ahead of them. When you come to stairs, please be sure to say, “There are steps, be careful!”

* The Braille Blocks was proposed by Japanese inventor MIYAKE Seichi for the first time in 1965. It is installed in most stations and facilities, and sidewalks of the main streets in Japan today.

YAGI Takashi

Heavy Localized Guerilla Rainstorms

Painful accidents from guerrilla rainstorms, sudden storms with very heavy rainfall, are happening more frequently, mostly in the afternoon, causing rivers to rise and even taking the lives of children. Due to global warming, the rain has been worsening past the point of *yudachi*, sudden evening showers.

As the earth’s surface temperature rises in the afternoon, some volume of air above the surface moves up and forms a rain cloud at around 10 kms above sea level. Since the dark cloud layer which contains the rain droplets thus formed travels down, replacing the rising air, a cool wind begins blowing just before heavy rainfall.

Concurrently, a massive amount of static electricity is accumulated in the cloud and eventually transforms into lightning. If you are in an area like a field without any tall buildings, you should stay close to the ground to avoid being struck by lightning. Staying under a tall tree should also be avoided, because lightning might strike the tree. Even with heavy rain in a limited area, it causes rivers to rise in an instant making evacuation impossible. But most of the time, the rain stops after an hour.

Recently, research on guerilla rainstorms has developed and now weather can be forecasted even more accurately. Now you can feel relief after checking rain cloud activity while playing in a river.

FURUTA Tomiyoshi

Consultation Counter for Foreign Workers

Foreign workers are under the protection of Japanese labor laws and regulations. If you are having some troubles with your working conditions, please feel free to call or visit the Consultation Counter for Foreign Workers in the Inspection Division of Kyoto Labor Bureau. An advisor will provide you some advice to solve your problems in English. For example...dismissal, termination of contract, unpaid wages, overtime allowances, paid holidays, injured on the job, and so on...Your privacy is strictly confidential.

- ◆ Address : 451 Kinbukicho, Ryogaecho-dori Oike-agaru, Nakagyo-ku, Kyoto 2F Kyoto Labor Bureau
 - ◆ Nearest Station : Karasuma-Oike (Subway Karasuma-line or Tohzaï-line)
 - ◆ Tel : 075-241-3214 (direct) / 241-3211 Fax : 075-241-3219
 - ◆ Consultation Hours : 9:00 to 17:00 (except 12:00 to 13:00) on Tuesdays and Thursdays (in English)
- * Booking is not necessary, but the dates might be changed, so it is recommended to take an appointment of your visit by phone.

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

kokoka Open Day 2020 LIK Volunteer Planned Event

This year too, kokoka Open Day will be held. In addition to various events and exhibitions, this day will introduce panel exhibitions and videos about the history of "Life in Kyoto", an information magazine on living and culture for foreigners, and volunteer activities spanning 30 years. There will also be multi-lingual storytelling of *kamishibai* picture-story shows performed by volunteers.

- ◆ Date : November 3, 2020 (Tuesday/Holiday)
- ◆ Time : 10:00am to 4:00pm
- ◆ Venue : kokoka, 3rd Floor
- ◆ For more information about the event : <https://www.kcif.or.jp/web/jp/news/>

kokoka Kyoto International
Community House kokoPlaza 2F

Library Letter

2020/Autumn
(October, November, December)

books recommended by kokoka

"Children's games of the world: You can learn cultural differences!"

(Supervised by SOGAWA Tsuneo,
PHP Kenkyusho, 2015)



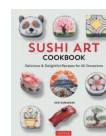
This book clearly introduces children's games from all around the world with wonderful illustrations. How about trying the world's games by using this book? For adults too! You can feel familiar with the world, and have fun too. I am kokoka* and I am interested in fierljeppen, one of Holland's games, and will find a good place to try it.

*kokoka is the mascot of Kyoto International Community House.

"Sushi Art Cookbook"

(Ken Kawasumi, TUTTLE, 2017)

This book shows you many sushi designs which are too nice to eat! Let's try cooking artistic sushi.



They are difficult to cook, that's why you can feel so accomplished when successfully creating them. I (kokoka) will do my best to cook the "bunny rabbit roll" .

(This book is written only in English.)

These items are also available at kokoPlaza

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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chatting, I found myself less awkward and enjoyed myself here where the majority were local people.

Another trick I tried is to join a free weekly English club held by a Christian church in which people can participate without regard to religion, age or nationality. I suppose there are many foreigners who may want to practice English or are better at English than Japanese like me. For this group of people, if you go to an English club here in Kyoto, surprisingly but for real, you will get the chance to talk a lot with the local people. In the English club, I met locals from a variety of backgrounds who I may not have encountered in daily life, like an amateur speed racer from Okinawa prefecture, or the chief priest's wife of a temple. Talking with them has truly broadened my horizons about a wide spectrum of the regional society.

A lot of you may be attending Japanese classes in a university or a Japanese language school. But actually, Japanese classes run by volunteers is a better “buffer zone” if you wish to chat with the locals in Japanese but yet to be confident enough to go to local places. A variety of local organisations offer free or inexpensive language classes for foreigners. Different from the standardised regular courses, lectures by volunteers are characterised by the teachers’ personalities. You can learn not only the language but also what is going on locally. In kokoka’s 100 yen class, the foodie teachers told me about long-established restaurants they love while the elderly teachers shared with me their opinions about Japan’s pension system. From the class I have come to know information about Kyoto that is not “cold and dead” like in tourist guidebooks, but instead warm and lively, coming directly from the daily life of residents.

Last, I would recommend non-franchised shops and restaurants as nice places to meet local people. Do not rely too much on what guidebooks and apps tell you. Instead, go for a walk in the neighbourhood. You will gain surprising but delightful discoveries like I did. When I walked around the Ichijoji area, I found an Izakaya run by a lovely couple who like experimenting with new recipes. Although I did not know most of the food on their menu, I was kindly helped by regular customers and got to try one of the couple’s original dish: Miso Cheese. (“YUMMY”). When my friends and I were on the way to a cafe near Nijo castle, we discovered a factory of homemade fruit wine in a quiet residential area offering factory tours free of charge, and had a two-hour long chat with the owner. For me, relaxing my heart and being creative by trying different strategies have brought me amazing experiences. Would you also like to try customising your strategies to enjoy time with the local people after reading this article? I hope so.

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