

LEADER'S REPORT ON A VISIT TO JAPAN BY AN AUSTRALIAN OVERSEAS STUDENT TRAVEL SCHEME (AOSTS) DELEGATION OF UNIVERSITY GRADUATE STUDENTS, 1965-66

Total Number of Participants: Male 27, Female 14 = 41

Leader: Nicholas Blain, B.Ec (Hons)

Deputy Leader: Peter Jeppeson

Selection of Leader

On 2nd December 1965, I was selected as the Leader of the Australian Universities Graduate Student Delegation to Japan. I then flew to Melbourne to prepare for the trip. The date of selection was very late and there was not sufficient time to communicate with participants over such matters as preparation for seminars, bringing books for the library, and general advice for the trip. Some participants received my letter of introduction only one day before departure to Brisbane.

I would recommend, therefore, that in future years the Leader should be appointed no later than 30th September.

Preliminary Orientation

Orientation before the ship departed varied considerably between States and individuals. To a large degree, this was inevitable. However, some participants informed me they had not received a copy of the "Japan Handbook" until one or two days prior to disembarkation. This publication is extremely useful for preliminary orientation.

I would recommend that the "Japan Handbook" be posted to all members no later than 30th September, so as to allow sufficient lead time for participants to prepare.

Shipboard Orientation

The main orientation for Japan was carried out on the ship in the form of Seminars, Language Tutorials and general reading. One of my first actions, after the ship sailed from Brisbane on December 21st, was to appoint the following persons to assist in the organisation of the shipboard Orientation Programme: -

Seminar Director – Roger Brown;
Librarian – Helmut Aimann; and
Assistant Librarian – Roger Moore.

Unfortunately, the shipboard library from the 1964-65 trip was not available. However, a working library was compiled from stocks of booklets and pamphlets supplied by the NUAUS Travel Officer and books loaned by individual participants.

I would suggest that, in future years, the NUAUS Travel Officer should ask a specific participant from Melbourne to take responsibility for the safe return of the library to the NUAUS Office.

The Seminar Programme proved to be very successful, its chief merit being that it stimulated participants' interest in Japan. In my judgement, this form of orientation is essential for effective preparation for an AOSTS trip. In addition, many participants welcomed the very informal Seminar Programme as a break in the sometimes monotonous routine of ship life.

The Language Tutorials, at which each of our fellow student Japanese "linguists" would instruct a "tutorial-sized" group in pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary, also proved to be very useful.

There was some criticism by a few participants that the Delegation as a whole did not take the business of shipboard orientation seriously enough. While their criticism may have been valid for a few participants, I do not believe that it applies to the group as a whole. However, it would be useful for the importance of

shipboard orientation to be emphasised more strongly to prospective participants at the early stages of selection procedure. Also, the quality of the shipboard Seminar Programme would no doubt be improved if the Leader could ask individual participants to prepare Seminars before leaving Australia.

I suggest participants should be approached no later than December 1st so as to give them sufficient time for adequate preparation.

Shipboard Life

Shipboard life, in general, was much better than most of us had anticipated. The living area consisted of bunks partitioned off by light metal walls into three dormitories, one for female participants, and two for males. As in the previous year, a swimming pool was erected on the forward deck and, again, the meals and service from the crew proved to be of the highest standard.

On the second day aboard, the Captain invited me to his cabin to discuss any problems and, as a result of this and other meetings, I obtained for the group various additional facilities e.g. blackboards, typing facilities and the loan of a gramophone. On the second night on the ship, we held a dance on the Third Class deck to which we invited the Captain, Officers and other passengers. It proved to be a roaring success. Apart from dancing, our shipboard entertainment programme included film and card evenings.

Unlike the 1964-65 Delegation, we did not receive complaints from other passengers on the ship. In fact, Tourist Class passengers often invited students into the Tourist Class and, even when participants visited the Tourist Class without an invitation, they usually "played ball". I discussed the whole question of our "rights" on the ship with the Captain who informed me that he did not object to students visiting other Classes in twos or threes, provided they were well behaved. The problem was that both Tourist and First Class were completely booked out and there was comparatively little space available in these areas.

