

# **Japan Field Studies 2015**

## **ASIA1135: Introduction to East Asia (Japan) and JPN 1115 (Beginner's Japanese I) or JPN 1125 Beginner's Japanese II)**

Nariko Takayanagi and Akemi Takei

### **Summary**

Nariko Takayanagi from the Asian studies department and Akemi Takei from the Modern Languages Department led Japan Field Studies from May 11<sup>th</sup> to June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015. This program was a unique and enriching experience for the students who would like to learn about traditional Japanese culture, history, and language. The entire program was created, planned, managed, and conducted by the two Japanese instructors who were able to bring out the insider's perspective as well as culturally nuanced approach to the subject matter.

After having two-week-long intensive lectures at Langara, we spent a week in Tokyo, taking subway everywhere (with a group of 19!) to visit various sites. We observed how the gigantic metropolitan city with highly advanced technology still have the aspects of traditional past. Then we moved to the historically and culturally rich ancient capital, Kyoto for another two and a half weeks. We visited various temples and shrines (including a Ninja House and a Shogun's Palace), participated in workshops, such as Zen meditation, traditional Japanese sweets making and a tea ceremony. These "hands-on", experiential learning opportunities with the availability of the instructor's explanation and lectures on-site made this field program educationally very rich one.

Also while we were in Kyoto, we were fortunate to be assisted by 34 volunteer students from Ryukoku University (one of our affiliated university in Japan). During the Japanese language class, these "buddies" became our valuable tutors and conversation partners. On our free time and weekends, a lot of fun activities took place, ranging from hiking, cycling, playing sports, karaoke, sightseeing, shopping and cooking meals together. Through these activities, our students were able to experience cultural immersion and build cross-cultural friendship. A field studies program like this is so valuable and effective to promote globally minded citizenship in the post-secondary education. We hope to offer our next Japan Field Studies in the coming years.

**May (May 11 to May 21 ) Langara College:** Pre-departure lectures and orientation

**ASIA1135**

**May 26 to June 1 Tokyo:** Visited old downtown (Asakusa), Tsukiji Fish Market, Edo-Tokyo Museum, Saw kabuki performance, participated guided tour of Meiji shrine, Day trip to Kamakura. Participated various cultural activities (i.e., observing contemporary youth culture at Harajuku, Shibuya, and Akihabara) during free time on weekends

**June 2 to June 18 Kyoto:** Visit major temples and shrines (Kiyomizu-dera, Kinkaku-ji, Ginkaku-ji, , Fushimi-Inari, Ryoan-ji etc), Participate tea ceremony workshop, See traditional performing arts at Gion, Participate Zen workshop, Socialize with Japanese students at Ryukoku University, Participate in various cultural activities and free time on weekends (e.g., karaoke, hiking, cycling, day trip to Osaka, Going to hot spring, dressed in kimono...)

**JPN1115/1125**

**May 25 to June 1: Tokyo**

No formal lectures are given during the stay in Tokyo, however, 4 Kanji assignments are given, and are followed by 4 quizzes.

**June 2 to June 18: Kyoto**

7 sessions at Ryukoku University. JAPN 1115 and 1215 are taught simultaneously

**Participants**

	JAPN 1115 <i>Beginner's Japanese I</i>	JAPN 1215 <i>Beginner's Japanese II</i>	ASIA 1135 <i>Introduction to East Asia (Japan)</i>	FSIE 1124 <i>Field Studies in Asia (Japan)</i>
Enrolment	4	4	17	17
(Retakers)	(0)	(3)	(0)	(3)
(International Students)	(3)	(2)	(5)	(5)
Course Completion	4	4	17	17
Ryukoku Buddies involved	19		34	

The following sites are very good way to learn what the tour was like from the student's perspective.

- *video presentation on Kimono by students (3 Langara students transformed to women in Edo period at Toei Kyoto Studio Park)*  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O3Rvbht3\\_eA&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O3Rvbht3_eA&feature=youtu.be)
- *Travel Blog (A very detailed record of this tour!)*  
<https://pastruminightskies.wordpress.com>

