A Bilingual Encyclopedia of Japanese Culture
絵と写真で日本文化を紹介

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火山：かざん
（噴火災害だけでなく、温泉の楽しみも）

日本には200を超える火山があります。そのうち110が「約1万年前以降に
噴火した証拠がある山と現在噴気活動がある山」として活火山に指定されて
います。日本人は古代から火山による災害に見舞われてきました。しかし、
火山活動によって造られた日本独自のみやびな風景や火山の熱によって生ま
れる温泉など、火山の豊かな恩恵も受けています。

Kazan: volcano
[damages by eruptions but enjoyable hot springs]

昭和新山：Shōwa Shinzan
There are more than 200 volcanoes in
Japan, 110 of which are designated as active
volcanoes with records of eruptions within
the last 10,000 years, or presently have
fumarolic activities. Japanese people have
suffered from disasters caused by volcanoes
from time immemorial. However, they have
also been able to enjoy volcanic
phenomena, in the forms of beautiful
sceneries unique to Japan or hot springs generated by volcanic heat.

温泉：おんせん
（都心にも温泉が）

日本には温泉施設が多くあり、温泉旅行は日本人に人気の高いレジャーと
なっています。温泉にはイオンやミネラルなどが含まれています。それらは、
けがや病気にきくといわれています。温泉による治療法は「湯治」と呼ばれ、
古くから行われてきました。現在では東京都心に温泉施設が増え、テーマパ
ークとして人気を集めています。

Onsen: hot spring
[even in the middle of the Tokyo Metropolitan district]

There are a lot of hot spring facilities in Japan and hot spring tours are very
popular leisure activities. Hot springs contain
ions and minerals and these are believed to act
on injuries or diseases. Spa therapy has been
practiced since the ancient times, which is
called tōji. Nowadays, there are an increasing
number of hot springs facilities even in the
middle of the Tokyo Metropolitan district, which have gained popularity as theme parks.

[人間だけでなく動物も好きな温泉:
Not only humans but animals enjoy hot springs.]
地震：じしん [世界有数の地震国、日本]

日本で地震が多いのは、海洋プレートが周辺のプレートに沈み込むことに伴って地震が発生するためで、火山活動も活発です。1年間に世界で発生する地震のうち、約1割が日本で発生しているともいわれます。日本の歴史上最も大きな地震災害は1923年の関東大震災です。また近年でも、1995年の阪神・淡路大震災や2011年の東日本大震災で多数の犠牲者が出ました。

Jishin: earthquake [Japan is a country most prone to earthquakes in the world.]

Japan has many earthquakes mainly due to the subduction of oceanic plates under the surrounding plates, and volcanic activities are also active. Almost 10% of the earthquakes in the world are said to occur in Japan annually. The Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923 caused the biggest damage in Japanese history. Many people lost their lives in the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995 and in the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011.

日本周辺には海洋プレートの境界が複数ある。プレートの移動は地震を引き起こし、ときには大きな被害を及ぼす。
There are several oceanic plate boundaries around Japan. The movement of plates at those boundaries causes earthquake and sometimes brings serious damage.
Fujisan : Mt. Fuji [the highest mountain and a national symbol]

Mt. Fuji, which has beautiful long slopes, is the highest mountain in Japan with the elevation of 3,776 meters stretching on the border of Shizuoka and Yamanashi Prefectures. The mountain has been regarded as one of the three spiritual mountains, where no women were allowed to climb in ancient times. It was designated as a World Cultural Heritage Site in June 2013.

Tokyo [center of politics, economy and culture]

Tokyo is a metropolis where the capital of Japan has been placed since Meiji Period. “Tokyo” was named after its location in the east of Kyoto, the previous capital. In 1603, Tokugawa Ieyasu who was the shōgun then placed the feudal government in this city and named it Edo. Presently, the Tokyo metropolitan government includes twenty-three wards, twenty-six cities, one county and several islands such as the Izu Islands and the Ogasawara Islands (also called Bonin Islands). It has a population of about 13,500,000 and the area of 2,200 km², forming the center of Japan.
秋葉原：あきはばら [電気街からオタクの聖地へ]

秋葉原は、東京にある日本最大の電気街です。家電量販店やパソコン関連店が並び、もともと多くの外国人観光客が日本製の電気製品を買いに訪れました。しかし2000年ごろを境に、アニメマニア向けのキャラクター商品などを扱う店が増え始め、現在では、「オタク」の聖地として知られるようになりました。

Akihabara [the holy place for otaku from]

Akihabara in Tokyo has been the largest shopping town for electric goods in Japan, where stores for electric and computer goods stand in rows attracting many non-Japanese tourists looking for made-in-Japan products. However, the number of stores selling character goods for anime maniacs has increased since around 2000 and presently Akihabara is also known as the holy place for otaku, or anime and cosplay freaks.

