



Walking in Kyoto - a view from the heavens

Tymur Sandrovych (Ukraine)

If somebody asks me what my best memory about Kyoto is, I would reply that I had it not IN the city, but rather OVER it. I don't remember for sure when exactly this happened, most probably about seven or eight years ago.

I was in an airplane flying from Tokyo to some European city, and the route, for the reasons not very clear to me, was not made via the Sea of Japan and then through the continent and the north of Russia. This time, the flight was being performed from Tokyo to Western Japan, and then, via the Korean peninsula. I am writing about this so extensively, because at one point, while looking through the window, it came to my mind that what I could see was strangely familiar to me: a wide delta where two rivers were creating one, a bridge very close to it, mountains far in the north from this delta, several spots with numerous trees around them, and a very big green rectangle somewhere to the south-west from the delta.

While looking at this space, I realized that what I could see was actually Kyoto, the area close to Demachiyana station. All the places full of trees were shrines, while the big green rectangle must be Kyoto Gyoen (I always call it "Go-sho" - a former Imperial palace). At the same time it came to my mind that I could recognize this city from the air mainly due to the numerous everyday promenades and encounters that I had in its different parts: Arashiyama, Nishijin, Kami- and Shimogamo, the Kyoto Imperial Palace, Nishiki market and central Kyoto - just to name but a few.

This is actually something that I would like to recommend to everybody who is reading this essay: walk in Kyoto whenever you have time! It is a city beautiful under any weather conditions, and walking around Kyoto would definitely turn your stay in the city into an unforgettable experience. My special recommendation is walking along



Author

continued on page 6

ADVERTISE your activities
in the "Life in Kyoto" newsletter!!



We publish newsletter 4 times a year.
Advertising rate starts at 10,000yen!

☎ 075-752-3511 ✉ office@kcif.or.jp

**We are looking for new
members like you!!**

Our volunteer team has people from many
different cultures, why don't you join us!

Contact us now! ☎ 075-752-3511 ✉ office@kcif.or.jp



Enjoying *Chado* (the Way of Tea)

Treat yourself and join a tea gathering!

In Kyoto, you can find many informal tea gatherings taking place where anyone can experience the delightfulness of *chado*. Let me share with you some enjoyable points of the tea gathering, if you think it seems difficult to try!

< Enjoyable Point 1 : The peaceful setting >

The purpose of *chado* is to make delicious *matcha* tea for guests and offer a heartwarming time. In the tearoom, all guests are equal and expected to treat one another with respect regardless of the guests' age or social status. This tradition has been valued for centuries, even in the age of the *bushi* or *samurai* when there was a strict social class system. (Interestingly, at that time, *samurai* were required to take off their swords when entering the tearoom.) For these reasons, the tearoom is the ultimate place of peace.



A tea gathering



Matcha tea and sweets
(confectionery : Nijo-wakasaya)

< Enjoyable Point 2 : The sweets >

Wagashi (Japanese sweets) are another aspect that guests can enjoy at tea gatherings. In addition to being delicious, these sweets are also beautiful to look at as they are designed with seasonal motifs, such as flowers and natural sceneries. Sweets are hand-made using recipes that have been handed down through several generations. This sweetness along with the rich flavor of *matcha* tea is relaxing and rejuvenating.

< Enjoyable Point 3 : The tea utensils >

The utensils used for *chado* are all traditional crafts. The tea bowls are pottery and the *natsume* (a container of tea powder) is lacquerware. Also, the *chashaku* (a tea scoop) and the *chasen* (a tea whisk) are bamboo-ware. Additionally, there are metal-ware, wood-ware, and so on. Each utensil is elaborately hand-crafted and reflects traditional Japanese sense of beauty. If you are interested in crafts, these artistic tea utensils are another highlight of the tea gathering.

What you will truly enjoy at the tea gathering is an “unusual” experience. The hustle and bustle of everyday life is nowhere to be found in the tearoom. Plastic items and electronics, neither. The room is completely natural. Each part of the tearoom contains natural materials, such as *tatami* mats, sliding doors, and pillars. And the tea utensils are also made of natural materials. Surrounded by beautiful things created by nature, enjoying the delicious tea, and sharing the peaceful time with other participants --- the tearoom is indeed a sanctuary. Is there anywhere else that is better to relax without worldly concerns?



Some tea utensils

So, why don't you treat yourself go to a tea gathering?

