

# Our Study Visit to Kyoto

October 22<sup>nd</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017



Messages to Students of Varanasi

**Courtesy Visit to Mayor of Kyoto City**

Date: Oct. 24, 2017

My Dear Children,

Today I got the opportunity to meet elected people representative, "Mayor of Kyoto", whom we have seen as most respectable by the majority of the city population. His popularity continues after his successive consecutive third time victory. After sharing our pleasantries, he explained in detail about the efforts that has been made along with local community for accelerating cleanliness drives which have brought remarkable changes in the city. He has also significantly mentioned about his contribution to DRR in Kyoto. Fire, which was the major hazard facing the city's wooden infrastructure was minimized to a very low level by innovating new community based DRR.

During our visit to various community centers and interaction with people we realized that participatory community based programmes are a must for ensuring clean drives and DRR. This same education was taught/ followed in India centuries ago, My best wishes to all of you in India.

**Alok Kumar Singh**

Commandant, National Disaster Response Force

Messages to Students of Varanasi

**Kyoto City Disaster Prevention and Crisis Management Office**

Date: Oct. 24, 2017

Dear Students,

Today I visited Kyoto City disaster prevention and crisis management Office, that is responsible for supervision of DRR and crisis management administration and co-ordination in Kyoto City. As we all know many natural and man made disaster had struck in Japan time to time and managing these disasters is a dynamic and tough Job. The department get its line status about natural disaster from Japan Meteorological Agency and sends emergency information to city residents via Emails and TV broadcasting. Here in the city residents play a very participatory role in preparedness, response and mitigation of disaster. So, we also can do as a model like in Kyoto as in Varanasi. Thank You.

**Devendra Kumar**

Deputy Commandant

11, National Disaster Response Force

Messages to Students of Varanasi

**Visit to Kyoto City Board of Education**

Date: Oct. 24, 2017

Dear Students,

In 1989 the capital of Japan shifted from Kyoto to Tokyo. In that year a modern school system was started in Kyoto with the initiative of residents. Sixty Four elementary schools were established at that time. Kyoto's school management and committees involves parent, guardians & community members who are actively taking part in planning all the activities of the school. Disaster Risk Reduction education is a compulsory and being integrated in school curriculum. Each subject teacher not only teaches in the school but also helps with the community DRR system. Many community members also support the schools by offering their knowledge in field of art, culture & sports etc. There is a group of over 20,000 volunteers who ensures safe movement of school going children from home to school & school to home.

Thank you!

**Ganesh Sahai**

Principal

Aryan International School



Visit to Kyoto City Mayor's Office

(Photo : © Kyoto City Mayor's Office)

Messages to Students of Varanasi

**Visit to Disaster Prevention Centre**

Date: Oct. 25, 2017

Dear Students,

It is date of 25 Oct. (Wed.). We all are going to Kyoto City Disaster Prevention Centre. The Kyoto City Disaster Prevention Centre is the place in Kyoto where the public can feel and learn about disaster affects and also we learn how to we can protect ourselves after disasters and how to be better prepared before disaster and how to take steps to protect ourselves against disaster. In the Disaster Prevention Centre we experienced about the different kinds of disaster. We were watching, learning, listening, touching and feeling everything. Here there are three floors to see and learn about disaster prevention. On the first floor there is a simulation room where visitors can locate the videos along with the disaster experience such as the fear of earthquakes and typhoons. On the second floor the visitor can simulate the training and enhance their ability to taken action to protect against disaster and on the third floor we feel the virtual disasters. After this we went to the third floor in the Prevention Centre where we listened to a very good lecture given to us by Mr. Senda and Mr. Ota. Our visit and the presentations were a very good experience for the Varanasi team.

Regards & love,

**Kirti Singh**

Agrasen Kanya Girls College

Messages to Students of Varanasi

**Kiyomizu Temple Kyoto**

Date: Oct. 26, 2017

Hi Friends,

The Kiyomizu-dera temple is more than a thousand year old. It relates to KANNON Bodhisattva, the Compassionate deity. More than four to five thousand visitors come to visit the temple daily. Spreading over 130000 sq. m. the temple is situated on the slopes of Mt. Otowa in the eastern part of Kyoto City. The temple has survived no less than 10 times by the fire disasters—it was destroyed and reinstated. The buildings and shops around here have many traditional tokens.

