Our Visit in Japan, the Philippines and Hong Kong

by

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Ever since one of us (GCP) visited Japan in 1951 with the American Dental Association mission our friends on the faculty of the Dental School at Nihon University have urged me to return as a visiting professor in its Graduate School. Dr. Kazuo Sato, the founder of the school and now its counsellor, was the prime mover in this invitation. So it was with a sense of pleasure that final arrangements were made for April and May of this year. They were most generous in including the two of us as lecturers. One of us (GCP) lectured on various phases of dental materials and the other (RAP) gave four lectures to the women dental hygiene students on various phases of American lives, especially women’s lives in America.

All of the technical details were taken care of by the Dean, Dr. Masaru Suzuki, and the Vice-Dean, Dr. Kazuo Nagai. Tickets for the flight were presented to us in beautiful brocade covered folders. We left Friendship Airport by jet at noon on March 30 for Chicago and Seattle. The next morning our flight continued to Anchorage, Alaska, where, after an hour’s browsing in the gift shop, we again boarded the beautiful jet plane of the Japan Airlines to fly seven thousand miles above the ocean until we were set down at Haneda Airport in Tokyo in the evening. The luxury of the Japan Airlines first class service was something to always be remembered—delicious food and drinks served with leisurely good taste and beauty by charming Japanese stewardesses and stewards who seemed aware of one’s needs and desires almost before we were ourselves. At 3:00 p.m. we were asked to set our watches ahead to 10:00 a.m. the next morning and the flight carried on in continuous bright sunshine.

Upon arrival we were greeted by the Dental faculty—Drs. Sato, Suzuki and Suzuki—students, and other friends, who presented bouquets, waved, smiled and welcomed us warmly. We were taken to a small residential hotel in a quiet part of town where a very pleasant room was reserved for us. Here, in the lobby of this western-style hotel, they held a short welcoming reception, serving beer and crackers and cheese. We were to become very familiar with welcoming parties, with the delicious Japanese beer and enjoyed them all thoroughly, for the friendliness and cordiality of these people were sincere and heart-warming, and were easily reciprocated.

We were given the next day to rest and sleep, which we did with grateful hearts. Then a full itinerary was presented to us. First there was a welcoming party given in our honor by Dr. Sato at a famous old Geisha house on the Sumida River in Tokyo.

Dr. George C. Paffenbarger, Senior Research Associate, National Bureau of Standards, Washington, U.S.A., was at Nihon University School of Dentistry as a Visiting Professor from April to May 1961, accompanied by his wife. Upon their return to the States, Dr. and Mrs. Paffenbarger sent the Editor impressions of their stay here so that these impressions might be shared by our readers. Editor is happy to insert it in the present Issue with full belief that it will provide an interesting reading matter.
Here the Geisha girls entertained the guests with music and dancing.

There were trips to the Hakone National Park, where we stayed at a very modern hotel and ate Japanese style, were driven by car to a restored feudal castle, took a boat ride back to Tokyo past rice fields and tiny vegetable gardens in neat plots around the picturesque, thatch-roofed farmers’ cottages; back to the noisy, busy, traffic congested streets of the largest city in the world. After being shown the fine modern building of the Graduate School of Dentistry at Nihon University and presented with an office and its key for our use while there, we were taken on another sightseeing trip, this time at the invitation of Mr. Shofu of the Shofu Dental Manufacturing Company in Kyoto.

Kyoto is the art and cultural center of Japan and is a city of a million or so. It was not bombed during the war so its more than 300 temples and shrines, its old Gion section along the canal where Geisha girls live and are trained, remain picturesque and intact. The city is one of old brown wooden houses with blue-black tiled roofs, fanciful gates to wall-surrounded temples and shrines and modern steel and glass hotels and public buildings. Cherry trees were in full bloom everywhere and streets and street lights decorated with artificial cherry blossoms added to the festive atmosphere. The lavish musical show, The Miyako Odori—Cherry Blossom Festival—was being presented nightly and our host provided us with an interpreter and programs with some English scripts. We were guests at dinner at a very old Geisha house where the Geisha girls served us at the usual low tables, around which we sat no cushions on the floor. Here they sang or danced for our entertainment between courses, or presented complicated slight-of-hand tricks. The dinner consisted of many courses, artistically arranged on
small dishes. First was served cooked fish followed by slivers of fresh raw fish, tiny bowls of clear broth, covered lacquer bowls of hot steamed rice accompanied by two or three small slices of pickles, and a handleless cup of tea followed by a slice of melon or four beautiful strawberries. A steaming terrycloth wash cloth wrung out of very hot scented water was presented to each guest when he was first seated. It was truly refreshing to sponge hands and face before a cup of aromatic tea was brought and the meal began.