浅草：あさくさ [伝統があふれ、庶民のノスタルジー漂う街]

浅草は、古きよき時代を感じさせる東京の下町です。浅草といえば浅草寺の「雷門」が有名で、大きな提灯がつり下げられた門の右側に風神、左側に雷神の像が立っています。浅草寺への参道には「仲見世」という商店街がりにぎわっています。また、このエリアでは日本の伝統芸能に触れることもできます。

Asakusa [town of Japanese tradition and popular nostalgia]

Asakusa is one of the old downtown Tokyo areas, where you can enjoy the atmosphere of the good old days. The most famous in Asakusa is the Kaminari-mon Gate of the Senso-ji Temple, where a big lantern is hung and two statues of fūjin (the god of wind) and raijin (the god of thunder) stand on both sides. The approach to the temple makes up Nakamise or popular shopping area. You can also enjoy Japanese traditional entertainments in this area.
Satsuki-bare: clear day in May [originally, clear days during the rainy season]

*Satsuki-bare* originally meant unusually clear days during *tsuyu*, the rainy season in June (or May by the lunar calendar). Today, however, the term is used for clear days in May and sometimes referred to as *gogatsu-bare* (clear days in May) instead. Meanwhile, long rains during *tsuyu* are sometimes called *samidare* (rain in May). Many of the seasonal terms in Japan are based on the lunar calendar and are often used with different meanings from their original ones.

Tsuyu (baiu): plum rain, rainy season [gloomy rainy season in Japan]

*Tsuyu* is the long rainy season in June and July. The rain covers most of Japan except Hokkaido and some other areas, and brings very humid air, causing mold and food poisoning. It is sometimes said that the name is derived from the fact that it coincides with the season of Japanese plum ripening. Recently, torrential rainfalls often occur at the end of *tsuyu* because of global warming, occasionally causing major disasters.
真夏日・熱帯夜：まなつび・ねったいや
（蒸し暑い夏を表す気象用語）
日本では1日の最高気温が25℃以上の日を「夏日」、30℃以上の日を「真夏日」、35℃以上の日を「猛暑日」といいます。「猛暑日」は、地球温暖化によって35℃以上の日が多くなったために最近誕生した言葉です。最低気温が25℃を下回らない日の夜を「熱帯夜」といいます。

Manatsubi/Nettaiya: day over 30 degrees Celsius/sweltering night
[meteorological terms of sweltering heat]
In Japan, if the highest temperature of a day reaches more than 25 degrees Celsius, the day is called natsu-bi (a day of summer heat). A day of the highest temperature of more than 30 degrees Celsius is called manatsu-bi (a day of real summer heat). A day of the highest temperature of over 35 degrees Celsius is called mōsho-bi (a day of extreme summer heat). Mōsho-bi is a recently invented term because of the rising number of days over 35 degrees due to global warming. Also, if the lowest temperature at night is above 25 degrees Celsius, the night is called nettai-ya (a sweltering night).

台風：たいふう
（夏から秋に発生する暴風雨）
台風は、太平洋上などで発生した、最大風速34ノット以上の熱帯低気圧のことです。ハリケーンやサイクロンと呼ばれるものと同じです。平安時代には野分と呼んでいました。日本近海を通る台風は、毎年夏から秋に南の海上からやってきます。暴風雨による洪水やがけ崩れ、家の崩壊などによって、多くの人が命を落とすなど大きな被害をもたらします。

Taifū: typhoon
[severe tropical storm occurring in summer and autumn]
Taifū or a typhoon, just like a hurricane and a cyclone, is a tropical depression with the maximum wind velocity of 34 knots or more, usually starting in the Pacific. It was called nowake (wind blowing through grass in the field) in the Heian Period (794 – 1185). Taifū reaches Japan from the south in summer and autumn, and causes major disasters due to rainstorms, such as floods, landslides and destruction of houses, which may cause casualties.
Soba: buckwheat noodle

Soba (buckwheat noodles) are made by mixing buckwheat flour and wheat flour with water into a dough, and then cutting the dough into thin, long pieces. Once boiled, soba is served hot with broth or cold with dipping sauce. There are a wide variety of toppings for both hot and cold soba; raw egg and tempura (deep-fried battered vegetables or seafood) are among the most popular toppings. The most ordinary soba toppings include kitsune or aburaage (sweetened, deep-fried tofu pockets) and tanuki or tenkasu (crunchy bits of deep-fried flour-dough). In the Kanto region (areas around Tokyo), these two toppings are used freely both for soba and udon (thick wheat-floured noodles). But in the Kansai region (areas around Osaka), kitsune always represents a combination of udon and aburaage, and tanuki, a combination of soba and tenkasu. There is a long-standing tradition of eating soba noodles on New Year’s Eve for wishing good luck, “hoping for a long and healthy life even thin one,” just like the noodles.

▼すき蕎麦: zaru-soba (cold buckwheat noodles with sauce)

Serving of buckwheat noodle that come with seaweed is usually called zaru-soba, serving of buckwheat noodle without seaweed is usually called maki-soba.

▼月見蕎麦: tsukimi-soba (moon viewing buckwheat noodle)

The name comes from its appearance of a raw egg dropped in warm buckwheat noodle soup looking like the full moon.
Udon: thick wheat-floured noodle

[ eaten only on auspicious occasions in the old days ]

Udon are thick, white-colored wheat-floured noodles. Udon was introduced into Japan from China during the Tang Dynasty (618 – 907). Although udon can be consumed anytime like soba, peasants during the Edo Period (1603 – 1867) were allowed to eat udon only on auspicious occasions. The cooking method and ingredients for udon are basically the same as for soba. The udon broth tends to have lighter taste in western Japan. Recently, sanuki udon which is a thick, rather stiff type is popular.

