

Reiki trip to Japan 2023

In the 30th anniversary year of her first Reiki training, Kerstin B. traveled to Japan with an international group led by Oliver Drewes. She wrote an experience report for the German Reiki News Magazine with her personal impressions. Below you find the translation into English.

After being unable to travel to Japan for three years due to the covid circumstances, I was looking forward to being able to travel to the country of origin of the Reiki method in November 2023. After becoming a Reiki channel in 1993 with one student of Brigitte Müller who was the first to bring Reiki to Germany, I had dreamed for so many years of being able to see Mount Kurama and the birthplace of Mikao Usui with my own eyes. And then there were also workshops, retreats and blessing ceremonies on the program ... but one thing at a time.

Travel preparations

Before starting the trip, I had actually planned to polish up my foreign language skills of English. With the majority of participants coming from Australia, the USA and Canada, as well as Reiki practitioners from England, Italy and the Netherlands, the trip took place in English. Even without a language refresher course, this was not really a problem. Nevertheless, being from Germany I was very happy that seven people from my country and one German-speaking Dutch woman were also on board.

A Facebook group set up exclusively for tour participants not only provided us with additional information in advance, it also gave us the opportunity to get to know each other early on.

The trip began and ended in Osaka, actually in Izumi Sano, the city right next to Kansai Airport, which is a good hour's train ride south of Osaka. All hotel changes took place on a large coach, which I found very comfortable and pleasant.

The first hotel impressed with a gigantic room view of the sea from the 22nd floor. But this was topped by the view from the dining room on the 52nd floor of the airport on the offshore island. The other hotels were more traditional and smaller ... but I wanted to report one after the other.

First Highlights

Our first stop was Nara, a cozy city that made it easy to immerse ourselves in ►



Deer and stags mingle with people in Nara and are fed with rice crackers baked especially for them (Photo Oliver Drewes).

Fushimi Inari

We combined the change to the next hotel with sightseeing stops. Fushimi Inari, the seemingly endless row of Shinto gates, is one of Kyoto's greatest sights. Shoren-in, a wonderful gem, is the temple where, according to Frans Stiene's research, Mikao Usui most probably spent the zazen years before his satori experience on Kurama Mountain.

The adjacent Chion-in, the main temple of the Jōdo-shu or Pure Land current in Tendai Buddhism, to which Mikao Usui is said to have belonged, was impressive. It is difficult for me to name the absolute highlights, as every single day impressed me anew. Mount Hiei, the birthplace of Buddhism in Japan, where this day ended, is certainly one of them.

Our accommodation in Nara was already very beautiful and quite tradi-



Social evening at the farewell and birthday party of Hiroshi Doi Sensei in Osaka (Photo Sylvia Dumont).

Japanese culture. On the first day, we visited the Kofu-kuji and Tōdai-ji temples on foot. The architecture and statues were really impressive. For me, the encounter with the deer and roe deer running free there was also a highlight. It wasn't just that you could stroke them ... they had learned over time to return bows. The day came to a great end with a bath in the hotel's onsen, a traditional wellness experience with hot spring water.

The next three days were devoted to a Reiki retreat by the internationally active Reiki teacher Frans Stiene, focusing on the Reiki system from a Japanese perspective. The event took place in a beautiful seminar room within walking distance of the hotel.

In retrospect, 27 participants seemed relatively few when we met another 170 predominantly Japanese Reiki practitioners in Osaka the following day. Hiroshi Doi, founder of the Gendai Reiki method and teacher of tour organizer Oliver Drewes, celebrated his retirement as a Reiki teacher - and his 88th birthday at the same time. Groups from Mexico to Taiwan came especially for the occasion. What a great Reiki exchange meeting, and what a great evening, with lavishly laid tables.



The bus rides were used for sightseeing stops when changing locations and hotels (Photo Oliver Drewes).

tional with its tatami floors. But the rooms on Mount Hiei with a fabulous view of the largest lake in Japan, Lake Biwa, put it even further in the shade. We received a crash course from our Japanese translator, who accompanied the group, on how to set up our futon beds, which had been stowed away in the closet during the day.

One of the two workshops, zazen meditation on Mount Hiei, was a real experience. And listening to the monks chanting the Heart Sutra in the morning service at the Konpon Chudo temple shortly after six in the morning was simply goosebumps.

