

Life & Cultural Information Newsletter

kokoka

Life In Kyoto

2021
Summer

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01 My Favorite Kyoto

Moments of Eternity | David Gay-Perret

I came to Japan for the first time in 2009, with three friends. That trip as a whole was a childhood dream come true but among the many places we visited, Kyoto had a particularly strong effect on me. Indeed, several times while walking around the city I felt a deep sense of serenity and peace, I experienced timeless moments when the whole world seemed to stop.

I think many scenes in Japanese animation try to capture these special moments, and maybe that's what the Japanese call "*Satori*"?

I personally call them "moments of eternity" and the one place that moved me the most was the Path of Philosophy. There were much less tourists back in 2009 and when my friends and I walked there it was just us, the setting sun, and a few locals: an artist painting the scenery, a young girl playing with a cat... And us four, walking as though the path – and that moment – would never end.

Because the city had left me with such intense memories, I came back during my second trip to Japan in 2019. This time I befriended the locals, and so moving to Kyoto was an obvious choice once it became clear I no longer wished to stay in Sweden.

Soon after arriving, the Corona outbreak and its subsequent lockdown began, and suddenly I had the city all to myself; empty were the streets of Arashiyama, Ninenzaka & Sannenzaka, beautiful and solitary stood

the Kinkakuji and the Kiyomizu-Dera, bared laid the hill of Fushimi Inari Taisha and Tenryuji's Garden... And the timeless moments of serenity which had mesmerized me over 10 years earlier came back.

Few people will ever experience Kyoto this way. However I discovered these "moments of eternity" also tend to manifest themselves when walking along the numerous waterways running throughout the city. No need for a map; just follow the water! Which in turns keeps our attention focused on the present moment. It's also a great opportunity to discover hidden gems: unusual shops, unknown temples, beautiful landscapes... And perhaps share a few words with the locals!

Interested but not sure where to start? Why don't you take the Keihan Line to Sumizome Station and walk along the river running in front of Fushimi Inari Taisha? Or take the Eizan Line to Nikenchaya and follow the nearby river all the way to Kokusaikaikan!



David Gay-Perret

I was born and grew up in a small city in the French Alps. After turning 20 I moved to Sweden to study, before starting my own business there. I got the double citizenship French-Swedish and ended up staying 10 years in the country, before deciding to move to Kyoto in March 2020.

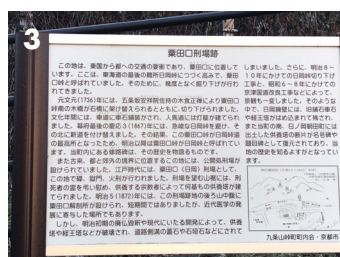
Today I work as a full-time freelance voice artist, with customers all over the world.

02 Some Creepy Places Near kokoka | KOSONO Miki

On hot and humid summer nights, Japan has a traditional custom of telling scary stories. This is because when you hear those kinds of stories, you get chills as if you were feeling cold. Near kokoka in Keage, there are some places where you can get that same feeling.

Walk for about 15 minutes up the slope in front of kokoka to Keage Station. There you will see a sign describing the Ruins of Awataguchi Keijo. The explanation, in Japanese only, says that about 15,000 people were executed in this place during the Edo Period. There used to be some buildings that had been used for autopsies, as well as various monuments. However, most of these were removed when a new road was built. A few minutes away from the sign, behind construction fences, you'll find a slope that seems to refuse anyone trying to enter. Just up the slope, two monuments remain. I went there on a sunny, warm day, but somehow I felt my spine was cold. It is said that the head of AKECHI Mitsuhide, who killed

ODA Nobunaga, a famous Japanese warlord whose name is often seen in games, was exposed here. Near Higashiyama Station, you can see a monument of his head. If you want to feel more scared, I recommend you to go there. However, if you don't respect the people who were executed, you will get a scarier experience!



