

Japanese Culture Program

No.7

The Global Education Center has conducted Japanese culture classes since 2003 to offer international students the chance to experience traditional Japanese culture and to deepen their understanding of Japan. These programs are also open to Japanese students, and so it is our hope that both Japanese and international students will benefit from this mutual exchange and acquire a global perspective through experiencing traditional Japanese culture together.

しよどうきょうしつ
書道教室
Shodo Class



きつ きょうしつ
着付け教室

Kimono-Wearing Class



In this globalized world, it is essential for us to live together with people all over the world beyond the differences of language and culture. We, the Global Education Center, are here to help you both international students and Japanese students communicate each other and understand their culture and language.

This program is designed not only for obtaining the knowledge of Japanese culture but also learning it through your own experience. Students clubs of Ochanomizu University also join the program so that international students and Japanese students are able to have an opportunity for cultural exchange. We hope it helps you to understand cultural differences, and to make an opportunity to work together over the differences of language and culture.

This booklet introduces activities that we have held in this program. Any of you are always welcome. We look forward to seeing you in the class.

Ikebana Class

Ikebana, also known as *kado* (the way of flowers), is the traditional Japanese art of flower arranging. Ikebana started to flourish in the sixteenth century, and the fundamental concept is to express the three elements of heaven, earth, and humankind in a balanced composition using natural flowers. The way of arranging flowers differs depending on the school of ikebana.

The Ikebana Class has been held at the Global Education Center since 2004. The class is very popular among students, who can learn basic arranging with seasonal flowers and enjoy seeing advanced arrangements designed by the instructor.



Ikebana Instructor

Ms. Fusako Akaike

First class grand master of Ikebana, Ryuka style

Ohara School of Ikebana

Ms. Akaike started learning ikebana forty-five years ago from her mother-in-law, a grand master of ikebana. She has taught ikebana for many years, including at the Ikebana Club of Ochanomizu University. In her free time she enjoys traveling, reading, and doing *chigirie* (torn paper collage art).

★Interview with the Instructor

Q : What do you find fascinating about ikebana ?

A : Ikebana can express the beauty of harmony and contrast of different colors. It can also create space using seasonal flowers and your imagination.

Q : From your point of view, what is the importance of introducing Japanese culture to international students ?

A : Through this class, I hope the students can learn some things about ikebana that they can talk about when they return to their home countries.

Q : What do you think of the students' flower arrangements ?

A : When I first saw the students' arrangements, I felt that they had a sense for flower arranging. They arranged the flowers very nicely even though it was probably the first time for most of them.

Q : What is the impression of the students ?

A : They seem to enjoy arranging flowers very much. I am very happy to see that.

Q : What do you find difficult about teaching ikebana ?

A : It is not easy to help them understand the spirit of ikebana in only one lesson. But I hope that students will learn not only arranging skills but also feel something about the spirit.

Q : What do you find interesting about teaching ikebana ?

A : I'm impressed with the uniqueness of the students' arrangements.

Q : What is most appealing thing about this class ?

A : Talking with people from different cultural backgrounds.

Q : Do you have any new ideas for the Ikebana Class in the future ?

A : It would be interesting to prepare various flower arrangement materials and let students arrange them anyway they like. Also, giving comments on arrangement to each other in class would be a good inspiration.

Q : Please let us know if you have any recommendations on publications and Web sites.

A : Publications ● *Umeno Ikebana Ohara-ryu Ikebana Sosho 4*: Ohara-ryu Publications

● *Ohara-ryu Ikebana Kihon Manual*: Ohara-ryu Publications

● *Soka* (monthly publication)

● *Kikyo* (bimonthly publication)

Web sites

● Ohara School of Ikebana: <http://www.ohararyu.or.jp/>

● Minna no Ikebana (Ikebana for Everyone): <http://www.minnanoikebana.com>

A Look at the Class

1



The instructor gives a brief explanation about ikebana.

2



Let's start to arrange flowers with the instructor.