Kiyomizu dera temple is registered as UNESCO world heritage. An efficient fire fighting system has been established. The water supply is from rain water harvesting. The fire prevention team is always ready to mitigate any fire accident. The pump bell is such as it can operate during power failure for up to 2 hrs. You would love to visit this historic heritage temple . It has religion as well as environmental messages for the people.

Regards & love,

**Dr. S.B. Pandey**

## Messages to Students of Varanasi

## Visit to Kyoto Municipal Takakura Elementary School

Date: Oct. 24, 2017

**Dear friends,**

Greetings from Japan,

It was perhaps the most entertaining and motivating day of our visit to Japan. The students, the little kids (I to VI Students) are very friendly and enthusiastic. Just as the Earthquake Warning bell rang the kids started rehearsing how to react to an Earthquake. They found safe places in the school and also had emergency bags. Then they also began to very eagerly start doing actions such as sweeping and cleaning their class rooms. I was just so amazed to see the little children (I-II-III standard) so curious and well in formed of the situations during any disasters Earthquake, Fire, flood etc.

So, Friends be aware of the locality around your school and around your home. May be in India there are not so many hazards and disasters as there are in Japan. But, still it is very important to learn from my Kyoto visit about how we too can start mock drills about these disasters regularly. I was most impressed how the students are cleaning and sweeping in and around the school and the community.

Friends, disaster can happen so lets do five things to be better prepared..

1. Keep cool and calm and react to a danger calmly.
2. Learn a lot about your safety and your surroundings: the School and community are important.
3. Don't panic on assumptions, be ready to find the facts and to face the reality
4. Involve others around you
5. Being confident about your knowledge and about your safety and your locality is good. But, be ready to learn more about the surroundings-- don't be over confident. Remember the facts and science about the disasters/ hazards and about you surrounding. This will make you ready for disasters and save you from any panic.

Regards & love,  
**Dr. S.B. Pandey**  
Central Hindu Boys School

## Messages to Students of Varanasi

## Visit to Smile 21 Takakura Elementary School

Date: Oct. 24, 2017

**Dear Varanasi Students,**

Today, On 24 Oct. I visited lot of valuable places in Kyoto, Japan, like the Mayor's Office, and Takakura Elementary school, which was the most inspiring for me. I also received a very valuable lecture by Smile 21 committee members.

Children, Smile 21 is Kyoto Municipality's School Management Committee. We met with Mr. Kazuhiko Inoue, a representative of Smile 21 of the 5th & 6th grade students.

Students, I was really impressed to discover that Smile 21 operates like an open school and has a good platform for not only teachers, students but also for community members in the area. They also gave a lot of knowledge to us about disaster risk reduction but one thing that mainly attracted me was the way they incorporated the elderly people in the community with the children. Students who are now protected by the adults will become junior high school students and eventually become adults. So they need to think about "What they can do to support and help others", especially how their actions can might be fruitful for their future.

Thank you for a wonderful learning experience in Kyoto that I want to share with my students and other students in the Climate Schools and Varanasi.

Regards & love,  
**Dr. Kavita Mishra**  
Sant Atulanand Convent School  
Varanasi

**Kyoto Diary...**

Today is October 22. My first visit outside of Varanasi. I am going with SEEDS Asia Varanasi Team to Kyoto Japan. This is Study visit about disaster management.

**Day Two:** We arrive in Kyoto and meet with SEEDS Asia Kobe team. **Day Three:** We visited City Mayor and discuss Disaster Risk Reduction. Then we visited the Kyoto City Prevention and Crisis Management Office for a lecture.

**Day Four :** We visited Takakura Elementary School and met the wonderful principal, Ms. Kishida. We also met the students who eagerly talked. They said Namaste to us. It was a very wonderful joyful day. **Day Five:** We make Action Plans to bring back to our schools. It is a good time to discuss our stay and ideas.

