

A Historical Walk Around Kyoto

Photo by Masayoshi Masuda



Kamigamo Shrine

Kamigamo Shrine is one of the oldest shrines in Kyoto. It is located along the Kamogawa River in the north of Kyoto city. The surrounding area of this shrine is quiet in winter, except when events are held. You often see light snowfall here, occasionally settling along the rooftops of the shrines and the trees. It is a view to savor. The vermilion building shown in this photo is the famous entrance for the main shrine building. The main shrine building was built in 678 before the transfer of the Japanese capital to Kyoto in 794. Although all existing shrine buildings were rebuilt from during the 17th and 18th centuries, this shrine is designated as a World Cultural Heritage Site.

Syakemachi (Shinto priest's town)

Unique houses with stone foundations were built outside of Kamigamo Shrine along the Myojingawa River*. The Kamo clan has traditionally held the order of succession of Shinto priests for Kamigamo Shrine. The Kamo family lived in this area. All of the houses were ordered to be built at a level lower than the gate of Kamigamo Shrine at the time. Although the succession was discontinued by law in 1871, this area in which unique buildings still exist has been designated as an Important Preservation District for the Group of Historic Buildings since 1986.

* The river runs from the north of Kamogawa River to the southeast of Kamigamo Shrine.

Local food

Suguki is originally from this area. *Suguki* has two meanings, a root vegetable and a pickled one. The vegetable is a kind of white turnip, and the pickled vegetable is one of the three major traditional pickles in Kyoto, along with *Shiba-zuke* (pickled eggplants or cucumbers with Japanese red basil) and *Senmai-zuke* (pickled white turnip). This pickled *Suguki* tastes best in winter. In addition, it contains lactic acid bacterium and helps stop the lower abdomen swelling by smoothly regulating the functions of the intestines.

By Etsuko.M