Sōmen: thin, white noodle [goes down smoothly in summer]

Sōmen are very thin noodles made of wheat flour. Sōmen is usually sold in stores as dried noodles. The usual method of cooking and eating sōmen is to boil them in hot water, wash and soak in cold water, drain off the water, and then dipping them in a well-seasoned sauce. People like to eat sōmen especially during the summertime when they lose their appetite due to summer fatigue as it is slippery and goes down smoothly and easily. There is another method of eating sōmen, called nagashi-sōmen (flowing sōmen), which is one of the summer traditions. Here, sōmen is put in water flowing along a long gutter, which is made by splitting bamboo in half, and you catch and eat the noodles.
Kaiseki ryōri : traditional multi-course Japanese meal

Kaiseki ryōri, which was developed by Sen no Rikyū, the supreme tea master, in the Azuchi-Momoyama Period (1573 – 1603), is a simple meal served at tea ceremonies. The purpose of it is to help the guests fully enjoy tea afterwards. It is a multi-course Japanese meal, made of ichijō-sansai (one soup, three side dishes), which is simple and frugal but full of hospitality and exquisite care to entertain guests. Today, kaiseki ryōri is often used synonymously with the other “kaiseki ryōri” spelled out using different kanji, which refers to the fancy meal that was originally served at banquets for haiku poems.

Shōjin ryōri : vegetarian meal

Shōjin ryōri is based mainly on vegetables, grain, and beans and has been eaten by Buddhist monks who are prohibited from killing animals and eating the meat. It is characterized by an extensive use of soybeans as a source of protein. Miso (soybean paste), soy sauce and tōfu, among others, are now considered indispensable ingredients in Japanese cuisine. They are originally the ingredients closely related to shōjin ryōri.
Gyūdon: beef bowl [remains a Japanese favorite primarily among male customers]

Gyūdon was first developed in the Meiji Period (1868 – 1912) as a food for the general public. It has become one of the most popular Japanese fast foods in Japan. It is a dish consisting of a bowl of rice topped with sliced beef and onion simmered in a sauce flavored with soy sauce. It is served with beni shōga (red pickled ginger) and raw egg according to taste. Ever since the gyūdon chain stores were first launched in the 1970s, gyūdon has constantly remained a favorite primarily among male customers because of its hearty volume.

Tempura: deep fried battered vegetables or seafood [regarded as a synonym for Japanese food]

Tempura is a Japanese fritter-like dish made by cutting seafood and vegetables into the proper sizes, dipping them in a batter made of water and wheat flour to give them a thin coating, and cooking them in sesame oil etc. Crispy tempura, while freshly cooked, is eaten with dashi (dipping soup stock) or salt. Tempura is sold in sidewalk stalls and fancy Japanese restaurants. Tempura is also cooked at home and eaten with rice or on top of soba (buckwheat noodles) or udon (thick wheat-floured noodles).
Ryōtei: luxurious traditional Japanese restaurant
(high-level business or political meetings take place)

Ryōtei is a luxurious traditional Japanese restaurant built in the Japanese architectural style, where guests are wined and dined on Japanese cuisine and entertained by geisha in a private tatami room. Ryōtei is often used for business receptions or business negotiations. Ryōtei has long been used as the scene for politicking and for the secret meetings by politicians as well to the extent that the Japanese would instantly associate ryōtei with the meetings of politicians.

Izakaya: Japanese pub restaurant (drinking establishment featuring casual atmosphere and reasonable prices)

In the past, izakaya used to be called akachōchin (a red lantern) as there was a red lantern hung at the entrance of every izakaya. The menu items at izakaya include Nihonshu (Japanese alcoholic beverages), beer, shōchū, and popular sakana (food as an accompaniment to alcohol), such as yakitori (grilled skewers of chicken and chicken parts). It is said that the origin of izakaya can be traced back to the Edo Period (1603 – 1867) when the liquor shop selling sake by measure let the customers drink sake on the spot. There are many izakaya chains nationwide, and izakaya are extensively used for such occasions as company welcome or farewell parties and student get-togethers.
Yatai: street stall [Japanese version of the fast food store]

Yatai is a makeshift food store pulled by a two-wheel cart or a small truck to move to places and assembled to set up shop. During the Edo Period (1603 – 1867), yatai used to be a fast food store, selling sushi and other foods. The Hakata District of Fukuoka Prefecture is famous for the “yatai row,” where many yatai stand side by side, selling tonkotsu rāmen (rāmen with a rich, milky, pork-bone broth) and tempura (deep-fried battered dish). Yatai shops are also set up in front of the gates of the temples and shrines for Japanese festivals and the New Year. They are also called yomise (night stalls) and roten (street vendors), selling takoyaki (octopus balls), wata-ame (cotton candy), and kingyo (goldfish) scooping games (a traditional Japanese game where a player scoops goldfish with a special scooper).
Demae: catering service

Demae is a catering service offered by some restaurants. The restaurants accept orders for food and drinks by telephone, or some other means, from customers and deliver the ordered food and drinks to the places designated by the customers. The restaurants that accept demae usually include soba (buckwheat noodles) shops, sushi shops, and rāmen (Chinese-style noodles) shops. These days, a delivery person rides a motorcycle or drives a car to make the delivery, but deliveries used to be made on a bicycle with bowls of food or a stack of steamers placed on a tray on one hand while maneuvering the bicycle with the other hand. From the latter 1980s, the home delivery service for pizzas has become popular. Today pizzas can often be seen delivered to cherry blossom viewing parties.