**Day Six:** We are leaving Kyoto soon. Thank you SEEDS Asia and Kyoto people for hosting us. We will continue our further communication through Prahari Newspaper.

See you again.

**Kirti Singh**  
Agrasen Kanya Girls College

## Messages to Students of Varanasi

## Kyoto Municipal Horikawa Senior High School

Date: Oct. 25, 2017

**Dear Students,**

On 25/10, we visited Kyoto Municipal Horikawa Senior High School. We were warmly welcomed by Principal. Mr. Onda also shared that India & Japan has old age cultural and historical linkages. He has also great respect towards Hindu philosophy & India. Mr. Onda, school staff & students of class X gave us beautiful presentations on disaster. For us they have specially prepared presentation in English students of Japan here are very similar students in India.

They have same curiosity level, same learning attitude and also similar uniform. We also taught them and they asked questions also. We saw their science lab, bio lab, library, classrooms, computer lab, etc. We have seen a different methods of teaching also. In this method there is a group of 10-15 students. Each students speaks on a given specific topic and in the last session the teacher mentors & summarizes the topic in a systematic way.

This is the government school in Kyoto whose maximum members of students get admitted to University of Tokyo and Kyoto.

Regards & love,  
**Ganesh Sahai**  
Aryan International School  
Varanasi

## Messages to Students of Varanasi

## Voluntary Fire Corps &amp; DRR Organisation, Higashiyama

Date: Oct. 26, 2017

Hello

Dear Student

Today, we went to the Kiyomizu dera temple. It is a temple that has established a self-defense fire group. After visit of Kiyomizu temple we met Mr. Kiyoda from Voluntary Fire Corp and Mr. Takahashi from Voluntary DRR Organisation in Kiyomizu, Higashiyama ward of Kyoto City. There we saw lot of water facilities for fire prevention during our visit, introduced by Mr. Takahashi and officials of Higashiyama Fire Station on 24 October. In 1950, Kyoto city established an administrative system for fire prevention and the concept was, "One ward, one fire station".

This is also a community/society based organisation that has been established for enhancing self help and mutual help with the concept of "Protecting our city by ourselves".

Regards & love,  
**Kirti Singh**  
Agrasen Kanya Girls College



Who are  
**Prahari Reporters**

**VARANASI CLIMATE SCHOOLS**

- Agrasen Kanya Inter College (AKIC)
- Aryan International School (AIS)
- Central Hindu Boys School (CHBS)
- Rajghat Besant School (RBS)
- Sant Atulanand Convent School (SACS)

Prahari Reporters belong to the above five Climate Schools. They are students who are investigating and writing about natural and man-made disasters that affect them, their families and neighborhood. Their findings are published in the Climate School Newspaper with the objective of sharing the lessons learned with their colleagues, community and local officials to build a safer society and world.

Messages to Students of Varanasi

**An Evening In Pontocho, Kyoto, Japan**

Date: Oct. 25, 2017

**Dear Students,**

Greetings from Kyoto, Japan!

Yes, what a surprise, isn't it? We wrote these letters to you when we visited Kyoto, Japan to see how they work with their schools and communities to make their areas and cities more resilient to natural disasters. It is worthy to learn this first hand from Japan as this country is geographically located in a very naturally hazard prone area in the world. Earthquakes, Tsunamis, Typhoons are quite common here. All of this has made the people of Japan very hardworking, responsible, aware and resilient to face natural disasters and lead extremely productive and efficient lives.

I write this on my second day in this beautiful city of Kyoto, the old capital of Japan before Tokyo. It is still today revered as the Spiritual City of this country. The city is in most parts extremely modern but full of many old temples, mostly Buddhist and palaces. Today we came upon this wonderful and quaint neighbourhood in the city called – Ponto Cho. The area lies near the eastern banks of the Kamo River. Lying along a narrow path no wider than two meters are adjoining restaurants, bars and chaya ("teahouses" owned by women known as okami-san.)