Again, unlike the experience of the 1964-65 Delegation, we had no problem with the Chinese crew, except for one or two difficulties with the Tourist Class Purser. In general, the conditions were very good for the money paid. The Captain was pleased to have us on board and informed me that he would recommend to the RIL Shipping Line that additional improvements be made to the Third Class so as to make the accommodation of a higher standard for the same fare.

Arrival and Tokyo Orientation

The ship arrived at Harumi Wharf on January 1st, the time of the Japanese New Year. For the first four days, the Delegation was booked into a Ryokan (Japanese-style Inn) where participants learned new skills, such as how to take a Japanese bath, how to sleep on tatami matting, how to eat raw fish and how to drink Japanese sake.

During this period of orientation, the Committee of Japan Australia Student Exchange Federation (JASEF) maintained an around-the-clock "service" for the Delegation at a special meeting-room in the Ryokan and, each day, Japanese students acted as guides for participants for sight-seeing tours in Tokyo.

At the Ryokan, the Japanese students divided the Delegation into two groups: The Tokyo Group (27) and the Kansai Group (14). The Tokyo group was further sub-divided into five sub-groups, each sub-group to become the responsibility of one of the member Universities of JASEF – Sophia, Waseda, Hitotsubashi, Keio and Aoyama Gakuin.

On January 5th, the Delegation left the Ryokan – the Kansai group departed for Osaka (300 miles west of Tokyo) and the members of the Tokyo group went to their host families. This was the first year that a section of the Delegation had homestays in the Kansai District (Osaka, Kyoto area). The stay in the Ryokan was very valuable as it enabled students to adjust to Japan and, in particular, to many customs of living and eating. By Japanese standards, the cost was not cheap for the value received – a total of Y6000 (\$15), including two meals a day.

Homestays

Unfortunately, there has been very little opportunity for me to communicate with students who went to Osaka but, from the limited contact possible, I understand that most of them had very satisfactory homestays.

Homestays in Tokyo were extremely good. The length of the homestays was fourteen days but many participants had two homestays, of one week each. This had the advantage of giving the participant a broader understanding of the way of life of Japanese people. Some of our Tokyo people were a long way out from the centre of Tokyo but, in the city with the largest population in the world, it is to be expected that a substantial amount of travel may often be unavoidable.

Programme in Tokyo

A very comprehensive programme was organised by JASEF, some of the highlights of which were to visit a Tea Ceremony, a Welcome Party at Akasaka Prince Hotel, visits to NHK (Japanese Broadcasting Corporation), Nissan Automobile Co. Ltd., Sony Co. Ltd., a skating and sightseeing tour around Mount Fuji and a Farewell Party sponsored by Fujita Travel Service at the beautiful Chinese Restaurant – Garden in Tokyo. There were several other parties arranged.

The whole programme retained sufficient flexibility as participants were permitted to choose activities on the programme according to their specialised interests. In general, the functions arranged for the Delegation were well attended.

Work Camp

A work camp was held at Ninoshima Island in late January 1965. The work camp could be described as a "staggered" work camp and the whole scheme was in the nature of an experiment. The procedure followed was for the participants to come to Ninoshima for a period of three or four days at various time intervals between the 20th January and 10th February. The short length of the stays of the participants at the work camp was inevitable, owing to the shortage of time available for the free travel in Japan.

The basis of the operation of the work camp was decided upon in Tokyo at a meeting of the "volunteers" and Don Calman. There were some complaints early on in the trip concerning the method of selection of participants who were to attend the work camp.

I strongly recommend that, in future years, all prospective AOSTS members should be fully informed of the purpose and operation of a work camp before being expected to commit themselves to attending.

As background, I propose to describe briefly the nature of the work camp at Ninoshima Island. Firstly, the Island is extremely small and isolated. It is not known even by many Japanese in Tokyo. During the War, it was used as a hospital camp for A-bomb victims, who were ferried across from Hiroshima. The Island is very beautiful and is a place where very few foreigners visit. The main industry of the Island is fishing and there is also some simple agriculture.

On the island, there are two settlements – Ninoshima Village and Ninoshima Gakuen. The Gakuen is the equivalent of a Government-run home for orphans and under-privileged children and it is a completely self-contained institution.

A total of approximately 200 children attend the Gakuen and, generally speaking, they have a low IQ, although a few brighter ones have passed through the school.

