

c/o Robert K. Kuwahara
P. O. Box 17830
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

e-mail address:
kuwaharar002@hawaii.rr.com

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



by Walter Osakoda

The West Oahu Y's Men Japan Tour Group of WALTER & DOROTHY OSAKODA, BOB & JEANETTE KUWAHARA, TRUDY & DAN ZUKEMURA AND JEAN MATSUDA AND JANICE SANDUSKY, Jean's classmate from Kauai now living in Oregon, have returned from a wonderful trip which took us from Tokyo, Kamakura, Mt. Fuji, Hakone, Kyoto, Hiroshima

& Osaka. Although I thought we had planned a leisurely tour it turned out to be quit hectic.

In future issues, we hope to have impressions of our trip from other members of our group ... as assignment were handed out! Bob and I are sharing a brief highlight of our most memorable experiences as well as our experience with the Kyoto and Hiroshima Y's Men. One of the reasons for this tour was to visit with our IBC the Hiroshima Y's Men Club.

Everyone that visits Japan talks about visiting the many temples and shrines and having to climb many stairs. I can attest to the truth of this statement but what is not shared is that most of these places are tied into the history of the Edo period of Japan. The narrative by the tour guides brought back memories of historical and samurai dramas I've seen on TV and Movies.

People in the cities either walk, ride the train or subway to get around. A new experience for all of us but once you understand how to buy a ticket from the machines and understand you need to keep the ticket to use at your destination to exit the platform it becomes very efficient. The first few times I tried to, exit I just

pushed the gates to exit while others followed close by the person in front of them to exit before the gate closed on them. We were lucky that the staff did not stop us and scold us for not inserting our ticket to exit.

I enjoyed the Kamakura walking tour because of the beautiful Hase Kennon Temple, not a lot of stairs to climb, and the Great Buddha, again long walk but not high stairs. I also enjoyed the town of Hase which has no tall buildings and the shops give you the feel of an old Japanese small town.

I also really enjoyed our overnight stay at the Hotel Kajika-so onsen, in Odawara. Could have spent a couple of nights here, very relaxing.

The overall best experience for me was the time we spent with fellow Y's Men in Kyoto, Hiroshima and Osaka. We were able to overcome our language challenge, we did not speak Japanese, there were Y's Men who spoke English and we all tried hard to communicate. The best tours were those conducted by the Y's Men because it gave us a chance to get to know each other better. Also these were slower paced or they altered the pace for us.

Miyajima is a must see, the Itsukushima Shrine is different from all of the other temples and shrines we visited. I marvel at the engineering that allows the temple to be surrounded by water at high tide. The O-torii Gate is also a marvel because of the size of the timbers used to construct it.

The castle town of Iwakuni is also a must see with it's Kintai Bridge, seen in many Japanese films and TV shows and the Iwakuni Castle.

The Hiroshima Club also set up a brief luncheon with us and members of the Kure Y's Men club on our way to the Yamato Museum. I wasn't aware that Kure was a shipbuilding town. The did and continue to build the the Japanese War Ships and Commercial Ships.

We had the pleasure of visiting with Osamu Shoji, Windward and Osaka Y's Men Club Member and a frequent visitor to our Regional Convention. He met us along with our Japanese Speaking guide at the train station when we arrived in Osaka. After we checked into our hotel he took us on a brief walking tour to Dotombori, somewhat like Waikiki, and introduced us to "Tako yaki". He also took us to his office and then took us to dinner. He was at our hotel early the next morning to accompany us on our walking tour of Osaka, along with our English speaking tour guide.

It was a great trip but too short for all of the things this part of Japan has to offer.

Maybe we'll go back!

Newsletter of the
West Oahu Y's Men's Club
of Mililani YMCA,
Oahu, Hawaii

President Walter Osakoda
Vice President Jeanette
Nakano-Kuwahara
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Duke Chung, Jr.
Shin Domen
Merle Iwamasa
Dennis Kuwabara
Jean Matsuda
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CALENDAR

November 12 (Monday)
Business Meeting
Mililani YMCA
7 pm

November 24 (Saturday)
Metro District Meeting
followed by
Region's MidYear
Cabinet Meeting

at Ilima Hotel



Group in front of Hiroshima "Dome", Welcome Dinner in Hiroshima and Walter with his followers.

JAPAN 2007

Visiting Japan for the first time for most of us was a very enlightening experience. We noted the organized transportation system, courteous people, and mostly unscarred (or graffiti-less) and clean beauty in its cities and surroundings.

We were also the beneficiaries of several Y's Men activities in Kyoto and Hiroshima, which was also very enlightening.

KYOTO

Kyoto has some 18 clubs (with adjoining Osaka with 10 clubs) and presented a very dedicated group. Our first encounter was a joint (three club) dinner meeting on our arrival in Kyoto. The Kyoto Prince (24 members), Kyoto Global (51 members), and Kyoto Well (16 members) meeting had some EIGHTY members and began with singing of the Y's Men's Song (Once More We Stand) and ended with the singing of the YMCA Song (NOT the one by the Village People).

The dinner and meeting was relative long with a speaker, Ms. Atsuko Arai, a Music Therapist discussing music -- specifically recalling songs from earlier years -- as a therapeutic source. The presentation lasted about an hour, but there was no conversation in the audience ... reflecting the attendees courtesy to the speaker.

Most Kyoto Y's men appear younger (as compared to the membership demographics at our regional convention), and dressed in their business suits.

Many were able to speak some English in communicating (as none of our group spoke any Japanese) and made us feel welcome.

