

B I G (i n) J A P A N

(w h e r e t h e E a s t e r n s e a ' s s o b l u e)

O S A K A
K Y O T O
H I R O S H I M A
N A G A S A K I
F U K U O K A

E L E N A N . G A L A N I

BIG (IN) JAPAN

(where the Eastern sea is so blue)

by ELENA N. GALANI

BIG (IN) JAPAN

(where the Eastern sea is so blue)

Big Japan: the land of anime, of manga, of samurai

Where aesthetics slip into another dimension
and minimalism is not just a concept, but a way of being—lived, each day, in silence.

Where *haiku* was born,
And *kitsuke*,
the ritual of tea,
the patient stitch of *sashiko*,
the quiet poetry of *origami*,
the grace of silk kimonos,
the whispered path of the sword.

A land of restless cities,
of swelling crowds
and yet of unbearable solitude.

A land of senses —
A land of illusions.

A land of perfectly composed gardens,
of animist spirits,
where deers have no reason to hide.

A land of Shinto shrines breathing among the trees.

A country inward and melancholic,
almost mythical —
distant enough
to preserve its incomparable allure through time.

A land of contrasts -

where the (nearly- awakened) cherry blossoms tremble in the wind,
the plum trees hurries to come to life
while the Japanese camellias unfold in stillness,

and yet, a place of unspeakable harshness —
witness to one of the darkest moments in human history:
in Nagasaki and Hiroshima,
memory still burns —,
for forgetting is not a choice.

Is Japan that magical land of escape
we once dreamed of in youth?

The place where dreams wait to be lived,
where *things are easy*
like in the song from the 80's,
(then in the album *Forever Young* by the Alphaville, now
in the haunting interpretation of Ane Brun)
or is it simply
another construction of longing?

*Winter's city side, crystal bits of snowflakes
All around my head and in the wind
I had no illusions that I'd ever find
A glimpse of summer's heatwaves in your eyes*

*You did what you did to me
Now it's history I see
Here's my comeback on the road again
Things will happen while they can
I will wait here for my man tonight
It's easy when you're big in Japan*

[Chorus]
*Oh, when you're big in Japan, tonight
Big in Japan, be tight
Big in Japan, ooh, the eastern sea's so blue
Big in Japan, alright
Pay, then I'll sleep by your side
Things are easy when you're big in Japan
Oh, when you're big in Japan*

*Neon on my naked skin
Passing silhouettes of strange illuminated mannequins
Shall I stay here at the zoo?
Or should I go and change my point of view for other ugly scenes?*

Is this the "Eastern end" we were promised?

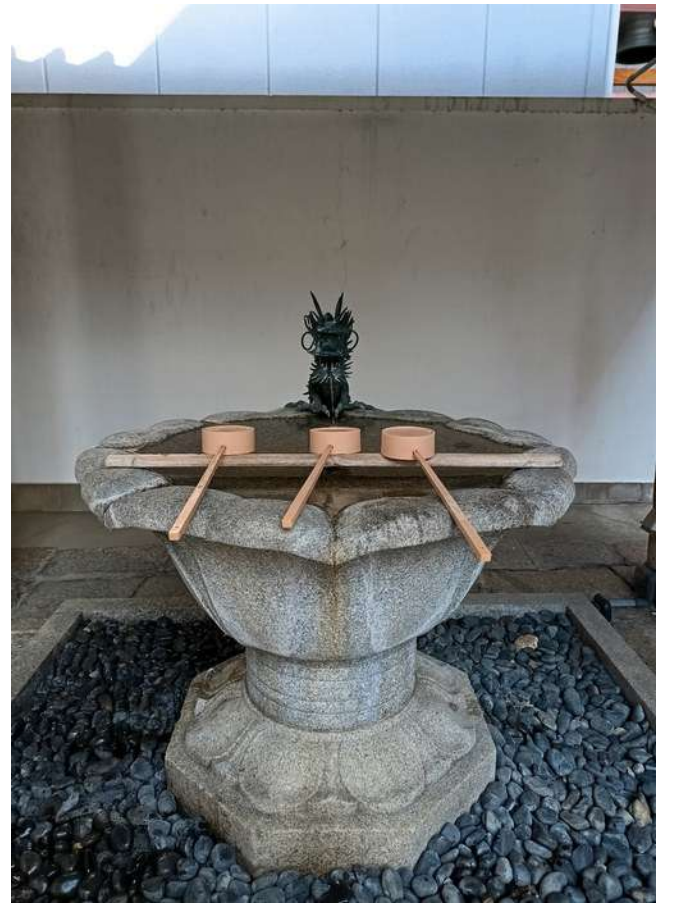
(in a just, peaceful world
we would be here together - someday

