

A Historical Walk Around Kyoto



Photo by Ryotaro Nakajima

Toriimoto Place (temple town)

Toriimoto place is located in northwestern Kyoto, in the *Sagano* area. This place used to be a village, and the village people originally lived by fishing in the river, agriculture and forestry around the 15th century. All roofs were straw-thatched. After the place started flourishing as a temple town from the 19th century, some houses were remodeled into teahouses, etc., while preserving the traditional style. In almost all Japanese villages, many straw-thatched roofs were rapidly changed into tiled, tin or zinc roofs. Nowadays, Western-style houses are more popular with the younger generations. They believe the Western-style house is cheaper and easier to allow for a comfortable lifestyle. For that reason, Western-style and Japanese-style houses are jumbled together in Japan, regardless of the countryside or in the city. However, in *Toriimoto* place, many original traditional houses still exist and line the *Atago* Street. As this place is less known to tourists, it is a great spot for walking.

Traditional Teahouse

This teahouse, *Hiranoya*, described in the photo is a 400-year-old house. Many visitors are impressed with the beautiful view because it is surrounded by nature. Leaves change red and yellow here in November. The beautiful view is often seen in movies, dramas, calendars, etc. The teahouse is still presently used as an expensive restaurant. The local specialty is a full course of *ayu* (sweet fish) cuisine. In this course, *ayu* grilled with salt, sushi, *zosui* *, etc. will be served. From June to October, you can enjoy eating *ayu* that is taken from the upper portion of the *Hozu* River.

* *Zosui* is a rice gruel cooked with a little rice for easy digestion and usually served hot.

How to get there

Take the Kyoto bus, bound for *Kiyotaki*, from Kyoto Station, and get off at *Toriimoto*. It takes about 45 minutes.

By *Etsuko.N*