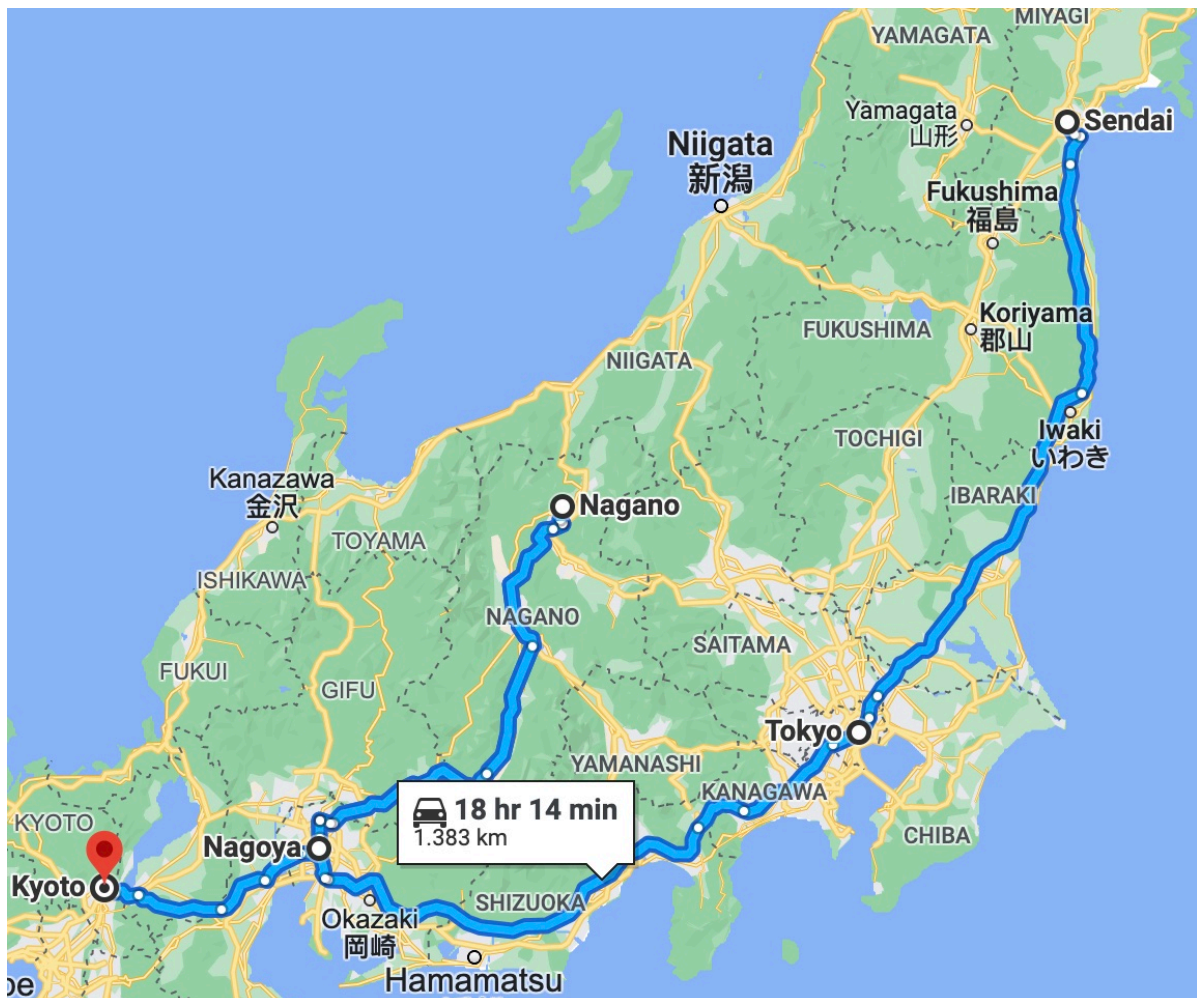


TRIP TO JAPAN BY DICK AND LIZ ASKEY, OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 1987

*a travel diary written by Liz Askey,
edited by Tom Koornwinder¹, 15 June 2022,
thanks also to Howard Cohl for careful reading.*

Schedule (dates are approximate; travels between the cities were made by train):

