

Hello from Kyoto,

January 30, 2016

I am attending the Kyoto Minsai Japanese language school here for 2 months, enrolled in the beginner's class. The full length of their short term study is 3 months but a student can study in the program for any period of time that they are able to. The Kyoto Minsai School is dedicated to the idea of working together. The word "minsai" roughly translated means "all of us together". Kyoto Minsai incorporates this ideal, cooperation instead of competition, into an academic environment through



the diverse cultural activities and field trips that they sponsor. In addition the School provides a network of support to their international students living in Kyoto making available to their students such amenities as rental telephones and bicycles during their stay here.



Recently our class went on a field trip to Byodoin temple. It was a rainy day but, despite the weather, the trip turned out to be educational and interesting as well as FUN too.

Byodoin temple is a World Cultural Heritage site located in the small but famous town of Uji about an hours drive from Kyoto. Uji is world-renowned for its teas. There is an endless array of teas and tea products such as tea flavored mochi and other sweets available in Uji. In the right corner of the photo below you can see a green tea flavored ice cream cone. Often, the highest quality of



tea that is used in prestigious world-class tea ceremonies is purchased or ordered directly from here. Uji is also the hometown of



noblewoman

Murasaki Shikibu the first female author of Japan who in the 11th century wrote the classic work of Japanese literature, "Tale of Genji", a book that describes court intrigues during the historical period of the Heian era.



As a way of resolving conflicts that occurred centuries ago, two different sects of Buddhism have managed Byodoin Temple, for hundreds of years. Jodo-shu (Pure Land) and Tendai-shu both are

responsible for management. Various smaller temples and shrines spring from these denominations and are located within the same Byodoin temple walls. Tendai-shu is an open egalitarian form of Buddhism that draws from many different schools and they sponsor a small Obaku Zen representation here within the overview of Tendai.

Paragraph below credited to(<http://kyoto.asanoxn.com/places/uji/byodoin.htm>, viewed Jan. 25,2015)
Byodo-in temple ... has a typical Jodo-Shiki teien (Pure Land garden) that consists of



(All 8 Photos above- AA 2016)

Amida-do (Ho'o-do) hall and a pond. Amida-do, a national treasure, stands facing east on Naka-jima island in Aji-ike pond. The layout was designed so that ancient aristocrats can make a bow from the east side of the pond toward Amida-do that represents the Pure Land, or the western paradise. Inside of Amida-do are a figure of Amida-Nyorai (Amitabha Tathagata) and 51 smaller Buddhist images playing musical instruments. The primary and smaller images as well as the canopy above Amida-Nyorai are national treasures. The inner walls once were painted colorfully to represent Pure Land but most of the paintings have faded away. Vivid color reproduction of the wall paintings are displayed in Hosho-kan Museum.

All Photos below credited to -
(<https://www.quest-for-japan.com>,
viewed 1/30/2016)





Amida-Nyorai is enshrined in the Phoenix hall. He is surrounded by 52 Bodhisattvas (Bosatsu) playing musical instruments. These smaller images are just a few. The



originals are kept in the Hoshokan museum on site but replicas are installed in the Butsuden.



Jōchō 定朝 (Jocho). It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of Jōchō 定朝 (d. +1057) to the world of Japanese Buddhist statuary. From his loins and workshop sprang three of the most important schools of Japanese Buddhist statuary -- the Enpa 円派, Inpa 院派, and Keiha 慶派 schools, which dominated Buddhist sculpture thereafter.

Today he remains the undisputed patriarch of Japan's "independent" style of religious statuary, called Wayō 和様 (lit. Japanese Style). After Jōchō's death, numerous lineage



charts or genealogy tables (Busshi Keizu 仏師系図) were made to trace his line. But these charts are fraught with difficulty, for they typically include Jōchō's direct descendants, pupils, and adopted sons without differentiation.

Paragraph on Jocho credited to (<http://www.onmarkproductions.com/html/busshi-buddha-sculptor-jocho-japan.html>, viewed January 25, 2016)





I hope you have all enjoyed this Photo Essay.

Gassho, Teteki Andrew Atkeison 2/5/2016
(atkeison@sonic.net)