Every night, waves of people sweep through Pontocho. It has a reputation as a lively, elegant and tasteful street. Pontocho is a mysterious space that mixes new tastes and traditional atmosphere: there are many Western-style bars and Japanese restaurants built in machiya-style (wooden) houses.

This neighbourhood is four hundred years old. It has been inhabited since the Edo period (1600 CE). Today, there are 120 residential units and 350 restaurants and shops. On my return to the hotel, I tried to get more details about this community. There is a lot of research material on this community but since our interest was not to visit this area only to track down a particular community but to understand more about how the community is trying to preserve this shrinking heritage in view of all the natural disasters which affects the city. However, you all may find more details about this community and it would be very nice to explore their history, traditions and present social conditions in contemporary Kyoto society.

The amazing aspects of our Ponto Cho visit went beyond history since we met with Community members, police officials and fire fighters as one of the main problems being faced by this community is fire. The area has many wooden houses, extremely narrow lanes and alleys, exposed electric lines. All of this creates the fire hazard and the fire safety measures are unable to reach through these narrow and restricted spaces to save lives and property.

We met with an extremely passionate group of community members headed by Mr. Hajime Kambe. He explained with passion and patience the measures adopted of water hose access and the way it works. His team also explained that they have to work more on improvement of the overhead electric lines which are both unsafe and aesthetically poor for such a beautiful neighbourhood.

Another manmade disaster that stalks this neighbourhood is a high crime rate which has gone up due to restaurants and pubs opening in the area. The cause are mostly sparked from drunken brawls and limited drug menace as well. The area is not protected by any special zoning laws of the city and it is only these community groups which are striving to preserve this heritage part of town from complete collapse. It was delightful to see and hear their experience of making the community safe and sustainable given that this historical community of Ponto cho needs continued support and struggle to sustain in its timeless splendour and remain a narrative in the urban history of Kyoto.

I must say that being a resident of Varanasi, India, we are extremely fortunate to have a huge living history in our midst as well, but we definitely need to question whether we are or will be able to preserve it with such pride and dedication as seen by community groups and services as seen through the experience of saving Ponto Cho.

Hope you enjoy this letter and explore your relationship with your neighbourhoods, community and the place you wish to call home.

Regards & love,  
**Sayantani Gaddam**  
Rajghat Besant School, Varanasi

Messages to Students of Varanasi

**Kyoto City Disaster Prevention Centre**

Date: Oct. 25, 2017

**Dear Students,**

Greetings from Japan,

During our study visit in Japan we visited the Kyoto City Disaster Prevention Centre on 25th Oct.2017. During this visit we met Mr. Ko Ota, the President of Bosai Terakoya Kyoto. In the year 1995 Kobe witnessed a vast earthquake at Hanshin Awaji. It caused large scale destruction in the city. During this time Mr. Ota came forward for the rescue operation.

He realized that disaster never comes at a predefined time and that disasters might come at any moment. So it is very much necessary to prepare ourselves for these disaster. To implement it he made a voluntary organization named Bosai Terakoya Kyoto whose main objective was to prepare the community for facing disaster by creating awareness among people belonging to the local community.

This is done at two levels.

1. School level: At school level Mr. Ota himself is educating the students about Disaster Risk Reduction in schools-- for example in the Takakura school.

2. Community level: He is also a member of DRR voluntary organization in his residential area. I learned that senior citizens are even more actively participating in DRR. They are taking care of all the necessary equipment and material in a very organized manner. They are behaving the same way as our elders do in our family. This encourage the young generation to understand their responsibility. Through this, organization is trying to increase the capacity of community.

He also believes that in today's world one must not be dependent on others, like other departments like fire brigade, health department etc. but we should be able to take the initiative in taking responsibility to come forward. One must be able to take care of self but also take care of others. He believes in the strengthening our abilities for this purpose. His organization and its members have equipped the residential areas with the minimum required things in case of emergency. Also he explained that in about ninety-eight percent of the cases, self-help and mutual-help is most effective in protecting the vulnerability of the societies. Only two percent is saved by rescue teams. So we must learn and adopt the practices of self-help and mutual help.