- October 6-12: Sendai (mathematical host: Satoru Igari², Tohoku University)
- October 12-18: Tokyo (host: Suki Kubo; mathematical host: Reiji Takahashi³, Sophia Univ.)
- October 18-23: Nagoya (mathematical hosts: Aomoto⁴, Nagoya University and Toshihiro Watanabe⁵, Gifu University)
- October 23-26: Nagano (conference and excursions with the Aomotos)
- October 26-28: Nagoya
- October 28 - November 12: Kyoto (mathematical host: Michio Jimbo⁶, Kyoto University)
- November 12-14: Tokyo (host: Suki Kubo)



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2. <https://mathscinet.ams.org/mathscinet/search/author.html?mrauthid=90735>
3. <https://mathscinet.ams.org/mathscinet/search/author.html?mrauthid=240368>, also [on \(Japanese\) Wikipedia](#)
4. <https://mathscinet.ams.org/mathscinet/search/author.html?mrauthid=26550>, also [on Wikipedia](#)
5. <https://mathscinet.ams.org/mathscinet/search/author.html?mrauthid=211249>
6. <https://mathscinet.ams.org/mathscinet/search/author.html?mrauthid=189009>, also [on Wikipedia](#)

Friday, October 9, 1987

Sendai, Japan, is plainly not the Chicago suburbs. It's an interesting experience to be an illiterate – able neither to read nor understand a word we see or hear. Actually that situation is probably worse than illiteracy. It's humbling. We'd really be stuck without a guide to lead us by the hand. Mr. and Mrs. Igari have done a marvelous job of that. Mr. Igari took the whole afternoon our first day in Sendai to lead us where we needed to go in the University Hospital. The last two times we managed by ourselves, which has been easy since our hotel is across the street from the hospital. The kidney stone is gradually making its way through Dick's system but, unfortunately, it's not a pain free process. Since the X-ray showed a small stone all he can do is to wait it out. So we looked at one another a couple of days ago and wondered if Russia brought us bed bugs and Japan a kidney stone, what was in store for us in Australia and India?

The weather has been warm – in the high 70s. Rain the first day and beautiful ever since. On Wednesday when Dick spent the morning with Igari. I went with Mrs. Igari to her tea ceremony class. It was taught by Mr. Igari's aunt, who is a master teacher in her particular tea ceremony school. The whole thing was fascinating – every movement precise and ritualized and each having meaning, both for the tea servers and for the guests. Mrs. Igari showed me what to do and explained things as the ceremony progressed. She said I should sit so that I would be comfortable rather than as the Japanese women did or I might find myself unable to get up at the end. That had happened to an exchange student who had come to one of the ceremonies a few months ago. I saw the wisdom of her advice and took it.

The ceremony is held in a tatami matted room bare of anything but items relevant to the ceremony, which includes admiration of a flower arrangement and a painting on the walls. The arrangements change with the season and the occasion, so I shouldn't say "ceremony" in the singular. There are many ceremonies. Mrs. Igari has been studying tea ceremonies for eleven years. Somehow the ceremony had the effect of focusing your attention and eliminating everything outside that room as I, as one of the guests, admired the painting and flower arrangement, accepted the tea and drank it in the required number of sips, accepted the tea cake and placed it using chopsticks just so on the sheet of paper used especially for that purpose and responded (through Mrs. Igari) with the proper ritualistic statements. I can see why it would take eleven years and more to study the tea ceremony – and I think I got a glimmer of an idea why people might do that.

Mr. Igari's aunt presented me with a piece of calligraphy – a fragment of a Chinese poem – which she made for me when she knew I would be there. It's beautiful and thinking about it now brings back the delight it gave me when she presented it to me. Since the full moon was a night or two after the tea ceremony the poem fragment was about the play of the moon on the surface of a river by the wind through the pine trees.

After the tea ceremony we joined Dick and Mr. Igari for a walk through the garden of a Buddhist shrine. It was about two hundred years old and had all the peacefulness and calm that is supposed to belong to a garden like that – and the busy streets of Sendai are just outside the gates. Mr. Igari had an appointment to keep but the other three of us went to see the reconstructed tombs of Date Masamune⁷, the 16th century feudal lord of the Sendai area, and other members of his family. The reconstruction was finished just two or three years ago. The originals were destroyed in 1945 in a bombing raid. We also shucked our shoes to walk into a Buddhist shrine that was part of the area. Ornate gold-painted decorations glittered inside to provide an impressive eyeful. We were to have dinner with the Igaris that evening but the kidney stone intervened.

7. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Date_Masamune

Some of that lack was filled last night when Dick and I were taken to a Japanese restaurant by several members of the mathematics institute. We ate sitting at low tables on tatami mats and an array of courses was set before us – fish, tempura, soup, rice, tea, raw oysters and more. One of the soup courses was served in a small teapot. You pour the liquid into a small bowl and when you've drunk that you remove the lid and eat the solid ingredients of the soup with chopsticks. Hot, wet washcloths are served to you before and after the meal so that you can wash up. We're going to be taken out tonight for more of the same so we ate lightly at lunchtime.

The street on which the restaurant is located is just off the main shopping street. It's crowded with bars and restaurants and at least a couple of girlie shows. I've never seen more neon to the square inch than could be found on that street. It didn't seem garish but gave the effect of light, color and bustling activity. It struck both of us as such a contrast to Moscow where there is almost no neon and practically nothing in the way of advertising that isn't political. We walked the long way around back to the parking lot after dinner, along the main shopping street and past a couple of pachinko parlors. Pachinko players have pinball machine players "beat all hollow." At some point I'm going to have to walk into one and watch for a while.

On the sidewalks and even in the Sendai City Museum there are strips of tile of different texture and feel with raised dots or lines which tell blind people where the curb is or how to get to some particular place, like the ticket booth in the city museum. Neat idea.

Dick and I saw a hearse yesterday – a Buddhist hearse with a black body and a gilt tiled roof that looked like a Japanese temple. That's how to go out in style!

Yesterday Dick received a second payment for the talk he gave this afternoon. The first payment came, I think, from the mathematical institute proper and this one from the particular seminar group he was addressing – 75,000 yen from the first and 65,000 from the second. That seems like quite a bit – especially when the second amount was completely unexpected. So far all we've been able to spend it on is medical bills at the hospital which have been surprisingly low, and four giant, juicy apples at a fruit and vegetable store. It's rather nice to be waited on with a bow by the sales clerk. It was very rare to see even a smile on the face of a Moscow sales clerk. Those apples cost the equivalent of \$1 each, but they were so big and so good that they were worth it. Cans of soda pop out of a vending machine cost 120 yen and that's something like 80 or 85 cents – a high price for pop.

Japanese lobster, raw fish, ice cream flavored with powdered green tea and garnished with a slice of kiwi and numerous other dishes I can't name – none of them the same as last night's feast: that was tonight's dinner. Groan! We'll go home weighing a ton each. It was all too good to pass up.

Monday, October 12

We took the bullet train (shinkansen) to Tokyo this morning. The smoothness of that roadbed and the speed of the train are impressive. The scenery is mountainous and wooded – and very crowded where there are houses.

Suki⁸ met us at our hotel; it was so good to see her again. She looks just the same but different – something I can say about myself as well. She gave us a packed lunch and said she'd be back at 2 p.m. when Takahashi would be back to take Dick to Sophia University for his talk. We fell on the sandwiches ravenously – and the fruit. Why is it that sitting on a train

8. Suki Kubo, born Watanabe. She studied together with Liz Askey at Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvania, and they were good friends. Liz, whose parents lived in Washington state, could not afford to go home for all of the school breaks, and then sometimes went with Suki to Suki's parents. Thanks to Liz' daughter Suzanne and Liz' sister Martha for this information.

doing nothing makes you so hungry? Not only did Suki provide sandwiches and fruit, there were also paper plates, cups, napkins, spoons and everything needed for a more than adequate lunch.

After Takahashi scooped Dick up for his talk, Suki and I went to the Meiji shrine⁹, which honors the Emperor Meiji and his consort; to browse in a department store (the Japanese crafts section was particularly interesting with its beautiful silk kimonos and obis, pottery and other crafts, which included more everyday items); and to a Japanese restaurant at the department store for dinner. I got back before Dick who was taken out for dinner after his talk. They gave him a very thick pillow to sit on, so he was more comfortable sitting at a Japanese table than he has been since we got here.

