

Kamogawa Musicians

In Kyoto, the visitor, quite often, has come to discover the “great” Japanese culture, the one that is shining through the countless ancestral temples and shrines of the cultural capital, the massive monuments and the traditional ceremonies perpetuated from time immemorial... There are some things, however, which can only be found at a turn in an ordinary path, in a conversation or... next to a river.

The Kamo River, in Kyoto, often remains a place to pass and not to stay for the inattentive visitor. However, this place full of life is not only worth the trip, but it is also an interesting testimony of cultural differences. As a French person, what surprised me when I first came to this place was the incredible amount of people playing music on the riverbank, without any apparent desire to be heard. That was when I decided to meet some of these musicians of the Kamo River to discuss their way of practising music.

Three members of the Doshisha Students' editorial team interviewed three groups of musicians playing next to the Kamo River. Satou, Agari and Terada agreed to answer our questions.

To be heard or not to be heard

One of the things that struck me most in their replies was this absence of a desire to be heard I had already noticed before. In France, almost every person who plays music outdoors does so as a performance, often to earn money. Here, we met two groups of students and one 66-year-old man, but no one was performing. They explained that they were just training here for themselves. Mr Terada even told us that the possibility that he could be listened to by passers-by was really embarrassing for him. Not that all these people rejected the idea of spectacle: on the contrary, they all were or had been in a band or some group performing on a regular basis. Satou is a member of the jazz club in his



university and performs weekly in a bar, Agari takes part in the live bands of her university circle, and Terada was proud to say that he used to play in a rock band a few years ago. It seems that the Kamo River has just been defined by these musicians as a place of relaxation and personal development, which exclude the idea of performance.

Playing outside

Having said that, the remaining question is: why play outside if being heard is a source of embarrassment?

Japanese housing, along with a great sense of respect, is a simple and still determinant point in the explanation of this practice. Indeed, the walls of Japanese habitations are thin, which means that almost every single noise can be heard by people inside the house and in the neighbourhood. The three people we questioned confirmed that the will not to disturb their neighbours played an important part in their decision to practise next to the river.

The second reason is, simply, that it... feels good. And so it must, since Terada, who is now 66 years old, has been playing the guitar on the riverbank since Secondary school! He likes playing music while paying attention to his environment, in rhythm with the flow of the river, the sounds of the street, the cars, the people, feeling all the stress of everyday life vanishing... That is it, when all is said and done. It just feels good, and according to Satou, it also feels good to see so many people feeling good playing music at the same time.

In France, two musicians playing in the same space would probably just fight for the better spot, as it is a matter of money and visibility.

Japanese hiding strategies

The interesting point in the phenomenon of Kamo River's musicians is the way they try to reconcile this good feeling of playing music in such a lovely place, probably linked with the Japanese approach of nature as well, and the intention of not being heard. Trying to identify the ingenious hiding strategies of

Japanese when you walk along the river quite an amusing exercise.

***Turning the sound off:** Satou and his group opted for the most obvious option: drums without sound. Yes, it is possible, and a lot of those who play percussion instruments along the Kamo River are in reality using plastic elements which are not producing any sound just for training. In a less extreme version, when it is possible (it is quite difficult to muffle a trumpet, for example), musicians are most of the time playing lightly, as it becomes difficult to detect it from afar.

***Using the environment as camouflage:** Searching for musicians next to the Kamo River can quickly become a new sport, as they sometimes develop a great talent for hiding, playing under bridges, and particularly next to places where the sound of the river is strong enough to cover the music. This technique also works with any loud sound like road traffic. When we asked Terada how this place was and he answered it was “calm”, I thought it was positive, but he added it was “too calm, in fact”.

***Choosing a hostile environment:** The most extreme example of these hidden musicians was this boy playing the drums in February at 6 am. He was indeed quite unlucky that I was able to hear him. He was wearing a parka and gloves...

Of course, these strategies sometimes fail, as people actually like listening to music. Terada told us that one day, a couple came next to him to enjoy the music. As he would have been ashamed of breaking the romantic atmosphere, he had to keep playing, and did not know how to stop. I think the particular atmosphere of the Kamo River comes from this non-competitive spirit, people playing music for music's sake... but able to worry about how a couple would feel if the music stops.