◆ Information about informal (monthly) tea gatherings

Digital *Chanoyu* Map, by Tankosha *Only available in Japanese : <https://chanoyumap.jp/>

◆ If you want to take a *chado* lesson :

KYOTO – Experience *Chado* (the Way of Tea) at kokoka : <https://www.kcif.or.jp/web/en/classes/teaceremony/>

How to Make Emergency Calls for Foreigners Unable to Speak Japanese



When I first came to Japan, I only spoke a little Japanese. After having dinner and drinks with friends, a friend (Chinese-speaker) suddenly had a bad stomachache and could barely walk. With the help of the Japanese people at the party, we dialed 119 and called an ambulance. When the ambulance arrived, we had to provide the name, address and insurance card of my friend. So, we found that it is best to carry your health insurance card or other ID with you at all times. I was particularly surprised that it is free to call an ambulance in Japan. However, in the case of a minor injury or a none life-threatening illness, you should go directly to the hospital or clinic by taxi or car rather than dialing 119 which is only for emergencies.

If there is a fire, please call a fire engine also by dialing 119. Kyoto City has started the "5-languages (English, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Portuguese) Simultaneous Telephone Interpretation Service". Foreigners unable to speak Japanese can call for a fire engine or ambulance with ease. After dialing 119, an operator will respond in Japanese, state the purpose of the call in your native language. After about 20 seconds, you will be promptly connected to an interpreter, so do not hang up. For more information, please watch YouTube: (English) 119 for the emergency hot line! (You can report in English) Please be aware this service is only available within the Kyoto City limits.



In addition, if you have lost money or other valuables, please report it to the nearest Police station as soon as possible. If you encounter an accident, please call 110 immediately. You can speak with the operator in your own language. Stay on the phone until an interpreter answers you. If you have no idea about where you are, you can show the "110 SUPPORT CARD" to any Japanese people around you to explain the place to the operator. The English card can be downloaded to your smartphone for your convenience. Emergency calls are answered 24 hours a day, and free of charge. Please make use of it if needed.



YouTube : (English) 119
for the emergency hot line!



110 SUPPORT CARD

ZHOU Xiaochun

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 : Sunday, February 21, 2021, 13:00 - 17:00
- ◆ Where : kokoka Kyoto International Community House, 3F, Conference Room
- ◆ Reservations : phone 075-752-3511 (Reservations will begin from January 21, 2021)



Annual Events and *Kyogashi*

Do you like *wagashi* (Japanese confectionery)? I became a lover of *wagashi* after I started to learn tea ceremony. Beautiful to the eyes, I love the exquisite taste of *wagashi*'s sweetness complemented by the bitterness of drinking matcha tea. We generally call *wagashi* made in Kyoto collectively as *kyogashi*. *Kyogashi* is hand-made by skilled craftsmen using traditional techniques. And unlike ordinary *wagashi*, *kyogashi* has been influenced by Kyoto's ancient culture, customs and history of tea ceremony. In the world of *kyogashi*, the season changes every two weeks and the confectioneries matching the season are sold in the stores. The special quality of *kyogashi* is to taste it with all five of senses, characterized by not only the beautiful appearance to the eyes, but also the feel and taste to the tongue, the scent to nose, and the hearing of the *kyogashi*'s name to the ears. The more we know, the more profound *kyogashi* becomes.

About the sense of the season, for example, February 3rd is *Setsubun*. Originally, *Setsubun* meant the division of the seasons. According to the old lunar calendar, Japanese New Year started on *Risshun* (The First Day of Spring), and back in those days, Japanese people thought the day before (*Setsubun*) as a special day, equivalent to New Year's Eve. *Setsubun* was believed to be the day that devils might appear, so while shouting "*Oni wa soto, Fuku wa uchi* (Devils out! Happiness in!)", beans are thrown to drive away the evil spirits (disaster) and to bring in good fortune. This custom is called *mamemaki*. The *Setsubun* Festival is held in Kyoto every year to drive away the *oni* (devils). The *oni* represent evil spirits. So, we don't use ordinary beans when we throw them. We use roasted beans, because it is believed that raw beans may sprout which might awaken the evil spirits.

Now, I like to introduce *kyogashi* related with *Setsubun*. The first *wagashi* is named "*Mamemaki* (Beans Throw)", which contains boiled beans sweetened in a wooden measure box made from *yokan* (*azuki*-bean jelly). The other is named "*Oni ni Kanabou* (Club on Devil)". It is an idiom that means to make already strong devil even stronger because it gets a club. The "*Oni ni Kanabou*" confectionery is made using the traditional technique called "*Hasamigiku*". This technique is to make a shallow even cuts using special sharp scissors and finishing it like a petal of a chrysanthemum.

In this way, *kyogashi* has been influenced by not only craftsmen's traditional techniques and their sensibilities but also by Kyoto's old culture and customs, and people's wishes. Why don't you have a *kyogashi* while thinking about such things? I think it would even be that much more tasteful.



Mamemaki



Oni ni Kanabou

Photos courtesy of Kanshundo : <http://www.kanshundo.co.jp>

NISHIKI Mie

The Beautiful Kyoto Sento Imperial Palace

The Kyoto Sento Imperial Palace, located inside Kyoto Gyoen National Garden, preserves the beauty of the Edo period (1603 to 1868). There is a garden with a pond, tended by master gardener Mr. Enshu Kobori, where visitors can discover a variety of noteworthy points. And, if you look out over the pond, you can see the Higashiyama Mountains.



