



PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW FAULK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



Far left, a portion of the Kiyomizu Temple complex. Left, Nijo Castle, once the residence of Japan's first shogun, Tokugawa Ieyasu. Below clockwise from left: Kyoto's mayor, Daisaku Kadokawa, at the Miyako Messe convention center; a restaurant at Kyoto's Nishiki market, where the number of foreign tourists irked locals before the pandemic; Hanamikoji Street, in the Gion district; among the thousands of torii gates at Fushimi Inari Shrine; and women in traditional dress outside Kiyomizu Temple.



Some in the city are eager to greet the new tourists.

Fuminari Shinbo is part of a group of retirees who began training before the Tokyo Olympics to give tours in English to visitors coming to Kyoto, devoting hours to memorizing dialogues in English they never had the chance to use.

In late August, about 20 of the volunteers gathered in front of Fushimi Inari, a shrine that has become Kyoto's most popular tourist destination, for a dry run.

Clothed in bright blue bibs with white lettering advertising free help for English-speaking tourists, they introduced the shrine's best-known feature, a corridor of nearly a thousand bright orange gates that have provided a vibrant punch of color to countless vacation photos.

When the tour was over, Mr. Shinbo said he was excited that he would finally be able to put his hard work to good use.

So far, he said, "I've only been able to practice on my grandson."

