

Life & Cultural Information Newsletter

Life In Kyoto

Summer 2022

KOKOKO

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01 My Favorite Kyoto

Wise live in Nagaokakyo | Sei Nakamura (Taiwan)

Hello, my name is NAKAMURA Sei, and I'm originally from Changhua, Taiwan.

I really enjoy backpack trips around the world and have been to Japan more than 30 times. During every trip to Japan, I was impressed by the kindness and honesty of the local people. I live in Nagaokakyo City which promotes the city under a slogan "Kashiko Kurassic Nagaokakyo", meaning wise live in Nagaokakyo.

It is about 10 kilometers far southwest from Kyoto City and easily accessible to both Kyoto and Osaka by JR and Hankyu railway. we can enjoy a beautiful view in the area with a background of the Nishiyama mountains all year round. I feel myself at home here in Japan I live. The area has a rich history, and the most historic topic is the transfer of the capital of Japan from Heijokyo in Nara to Nagaokakyo in 784, then in 794 to Heiankyo.in Kyoto. Japan is a beautiful and inspiring country you can enjoy and is amazing at its nature, history and architecture during each season. In particular, Kyoto, the old capital of a thousand years, has an atmosphere surrounded by old temples, traditional buildings, natural beauty and history. Kyoto is a city with a calm and safe living environment.

The roundhouse of locomotives of the Kyoto Railway Museum is as same heritage as that in Changhua, my hometown, and so Taiwan and Kyoto are literally so similar that I have a special feeling of connection.

Since Kyoto people are very warm and friendly, all visitors can immediately feel traditions unique to Japanese people that begin with a welcoming smile. Also if you say hello to each other, you can get along well and make friends easily.

There are simple but friendly Kyoto customs that can be specially noticed by foreign visitors that leave a lovely memory such as each morning, watering the flowers and cleaning the road are performed lovingly with pleasant greetings and diligent devotion. When I was looking for a job, my neighbor took me to the Chamber of Commerce for consulting and helped me in every way possible, so friendly and helpful.

I was also pleasantly surprised at the service of the post office. One experience I had was when my American friend didn't receive my parcel and delivery notice in the USA post office. I went to the Mukomachi Post Office for tracking the parcel. The staff kindly solved this problem quickly and very professionally. I was contacted by the Mukomachi Post Office as soon as my package arrived in the USA and received an informed postcard.

Another example is that the Nagaoka Imazato Post Office phoned me immediately after forgetting to remove my cash card out. I was really impressed by the compassionate and honest spirit. I'm often impressed by the deeds of the Japanese people. Japan is also reputed for the best hospitality and service in the world and demonstrates its fine reputation almost daily.

Finally, there are many hard working volunteer teachers who work tirelessly to teach foreigners Japanese and Japan daily life in Kyoto.

It is better to slowly experience Kyoto's "Okoshiyasu" in the Kyoto dialect, meaning welcome, so that you can learn more about the way of thinking and caring of Kyoto people. I feel like I want to enjoy this millennial city. Recommended for Kyoto and Nagaokakyo, live a safe and leisurely life.



02 Friendship between "Danno-san" and Okinawa | IKEMIYAGI Yasuko

Danno-Horin-ji Temple, located at the east end of Sanjo Ohashi bridge, is often called by its nickname "Danno-san," much loved in its neighborhood. The temple and Okinawa are closely tied with friendship. "Okinawa Festa" and "Peaceful Concert" are both held at the temple.



"Okinawa Festa" was started by people from Okinawa living in Kyoto and by those who love Okinawan music. Festa is held in May. Hearing the rhythmic sound of drums and *sanshin* (a three-string instrument like a guitar), passers-by gathered at the performance and now it's a big festival.

"Peaceful Concert" is held around June 23, Okinawa Memorial Day. Priest Shigahara started the concert out of his wish to console the people killed in the battle on Okinawa during the world war II.

The beginning of the friendship dates back to around 1600. Priest Taichu who later initiated the construction of the Danno-Horin-ji temple, wished to study Buddhism in China. He traveled to as far as Ryukyu (Okinawa) when he was forced to stay in Okinawa for about 3 years. Although his dream to study was not realized, he began a friendship with Okinawa. The friendship was stopped for a long time but it restarted in the 1920th.

As this year is the 50th anniversary of the United States' return of administration rights over Okinawa to Japan, more people are interested in studying about the history and culture of Okinawa as they gather together at the temple.

03 "yubiwa o itadakimashita" | KAWASAKI Masashi

You learn to say "Itadakimasu" (Thank you for the food as a greeting before you eat a meal. Then, when you say "yubiwa o itadakimashita", does it imply "I have eaten a ring"? No, of course not!