3



The instructor helps students to arrange flowers.

6



The teacher puts theory into practice at the end.

5



Students also tried the 'inclining form'.

4



'Rising form' arrangements completed.

Comments from 2016 Participants



I got to make an ikebana arrangement for the first time in ages, and it was a hugely interesting and enjoyable experience. The roses were such a lovely cool color.



Usually ikebana is something I just look at, but today I got to try it for myself. So much fun! I had to think a bit to get the balance right, and of course I couldn't possibly match the teacher's skill. I learned so much. Thank you!



Kimono-Wearing Class

The kimono's form has not changed at all for several hundred years, and it has lost almost all of its use as daily wear. However, the traditional beauty of kimonos has recently been reevaluated in Japan, and kimonos have become popular among young people.

The Kimono-Wearing Class has been held at the Global Education Center since 2005. By learning how to wear a Nagoya-obi (a simple type of sash) and yukata the spring semester and a Nagoya-obi and kimono the autumn semester, we were able to experience Japanese traditional culture. The Kimono-Wearing Class is so popular among both Japanese and international students that it is always filled with liveliness and smiles.



Kimono Instructor

Ms. Keiko Gabe

Head Instructor of Keiko Gabe Kimono school

Kimono consultant

Instructor of the Kimono-Wearing Club at Ochanomizu University.

A graduate of Ochanomizu University
Studied at Sodo Kimono School

Ms. Gabe has been working with kimonos for more than thirty years, including teaching kimono-wearing classes and working as a professional kimono fitter for weddings and other special ceremonies such as Shichi-Go-San (a festival day for children aged three, five, and seven). Her hobbies include singing songs and writing haiku (a Japanese poem of seventeen syllables arranged in a 5-7-5 pattern).

★Interview with the Instructor

Q : How did you start learning about kimono wearing ?

A : The first reason was simple. I wanted to be able to put on a kimono by myself. While learning, I was getting more interested in wearing and instructing. Various types of kimonos also inspired me to learn more.

Q : What do you find attractive about kimonos ?

A : Kimonos express a Japanese sense of aesthetics.

Q : Do you have any funny stories about kimono-wearing classes ?

A : A few years ago, a pretty student said that she was going out after the lesson wearing a kimono, so I asked her if she had any *geta* (Japanese wooden footwear usually worn with a kimono). She said her short boots would go well with a kimono. If I had known her plan from the beginning, I could have shown her an innovative and popular way to wear a kimono with boots.

Q : What do you find difficult or interesting about teaching kimono wearing ?

A : Nowadays, young people seem a bit clumsy with kimonos, so I have to teach each point over and over. But I feel happy when my students make an effort and get better at putting on a kimono and handling the string fasteners. It is a lot of fun to find out what young people think and how they feel; I am surprised, impressed, and sometimes flabbergasted.

Q : Do you have any new ideas for the Kimono-Wearing Class in the future ?

A : I would like to compare kimonos with traditional Korean garments in order to find commonality between them. Also, I am interested in teaching in English and discovering an easier way to put on a kimono.

Q : Do you have a special message for students at Ochanomizu University ?

A : I think many students here are diligent as they establish a goal and make a continual effort towards it. I would say that "steady-going" is one of ethos of this school, and this is of particular value nowadays. Even in a world changing incredibly quickly, you can find your own way if you deeply consider what kind of life you want and make an effort towards your future.

A Look at the Class

1



First, students learn about the history of kimono.

2



The instructor teaches how to lace up an obi; then students try doing it.

3



The instructor helps to fit the difficult parts.

6



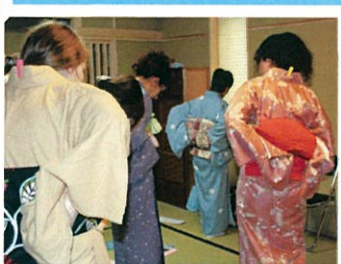
Learning how to bow and move.

5



Dressed at last!

4



A finished obi.