Our second encounter with the Y's Men in Kyoto was a farewell dinner coordinated by SAM FUJIWARA of the Osaka Centennial Club. The dinner was part of SAM's one day tour of Kyoto for us (as we visited Kyoto Tower, Kodai Yuzen-en .. Yuzen Dyeing House ... and the Toei Movie Land ... where we had glimpses of the samurai movie making town.) The dinner was the final part of the day's tour. Our tour drivers were SAM FUJIWARA, KOSEI WATANABE, and SHINJIRO MORI (the latter two of the Kyoto Prince club), all three were at our last Hawaiian Region Convention. At the dinner we were joined by DR. TAKAYUKI NAKAMURA, CHIHARU & TETSURO SAKAMOTO of the Osaka Centennial, KEISUKE ITOH, JUNKO (Mrs. Kosei) WATANABE, SETSUKO (Mrs. Shinjiro) MORI, HIROSHI (Kyoto Prince president) & YOSHIKO NISHIMURA, HIROSHI (Kyoto Prince vice president) & MRS. OKANISHI.

The group sang the Y's Men's Song, and then individuals began to present their musical

talents ... and expected the Hawaii group to contribute ... which was a mistake!

HIROSHIMA

Our third encounter with Y's Men was in Hiroshima ... with our brother club, the Hiroshima Y's Men's Club. From our initial steps off the Shinkansen, we were greeted and treated royally (not sure how we can match this effort when they come in two years ... you reading this DUKE! and LINDA!)

After checking in at the Century 21 Hotel, we walked to the Hiroshima YMCA (about 20 minutes away) for a tour of their facilities, had Hiroshima's specialty ... OKONOMI YAKI ... for lunch, and met with Hiroshima's General Secretary (like CEO & President for YMCA of Honolulu) KAZUYUKI SHIMOBO, a member of the Hiroshima club. We continued to the PEACE MEMORIAL and PARK and spent the afternoon there.

That night we were taken to their Welcome Reception at a restaurant and greeted by some 20 Y's Men and spouses.

Hiroshima's coordinator for our stay in Hiroshima, ETUSHI WATANABE, had at least eight "chaperones" to accompany us on tours and always tried to give us what he thought we wanted to do.

Being on a "special" tour ... they varied their schedule to our pace ... and in our tour, we had this group of shoppers that wanted to ... shop! So, wherever there was a shop ... it was a little slow going. Not to mention the amount of walking that required us more time to get there!

Some observations ...

- 1) It appears that most of the Hiroshima members have not been to Hawaii ...
- 2) Hiroshima Y is larger ... much larger ... than the YMCA of Honolulu
- 3) The Top Y Staff are dedicated Y's men

Added notes ...

Mr. MAMORU YAMANO, who was the president of the Hiroshima Y's Men at the time of and participated in the ceremonial signing of our IBC pact, has passed away. However, his son, SUSUMU, and granddaughter, MIDORI, are members of the club. His wife, Mrs. TAMIKO YAMANO continues to be part of the Y's Men family and is a Japanese classical dance instructor.

Mr. KOTARO MASAKUNI, who attended the signing of our IBC pact, continues to be an active member.

A GREAT TRIP!



DUKE CHUNG RECOVERING FROM NERVE DISORDER

DUKE CHUNG's plans to travel to Japan was quickly ended in August when he was stricken with a case of Guillain-Barre Syndrome. DUKE was taken to Pali Momi Hospital where, after several tests, was diagnosed and treatment was given. Later, he had a recovery period at ReHab Hospital, and is currently recuperating at home under the watchful help of nurse LINDA.

What is Guillain-Barre Syndrome?

Guillain-Barré (ghee-yan bah-ray) syndrome is a disorder in which the body's immune system attacks part of the peripheral nervous system. The first symptoms of this disorder include varying degrees of weakness or tingling sensations in the legs. In many instances, the weakness and abnormal sensations spread to the arms and upper body. These symptoms can increase in intensity until the muscles cannot be used at all and the patient is almost totally paralyzed. In these cases, the disorder is life-threatening and is considered a medical emergency. The patient is often put on a respirator to assist with breathing. Most patients, however, recover from even the most severe cases of Guillain-Barré syndrome, although some continue to have some degree of weakness. Guillain-Barré syndrome is rare. Usually Guillain-Barré occurs a few days or weeks after the patient has had symptoms of a respiratory or gastrointestinal viral infection. Occasionally, surgery or vaccinations will trigger the syndrome. The disorder can develop over the course of hours or days, or it may take up to 3 to 4 weeks. No one yet knows why Guillain-Barré strikes some people and not others or what sets the disease in motion. What scientists do know is that the body's immune system begins to attack the body itself, causing what is known as an autoimmune disease. Guillain-Barré is called a syndrome rather than a disease because it is not clear that a specific disease-causing agent is involved. Reflexes such as knee jerks are usually lost. Because the signals traveling along the nerve are slower, a nerve conduction velocity (NCV) test can give a doctor clues to aid the diagnosis. The cerebrospinal fluid that bathes the spinal cord and brain contains more protein than usual, so a physician may decide to perform a spinal tap.

What is the prognosis?

Guillain-Barré syndrome can be a devastating disorder because of its sudden and unexpected onset. Most people reach the stage of greatest weakness within the first 2 weeks after symptoms appear, and by the third week of the illness 90 percent of all patients are at their weakest. The recovery period may be as little as a few weeks or as long as a few years. About 30 percent of those with Guillain-Barré still have a residual weakness after 3 years. About 3 percent may suffer a relapse of muscle weakness and tingling sensations many years after the initial attack.