

The Philosophical Research Society, Inc.

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CONTRIBUTORS' BULLETIN - FEBRUARY 1968

Dear Friend:

We feel that you may want to hear a brief account of my last trip to Japan in the summer of 1967. There have been so many other items to mention in past issues of the Bulletin which we felt deserved priority that only now we seem to have found an appropriate time to tell of our personal adventures.



Having prepared a special list of objectives for the 1967 trip, I was able to accomplish more than on previous occasions. Soon after arriving in Tokyo, I made a special pilgrimage to the great image of Kannon, which stands on a promontory overlooking Tokyo Bay. In my recent book I had to use a press photograph, but now I have several excellent pictures of the great statue. One is quite dramatic, for it shows only the lower part of the image, with several visitors walking about on the platform. It is one of my best photographs, so it

is being reproduced here. Later it was possible to visit the Takasaki Kannon, also a colossal figure. This provided several good photographs, which will be used in later publications.

While in Kyoto, we were most fortunate in receiving extraordinary cooperation from a distinguished Japanese friend. He placed his cars at our disposal, provided English-speaking drivers, and accompanied us on many unusual trips. Through his kindness we were able to visit two fine Shinto shrines. At one of these, generally referred to as the Izumo Shrine, there is a corridor extending up the side of a mountain, composed of ten thousand Torii gates. At the end of this journey, there is a fascinating sanctuary and a huge rack covered with Ema pictures - small votive paintings, mostly of birds and animals. We had tea with the high priest of the Yasaka Shrine in Kyoto, and got several interesting pictures of the Shinto ritual dances.

The journey to the Enryakuji Temple on Mt. Hiei was most interesting. The heavily forested range of hills to the north of Kyoto is inhabited by a number of curious and adventurous monkeys. Along the toll road which leads to the summit, there are many quaint signs warning drivers to be careful of the Simian population. Each sign is illustrated with a mother monkey in human clothing, leading her little boy - who is also festively attired - across the highway.

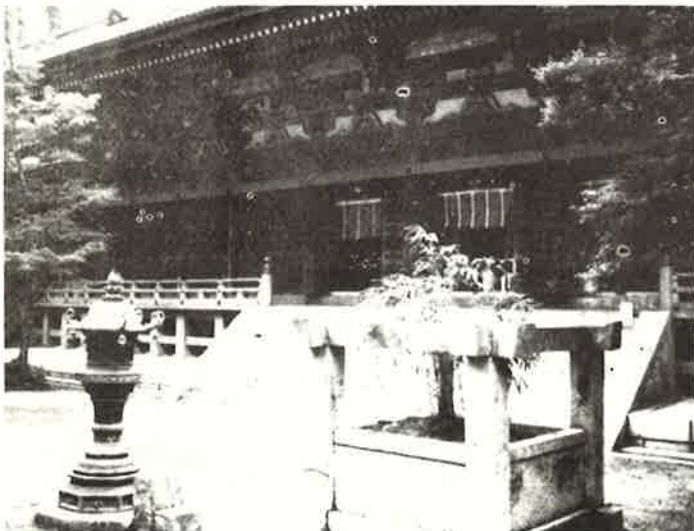
The great monastery which crowns the mountain is one of the most historical and impressive in Japan. Through our friend we were able to drive deep into the monastery compound, which saved much walking. The most impressive buildings are in a shallow

ravine below the summit of the mountain, and are surrounded with slender, graceful cypress trees. This is truly an area to delight the heart of the photographer, and an exhibit of enlarged photographs which I took will be shown in the library in April.

The most impressive building of the Mt. Hiei group has an enclosed forecourt. This leads to an entrance at one end of the principal temple. The interior is entirely dark, except for three dim lanterns that seem to be suspended in space. Entering the building, you find yourself on a kind of viewer's gallery, and part of the sanctuary is below you, to be sensed rather than seen in the gloom. A number of candles are burning on an elaborate candelabrum near the principal door. In the accompanying photograph of the main facade of the temple, and through the doorway of the temple, the burning candles are clearly visible.