As you study Japanese, text books for foreign learners of Japanese show you the expressions "ageru" (give) and "morau" (receive).

But, there are variations in expressions for "ageru". They are "sashiageru" and "yaru". Both mean "give".

The same goes for "morau", where "itadaku", "kudasaru" and "kureru" all mean "receive". These variety of expressions with the common meaning often appear in Japanese. What is the difference between them?

Actually, "ageru" and "morau" are the two most frequent expressions in Japanese. In addition, they are not limited to mean give/receive goods such as flowers or rings. Even a verb "toru"(take) can be combined with "ageru/morau" to be "totteageru" or "tottemorau". You will also find a verb "teach" (oshieru) joined

together with "ageru/morau" to be "oshieteageru" or "osietemorau". I understand some foreign languages have different expressions in these cases. How about in your mother tongue?

Native speakers of Japanese use many expressions with the common meaning properly and unconsciously. Yet even they can make mistakes sometime for too many of the same expressions.

Ask Japanese if your usage is appropriate or not, making a list of questions as follows: Which of "ageru", "sashiageru", or "yaru" is correct to use in the sense of "give flowers/rings, when, who, and to whom? Which of "kureru", "morau" or "itadaku" is correct to use to mean "receive", when, who, and to whom?

It could be an interesting international exchange with the local people.



Reference: Summary of lecture notes for Open University.
By MAEDA Naoko, professor, Gakushuin University.

04 Stand with Ukraine : Support by the Kyoto people

ISHIHARA Keiko



The "Stand with Ukraine" event was held in Kyoto on April 30 and May 1, sponsored by the Kyoto City International Foundation and other organizations. The event was organized by Ukrainians living in Japan. The two-day gatherings had lectures on history, language and folklore, a panel discussion, folk-art workshops, and music and dance performances, with a total of over 2,500 participants.

The terrible attack aiming at the Russification of Ukraine has claimed a great number of victims. An Ukrainian from Kyiv made the following appeal: "We are fighting not for our lives, but for our identity. If we lose our language and culture, our lives may remain to us, but we will not be alive".

Ethnographer KATAOKA Hiroshi told the audience: "Why do Ukrainians stay on the land? That land is sacred to them. There are many pictures of sunflowers blooming over dead bodies in Ukraine. Ukrainians' idea is that there they were borne and there they should die. They don't think they may just move somewhere else".

The atmosphere in the hall was serious and one could sense strong concerns and commitment about the issues. We interviewed three major figures involved in the support activities.

TAKAO Michiko, representative of the Terada Ballet Company in Kyoto, whose children danced at the event, said: "We have raised a lot of funds. We do hope they

will be used for arts in Ukraine". Her son, TERADA Nobuhiro, of the National Ballet of Kyiv, is doing his best in Europe to find ballet-related hosts for his dancers and students.

At the beginning of the event the Kyoto International Choir sang the Ukrainian national anthem, and will hold another concert in support of Ukraine in July. Representative TSUDA Takashi said: "Media coverage has its ups and downs. We should work steadily and continuously, while making the best possible use of the media".

Kyoto Mayor KADOKAWA Daisaku reported that the number of Ukrainian arrivals in the city is now one family and five single people, with three more single people due to come after the May holidays. In response to an interview with a LIK reporter, he said: "There is also a growing movement of support among universities and private companies. We are trying to deepen our support capability without pre-determining the number of Ukrainians we can accept".

As of the end of April, 66 housing offers had been received, while 46 people said they are available as language volunteers. While the war drags on, various forms of support are now taking a concrete shape in Kyoto.



05 Esports in Kyoto | SUZUKI Hidetoshi

Recently, esports has been drawing attention. The meaning of “esports” is to play video games competitively, and it is also one of the events of Asian Games to be held in China next year. Given this situation, the government of Kyoto Prefecture considers esports as a kind of “new culture” and is actively promoting its development.

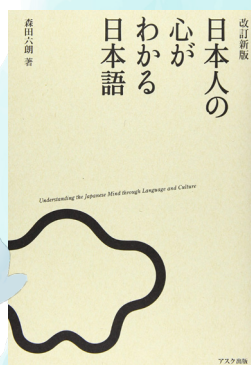
To learn more about esports in Kyoto, I interviewed the chairman of the Kyoto Esports Association, HORIKAWA Nobukazu. The Kyoto Esports Association regularly holds events and offers information to promote esports, in cooperation with Kyoto Prefecture and various companies and groups. As one of their activities, Kyoto Esports Association holds the “Kyoto Cup” competition twice a month online. During each event, about 20 teams participate in the competition, and about half of the teams are nationally recognized.