- 1, 2. The monuments
3. The sign of the Ruins of Awataguchi Keijo

03 From Kyoto to Hiroshima

FURUTA Tomiyoshi

A couple of years ago, when I walked along the Kitaoji-dori, several foreigners, who surrounded bicycles, seemed troubled. Talking to them, I found bicycle stands were locked, which they didn't know. After unlocking it, they told me that they are from the United States; High school students and their teacher, studying Japanese. Encouraged by their teacher, high schoolers had a chat with me for some time, and they told me that they have just finished sightseeing in Kyoto and are planning to travel to Hiroshima.

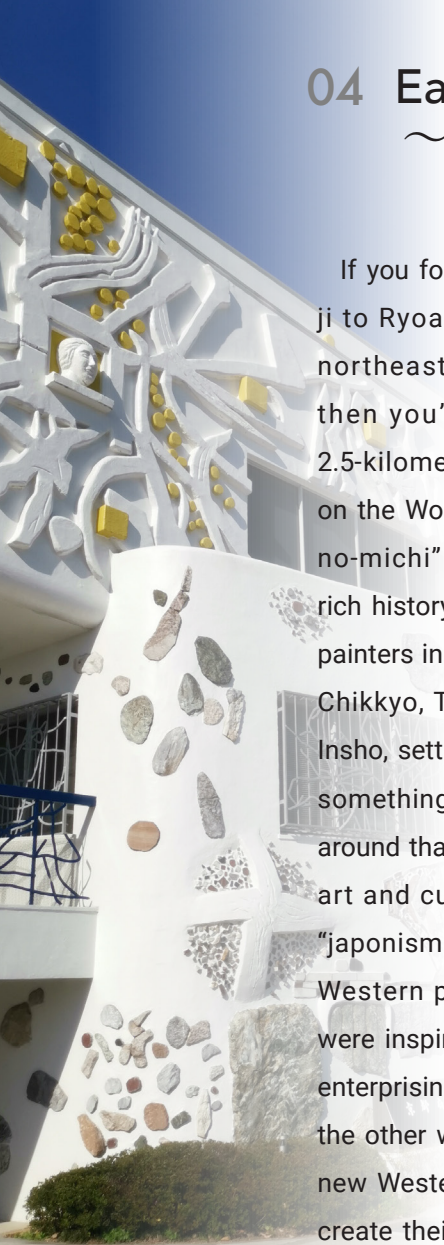
There, I did advise them to visit Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and Atomic Bomb Dome. During

World War II, two atomic bombs were detonated over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and as many as 140,000 citizens were killed. The killed are not only Japanese but also Koreans and even Americans. To remember this dreadful history and make the world peaceful, the Peace Memorial Ceremony is held on August 6 annually at Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima City.

Kyoto became Heiankyo 1200 years ago. Heiankyo means the capital of peace. Kyoto city is a city that prays peace, being united worldly. I wish the prayer can synchronize with Hiroshima through the trip of the people I have met.

04 Eager To Learn More About Kyoto ～ Scenery with a museum in it ～

MIZUNO Hiroshi



If you follow the road that runs from Ninna-ji to Ryoan-ji and thereafter farther to the northeast along the foot of Mt. Kinugasa, then you'll get to Kinkaku-ji. The about 2.5-kilometer road lined with these temples on the World Heritage list is called "Kinukake-no-michi" and known as a promenade with rich history. Early in the 20th century, leading painters in the art world of Kyoto such as ONO Chikkyo, TSUCHIDA Bakusen, and DOMOTO Insho, settled down in this area, which formed something like an artists' colony. In Europe around that time the enthusiasm for Japanese art and culture — a phenomenon known as "japonisme" had already spread around, and Western painters such as Monet and Gogh were inspired by Japanese art, whereas these enterprising Japanese painters were influenced the other way around, and tried to incorporate new Western art forms into their paintings to create their unique style. Today we can catch

a glimpse of the fruits of their efforts at the museum Insho left to future generations.

Halfway between Ryoan-ji and Kinkaku-ji lies Ritsumeikan University, across from which is a white Western-style building with eccentric patterns. It is Kyoto Prefectural Insho-Domoto Museum of Fine Arts, and to the east across the side road from the museum is his old residence complete with a studio. The museum houses Insho's works in each phase, and displays different pieces each time at thematic exhibitions that take place several times a year. The exhibition which is being held until September 26th, "DOMOTO INSHO Commemorating the 130th Anniversary of His Birth" features paintings elected by visitors' vote. You can, therefore, enjoy such various types of paintings from traditional Japanese to abstract ones that you couldn't believe it is a solo exhibition.