On the side of Mt. Hiei, which faces away from Kyoto, is the beautiful and placid Lake Biwa, so named because it resembles in shape an Oriental musical instrument similar to our mandolin. There is a legend that when volcanic action raised Mt. Fuji the land at the foot of Mt. Hiei sank, resulting in Lake Biwa. There is a pleasant boat trip down the lake to an island near the far end. This island is precipitous, a rocky mass, and is crowned by a combined Shinto and Buddhist sanctuary. The Shinto shrine is sacred to the goddess, Benten, a deity of good fortune, art, beauty and music. She is often represented as playing on a biwa. The Buddhist chapel commemorates Kannon, and a pilgrimage to these places is believed to confer special merit. On the way back, the boat stopped for a few minutes at a point of completely secular interest. The Japanese have built, on the shore of their lake, a miniature Hawaiian village, with palm trees, grass shacks, Polonesian restaurant, and several souvenir stores. Hawaiian music can be heard playing softly as the boat docks and departs. This resort is very popular during the hot summer days, and offers boating and swimming, among other attractions. Dimly across the lake can be seen the pointed spire of the Miidera Temple, one of the great strongholds of the Tendai sect of Buddhism, which, incidentally, has its headquarters at Enryakuji. It is here that the great American orientalist, Fenollosa, studied Tendai Buddhism, and when he died a Japanese battleship brought his remains back to Miidera, where he is interred.

At Nara we also had a bit of important news. The beautiful deer in the park there are becoming quite sophisticated. A number of local people make a living preparing little cakes to feed the deer. The moment the animals know you have such nutritious cookies, they use various manners to stimulate your generosity. They appear to be truly Japanese when, after receiving a cake, they step back, advance one foot, and bow! This is nearly always good for further cookies.



Sanctuary at Enryakuji

There is a wonderful old hotel at Nara, almost beside the Sarusawa Pond. It is said that this structure is in the Tempyo style, in that it is a combination of 16th Century Japanese, 19th Century German, and early 20th Century American. It is most unlikely that this hostelry will ever be demolished, and should it outlive its usefulness, it will probably be designated a national treasure.

The shops of Nara invited some thoughtful consideration. This quaint old city, the first permanent capitol of Japan, is now generally visited by a special one-day tour, conducted by the Japanese travel

bureau. Visitors arrive in mid-morning and depart in mid-afternoon. To break this pattern, we settled down in the Nara Hotel for a few days, and were thus able to visit places which can only be found by some diligent searching. The shops of Nara are much less sophisticated than those in Kyoto or Tokyo. You are sure of a cup of tea, hot or cold, some interesting cookies, and a great deal of cooperation in sign language. When they find out what you want, the dealers are sure to be obliging.

In the Japanese equivalent to the Chamber of Commerce, we found a wonderful poster honoring the ancient city. Through the hotel I secured a copy of this poster, which will also be exhibited in April. It is a beautiful composition, featuring the slender wrists and hands of the celebrated Kannon at Yakashiji.

We stopped for a few days in the industrial city of Nagoya, which, as you may remember, is the Japanese sister city of Los Angeles. Nagoya is a thriving, modern community, with many fine buildings and a gracious, hospitable atmosphere. I presented a letter to the Mayor of Nagoya from the Mayor of Los Angeles, and we had a pleasant visit at the city hall. Later I made arrangements to visit the great ceramic center of Seto, outside of Nagoya. Here we saw the ancient kilns fired with wood, used long ago by the folk artisans of the region. We met a modern ceramicist, whose pottery is receiving wide approval. He took us through his own kiln, and showed us a number of samples of his work. He has a beautiful little home in the midst of a flowering garden, and he and his wife are most hospitable. Fortunately, he spoke English, and was able to explain the procedures used to make the pottery of the clay taken from the nearby hills.

There are many other things we could talk about, but perhaps that is enough for now, so we will proceed to other considerations.



Work on the new building project began according to schedule on Nov. 6, 1967, with the moon increasing in light. Excavation for foundations started immediately in the three designated areas. We are told that the construction work of our "Space Program" will require approximately $4\frac{1}{2}$ months, allowing for winter inclemency. If things work out near to schedule, perhaps we can have an appropriate housewarming on my birthday.



We hope that at this time many new friends of the Society will want to join those loyal friends of long-standing who have encouraged us in our latest, and probably our final, building project, by their solid support in terms of pledges and spontaneous contributions from their hearts. It is my belief that the growth of an institution like our own is most real and enduring if we all have an active part in the fulfillment of a dedicated purpose.

Always most sincerely,

Manly P. Hall

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