駅弁：えきべん

駅弁は、駅の近くの弁当屋で、駅弁（駅弁り弁当）を略したネーミングです。駅の旅が主流だったころ、停車中にホームで買い求め、車窓の風景を眺めつつ楽しむ弁当でした。最近は列車のスピード化に伴い、停車時間も短縮されて駅弁が買いにくくなったります。一方で、ご当地カラーが色濃く反映される駅弁の人気は根強く、「駅弁フェア」と銘打ったイベントも催されます。

Ekiben: railway boxed meal

Ekiben are a specific type of bentō boxed meals sold at train stations in Japan and are short for “eki bentō” (train station bentō boxed meals) and “eki uri bentō” (bentō boxed meals sold at train stations). During the days when train travel was in its prime, people used to buy ekiben on the platform while the train was stopping at a station. They used to enjoy eating ekiben while enjoying the passing scenery from the train window. Today, as the time trains top at stations is shortened with the increased efficiency of train schedules, people do not seem to have enough time to buy ekiben on the platform during the train stop. The popularity of ekiben reflecting regional unique features is so strong and deep-rooted that department stores sometimes sponsor “Ekiben Fairs,” or ekiben festivals featuring box lunches from all over Japan.
Nihon teien: Japanese garden [expressing the religious ideas and world views]

Nihon teien has been highly acclaimed inside and outside Japan as a garden that expresses Mother Nature and the religious ideas and world views of the Japanese. Unique to nihon teien is the mitate technique (mitate means to see an object, not in the form that was originally intended, but as something else). A pond is seen as an ocean, and a mound and large stones are seen as mountains. The famous gardens include a shinden-style (aristocratic mansions built in Heian-kyō) residence and its associated gardens at Saga Daikakuji temple, the karesansui (literally dry landscape, which is a common type of garden suggesting mountains and water using only stones, sand or gravel, and occasionally plants) at Ryōanji Temple, and a Japanese-style strolling garden at the Katsura Rikiyū (Imperial Villa).

●枯山水式庭園の例：example of dry landscape garden (karesansui garden)
池泉回遊式庭園の例：
an example of strolling garden with a pond in the center (chisenkai'yū garden)

△名木や名石を配して、庭園の特徴のひとつにする。
Tasteful trees and stones that are laid out become one of the garden’s characteristics.

△土を盛って山を模す「つきやま」
Tsukiyama, piled up earth representing a mountain

△池泉回遊式庭園では、池を中心に周囲を巡るように景観が作られている。
The landscape is created around the pond in a strolling garden with a pond in the center (chisenkai'yū garden).

△「石灯籠（いしどうろう）」で景観にアクセントをつける。
Ishidōrō, a stone garden lantern, adds an accent to the landscape.

△休憩や展望用の建物「あずまや」
Azumaya, a building where people take a break or enjoy the scenery
正月：しょうがつ  [年のはじめに家族そろって新しい年を祝う]

正月は1年の最初の月を指し、日本では、国民全体で新年を祝う最大の年中行事となっています。元日から3日までの三日、その前後数日にわたって学校や多くの企業は休みとなり、遠方に暮らす家族も帰省してみんなで正月を祝います。子供たちはお年玉をもらい、女の子は羽根つき、男の子は風揚げをして遊ぶのが伝統です。春の29日ごろから大掃除をし、門松や注連飾り、鏡餅で家を飾り、年越しばものを食べながら、除夜の鐘を聴いて新年を迎えます。明日は元旦には、お屠蘇、おせち料理、雑煮などの伝統的な食事をし、寺社への初詣や近所への年始回りをして1年の幸せを祈ります。「あけましておめでとう」というあいさつには、新年を祝う気持ちと旧年を無事に過ごした感謝の気持ちが込められています。多くが心待ちにしている年中行事であるため、転じて大変楽しいときには、「盆と正月が一度に来た」と表現します。以前は1週間ほど正月休みを取り店が多くありましたが、近年では、2日から営業する店が増え、新年限定の「福袋」などを求めてデパートに足を運ぶ人が多くなっています。

Shōgatsu : New Year  [celebrating the New Year with family members]

The term *shōgatsu* literally indicates the first month of the year, but it also represents the largest annual event of the year in which people celebrate the New Year nationwide. All schools and many companies take extended holidays during *sanganichi*, the first three days of the year from New Year’s Day until the 3rd, and the few days before and after that period.

Traditionally for the New Year, people put up kadomatsu (pine decoration for the gate) in front of the gate, wear *kimono* and visit the shrine for the first time in the year.
お花見：おはなみ

春先に開花した桜の下で行う宴会をお花見といいます。本来は春の訪れを
喜び、桜の花を観賞する行事ですが、現代では宴会の意味合いが強くなって
います。日本各地に花見の名所があり、桜前線とともに花見の宴も北上しま
す。家族やグループで桜の下に花見弁当を広げ、飲みや歌いの騒ぎから泥酔
する花見客のマナーがしばしば問題になります。また夜桜見物という風流な
慣習もあり、昼の桜とは一味違う美しさが観賞できます。

Ohanami : cherry blossom viewing

People celebrate the arrival of spring with a banquet under the cherry blossoms.
A banquet held under blossoming cherry blossom trees at the beginning of
spring is called ohanami. Originally the event was held to celebrate the
arrival of spring and to enjoy the cherry blossoms. However, people seem
to place more meaning on the banquet today. There are popular cherry
blossom viewing spots nationwide, and together with the sakura-zensen (a
term created by the mass media that combines the blooming of the cherry
blossom flowers with the weather front, from south to north), cherry
blossom banquets gradually move north. Family and groups will sit under a
cherry tree with hanamibentō (take-out meals made for the ohanami) and
have an extravaganza by drinking and singing, yet this is often a problem
as people question the poor manners/behavior of the drunken flower
viewers. There is also the more refined custom to view the cherry
blossoms at night, enabling people to enjoy a different type of beauty from
the cherry blossoms viewed during the day.
■ 灯篭流し・精霊流し：とうろうながし・しょうりょうながし
（祖先の霊をあの世に返すお盆を締めくる行事）