Now it's history - I see

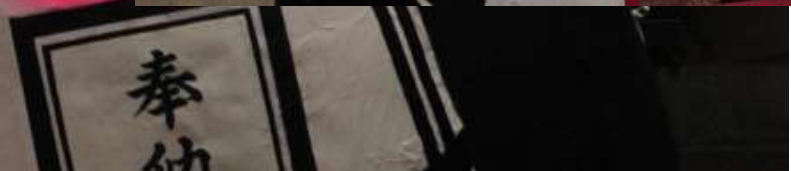
PS. But if we managed to lose ourselves in Japan
could we remain forever young?

Kyoto, February 21, 2026

















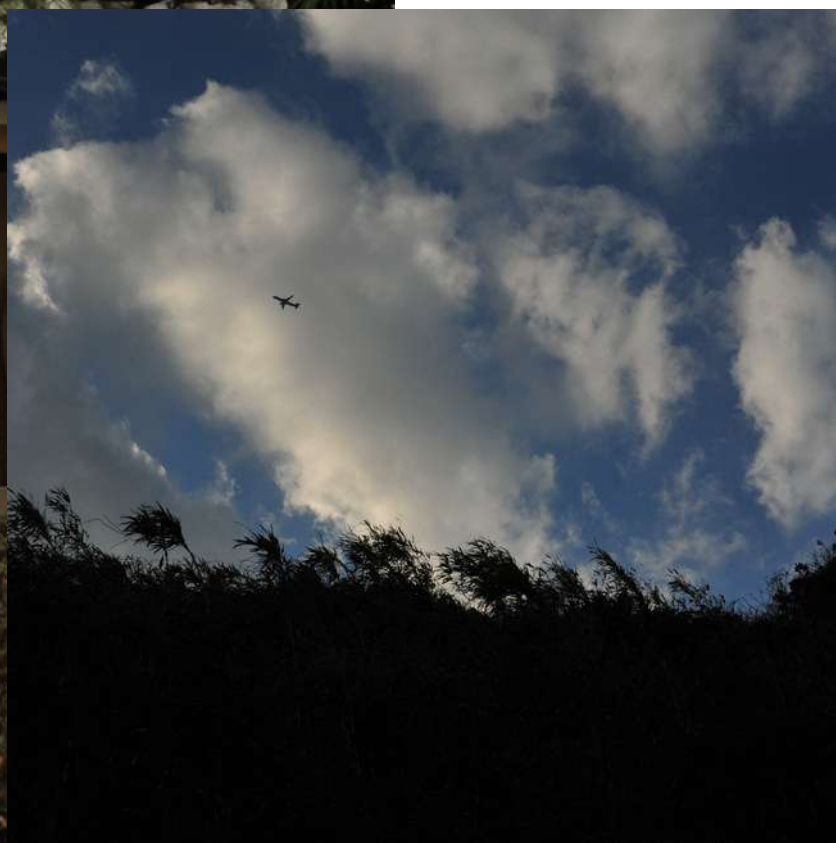


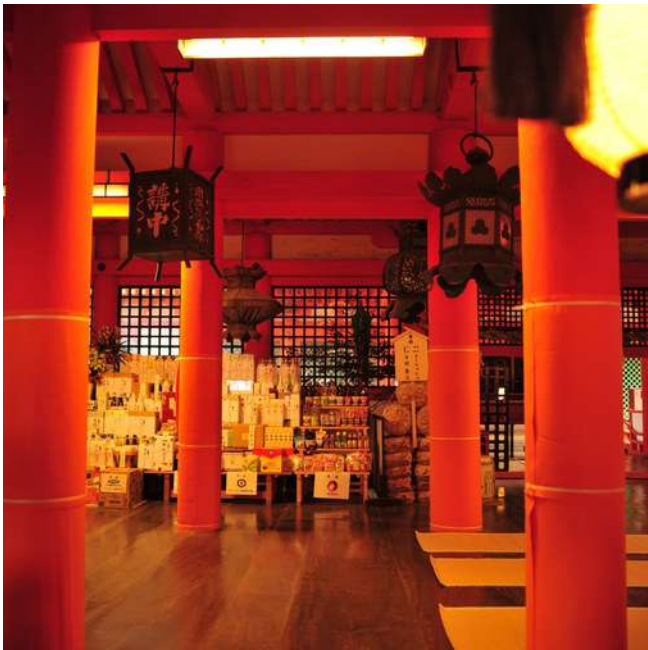






