Trips made to the beautiful gardens, the Buddhist and Shinto Temples and Shrines and the cherry blossom viewing party in the garden of the Shofu home with the daughter-in-law conducting the age-old tea ceremony for our benefit added to the enjoyment of this delightful week in Kyoto. We were taken by auto to nearby Nara to see the huge wooden temple, the largest and oldest wooden structure in the world, housing a great bronze statue of Buddha. In the grounds small tame deer ate crackers from our hands and nuzzled our pockets for more. Wonderful, new broad highways took us up the mountainside and down, with the finest in hotel accommodations and perfectly beautiful scenery. April and May are perfect months to visit Japan, as our hosts were well aware.

After our return to Tokyo and to the same San Bancho Hotel, lectures began in earnest. Mornings were given to students and afternoon and evenings to faculty seminars, research group meetings and discussions. Meanwhile one of us (RAP) had been most kindly invited to take a series of flower-arranging lessons at the well-known Sogetsu School of Ikebana (Flower Arrangement). So the days went by, more quickly than we were aware. Our next trip was to Korea for three days to lecture before the 38th Parallel Dental Society (GCP), and then for a week to Manila and Baguio City up in the mountains, for the Philippine Dental Association Meeting. Here one of us (GCP) represented the American Dental Association and presented a lecture, and was asked to install their new officers.

The wood carvings of the Igorots here were completely irresistible, so shopping and sight-seeing went along together. Drs. Erana (father and son), who are the souls of the true professional spirit in Philippine Dentistry, were our most gracious and generous hosts during this visit. We remember them and those days with the greatest happiness.

We flew to Hong Kong for two days on our own, there took a night tour including a trip to the village of fisher folk at Aberdeen across the island and were ferried out on a Sampan to the floating restaurant for a sea food dinner. Speaking of shopping, Hong Kong was just a mass of shops and shops and streets crowded with shoppers. A beautiful flight took us back to Tokyo where our friends were again awaiting us at the airport to drive us back to our most familiar hotel.

There were only two weeks left of our two-months stay and Dr. Nagai was kept busy arranging lectures, discussions and farewell parties. He and Dean Suzuki and our beloved old friend and counselor for the Dental School, Dr. Sato, took us into their homes for dinner parties and visits. Showing us the graciousness and beauty of Japanese culture was one of their greatest desires and we appreciated and enjoyed it all thoroughly.

Yet another trip was made to the famous shrine at Nikko, then a fascinating drive up steep mountainsides where the road made 32 sharp hairpin turns climbing above Nikko. High in the mountains we were served fresh brook trout at a most delightful little Japanese hotel before taking the fabulous drive back down the mountains.
and the four-hour train trip to Tokyo. Mr. and Mrs. Nakao, our hosts, took us to their beautiful home to stay over night before more lectures began the next day.

A most unexpected honor was given one of us (GCP) this last week. The President of Nihon University conferred a Doctor of Science degree with the presentation of a scroll and cap and gown. This honor was a recognition of the cooperative research between the American Dental Association and the Federal Government conducted at the Dental Research Section of the National Bureau of Standards. We are humbly grateful for such a sign of their approval. Fortunately, Prof. Ralph S. Paffenbarger, of Ohio State University, a brother of the recipient, and his wife were attending the meeting of International Rotary in Tokyo and could attend the ceremonies.

And so the time came for us to leave. Faculty members and students came to the airport to wish us God speed. The glee clubs sang the school song, "God Be with You 'Till We Meet Again", the anthems of both countries, and we left with tears in all eyes, for our feeling of friendship was mutual and sincere.

Dr. and Mrs. Paffenbarger with the members of Faculty, Nihon University School of Dentistry

A scene from one of Dr. Paffenbarger's lectures before the graduate students

The conferring ceremony of the honorary Doctor of Dental Surgery upon Dr. Paffenbarger.

Editor, left, serves as translator