Comments from 2016 Participants

Putting on a kimono was much harder and more complicated than I expected, but as it was my first time, it was also really fun. If I ever have the opportunity to wear one again, I look forward to putting it on by myself.



I'm so glad I went along. Thanks to the teacher's clear instructions, I was amazed at how I looked in a kimono—as if I'd discovered a whole new version of myself.



The teacher didn't just show us how to put on a yukata, but also how to walk and move. It was such a fascinating experience! Now I want a yukata of my own.



Shodo Class

Shodo (calligraphy) is a form of artistic writing involving the use of a brush and India ink. Originally from China, this aspect of culture developed in Japan to incorporate a combination of *kanji* (Chinese characters) and *kana* (Japanese syllabic characters). Although writing brushes are not used in daily life, people in Japan become familiar with calligraphy from classes in elementary school, culture clubs and the like.

Calligraphy classes have been held at the Global Education Center since the autumn semester of 2003. In addition to the basic practice, in the first semester we wrote on shikishi (fancy square boards used for calligraphy) and in the second semester we are also trying our hand at writing *kakizome* (the first calligraphy of the year) on long paper.



Shodo Instructor

Ms. Mika Akagi

Certified calligraphy instructor for high school

Ms. Akagi was 5 years old when she was inspired by her aunt - a Shodo teacher - to start calligraphy. She is a qualified Shodo master and teaches at the Global Education Center. She enjoys both playing and listening to classical music as a hobby, and is a keen food enthusiast.

★Interview with the Instructor

Q : What's the most fascinating thing about Shodo ?

A : It's focusing on and writing characters with great attention to detail, like you might do when making an intricate model of something.

Q : Why do you think it's important to introduce Japanese culture to students from other countries ?

A : Experiencing Japanese culture through Shodo gives students perspective and depth to understand the culture in which they grew up.

Q : What is the students' calligraphy output like ?

A : They all follow the basic points, and their work has a very relaxed air.

Q : What's your impression of the students ?

A : They write in the same way as they do their research. They first come to understand the meanings of the characters, and then they start writing. I think Shodo and academic research are similar in a way.

Q : What do you find difficult about teaching calligraphy ?

A : It's really hard to maintain the right posture and breathe properly when you write to create beautiful work.

Q : What's the most interesting thing about calligraphy ?

A : I like the fact that the way Chinese characters are received differs by country, and the choice of themes is very novel and fresh.

Q : What's the most appealing thing about this class ?

A : Students can talk about characters with others on an international platform based on their own work.

Q : Do you have any ideas for Shodo class development in the future ?

A : I want to try Rinsho, which involves following well-known classic writings. Writing characters on T-shirts might also be an interesting direction to take.

Q : Do you have any favorite calligraphy books or websites ?

A : I like Souun Takeda, a famous Japanese calligrapher who brings Shodo into daily life.
(<https://www.souun.net/>)



A Look at the Class



The teacher demonstrates how to use a calligraphy brush.



Students practice basic strokes on Japanese writing paper.



Write characters or words you like in line with the teacher's advice.



This is a copying exercise.



We practiced a lot.



Students work so seriously !

Comments from 2016 Participants



It was great having a teacher show us firsthand how to use the brush and draw characters. I was so proud at the end of class when I was able to write the character I'd chosen.



I haven't done calligraphy since junior high, and it was wonderful to spend some introspective time drawing words from the heart during this calligraphy lesson.



Sado Class

Sado is a way to learn the etiquette by making tea. There are almost forty-two styles with the main style called the Omote Senke, but the Ura Senke has the largest following. Sado is often categorized as a composite art since it consists of the way of making a tea; *otemae*, the architecture; tea room called *chashitsu*, *Ikebana*; flower arrangement used to decorate the room and small sweets; *wagashi*. We opened the Sado class in 2011 in order to respond to many expectations we had.