おいしい焼酎で
会いましょう。



焼酎 本格

伊佐 錦

黒麹仕込



博多川端
博多
ラーメン



ようこそ
博多川端
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ミヤマシテア劇場

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持ち帰り

ります



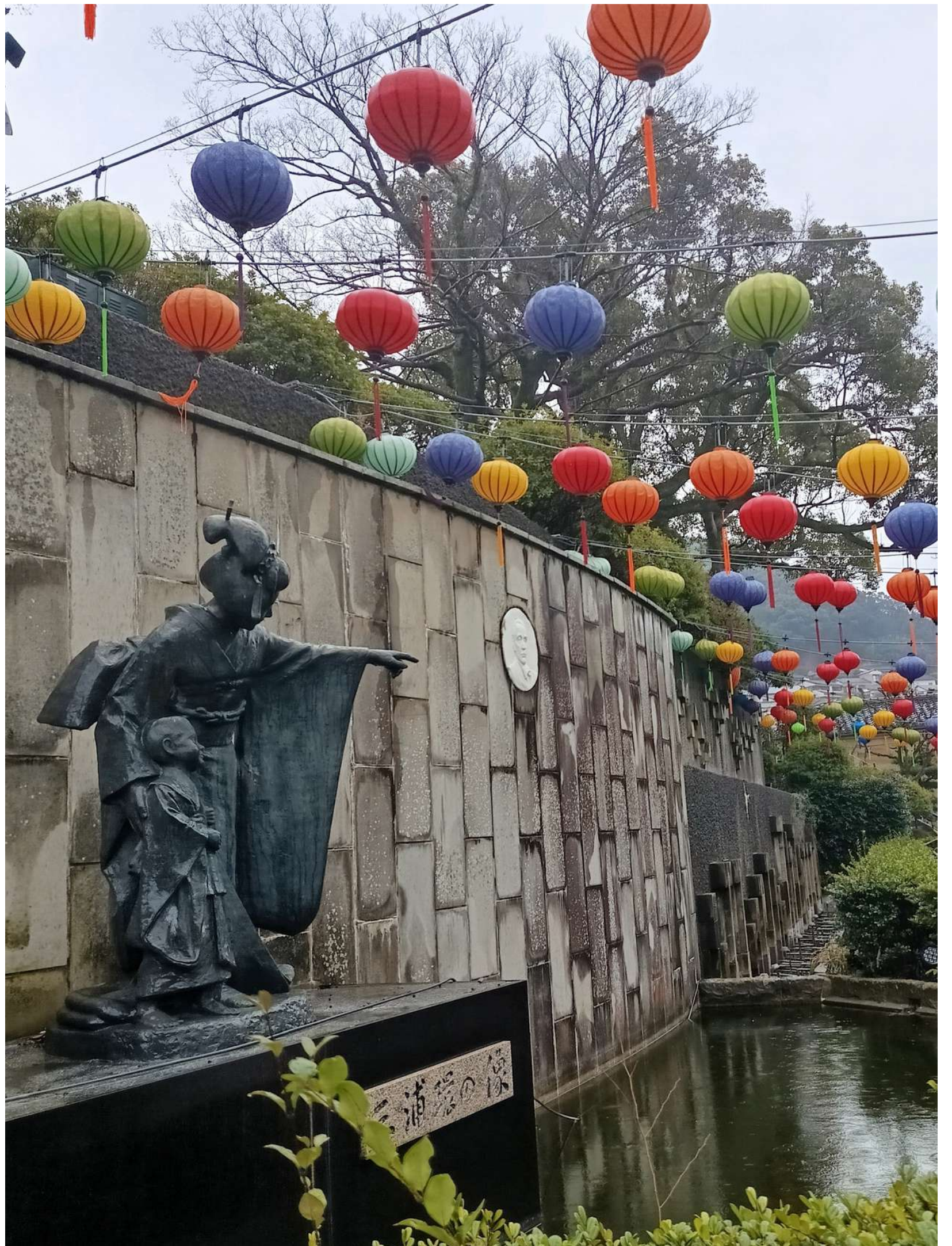