灯篭流しは、死者の霊を幽界に送り返すためのお盆最後の行事です。7月（旧盆は8月）15日ごろ、ロウソクをともした灯篭とともに、お盆の間祭壇にささげた供え物を海や川に流します。精霊流しは長崎などで行われる同様の魂送りの行事で、小さな船に火のともった提灯などを乗せ、海や川に流します。

Tōrōnagashi/Shōryōnagashi: sending back the spirits of the dead
（event which completes the bon festival by sending back the ancestral spirits to the other world）

Tōrōnagashi is the last event of obon that sends the spirits of the dead back to the other world. The candle-lit lantern is placed in the sea or river around July 15th (or August 15th in the old calendar) together with the offerings made to the Buddhist altar for obon. Shōryōnagashi is a similar event of sending back the souls held in places such as Nagasaki. They also float small boats with lit Japanese lanterns on the river or on the sea.

■ 盆踊り：はんおどり
（太鼓や三味線の音にのり、輪になって群舞）

お盆の時期、夜になるとやぐらが立てられた広場に浴衣を着た人々が集まり、盆踊りが行われます。人々はやぐらを中心に輪状に並び、一方向に進みながら太鼓や三味線の音節に合わせて踊ります。盆踊りは日本で行われるイベントで、農民の大きな娯楽でもありました。

Bon-odori: bon festival dance
（group dance in a circle to the sounds of taiko and shamisen）

At night during the period of obon, people in yukata will gather at an open space, where a tunnel has been made to do bon-odori: a bon festival dance. With a turret in the center, they line up in a circle around it and dance in one direction to the lead of the taiko (drums) and the shamisen (threestringed instrument). The bon festival dance is an event which takes place all over Japan, and it used to be a form of amusement for farmers.
**Jinja : Shintō shrine**  
*Be sure to make two bows, two claps and one bow upon worship.*

_Jinja_—a _Shintō_ shrine—is a religious institution where the _goshintai_, the object of worship believed to contain the spirit of the deity, is kept. Japanese people visit the Shintō shrines upon auspicious events such as _hatsumōde_ (the _first shrine visit of the New Year_), _omiyamairi_ (the _baby’s first visit to the shrine_) and _shichigosan_ (celebration for children of ages 3, 5 and 7). There are woods surrounding the _jinja_ called _chinjyu no mori_, and there is a _torii_ gateway at the _jinja_’s entrance. In the _keidai_ (the shrine grounds that come after the _torii_) is a _chōzuya_, an ablution pavilion for purification, _komainu_, a pair of stone carved _guardian dogs_, _shinmon_, the god’s gate, and the furthest building from the _torii_ is the _honden_, the main shrine where the _goshintai_ is installed. Before the main shrine, there is a _haiden_, the front shrine where visitors pay a visit. After ringing the bell, people make _money offerings_ to the _saisenbako_, an offertery box, and pray after doing _nihai nihakushu ippai_: bowing twice, followed by two claps and then a bow towards the main shrine.
寺：てら
[祠家の墓を管理し法事を行う]

寺は仏像が安置され、僧侶が住み、仏教の教理を説く拠点で、日本では人に死にまつわる行事を行います。寺の境内には、除夜の鐘などで続く大梵鐘、お参りの前に身を清める水盤舎、大香炉があります。大香炉には綿香が焚かれ、この煙を浴びるとご利益があるとされます。寺では祠家の法事が行われ、お盆や彼岸には人々が先祖の墓参りに寺を訪れます。千年以上の歴史を持つ京都や奈良では、観光名所になる寺も多数あります。

Tera : temple  [managing the graves of temple supporters and holding memorial services]

Tera is a place where statues of the Buddha are enshrined, Buddhist monks live, Buddhist doctrines are preached, and in Japan, where events related to death take place. Within the precincts of the tera, there are things such as the daibonsho, a large hanging bell thrust for events like joya no kane (bell ringing out the old year), suibansha, a small water pavilion which is used to purify oneself before paying a visit to the tera, and daikoro, large censers. Incense is burnt in the daikoro, and it is said that one is blessed by exposing oneself to the smoke. In the tera, Buddhist memorial services for tera supporters are held, and during the bon and equinoctial week, people come to the tera to visit their ancestral grave. In Kyoto and Nara, with over a thousand years of history, many tera have become popular tourist sights.
正座・あぐら：せいざ

正座は座るの正しい坐り方です。座り方は、両膝を床につけて腰を落とし、かかと上に尻を乗せるようにして足を折り曲げます。茶道の場などでは正座をするのが作法です。膝から下で全体重を支えるため、長い間正座をすると足がしびれます。あぐらはくだけた場で使われる座り方です。座り方は、尻を床につき、両足を内側に折り重なり、足首を足首を交差させます。どんな場でも、女性があぐらをかくと行儀が悪いとされます。