Sado Instructor

Ms. Keiko Yoshida

Head Instructor of Urasenke style

Influenced by her grandmother and mother, Ms. Yoshida got interested in the depth of Sado and started learning it almost sixteen years ago. She enjoys reading and watching movies as her hobbies.

★Interview with the Instructor

Q : What do you find fascinating about sado?

A : Sado is a Japanese composite art. Through learning sado, we also learn the better way of living.

Q : What is most appealing thing about this class ?

A : It is valuable to learn sado, but it is not easy in a short time to understand meanings of every movement in sado. I hope we will have another opportunity to learn depths of sado.

Q : What is your memorable story from teaching sado ?

A : The main act of sado is boiling water and making tea, though it's all based on rationality and insight in a scientific way. There is a story Einstein was impressed by the wisdom of sado. I felt proud of it.

Q : Please let us know if you have any recommendations of publications, Web sites and classes.

A : Web sites : Urasenke Konnichian <http://www.urasenke.or.jp/index2.html>

Interview with an assistant, Ms Yamashita who is a vice president of Sado club.

Q : What do you find difficult about teaching sado ?

A : How to tell the meanings of words and movement which are unfamiliar even to Japanese.

Q : What do you find interesting about teaching Sado ?

A : I was glad to see everyone enjoying making tea.

Q : What did you think of the class ?

A : We believe participants could learn the beauty of sado in this class.

A Look at the Class



The instructor gives an explanation about *Kakejiku* and *Ikebana*.



A rare opportunity to see hidden aspects of the tea.



The teacher explains as the club leader performs the tea ceremony.



All satisfied with delicious tea.



Making tea by themselves.



Enjoying tea with manners.

Comments from 2016 Participants



My first tea ceremony experience was so interesting! I love the whole tea culture—no superfluous movements, starting with a bow and ending with a bow, and ensuring that guests have a truly memorable experience. Living in a world of conflict, it's important to treasure spaces like these.



Today was my first tea ceremony experience. Both the teacher and the club leader taught us so patiently, and I had a wonderful time. If I ever have the chance to do a ceremony myself somewhere, I want to do it properly, just like we learned today.



I felt that for the Japanese people, tea is truly something sacred. But sitting in the *seiza* position is really difficult for non-Japanese people. Thank you very much for giving me the chance to experience this.



Kabuki Appreciation Class (Traditional Japanese Dance-Drama)

Kabuki is one of the main traditional Japanese theater forms. It is said to have begun around 1603 when Okuni, a shrine maiden of the Grand Shrine of Izumo, performed *Nenbutsu odori* (Buddhist folk dances) in Kyoto.

Ochanomizu University offers international students an opportunity to go on a field trip to see a Kabuki performance at the National Theater of Japan every year in June. In order to better prepare students for the Kabuki performance, the Global Education Center offers a special class. The Kabuki Class is an introductory seminar on the history of Kabuki and ways to enjoy the performances. In the class students gain a deeper understanding of the program, characters, and story.

The Kabuki Class is always popular since it is open to all students. Even if students miss the field trip to the National Theater, the seminar is still a great chance to learn about Kabuki.



Origami Class (The Art of Paper Folding)

Origami, the Japanese art of folding paper into decorative shapes, is a traditional Japanese pastime. With origami, you can make various figures such as animals, flowers, and even household goods. Origami paper comes in a variety in sizes, prints, and materials, and it gives people enjoyment to create figures using the characteristics of each kind of paper.

In the Origami Class at the Global Education Center, students have made chopstick envelopes, animation characters, seasonal greeting cards, and so on. It is a good opportunity to try making wonderful paper crafts using your creativity. Please join us and have fun !



Comments from 2016 Participants



I'm not very good with my hands, so I was thrilled to see my origami come out properly. It was like returning to childhood. If I become a Japanese teacher one day, I want to use this experience in my own classes.