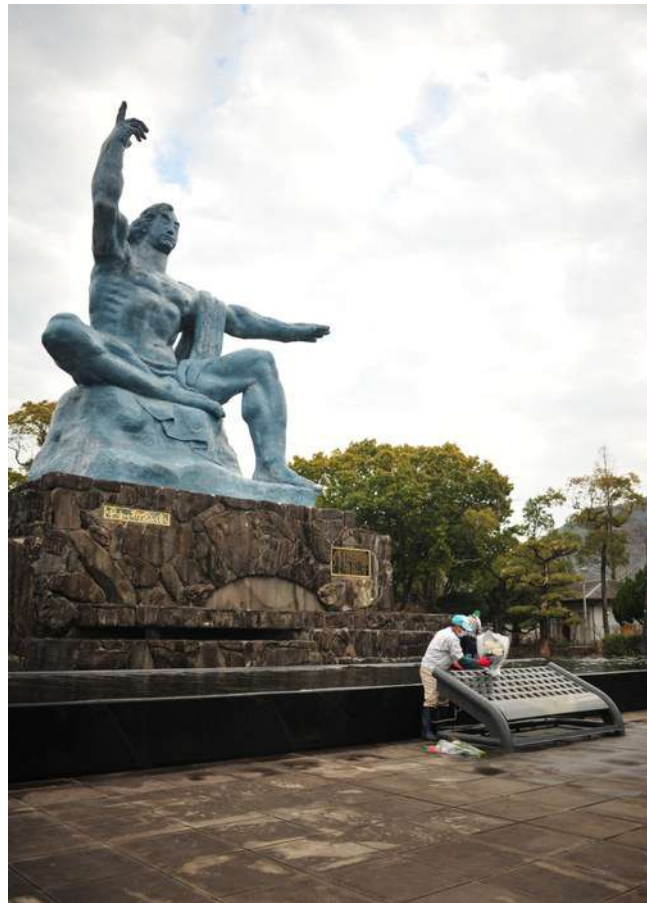




















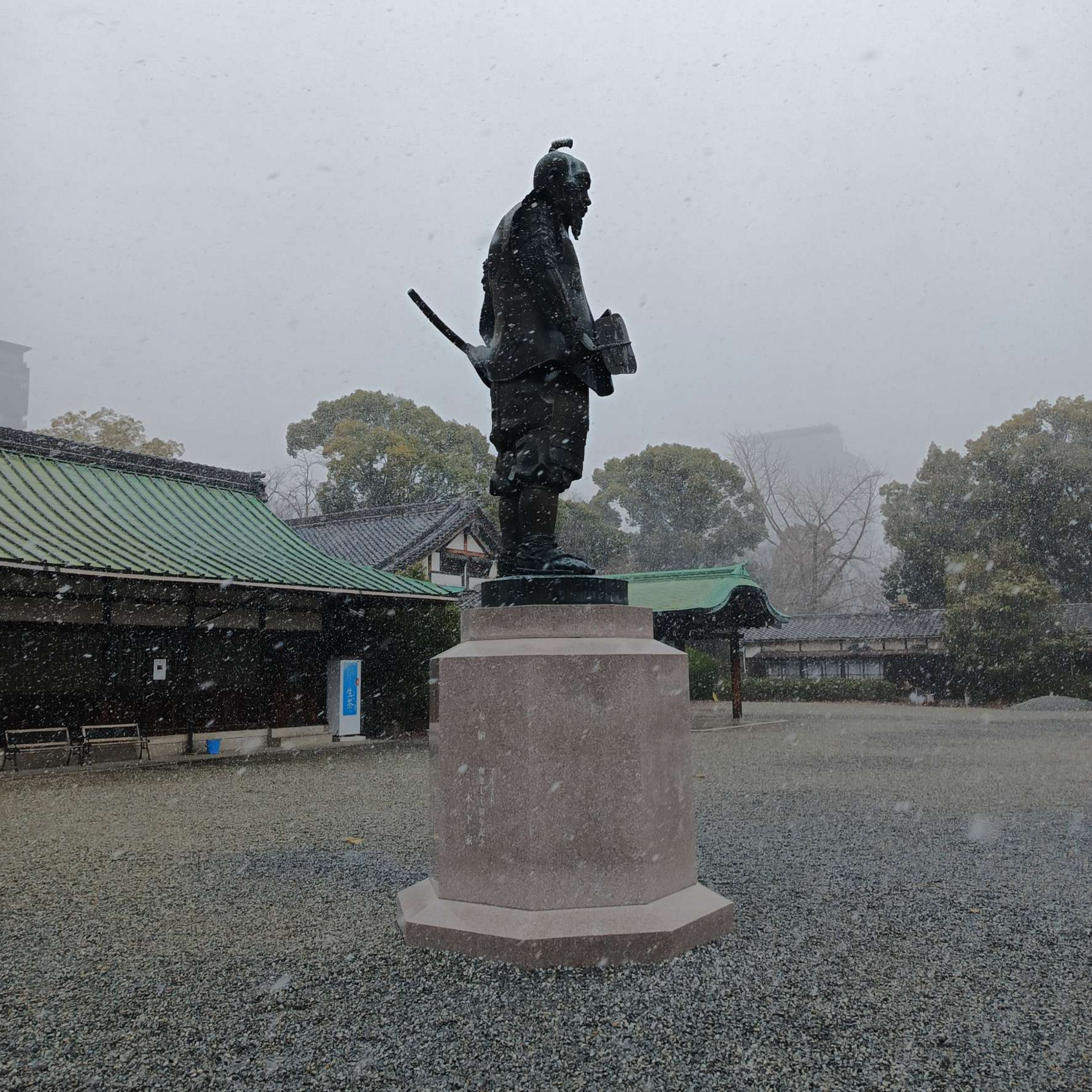












The photographs in this album were taken with a Nikon D700 camera (24–70mm f/2.8 lens) and a TCL 50 NXPAPER 5G mobile phone, in various cities across Japan, from February 6 to 22, 2026.

The occasion for this journey was my participation in the World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (WFTGA) Convention in Fukuoka (February 8–13, 2026).



古はやぶ鐘の
押さ道きぬし
大はけ志す
志賀の皇神

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