Tuesday, October 13

This morning we added to Dick's collection of plastic admission cards to hospitals in Japan. Jikei University Hospital was the spot where we passed a couple of hours looking at the scenic wonders. More accurately, I suppose, the patients are the scenic wonders. Another X-ray was taken and the stone had two to three centimeters to go before it's out. It might as well be a mile for the time it's taking. Dick refilled his pain pill prescription and we were off to visit the Zojoji shrine, the headquarters of the Jodo Buddhist sect (on its grounds President U.S. Grant planted a pine tree in the 1870s – it's still there, but one hundred years larger); lunch of Japanese noodles (in a bowl the size of a mixing bowl) at the Akasaka Tokyu Department Store; and then to the Suntory Museum of Art for a show of paintings of animals, birds, plants, flowers and insects from the Edo period – beautiful stuff. Some of the items were borrowed but many belonged to Suntory. (The sale of alcohol is a profitable business.) Suki's parents invited us for dinner on Saturday. It will be very good to see them again.

Before it slips from my memory I should mention the two day trips we took on Saturday and Sunday with the Igaris in Sendai. Hiraizumi¹⁰, with its Buddhist temples, all associated with the Date clan, is about 100 kilometers from Sendai. The first temples we saw were on a hill which was originally intended as a temple complex and city to rival Kyoto. It was a national holiday and great crowds of people, often in tour groups with a leader holding a small banner, were there. You had to watch carefully so as not to be swept up in one of the groups and carried along in the flood of people. Despite the crowds it's amazing how peaceful and calm it is when you step inside one of the temples – except for the Golden Pavilion, which is completely enclosed in glass and is not accessible, partly to protect its covering of gold leaf, which was fairly recently renewed.

Our next stop in Hiraizumi contained the ruins of a temple complex and an extensive garden which had been maintained since Heian¹¹ times (794-1185). It was spare in its simplicity and, again, very peaceful and calm. Our final stop was a shrine built into a rock cliff which had originally housed a demon, according to Mrs. Igari's translation of the sign. A large stone face is carved into the cliff near the shrine. All of the places we saw in Hiraizumi date back about 800 years originally, though there has been reconstruction needed over the years since then. All these structures are built of wood – cypress, which wears very well, but which does burn.

9. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meiji_Shrine

10. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hiraizumi>

11. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heian_period

Sunday's trip to Matsushima¹² took us to one of the three best beauty spots of Japan, according to Japanese tradition. Since that tradition is well known we were there – again in the middle of crowds of Japanese tourists. There is strip development all of the thirty kilometers from Sendai to Matsushima. That was unattractive, as it is anywhere in the world, but the view at the end of the trip is as advertised. Craggy islets, some very small and in fantastic shapes, rise straight out of Matsushima Bay. They are covered with wind blown pines. One has an old botanical garden on it and can be reached by foot over a long bridge with red railings. Another tiny island just a few feet from shore holds a small wooden temple with carved animals of the zodiac on its pediments. The connecting footbridge has planks every few inches and then planks laid end to end on which the visitors to the island walk. Igari heard one small child ask his father why the bridge was built that way; the father replied that that was so small people could fall through. That child must have been something of a trial earlier in the day to merit that response!

Matsushima holds a temple from the early days of the Date clan (close to 400 years ago) which has been declared a National Treasure. Several of the rooms hold beautiful screens – painted with sumi-e¹³ drawings in one room, with chrysanthemums in another room and so on. The calm and peace of this building, just a few feet from the bustling tourist crowds, is quite incredible. At some point before we leave Japan I want to go into one of these temples and just sit – or stand – for a while to soak that feeling in.

We had a late lunch at a restaurant overlooking the bay – a gorgeous view, including the sea weed farm run by the restaurant (all you can see of it is the bamboo poles which stick up from the waters of the bay) and very good food. This meal included chrysanthemum petals, jellyfish and crab mixed together in one small dish – nothing humdrum on the menu! Driving back we listened to the musical traffic lights – two different note arrangements depending on the traffic flow. This is done to help blind people cross the streets.

[Many taxis in Sendai had lace headrest covers. Suki's car has full seat covers in lace. "Useful" non sequitur!]

Friday, October 16

Suki will be here in about forty minutes and this will be a shopping day for us – a coat wearing day as well. It rained lightly all day yesterday because of the influence of a typhoon. On Wednesday Suki took us to Sensoji Temple with its gigantic red lantern. Between the temple gate with its big wooden temple guardians and the temple itself is Nakamise-dori, a street of shops selling traditional Japanese items and toys as well as battery operated toys and other items aimed at tourists. It's a bright colorful area full of foreign tourists, of whom we have seen surprisingly few in Japan. I had a ball watching the moving toys – David would have enjoyed that, too.