Regards & love,  
**Megha Sharma**  
Rajghat Besant School, Varanasi



**Kiyomizu Voluntary DRR organization**

**From Students of Takakura Elementary School, Kyoto, Japan**

Dear Friends in India,

Nice to meet you. Thank you for your letters. At school in Japan, we practice evacuation drills and learn how to escape at a time of a disaster. We also have a program called the “ward-based gathering” where we practice how to get home from school to the evacuation center, and also discuss with society members the dangerous places in the paths on our way to school.

I heard that some schools in India have over 6,000 people. I think at Takakura Elementary School, where I go, will only have 1,000 people at most.

I would like to visit India when I have the opportunity.

**Aika Hori**, Takakura Elementary School 5<sup>th</sup> grade

Dear Friends of India,

Through evacuation drills, we learn about earthquakes, fires, suspicious persons, and photochemical smog. We have a “Safety Note” and learn about disaster preparedness and evacuation methods once every month.

I can't imagine monkeys being on campus in the oldest school. However, I think your school must be surrounded by nature if monkeys come, which is a good thing. Let's keep on learning about disaster preparedness together.

**Haruna Daigo**, Takakura Elementary School 5<sup>th</sup> grade

Dear Friends of India,

Thank you for sending lots of letters. I was surprised to learn that children are active to protect the society. I would like to learn from your good example. What you are doing is for the whole society; please keep up the good work!

Japan is a country with many disasters. There are many active plates around Japan. Because of this, we never know when disasters will strike, and we need to prepare in our daily lives. We do evacuation drills for earthquakes, fires and suspicious persons, as well as go school in groups. We also have a disaster preparedness booth at the school festival, so people can have fun while they learn.

**Yuri Takeuchi**, Takakura Elementary School 5<sup>th</sup> grade

Dear Friends of India,

Hello. At Takakura Elementary school, where I go, we have “ward-based meetings” once a month where groups gather to learn about dangerous places in our society. We also talk to society volunteer members who help us get to and from school safely. By discussing the dangerous spots in our society, we become more careful, and this leads to a safe environment. If you ever come to Japan, please come see our activities on disaster preparedness.

**Momoe Tsushita**, Takakura Elementary School 5<sup>th</sup> grade

Dear Friends of India,

I hope you are all well. Typhoon #21 directly hit Japan, where I live. There is a lot of damage from the typhoon throughout the country. Moreover, there are other dangerous things such as North Korea's missile tests. I feel anxious every day. There have been deaths and missing persons in typhoons in the past. Last night, the wind and rain was very strong. I am not sure if India has typhoons, but please be careful of flooding of the Ganges River.

**Yuka Sawaki**, Takakura Elementary School 5<sup>th</sup> grade



**Fire Prevention Dept.**



**Kiyomizu-dera Temple**



Logo Design:  
**Prof. Hiralal Prajapati**, Dean  
 Faculty of Visual Arts, BHU  
 Published by:  
**BHU-IESD and SEEDS Asia**  
**Varanasi Project Office**  
 Varanasi-221 005, Uttar Pradesh  
 Contact : 0542-2366671



**Messages to Students of Varanasi**

**After My Return to Varanasi**

**Dear Climate School students,**

Date: Oct. 29, 2017

I am now writing to you after my return to Varanasi from Kyoto. My memories of this wonderful study visit remain fresh in my mind. I share some important observations I made in Kyoto with the hope that we can start discussing in our school how we can implement some of these wonderful Japanese DRR practices. Firstly, let me share again how impressed I was with the cleanliness in Kyoto—there was no garbage thrown on the streets and the schools we visited were so clean. The students were very proud to keep their classrooms clean.

Secondly, I really liked their efforts to be independent rather than depending or complaining about not having enough support from the government. The schools and community make their plans for their safety. This was a very important lesson for Varanasi, and I look forward to discuss this in the classroom.

Thank you

Regards & love,  
**Kavita Mishra**  
 Sant Convent Atulanand School