**Exploring the Nigo Castle**

On the second day of our trip to Japan, we visited the Nijo Castle (Nijo-jo) in Kyoto. The castle was raised by Ieyasu Tokugawa in 1603. It has been built for 400 years and has not been destroyed yet. We are so excited when we saw the Nijo Castle. It is as large as a palace and surely, it has been preserved very well.

Before we entered the Ninomaru Palace, we had to take off our shoes in order to keep the environment clean and tidy. What’s more, we were not allowed to take any photos while we were visiting so as not to cause any harm to the whole building. Without any doubt, these are the reason why the Nijo Castle can be exhibited to people beautifully.

The Ninomaru Palace is a huge building. It is somehow a really suitable place for playing hide- and- seek. However, we could always hear some cracking sound when people are walking in the building. The sound is produced whenever people’s feet step on the wood used to build the place. It is said that people could know whether there were thieves in their house because of the sound. How amazing it is!

Inside the Ninomaru Palace, we could see the Kurumayose (entrance), Tozamurai (guard house), Shikidai (reception room), Ohiroma (great hall), Sotetsu-no-ma (a room of cycad), Kuro-Shoin (a study room painted with black lacquer), and the Shiro-Shoin (a study made of plain wood). These are all features of the building style of a samurai’s house. We have to admit that everything we saw was dainty and particular. It is indeed the dream house that everyone wants in their lives since the surrounding environment is very comfortable and peaceful.

In the castle , there are several gardens where groves of cherry and Japanese plum trees are planted. After we finished exploring the Ninomaru Palace, we went for a walk in the enchanting big garden in the Nijo Castle. As we walked along the path, we were all attracted by the beautiful scenic view. The view was natural and fine. Every tree was special there. Moreover, we could see a pond with clear water and a waterfall. We could not help but to take as many pictures as we can due to the attractive view.

The Nijo Castle is tremendous. It is so enormous that we did not have enough time to explore every part of it. What a pity! In some ways, it is not like Gu Gong in China. There are not many refined palaces. It is more common for us to find some natural gardens there. Anyway, the Nigo Castle is to be sure that one of the most beautiful places we have seen in the world. It is also very quiet. We fell in love with the place when we first saw it. It is a joy for us to visit the Nijo Castle. We will always remember the pleasing view with the big beautiful blue sky but we really wish that we could stay a little bit longer there.

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