We also took a boat trip down the Sumida River, under the eleven bridges, all with interesting – even beautiful – silhouettes, and past the sumo wrestling school with its green roof. We went to the Nezu Institute of Fine Art where we particularly enjoyed the fine Chinese bronzes on display. A particularly striking wine ewer¹⁴ had double rams' heads on it. We had dinner on our own that night – one of the few that's been about the right size. With many course meals you never know when you've finally reached the last one!

Yesterday Takahashi took us to two very good small museums with a stop at a Japanese version of an American "family style" restaurant in between. The Japan Folk Crafts

12. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matsushima>

13. ink wash painting, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ink_wash_painting#Japan

14. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pitcher_\(container\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pitcher_(container))

Museum (Nippon Mingeikan) had pottery, weaving, laquerware, bronze utensils and incense burners and a special exhibit of Lapp handicrafts from Scandinavia. The building itself had sliding paper windows and doors and smooth old wood floors, polished over the years by the slippers of its visitors. This is yet another place where shoes are removed as soon as you go in the door. Unfortunately I haven't figured out how to keep arch supports in backless slippers, because this is a rather pleasant custom worth adopting at home.

The last museum was in the library of the man who formed Mitsubishi. It was one fairly small room and almost everything in it has been declared a National Treasure or an Important Cultural Object – magnificent scrolls, calligraphy, pottery, etc. – some of the items quite breathtaking. Takahashi had not been here before either and we would never have found either of these gems of museums without his help.

Dick talked on Ramanujan at Tokyo Institute of Technology in the afternoon and once more we were taken out to a restaurant for too much food – sukiyaki this time. Sigh.

Sunday, October 18

Friday we shopped—in and out of department stores, a specialty paper goods shop, a jewelry store, etc. It was a rainy day and we discovered one other Japanese custom. A rack of thin, long plastic bags is located outside of many stores. You slide your wet umbrella into a bag and carry it that way while you're in the store – no dripping of rain water on the store's carpet. Then you throw the bag into a conveniently located trash container when you leave the store and go on your way. We also discovered when we stopped for something wet to drink in one of the department stores that Japanese cream sodas are green, not brown. And, as always, there's the question, when you're out for the day, of whether you can find a Western toilet or just Japanese toilets. The latter are rectangular porcelain fixtures which are flush with the floor. You squat to use them. Different, but usable.

On Saturday we went to the Tokyo National Museum especially to see a show of Japanese ink painting (sumi-e). Never have we seen such an extensive collection of first quality sumi-e. It was quite beautiful in its use of "white space" and minimal brush strokes to present an image to the eye. We also visited the Asian art and Japanese archaeology buildings (the museum is made up of six buildings). It's definitely worth a return trip. We'll see if we have time during our final two days in Tokyo just before we leave Japan. Suki is going to see if she can get tickets for a Kabuki play for November 13th.

Saturday evening we joined Suki and her husband and the Watanabes for dinner at the International House of Japan, of which Mr. Watanabe¹⁵ is a member. They are grayer but they look pretty much the same – Mr. Watanabe especially. We had a Western style meal with a huge army of knives, forks and spoons – our first Western dinner in almost two weeks in Japan. We learned some interesting things during the conversation. Mr. Watanabe led the Japanese delegation to the Trilateral Commission¹⁶ at one point. Suki's brother Hiroshi's wife has a library degree from UW-Madison and does storytelling all over Japan – and abroad, I think Suki said. Suki's husband, Mr. Kubo¹⁷, showed us a tie clasp made of a computer chip – a Toshiba chip which he helped to develop. He, of course, commented on ASCII code and the name Askey. Everyone who knows computers makes that remark to me. Mrs. Watanabe gave me a lovely Japanese doll. I don't know whether we'll try to mail it back or carry it with us for the next three months. If we get settled in a hotel room long enough I'll take her out of

15. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Takeshi_Watanabe_\(bureaucrat\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Takeshi_Watanabe_(bureaucrat))

16. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trilateral_Commission

17. Moritada Kubo

her box and sit her on her pillow to keep me company. In the next ten days it looks like we'll be staying in five or six different places, including a night at Professor Aomoto's house....