## LEARNING ABOUT HISTORY IN TOKYO, KAMAKURA AND KYOTO



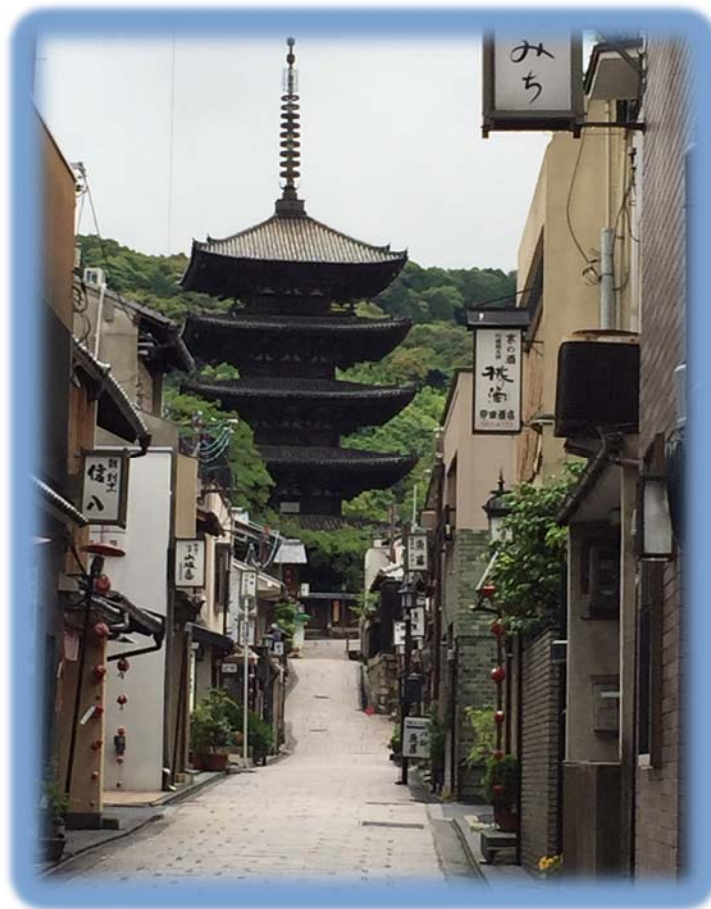
Metropolitan Tokyo



Asakusa in downtown Tokyo



Big Buddha in Kamakura



Pagoda in Kyoto



Byodo-In, Kyoto



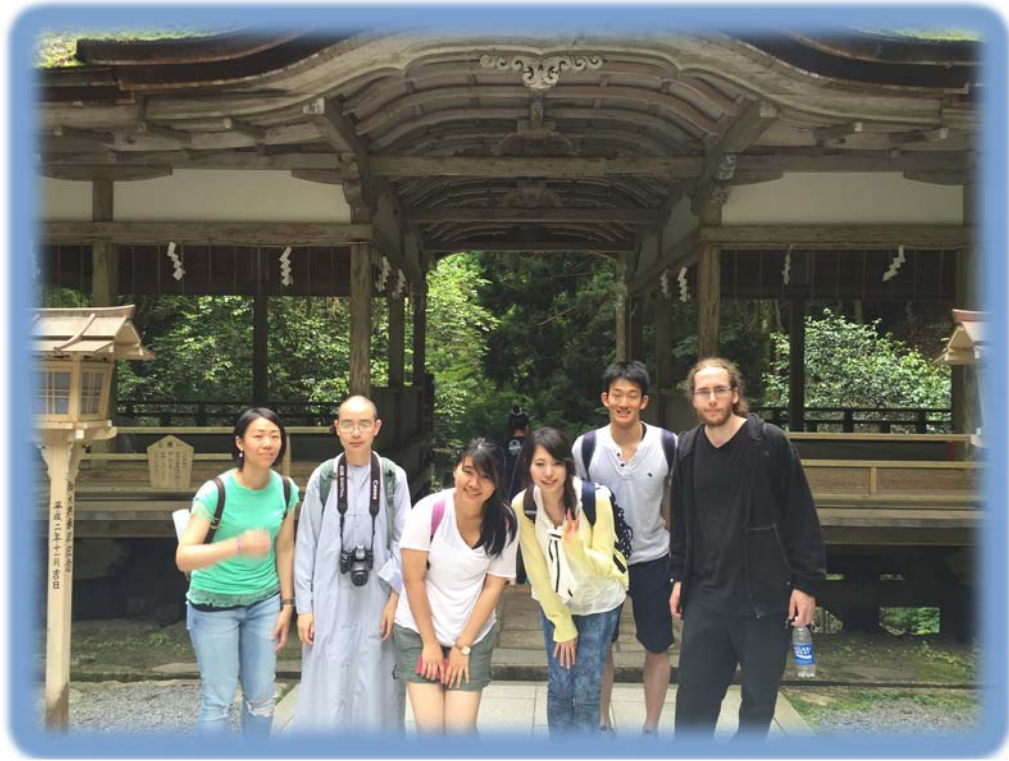
Big Buddha in Nara



Kinkaku-Ji (The Golden Pavilion)



Ginkaku-Ji (The Silver Pavilion)



Hiking to a mountain top temple



A rare experience--An empty bus all to us!



“Sacred” and cute deer at Nara Park







Sake Brewery





Kofukuji in Nara

## EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING THROUGH WORKSHOPS



A full-course meal of traditional Japanese cuisine in a traditional setting



Restaurant entrance



Zazen (meditation) as a part of Zen Workshop



Lecture by Zen Monk



**Eating Shojin Ryori**  
(vegetarian cuisine originally derived from the dietary restrictions of Buddhist monks)



**Workshop of Japanese traditional sweets**





Tea Ceremony Workshop





Kimono show



Bunraku





Kyogen



Zen Rock Garden



At "Susi-Train" restaurant. We ate so much....



At a restaurant specialized in "curry flavored" udon

## “Buddy” Time with Ryukoku Students







FARAWELL PARTY AT RYUKOKU UNIVESRITY







Japanese language class with Japanese tutors



The Last Day in Japan (with Ryukoku University students)

## FREE TIME