Breathtaking days in Kyoto

The next stop was Kyoto, what a wonderful city. From here we started our second workshop, an introduction to calligraphy. Our tour guide later told



After the Shinto blessing ceremony, the priest Hibino is available for personal souvenir photos (Photo Oliver Drewes).



us with great emotion that the temple management had confessed their nervousness to him because we were the first non-Japanese to be allowed to take a course there in over 1,200 years of history. From Kyoto, we took the tramp to the famous bamboo forest and a beautiful garden overlooking Kyoto, as well as the train to Kurama Mountain and the Shinkansen express train to Taniai.

The last one mentioned is the birthplace of Mikao Usui. We were not only able to marvel at the gate of the Shinto community, which Usui Sensei donated to the community together with his brother and which bears their names engraved on it. We received a Shinto Blessing from the local priest. In addition to our group, there were also participants from Canada and South America.

We had already planned to visit Usui's former school and the spring whose water his family used to make sake. But after the lunch buffet, it was a real surprise to be able to practise Reiki together with the local Reiki community for a few hours. It was really hard to have to leave these warm-hearted people again.

Part of the tour group at the Reiki exchange meeting with Japanese Reiki practitioners after the lunch buffet while visiting the birthplace of Mikao Usui (Photo Sylvia Dumont).

Holistika is offering the next Reiki trip to Japan in November 2025. More information and a pdf of the itinerary can be found at www.holistika.de



The trip to Japan, and in particular the visit to the Mount Kurama, fulfilled a lifelong dream of mine (Photo Oliver Drewes).

Visit to the Kurama mountain

Mount Kurama ... what can I say? It was what I was most looking forward to, and I wasn't disappointed. Standing on the energy point in front of the main hall ... how long I had dreamed about it. And it's true: the energy is incredible. But that basically applies to the whole mountain. Five of us had gathered around our tour guide and we were all trembling at the knees. And this continued until we were back in the village. Then it stopped there ... which shows to me that the cause was "energetic" and not exhaustion from the climb to Osugi Gongen Temple, which is at the top of the mountain, with its much-photographed roots of giant cedar trees.

I have to mention two wonderful highlights on the mountain that have gone unnoticed by some - don't miss them if you ever have the chance to visit this wonderful place:

Before the last stairs to the main temple, there is a two-storey temple on the right with a fountain decorated with dragons. There is a Buddha statue on the second floor and you can crawl under the stairs. At this point, a string ends that connects you to the Amida Buddha, who you can

look into the eyes of at the same time to get a taste of his compassion for people.

Equally impressive is a somewhat hidden place that can be found down the stairs in the main temple. Past countless ceramic vessels, where hair can be left for a fee, which the religious community based there today includes in their blessing ceremonies, there is an inconspicuous passageway in the middle. This leads to the statues of Maason, Bishamonten and Senju-Kannon, the three deities of today's Kurama Mountain religious community.

Sacred mountain temples

From Kyoto, with stops at the Ryoan-ji Zen Garden and three extraordinary temples, the Golden Pavilion, the Pure Land Temple Nishi-Hongan-ji and the much-visited Kiyomizu-dera Temple, we returned to Izumi Sano. The trip ended with two day trips. One to Mount Yoshino, with impressive blue Buddha statues in the Kinpusen-ji temple. The other to Mount Koya, where we visited the mausoleum of Kobo Daishi, a monk with an outstanding influence on the



I now remember my visit to Koyasan every time I play my favorite same named Deuter CD during Reiki treatments (Photo Oliver Drewes).

development of Buddhism in Japan and Japanese culture and founder of Shin-gon Buddhism.

Satori

What did I forget to mention? I loved the sushi restaurant in Nara, double the quality for half the price of what you pay in Germany. I enjoyed the matcha teas and, oh yes, the matcha cookies even more. I was worried whether I would be able to cope with the food in Japan ... but now I really miss it. Just like the nice people in the group. It was a wonderful - to use this word again - experience to meet Reiki enthusiasts from four continents and share time with them.

We remain connected - and yes, we always have been, connected to everything living and existing on this planet and in this universe - my small, humble Satori experience.



Kerstin B., registered German naturopath for psychotherapy, Reiki master/teacher, teaches Reiki near Bonn in Germany. She has been practicing Reiki almost every day for over 30 years. Her great concern is to motivate students to remain active with Reiki even after their class attendance (Photo Oliver Drewes).