Which brings me to Nagoya where we came by bullet train late this morning. Aomoto and another mathematician named Watanabe met us. After checking into the hotel we went downtown to watch a big parade in honor of three Japanese from this area who are important in Japanese history for uniting the country: Oda Nobunaga, Hideyoshi Toyotomi, and Ieyasu Tokugawa. There were marching bands, pompon girls¹⁸, baton twirlers, unicycle riders and large flower covered floats – and that was only the warmup. We would have saved the film if we'd known that next would come hundreds of marchers in medieval Japanese costumes representing these three men, their families and their retainers, complete with accompanying Japanese music on drums, flutes, etc. It was quite a show.

Friday, October 23

Three different hotels in the last five days – this one is in Nagano in the "Japanese Alps." Nagano is a city of 340,000 and it feels (and is) small compared to the other cities in which we've spent the last eighteen days. This city has musical stop lights, too. The one nearest our hotel plays a tune that sounds something like "Bringing in the Sheaves" whenever the light changes – twenty-four hours a day.

Dick is off attending talks and giving his at the university. This morning we went with Igari and his student from Argentina, Martinez, to a museum of items related to a local samurai clan and a house typical of those in which samurai lived, and to Zenkoji Temple, a Buddhist temple about one and one-half miles from our hotel. To get to the first place required a half hour ride by bus to a nearby village in this valley in which Nagano is located. Many fields, all neat and tidy, lined the roadside. Considering how tight space is in this country they have no choice but to be neat and tidy with available land – there's no land to waste. We passed many small apple orchards on the way to the village, each tree loaded with large apples. Apples here come in sizes ranging from large to giant. It's a temptation to buy one of the giant apples to see whether the two of us could finish it in one sitting. But we talk ourselves out of trying because we can't quite see paying \$3+ for a single apple, good as we've found the merely large ones to be.

Armor, scroll painting, calligraphy, lacquerware lunch boxes, tea bowls, kimonos, swords – all of these and more were among the items in this morning's museum. Many of them bore the crest of the Senoda (spelling?) clan incorporated into the design of the piece. One design element we saw on the temple was a swastika. That stands for the rising sun in a number of cultures. The Nazis have given that symbol a bad name.

It's nice to feel we aren't under the wing of a tour guide for a while. We've seen a great deal that way but the pace is a wearing one. We may change "tour guides" (i.e. hosts) at each city but we're still the same tour members and we're getting pooped. Our three days in Nagoya before coming to Nagano should have been a start toward getting ourselves collected. On Monday Dick talked mathematics while I wrote to the kids and read. That evening we were taken out and overate again – this time a variant of sukiyaki (can't remember the name). On Tuesday morning Watanabe took us to the Tokugawa Art Museum¹⁹.

The museum building has just been rebuilt and was reopened this year. It's contents were almost all owned by a branch of the Tokugawa family so some of the interest is in the fact that the items reflect the taste of a single family. The items included old Chinese pieces

18. cheerleaders

19. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tokugawa_Art_Museum

which the family had preserved. The museum was simply stuffed with people. Some prince or princess had been there the day before so we had to contend with a double dose of people on the day we chose to be there.

Watanabe gave us a specially painted gourd water container and told us the story it represented. A young man had been caring for his ill parents and when he went to get water for them the water in the gourd changed into a healing liquid. He also gave us a small gourd attached to a suction cup and told us that that should be hung in our car to keep us safe. It sounds like a Japanese version of a traveler's St. Christopher medal. And of course we'll do as directed when we get it back home!

Dick gave his talk that afternoon and I just dozed in the office he'd been assigned – too tired even to read. In the evening we were taken out to a restaurant that specializes in chicken, for which the Nagoya area is especially well known. The tatami matted room in which our group ate was decorated with pictures of women in various erotic poses. I knew something like that would have to happen eventually. Japanese women do not join their husbands for business entertaining and, with one exception. I've been the only woman along when Dick has been taken out to eat after a talk. So at some point, you'd figure, the decor would have to be intended to appeal to "the boys." The pictures weren't too bad and the chicken, cooked several different ways, was very good, so I didn't regret being there.