Seiza/Agura: sitting straight up on one’s knees/sitting cross-legged

Seiza is the proper way of sitting on the tatami mat. The way to sit in seiza is by setting both knees on the floor, lowering the hips, and bending the legs so that one’s rear end rests on the heels. It is proper etiquette to sit in seiza upon paying someone a visit, and at tea ceremonies. Since one must support the whole body with only the legs from knees down, the legs often become numb when one sits in seiza for a long time. Agura is a way of sitting used in informal situations. The way to sit in agura form is by placing one’s rear end on the floor, bending both legs inwards and crossing the ankles together. Whatever the situation, it is considered to be bad manners for a woman to sit in agura.
Zazen: seated Zen meditation [settling one’s heart in to grasp the truth]

Zazen is one of the ways of training in Zen Buddhism, and is conducted in a sitting position. During zazen, one must adjust their breathing and stop all thoughts. Upon taking a seated position, one must cross the legs in a special way called the kekkafuza, the lotus position, or in hankafuza, placing one leg over the other, and the hands are placed in a position called hokkai jōin (dhyana mudra). With eyes half open and lips lightly shut, one releases tension from the shoulders and straightens the back. This position must be kept as one focuses the mind on one place. Zazenkai—meetings to do zazen—take place at Zen temples nationwide.

Aragyō: rigorous ascetic exercise [attaining enlightenment through inflicting physical pain]

Aragyō is one of the ways of training in Buddhism. It is also known as kugyō (penance), as one inflicts pain onto their body as a way to attain spiritual enlightenment. The founder of Buddhism Buddha did various aragyō such as fasting and sitting on thorns. Aragyō still takes place today. In particular, the senmichi kaihōgyō (thousand day mountain marathon) of the Tendaishū, a Japanese school of Mahayana Buddhism, is undertaken with a do-or-die spirit. The training involves paying visits to the holy grounds as one walks 30km every day through places such as the peaks of Mt. Hiei, near Kyoto.
Omikuji: written oracle

Omikuji refers to a type of fortune telling where one picks a piece of paper which has good or bad fortune written on it. First, on the omikuji, the overall fortune is written in words such as daikichi (excellent luck), chuikichi (very good luck), kichi (good luck), and kyô (ill fortune). This is followed by descriptions of fortune and advice for individual items such as studies, luck with money, marriage, and competition. Many people seem to casually draw omikuji as a form of play, and thus in recent years some temples and shrines have reduced the number of unlucky slips.

Ema: votive picture tablet of a horse

Ema are wooden tablets with a drawing on it that people offer upon visiting a Shintô shrine to pray, hoping for their wishes to come true. Originally, it was a custom to offer a real horse to the Shintô shrine, but people started to make offerings of wooden boards or wide frames with horse drawings instead of real horses. The reason why an ema has a pentagon house-like shape is because of the traces of how it imitated the roof of a horse stable. Later, designs other than horses appeared.
能：のう

能は「楽」と呼ばれる歌、演者の舞、お芝居が一体になった歌舞劇で、農民が演じていた猿楽から発展し、室町時代に世阿弥によって大成されました。役者は主戦のシテ、脇役のワキに分かれ、漆塗りの呪文を着け、錦織の華麗な着物をまとっています。お面は「能面」または「面」と呼ばれ、幽霊や動物、女性など、男性である演者が素顔で演じることができない役柄のときにかぶるもので、かぶらない場合もあり、これを直面と呼びます。能を観賞するには「隔世」「幽界」という日本独特的世界観を理解する必要があるでしょう。日本人は現実の世界である「現世」の裏側に、幽界が隣接して存在すると考え、その境界を越えて死者が現世に現れることはきわめて日常的で、現実的だととらえていました。その意味で、能は幽界から現れた死者や霊が現世の人々に物語る演劇なのです。せりふを伴わない静かな動きで幽玄と呼ばれる哲学的境界を表現しているとされ、世界的に高い評価を受けています。

Nō: nō play

Nō is a performance that combines a song called utai, a dance performance, and ohayashi (musical accompaniment), which developed from the sarugaku, a form of theater performed by peasants and popular during the 11th – 14th centuries, and was established in the Muromachi Period (1333 – 1573) by Zeami. The actors include the main character shite, the supporting character waki, and they both wear lacquered facemasks together with magnificent nishiki-ori (brocaded) kimono. The facemasks are called nōmen or omote and are put on when a role cannot be played by the male actor with an unpainted face (e.g., a ghost, an animal or a woman). Sometimes facemasks are not worn (called hitamen). In order to enjoy nō, one must understand the unique Japanese worldview called kakuriyo. The Japanese people believe that behind utsushiyo (the actual world), lies another world (kakuriyo, yūkai), and that it is extremely ordinary and realistic for the deceased to appear in this world by crossing over the border. In that sense, nō is a theatrical performance of a narrative given to the people of this world by the deceased or spirits that appear from the other world. The quiet movement that does not involve any speech is thought to be expressing the philosophical world called yūgen (subtle and profound beauty), and it has gained worldwide acclaim.
歌舞伎：かぶき

歌舞伎は日本の伝統音楽、舞踊、演劇が融合した総合芸術です。起源は古いものですが、江戸初期に風紀上の理由から女性歌舞伎が禁止されて男性に限定され、女性役をする女形などの独特なスタイルが確立しました。歌舞伎では客席の「大向こう」から声が掛かります。これで役者の演技が引き立ち、客席との一体感が生まれるのです。「見得を切る」は、役者が感極まった際に静止して目立つポーズをすることで、歌舞伎から生まれた言葉です。

△獅子（しし）のたてがみを模した被り物を勇壮に振り回す「毛掠り」
the fur-shaking action, where the actor shakes the costume representing the lion mane courageously