Assistance for the Japanese Culture Classes

Japanese culture classes are held with the support not only of the teachers who are leading the classes, but many others as well. The ikebana class is supported by members of the flower arrangement club, the kimono-wearing class by members of the kimono-wearing club, the tea ceremony class by members of the Urasenke tea ceremony club, and the koto class by the members of the koto music club. These individuals help prepare the necessary materials for the class and support the teachers.

Furoshiki Class (Japanese Wrapping Cloth)

Furoshiki are a type a traditional Japanese wrapping cloth, and are used to wrap and carry things. Furoshiki have been essential items for daily life in Japan for hundreds of years. Nowadays, people do not use furoshiki as often as before, but they are becoming popular because of the rediscovery of Japanese traditions. Furoshiki are also valued for being environmentally friendly.

At the Global Education Center's furoshiki lesson, students don't just learn how to use the furoshiki as a Japanese-style wrapping, but also about the appeal of the furoshiki, including its history in Japanese culture and the many different ways it can be used.



Comments from 2016 Participants

It was fun learning about the furoshiki, which I'd never heard of before, and trying out various ways of using furoshiki was a great experience. Learning about the history and significance of furoshiki also spurred my interest.



Koto Class

The koto is a traditional Japanese musical instrument that came to Japan more than 1,000 years ago from China, was adapted, and developed into something uniquely Japanese. It is mentioned in *The Tale of Genji* and other ancient literary works. The styles of koto playing are divided into the Ikuta-ryu school and the Yamada-ryu school, and the shape of the pick and way of playing are different.

The koto class began at the Global Education Center in the second semester of the 2015 school year. The members of the koto music club performed "Hiyaku," "Sandan no shirabe," and other tunes and everyone played "Sakura" together.

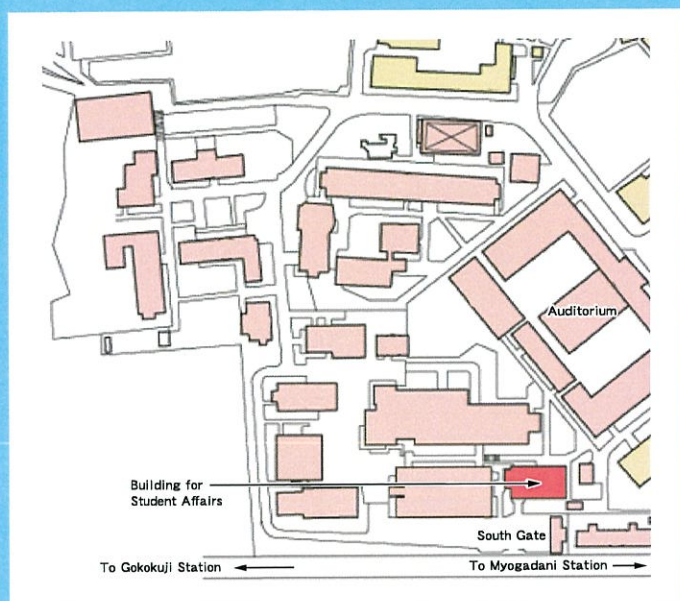


Comments from 2016 Participants

It was so interesting having the chance to hold a koto in my own hands, and quite an incredible experience to be able to try a brief performance. Thank you very much.



The Global Education Center



The Global Education Center (GEC) was established in April 2001 as an education and research facility. The International Student Division offers the following programs and services :

- Courses in Japanese language and culture for undergraduate and graduate international students
- Guidance and counseling on academic research, continuing education, and campus and social life in Japan
- Creating a system and environment to promote cultural interaction between Japanese and international students

The Global Education Center home page :

<http://www.cf.ocha.ac.jp/gec-in/index.html>

Japanese Culture Program home page :

http://www.cf.ocha.ac.jp/gec-in/j/menu/events/cul_school.html

Editor's Note

First, we would like to express our appreciation to the professors at the GEC for their continued support and encouragement, to the instructors for their passion and sincerity towards students and the program, and to the assistants for their kind help. Through creating this brochure, we have come to realize how many people have supported the Japanese Culture Program at the GEC. Thank you all very much.

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