Written by Morgane Olès



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Snack Party

We had a snack party on April 24th. This party was held for welcoming new members and make good relationships to each other. Thanks for people who came to the party:) We really enjoyed chatting and playing games with them.

Today, I'm going to introduce you the some drinking games. Actually, we played a few drinking games from Germany. Some are similar to Japanese ones, others are completely different. Anyway, all games are interesting but a little bit difficult. Please try it and enjoy more of your "nomikai".

~German drinking games~

•[unknown]

Make a circle with you all. Cross your right arm and his/her left arm who sit on the right side of you. left arm and his Cross your /her right arm who sit on the left side of you.

When you tap the table once, each hand taps the table with clockwise. when you tap twice, it'll be counterclockwise.

•Telephone Game

Choose the boss in advance and that boss decides the theme and writes it down. There are two teams and each team lines it up. The two people who are standing at the end of the lines check the theme. And they change the picture and draw it on the back of the people who are standing in front of them. Each team passes on the picture by drawing without talking. The last people of each team write the theme with letters. The team who draw the picture correctly win!

~American drinking games~

•Truth or Dare

You must choose "truth" or "dare." If you choose "truth," you must answer shameful question honestly. If you choose "dare," you must do something thoughtless such as going

to a cemetery by yourself.

•Spin the Bottle

Make a circle with you all. In the circle, one person spin the bottle on the floor. Then the person who has been chosen by the bottle points must kiss with the person who spins it.

•Beer Pong

Arrange six or ten red plastic cups in a triangle on both sides of the table. In each cup, there is the same amount of beer. Throw ping pong balls to the cups from the other side of the table. If you hit the cup, you must drink up the beer in the cup, and then you get the score. The cups have been hit have to be removed.

Written by Kana Nogami

What is the "global person"?

Nowadays, the word "global person" is getting more and more power in Japan. The more popular it becomes, the demand of human resources who is the global person is increasing. The students who study at the Doshisha university are also expected to be as the "global person". However, did they ever think about what the "global person is?" We hold a discussion about the definition of "global person" and shared the image or impression with each other.

—THE IMAGE OF "GLOBAL PERSON"—

The outcome of this discussion can be categorized into two parts: "skills" and "personality". Many of them thought that the "global person" should have skills of language —speaking, listening, reading, writing—, taking the leadership, communication, thinking logically, understanding other culture and history and so on. On the other hand, people had the images of the "global person" should have good personality. For example, those who can take communication without stereotype, put her / himself in other someone's place, seen not only as the detail but also the whole situation.

—THE "GLOBAL PERSON" AND THE "INTERNATIONAL PERSON"—

In our discussion, we also discussed about the

difference between the global person and the international person. For Japanese, most people regard them as almost same meaning, but there must be the obvious difference between this two words 'global person' and international person. According to the 'Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary', the word, global, has two meanings; one is covering or affecting the whole world. The other one is considering or including all parts of something. On the other hand, meaning of 'international' is connected with or involving two or more three countries in the dictionary. Taking these meaning of two adjectives into consideration, the global person has to see this world as one thing objectively and the international person has to see this world as an association of the countries. In other words, more important things to become the global person is not having stereotype and put her /himself in someone's place, and the international person is more need to understand Japanese culture and history as well as other's.

—WHAT SHOULD WE DO?—

The image and impress of this discussion seem to belong in both the global person and the international person. Furthermore the Japanese society demands that kind of person. So, what should we do to be such that



student? The answers are; studying harder and getting experience through practice. Fortunately, there are many courses where you can gain skills and knowledge about languages, history, culture and so on Also fortunately there are programs that you can get global experiences which you can have chance to have conversation with international students and studying abroad in Doshisha University. Why don't you re-register the courses at the autumn semester to be the global person and the international person?

Written by Moe Hasegawa, Kaoru Ishida

The Doshisha Student is published twice a year by the Doshisha English Language Newspaper Society in Kyoto, Japan.

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Publisher: Kimura-Keibunsha

Contacts: The Doshisha Student (thedoshishastudents@gmail.com) It was first published as "The Doshisha" by the Press Section of the English Speaking Society in 1956. The Doshisha English Language Newspaper Society was established in 1964 and was renewed as "The Doshisha Student" in 1966. It disappeared in 1999, but was revived in 2008.

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