English is taught in the Gakuen by three Japanese teachers and Don Calman. Altogether there are four English classes. I have been led to understand that some Japanese teachers resent Don Calman teaching in the Gakuen because of his influence over the children and his superior abilities as an English teacher. Don also teaches English to children in the morning, before formal classes, and in the evenings, after the children's studies are over.

The students participating in the work camp at Ninoshima Gakuen taught English to small groups of children, played with them after school hours, and organised constructive activities in which they could take part. The project has great value for the children and does much to give them self- confidence and self-respect.

Participants in the work camp must be careful to create and maintain good relationships with the authorities at the Gakuen and this requires considerable tactfulness in dealing with the children.

Prospective participants must be prepared to board at the Gakuen where food and accommodation are not good. The cost is approximately \$1.20 per day.

All things taken into consideration, this year's work camp was a success, and participants found the experience a rewarding one. *It would be desirable, however, for all participants to attend the work camp together as a group. I would recommend that the dates be finalised before the Delegation leaves Australia. I think 10 students is a good number, but this is only a rough guide. The ideal length for a work camp is difficult to decide and it largely depends on the programme as a whole. To be realistic, participants usually have a very tight schedule and are reluctant to commit themselves for more than a few days.*

Recommendations:

In addition to those already put forward, I have several recommendations to make:

1. The official length of the homestays should be shortened so as to give a more balanced perspective to the overall programme in Japan. The following table gives the actual and optimal time periods allocated for the different activities:

ACTUAL AND OPTIMAL TIME-PERIODS FOR ACTIVITIES IN JAPAN

| | Ryokan | Home Stay | Work Camp | Free Travel |
|---------------------|--------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Actual Time Period | 5 | 14 | 3 | 25 |
| Optimal Time Period | 4 | 10 | 5-7 | 21-23 |

(Note: Total time in Japan 1965-66, 47 days).

This recommendation does not mean that individual participants should not extend their homestays or continue on at the work camp but, for the group as a whole, I believe this recommended time allocation is the most generally acceptable arrangement. Members of JASEF supported this viewpoint.

2. In future years, it would be desirable, if possible, for all Australian students to have homestays in Tokyo itself. I discussed this question with JASEF officials who agreed with the proposition and suggested that it might be possible to arrange homestays in the Kansai Districts for any participants who desired a second homestay after the homestay in Tokyo.

3. The third recommendation is that the NUAUS Travel Officer should send the application forms of potential participants to JASEF at the very latest by October 31st each year. The Japanese students emphasised that it is essential for them, in planning our visit, to have the information provided on the application forms as soon as it is available, to enable them to approach business firms or other organisations and make specific arrangements well in advance. Japanese people, to their credit, are extremely fond of planning and I feel we should co-operate with them in this regard. We should also attempt to meet their request that photographs of participants should be sent together with the application cards.

4. Selection procedures should be changed so as to exclude the following categories of persons from eligibility for selection for a trip to Japan:

- a. Overseas students studying in Australia – JASEF is an acronym for Japan Australia Student Exchange Federation, and members of JASEF wish to entertain Australian students.
- b. Students over 30 years of age. This is because members of JASEF are themselves, in general, no older than 25.
- c. A married student who intends to travel to Japan with a husband or wife who is not a participant of the AOSTS scheme. This is because situations may arise which could be embarrassing to Japanese hosts.

This recommendation is made as the result of discussion with JASEF Committee members.

5. The final recommendation is that the value of learning even a very simple Japanese vocabulary should be strongly impressed upon potential participants. Japan, unlike other Asian countries (e.g. India or Malaya) is a country where a knowledge of the native language may, at times, be essential.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the 1965-66 trip was very satisfactory from almost every point of view. I have appreciated and enjoyed the privilege of being Leader of this AOSTS Delegation to Japan.