Regarding esports in Kyoto, the chairman Horikawa said “Looking abroad, China and Korea are especially advanced, and Japan is still running behind. And even within Japan, it can hardly be said that Kyoto is an advanced area for esports. However, Kyoto possesses good sources for esports such as Nintendo, and the Manga Museum. Additionally, Kyoto has many young people, such as students, who make up the main player base for esports. Also many people came from abroad. In the future, making use of the advantages of Kyoto, we wish to liven up the esports scene in Kyoto.”

Esports is not simply just for amusement, but it also connects directly to regional vitalization and children’s education. It also has an attractive potential to be a new large-scale industry. Going forward, we should pay close attention to the future development of esports.



06 kokoPlaza Letter



Understanding the Japanese Mind through Language and Culture (Newly Revised)

Author: Rokurou Morita Publisher: Ask publishing, 2021

The Japanese often use such phrases as, “People of the world”, “Read the air”, or “Real intention and façade”. But, when you ask about their meaning and usage, even the Japanese don’t explain well. (Or, rather, they can’t be explained!) This book explains in an easy-to-understand way, the “always” perception of these frustrating Japanese phrases. You can learn, when you’re conversing with Japanese people that remembering a phrase to give good impressions or a custom not expressed in words can contribute to more enjoyable communications. Notes in English, Chinese and Korean are also available. This book is recommended for those who want to know more about Japan and its people.

kokoPlaza's introduction

In the space of books “kokoPlaza” on the second floor of kokoka, the books which introduce the culture of Japan or foreign countries, the books to know about life in Japan (law, visa, education, parenting, disaster prevention, etc.), the books for study of Japanese language and so on are available. We hope you will make use of them.

[Hours] 9:30 ~ 17:00

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*Books are not available for check-out.

07 Summer in Kyoto - Beautiful places to see Hydrangea

YOKOTA Kanon

June is the rainy season in Japan. Since it rains constantly with high humidity, some people might feel reluctant to go outside during this dreary season. Here, I will introduce 3 famous hydrangea spots. They will definitely make you feel invigorated and refreshed.

The first one is Mimurotoji Temple, one of the most famous hydrangea viewing spots in the Kansai region, which is also called "hydrangea temple". Located in Uji City, this temple is also known as a temple of flowers, with azaleas in May, hydrangeas in June, and lotus in July. The "Ajisai Garden" is open to the public every year from early to late June, and the sight of over 20,000 hydrangea plants of 50 varieties in bloom is breathtaking. On Saturdays and Sundays, the hydrangea garden is illuminated, creating a fantastic sight.

Fujinomori Shrine is also famous for its beautiful hydrangeas. Every year, around mid-June, "Ajisai festival" is held, and approximately 3,500 hydrangeas with roots bloom in a variety of colors. During this period, you can obtain a special *Goshuinn* (the seal stamp given to visitors to shrines and temples) with hydrangea flower on it.

Lastly, I would like to introduce Umemiya Shrine. Here you can see not only hydrangeas, but also hanashobu (Japanese honeysuckle) and water lilies, and the colorful precincts are sure to be so beautiful that you will forget the heat of the rainy season. The hydrangeas are open to the public from early June to early July every year.

Please visit them, if you have a chance.




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Kyoto City International Foundation

TEL : 075-752-3511 FAX : 075-752-3510

E-mail : office@kcif.or.jp

Torii-cho 2-1, Awataguchi, Sakyo-ku, Kyoto, Japan
6068536

6 min walk North from [T09] Keage Station
Tozai Subway Line

Open 9:00am - 9:00pm Close on Mondays
(Open Monday if Monday is a National Holiday)

Writers, Editors and Contributors

FUJITA Risa / FURUTA Tomiyoshi / ICHINOMIYA Keiko

IKEMIYAGI Yasuko / IKUTA Minoru / ISHIHARA Keiko

ISHIHARA Shiena / KANAYA Chinami / KAWASAKI Masashi

KOSONO Miki / KOTANI Hitomi / LIN Hsiu Feng

MACHINO Yoichi / MATSUO Yukiya / MIZUNO Hiroshi

NISHIKI Mie / OKAMOTO Keisuke / SATO Mina

SAWADA Atsumi / SUZUKI Hidetoshi / YAGI Toshiyuki

YOKOTA Kanon / YU Yang Hong / YUZAWA Kimio

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