Kyoto Sento Imperial Palace

The cherry trees growing there are still the *yamazakura* variety, native to Japan, and different from the *someiyoshino* trees. Also, the *momiji* (maple) trees there are *iroha-momiji*, another native tree variety of Japan. The *hiiragi* (holly olive) grows there too, its small flowers bloom in winter, giving off a pleasant fragrance, while the wisteria over the bridge above the pond waits to bloom in May.

The Sento Imperial Palace was constructed for Gomizunoo Jyoko, who reigned during the early Edo period, and abdicated his Emperor's throne. He could see and enjoy each of the four seasons while staying inside the Palace. His other interests were *waka* (Japanese short poem), *shodo* (Chinese calligraphy), and *chado* (tea ceremony); he hosted many salons in the Palace. There remains a teahouse in the garden, where there is a work of calligraphy crafted by Mr. Li Bai, a Chinese poet from the Tang period. Come visit the Kyoto Sento Imperial Palace, and see for yourself the beauty there! Entry is free; you can visit as a walk-in by joining a group:

◆ <https://sankan.kunaicho.go.jp/multilingual/lang/en/information.html#sankan3application>

Or, you can make an application in advance for admission/reservation:

◆ https://sankan.kunaicho.go.jp/english/order/order_simple_flow.html

◆ https://sankan.kunaicho.go.jp/order/index_EN.html

A free multi-language audio guide application is also available.

FURUTA Tomiyoshi

kokoka Kyoto International
Community House kokoPlaza 2F

Library Letter

2021 Winter
(January, February, March)



books recommended by kokoka

“Congratulations in the Countries of the World !”

(Author: NOMURA Takaaki,
Publisher: Kodansha, 2019)

kokoka→



How do you celebrate your New Year every year? This book introduces how people in fourteen countries celebrate their New Year. Each page has illustrations aside from texts to help you easily imagine their customs. By all means, please come to the kokoPlaza at second floor of kokoka, and read it!

By the way, in Spain, they eat one grape each time the clock tower bell rings to wish a good luck for the new year.

*kokoka is the Kyoto International Community House's mascot.

“Japanese from the Ground Up”

(Author/Publisher: J Reserch Shuppan, 2019)



If you know someone around you who is thinking “I want to study Japanese language from the scratch, but I don't know which textbook is best to choose for myself.”, then please introduce this book to them. This book is a recommended Japanese textbook that you can enjoy learning *hiragana*, *katakana*, and greetings without overly doing it.



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.

[Hours] 9:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Closed on Mondays & last day of every month

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

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

translated by SUZUKI Shoichiro



Shugakuin Imperial Villa

the rivers – Kamo River/Takano River, or Katsura River, or any other smaller one.

While doing so, just observe everything that happens around you: people engaged in their everyday activities, birds spending hours in the water, and the rivers flowing from north to south. Of course, you need some time for this, but I can assure you that in the end you won't regret any single minute spent in such a way. Just like me some time ago, you might also enjoy a bonus of recognizing this city from an airplane window.

kokoka Open Day 2020 Self-produced Event of LIK

On November 3, the volunteers of “Life in Kyoto” held a self-produced event. We introduced ourselves through panel exhibitions and videos about the history and activity for the last 30 years of “Life in Kyoto”, a newsletter of life and culture.

The volunteers also performed kamishibai. For storytelling in Japanese, English and Chinese, we also used live method of participation from distant places via the internet. There were also volunteers participating who were from Canada!



Though we did not keep accurate count by registering visitors, more than 250 people including more than 150 children came to the event.

The ones who have come to watch last year came again, and others who were newly interested came. The event was a great success.

We held the event taking care to keep COVID-19 safe, as the size of venue was suitably large, and we could avoid the three Cs. Because the children had fun and we could meet the people from different countries, we think it was a very successful event.

KAWASAKI Masashi, translated by SUZUKI Hidetoshi

■ Writers, Editors and Contributors

Ashley CLAYTON / CHIKAMOTO Koji / FUJITA Risa /
FURUTA Tomiyoshi / IKUTA Minoru / Karl JANSMA /
KANAYA Chinami / KAWASAKI Masashi / LIN Hsiu Feng /
MIZUNO Hiroshi / NISHIKI Mie / SATO Mina /
SUZUKI Hidetoshi / SUZUKI Shoichiro / YAGI Toshiyuki /
YUZAWA Kimio / ZHOU Xiaochun

■ Publisher : Kyoto City International Foundation

TEL : 075-752-3511 FAX : 075-752-3510
E-mail : office@kcif.or.jp Website: <https://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

Thank you for reading!
You can also read LIK online!



Your messages motivate us!
office@kcif.or.jp