Kabuki : all-male theater

Kabuki is a composite art which fused together traditional music, dance, and theatrical performance. The origin dates back far, but in the early Edo Period (1603 – 1867), due to reasons regarding public morals, female kabuki was prohibited, making kabuki only for men, which led to the establishment of a unique style where female roles are played by oyama (a male actor playing a female role). In kabuki spectators call out from their seats called ōmukō. This sets off the actor’s performance and creates a sense of unity with the audience. Mie wo kiru (strike a pose) is an expression which comes from kabuki, as the actor strikes an appealing pose standing still when he becomes filled with emotions.
Geisha: traditional female entertainer  

*Geisha* are women who entertain guests at a banquet by serving them *sake* (drinks), performing with song, *shamisen* (three-stringed instrument) and *nihonbuyō* (Japanese dancing). They are dressed in Japanese clothing, with their hair done up in Japanese style, and wearing white water face powder make-up. In general, a full-fledged *geisha* is called *geigi*. In the Kanto area around Tokyo, *geigi* is called *geisha* and in the Kansai area around Kyoto and Osaka, *geigi* are called *geiko*. *Geisha* tend to be confused with *yūjo* (courtesans), but this is a misunderstanding; it is strictly an occupation that sells artistry.

Maiko: apprentice *geisha*  

*Maiko* is a young girl who entertains guests of a banquet with a dance. *Maiko*, which is called *han'yōoku* (literally half jewel) in Kanto area, is the apprentice status of *geigi* (*geisha*). Today *maiko* of apprentice status attract more attention than *geigi* and are treated like the symbol of *Kyoto* tourism and Kansai culture. The reason for this is due to the fact that many *maiko* tend to be young girls, and because they are made to wear relatively flamboyant *kimono* compared with *geigi* according to customary practice.
Kadō: art of flower arrangement

Kadō is a form of expressive art where flowering plants and tree branches are arranged in a flower vase, and it originates from the custom of offering flowers before the tablet of the deceased. *Kadō* is also called *ikebana*. In the practice of *kadō*, a *kenzan* (a pin holder) is placed in the flower vase with water, the tree branches and flowering plants are put in there, and the length and shape is adjusted with scissors as one views it. Such an arranged work is placed in the *tokonoma*, an alcove, and in the main entrance, for people to appreciate. In Japan, a beautiful custom has lasted for a very long time for women before marriage to become cultured in *kadō* in order to arrange flowers characteristic of each season in the house.
Sadō: art of tea ceremony  

Sadō, also called chanoyu, is a custom to entertain guests with tea and it became established during the Azuchi-Momoyama Period (1573 – 1603) by Sen no Rikyū. The one providing tea is called the teishu (master), and there are mannerisms regarding the technique the teishu must use to make tea, as well as for the guest’s gestures upon drinking it. It is not a simple act of entertainment, either, but rather considered a form of art in which through the exchange of manners people are able to exchange ways of thinking and the ways of life. This leads to the philosophy of wabi sabi (simplicity and elegance), and it is said that the basis of sadō is the heart of ichigo-ichie (one time, one encounter), where one always does their best, thinking that the encounter will never recur.

1. 茶会: chakai (tea ceremony)
2. 茶を点（た）てる点前（てまえ）: temae (procedure for making tea)
3. 客は、亭主の点てた茶をいただき、茶碗を拝見する: Guests taste the tea made by the master and enjoy the chawan (tea ceremony bowl)
盆栽：ぼんさい

盆栽とは草木を鉢植えにしたものですが、鉢も大切な要素であり、草木と鉢を含めて「盆栽」と呼びます。自然界的姿を盆栽という小さな世界に造り込み、観賞するものです。素材としては松類が代表的です。高さわずか30cmの松であっても、枝ぶりや葉の茂り力、根元の著の生え方などを眺め、そこに壮大な巨木の姿をイメージするという観賞のしかたをします。松以外の雑木、花物や草物なども扱います。

盆栽は草木の生長に合わせて、枝をはさみで切る「剪定」や、幹や枝に針金を巻いて形を整える「針金掛け」などさまざまな技法を凝らして好みの形に育てていきます。盆栽は生き続けるため「完成」ではなく、理想の形に近づけるためには何十年にもわたって手間をかけていきます。かつては中高年の趣味とされていましたが、若者の愛好家も増えています。最近では海外でも盆栽の人気が高まっています。

Bonsai: aesthetic minituarization of trees

Bonsai refers to potted plants and trees, but as the pot is also an important element, the plant and the pot together are called bonsai. People create the images of the world of nature into a small world and appreciate it. Pine trees seem to be the typical material used. Even if it is a small pine of only 30 cm, people appreciate it by looking at the branches, the way leaves are growing, the way moth plants are growing around the roots, and imagining a magnificent large tree from it. Other than the pine tree, miscellaneous small trees, flowers and leaves are also used.