Rakugo is a form of verbal entertainment performed by a lone storyteller. It had been a popular form of art from long ago because it is easy to understand and usually involved various characters and scenes.

The Kyoto Guide Club (KGC) in kokoka has invited a group of amateur, providing free performance of *Rakugo* in English at the event hall of kokoka on 19th September (Sun) afternoon.

The name of the English *Rakugo* circle is called "Laugh-Laugh-Tei". We interviewed the representator, Ms. OTONO Yasuko for more details of this circle.

Ms. OTONO was originally a member of another English *Rakugo* circle in Osaka. As she also wanted to share the joy of English *Rakugo* to people in Kyoto, she then established "Laugh-Laugh-Tei" 12 years ago. Although there were only two members at the beginning, now they had about 20 members from not only Kyoto but also Osaka, Aichi, Shiga and Hyogo prefecture. They will practice English *Rakugo* in

Shimogyo Ikilki Center twice a month and perform in different places.

Members are in wide range of ages, all of them love English and *Rakugo*. Even though their proficiencies are different, the will of them to make us happy is the same.

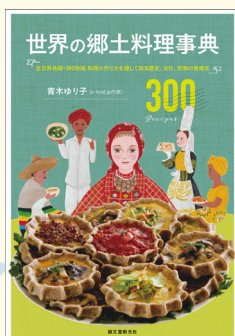
For KGC, we want to gather people under this pandemic to relieve our feelings of loneliness and to make a cheerful atmosphere. Therefore, everyone is welcome to join.



Laugh-Laugh-Tei home page : <http://2laughtei.blog.fc2.com/>

06 kokoPlaza Letter

"Encyclopedia of local cuisines around the world"



Author : AOKI Yuriko
Publisher : SEIBUNDO SHINKOSHA Publishing, 2020

The recipes of local cuisines around the world are introduced in this book, and you can understand various food cultures. Please refer to these recipes and try to cook various local cuisines. The cuisine kokoka is most interested in is "kabuli palaw", Afghan boiled rice seasoned with carrot, and chicken or mutton. It looks so delicious that kokoka would like to make it.

These items are also available at kokokPlaza.

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*Books are not available
for check-out.

07 My First Hospitalization in Japan | ZHOU Xiaochun

When the cherry blossoms were about to bloom, I got admitted to the hospital. I had never been to the hospital in Japan, and I was very nervous because of my poor Japanese.

Although the staff of the in-patient department had explained in detail the admission procedures, on admission day, I still made a mistake in it. It was a good thing that the nurse had endless patience with me, explained to me again and again in plain Japanese, and helped me to go through the admission procedures smoothly. During my stay in the hospital, every medical staff was very patient, who communicated with me in simple Japanese until I could understand my condition



Hospitals with Foreign Language
Speaking Doctors (Kyoto City) (PDF)

https://www.kcif.or.jp/web/assets/pdf/en_hospital_list19.pdf

correctly. The operation was a success, and I did not need to worry about my bad Japanese.

Even if you are a foreigner living in Kyoto who does not speak Japanese, you do not need to worry about going to the hospital. There are many hospitals in Kyoto that can provide medical care in foreign languages. And a list of them can be downloaded from kokoka's official website.

What surprised me was that I did not have to pay a security deposit when I went to the hospital, and no need to pay when I left. Until the invoice was mailed to your house, you didn't pay at the convenience store. I envy such a society of mutual trust as a foreigner living in Kyoto. I want to be a faithful person without delinquent insurance premiums.

In addition, if there is no delinquency in insurance premiums, you can apply for an "Eligibility Certificate for Ceiling-Amount Application (*GENDOGAKU TEKIYO NINTEISHO*).". It indicates to the hospital the maximum amount of medical expenses that a person under the age of 70 who has health insurance can receive. Therefore, as international students, if you take out health insurance, you can save medical expenses while protecting your health.

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Kyoto City International Foundation

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