Nicholas Blain, B.Ec (Hons)

**BRIEF NOTES ON MY ITINERARY IN JAPAN AS LEADER OF AN
AUSTRALIAN OVERSEAS STUDENT TRAVEL SCHEME (AOSTS)
DELEGATION OF GRADUATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS
1 JANUARY 1966 – MID-FEBRUARY 1966**

(i) HONSHU ISLAND

Tokyo - Some highlights were:

1 January 1966 - Arrive Tokyo (Many shops closed until January 5th - or those open were expensive).

8 January 1966 - Tea Ceremony – Welcome party, dance and talk.

9 January 1966 - International 3F (Friendship, Freedom, Forward Action) Club Party, hosted by:

- Jun-ichi Tamura - President, International 3F Club
- Norman Bartlett - Counsellor (Information), Australia Embassy Tokyo
- Katsuhisa Inagaki - Chairman, Japan Australia Student Exchange Federation
- Alexander Bruce - Australian Myer Foundation Fellow
- Yoichi Inouye - Managing Director, Japan-Australia Society
- D.A. Calman - President, Japan Australia Youth Fellowship Association (JAYFA).

10 January 1966 – Visit to Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK) Japan Broadcasting Company.

11 January 1966 - Party at Sophia University, debate, club activity.

12 January 1966 - Nissan automobile visit.

14 January 1966 - Sony automobile visit.

15 January 1966 - Sword Dancing exhibition.

17 January 1966 - Farewell Party.

The itinerary above excludes my homestays with two Japanese families in Tokyo.

Nikko – Visiting shrines, gardens.

Niigata – Homestay, 3 nights.

Yokohama – Sankei-en Garden, Chinatown visits.

Kamakura - Kotoku-in Temple, saw Great Buddha.

Mount Fuji – Mountain climb, spectacular view of peak.

Nagoya – Nagoya Castle, shrine visits.

Nara - 1 day. Oldest capital in Japan. Temples - Tōdaiji (biggest image of Buddha in Japan), Kasuga Grand Shrine, Yakushi-ji and Tōshōdai-ji temples. Sumi ink and pens, deer in Nara Park.

Osaka - Went to Himeji Castle by train.

Kyoto - 2 days. Temples (Nanzenji, Hongan-ji, Chionin), gardens and Mt. Arashi. Kyoto atmosphere is very Japanese, produces yuzen silk. Japanese houses, Kiyomizu yaki pottery. Ancient historical capital. Kyoto University, 2 Nobel Prize Winners - Hideki Yukawa, Shinichiro Tomonaga.

Hiroshima - 1 day. Memorial Park, Genbaku Dome.

Ninoshima - Ujina Port.

First group of students (Wendy, Ann, Ken, Andy and Bill). Second group of students (Maxine, Juliet and Judy). One week later, two students – Peter Jeppesen (my Deputy Leader) and Paul.

We taught small children English, stayed at Gakuen Hostel or at Don Calman's apartment in Hiroshima.

Gakuen – Government school, 200 students, boys and girls between 7 and 17 years old. Children have low IQ generally, come from poor families and have no parents. There are 4 English classes, Don takes one. 80 students learn from Don, 50 from 3 Japanese teachers who teach English.

Shimonoseki - Travelled through, no stop.

(ii) SHIKOKU ISLAND

Matsuyama – Visits to Matsuyama Castle, Temple and Onsen.

Kōchi – Saw a Tosa dog fight.

(iii) KYUSHU ISLAND

Beppu - Mt. Takasaki Wild Monkey Park.

Nōgata – Research Visit, Coal Mining Industry

Visited Kaijima Onoura Coal Mine - Miyata-machi, Kurate-gun, Nōgata.

Fukuoka - Visited parks, temples.

Omuta - Research Visit, Coal Mining Industry.

Met Mr. Miyagawa, Chairman of Miike Coal Miners' Union at Omuta. Ten minutes' walk to Union office. Met Mr. Yokoyama, also Mr. Haibara, General Secretary – Japan Coal Miners Workers Union No. 9.

Kumamoto - 1 day. Castle, beautiful garden, Suizenji Park. Best sake, Hakushika (White Deer).

Nagasaki – Visits to Nagasaki Peace Park, temples, Mount Inasa.

Shimabara – Shimabara Castle.

Mt. Unzen - Skiing.

Miyazaki - 1 day. Aoshima Island – coast, tropical plants, park, children's garden.

Kagoshima - 1 day. Island of Sakurajima – "Naples in Japan".

Sata-Misaki – Visited Onsen – beautiful, tropical steam bath.

Ibusuki – Visited Onsen.