Bonsai uses various techniques to make the plant grow the way one wants according to the stage of growth, such as sentei (trimming), where branches are cut with scissors, and harigane-kake, where one fixes the shape of the bonsai by wrapping the trunk and/or branches together. Because bonsai continues to live, there is no “completion,” and thus in order to make it into one’s desirable shape, one must spend decades of time and effort. In the past it was considered to be a hobby of the middle aged, yet young devotees have been increasing. In recent years, the popularity of bonsai is rising abroad as well.
浮世絵は江戸時代に描かれた版画と肉筆画でし。浮世とは、江戸時代の徳川幕府の施政により、平和なかで生まれたさまざまな生活文化や風俗をいいます。浮世絵の主な題材は風景、歌舞伎役者、相撲取り、遊女などで、生活のひとこまを描いたものもあります。肉筆画は一点製作のため非常に高価でしたが、木版画は安価であったため、庶民の人気を集めてました。しかし、日本人は浮世絵に芸術的価値を認めていなかったので、欧米で輸出される陶器の棚包などにも使われましたが、海外での高い評価をみて、日本人はようやく浮世絵の芸術的価値を認識するようになりました。

Ukiyoe: Japanese woodblock print

Ukiyoe are wood-block prints and original paintings drawn in the Edo Period (1603 – 1867). *Ukiyo* refers to the various lifestyles, manners and customs formed in the peaceful period under the administration of the Tokugawa Shogunate during the Edo Period. The main themes of *ukiyo* include scenery, *kabuki* actors, sumo wrestlers, and *yūjo* (courtisans); or depictions of scenes of daily life. *Nikuhitsuga*, or original paintings, are produced one by one and thus were very expensive, but as wood block prints were reasonable, they were popular amongst the general public. However, the Japanese people did not recognize the artistic value of *ukiyo* and so some were used as packaging material of chinaware exported to the West. *Ukiyo* which crossed the sea, however, influenced impressionist artists (such as van Gogh) and art collectors, and therefore gained high praise overseas. Having seen this, the Japanese people finally realized the artistic value of *ukiyo*.
祭り／Festivals

■ 神輿：みこし [担がれ揺さぶられた神様がご利益をもたらす]

神輿は神の乗り物です。祭りの際に神は神輿に宿り、人々に担がれて町内を一周します。御輿の巡回で、町内にご利益がもたらされるとされています。多くの神輿は神社を模した形をしていて、担ぐときは威勢の良い掛け声をかけ、激しく揺さぶります。揺さぶることで神の力が高まるとされています。

Mikoshi: portable shrine

[Mikoshi is the vehicle for the gods. During festivals the gods dwell in the mikoshi and go around the neighborhood carried by people. A tour around the neighborhood of the mikoshi is thought to bring good fortune to the area. Many mikoshi come in a shape imitating the Shintō shrine. When carrying this, people shout energetically, calling out encouragement while they violently shake the mikoshi. It is believed that the power of the gods will become stronger if the mikoshi is shaken.]

■ 祇園祭：ぎおんまつり [日本三大祭のひとつ]

一般に祇園祭といえば、毎年京都で7月に催される八坂神社の祭りを指します。祇園祭は平安時代に疫病が流行した際、怨霊を鎮めるために行った御霊会という儀式が元とされます。祇園祭最大の見所は豪華絢爛な山鉾です。山鉾は山車の一種で、台座に神殿を載せて人が引きます。祇園祭は夏祭りの起源ともいわれ、全国の祭りの形式に影響を及ぼしました。

Gion Matsuri: Gion Festival [one of the three major festivals of Japan]

In general, Gion Matsuri refers to the festival at Yasaka Shrine held every July in Kyoto. It is said that Gion Matsuri originates from a ceremony called goryōe held to calm a vengeful ghost when an epidemic prevailed in the Heian Period (794 – 1185). The biggest highlight of the Gion Matsuri is the absolutely gorgeous yamaboko. Yamaboko is a type of float with a shrine placed on the pedestal, which is pulled by people. Gion Matsuri is also said to be the origin of summer festivals, and it influenced the form of festivals all over Japan.
Judo  

Judo was created by Kano Jigoro who developed *jūjutsu* into judo. Judo is a martial art in which wrestlers fight with skills such as throws and locks. The rank of a judo wrestler is shown by the color of the belt. The belt of a beginner is white and an expert with *shodan* (the first *dan* or grade) has a black belt. An expert of the highest rank has a red belt. There are only a limited number of red-belt experts even in Japan. The skill of a judo wrestler using the force of the opponent to beat him/her is described as “flexibility beats stiffness.”

Kendo: Japanese fencing  

*Kenjutsu*, a martial art of *samurai*, was transformed into kendo in the Meiji Period (1868 – 1912) and now it is in the process of changing from a martial art to a sport. A kendo *sword* is a bamboo *sword* called *shinai* that was made by combining bamboo slats. A kendo player wears a set of protections for the face, the wrists, and the body. A player can get a point for hitting the part covered with the protections or the throat covered by a part of the face protection. The player who gained two points first is the winner.
**Karate**  
*globally popular KARATE*

The origin of karate is said to be the word karate, meaning Chinese hand, which is said to have originated in Okinawa. It is said to have spread all over Japan and to have developed in the Taishō Period (1912 – 1926). There are different types of karate with differing sets of rules, such as traditional karate, full contact karate, karate with protections, and fighting karate. Among the common techniques among the different types of karate are the three techniques, *tsuki* (thrust), *keri* (kick), and *uke* (receive). Now karate is practiced all over the world including Europe.

**Aikido**  
*developing one's body and spirit through exercises*

Aikido was founded by Ueshiba Morihei (1883 – 1969) as a contemporary martial art through his training for traditional martial arts and mental training. It has a philosophy that one does not compete with others for excellence; therefore, players do not have bouts. The purpose of aikido is to train one’s spirit with techniques that are learned as a result of body movements that occur during repeated training. It is now practiced in over 100 countries in the world.