The next day, Wednesday, we were on our own. We went to Ando Cloisonne, in and out of a department store (half the department stores in Japan close on Wednesday and the other half close on Thursday), into the Aichi Trade Center (where we looked at manufacturing items on display and where we also saw examples of shibori²⁰ (tie-dyed) material which is one of the things the Nagoya area is known for. It was beautiful stuff – in a different class from the tie dyed tee-shirts you see being sold on the library mall on the UW-Madison campus) and on to Nagoya Castle. The castle is a reconstruction built after World War II when the original went up in flames during bombing raids in May, 1945. Many art treasures which had been safely stored away were saved and are now on display in the main part of the castle.

The train trip to Nagano Thursday morning took three and one-quarter hours and was pretty pleasant, except for the fact that we were in a smoking car. When we began to turn green we went to stand between the train cars where the air wasn't so bad. The train followed a river for much of the trip. Huge boulders filled the river bed except for the narrow channel through which the water ran. At one spot giant slabs of stone rose up out of the river bed to make a short canyon through which the water rushed.

Tomorrow after the meeting ends we'll go to Tsumago²¹, one of three villages which look, so we're told, just as they did two hundred or three hundred years ago. We'll meet Mr. and Mrs. Aomoto there for a day before returning for our last three days in Nagoya. I hope it's as restful there as it sounds like it may be. The pace of modern Japan is "full speed ahead" and it would be nice to get off in a backwater for a while. It's hard to imagine a village without a vending machine on every corner, but maybe we're about to see one.

Tuesday, October 28

It's the last day in Nagoya and time to catch up in these pages. Yesterday at noon the cable from Suzanne, David and Benjamin was delivered. It was a relief to hear that all is well with them. The closer it got to "due date" the more I thought about whether things were all right. I really would have "stewed" if Benjamin had decided to arrive late. We were

20. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shibori>

21. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tsumago-juku>

grandparents for two whole days before we knew it. While he was being "hatched" we were off in the Japanese countryside.

On Saturday in Nagano, Dick cut the morning talks and we browsed in and out of shops before catching the train for Tsumago. There were a number of specialty shops that were uniquely Japanese. A doll shop sold exquisite Japanese dolls dressed in kimonos; tea ceremony shops displayed beautiful pottery tea bowls and other implements for tea ceremonies; a kimono shop was filled with beautiful silk kimonos whose design and colors quite literally took one's breath away. None of this beauty was inexpensive – quite the opposite. But the stunning beauty of many of these traditional Japanese items made it plain that the pieces we saw were well worth the prices asked. We did buy a piece of silk that is used as backing for the obi²². Anything larger than that was outside of our price range.

At the train station some sort of demonstration was going on. Balloons were released and petitions were being circulated. From photos posted on display boards we wondered if the demonstration might have had anything to do with Hiroshima atom bomb victims, but we couldn't really tell.

It had begun to rain before we left Nagano and it was still raining when we got off the train at Nagiso, where we were met by Mr. and Mrs. Aomoto. A taxi ride took us and all our luggage to a country inn in Tsumago. A sliding door in this wooden structure opened onto a dirt floor in which was embedded a large boulder. You stepped onto the boulder, removed your shoes and put on slippers which were worn in the hallways.

Our room was a six tatami mat room. The furniture consisted of a low small table which held a thermos of steaming hot water and a tray with a canister of Japanese green tea and two Japanese handleless tea cups and saucers (which, in Japanese style, do not match the cups). In a niche was a large covered black lacquer mirror on a stand and two wooden narrow stands stacked on top of one another (we never identified these). On the floor next to the niche was a small wastebasket and a low rectangular wooden box in which were stacked four kimonos – two to be used for bathrobe purposes and two, I think, were sleeping kimonos – and two hand towels and two tooth brushes with dollops of toothpaste on them enclosed in cellophane wrappers. Futons, blankets, pillows and two or three foam rubber mattresses were behind sliding doors. And that was the extent of the furniture.

Once we were settled in the room we all were given oiled paper umbrellas by the hotel, and off the four of us walked through the rain into the preserved part of Tsumago²³. For most of the ten minute walk we followed the boulder strewn river that ran below the shoji screened windows of our room in the inn. (That window also framed a persimmon tree that was still heavy with fruit.) We went into a house (now a museum) which had been a way station on the Nakasendo road²⁴, one of the two official roads from Edo (Tokyo) to Kyoto, the other being the Tokaido road. We walked along the streets looking at the old shop buildings and residences, all wooden and built in the style of the Edo period. We ended up at a tea shop where we slipped out of our shoes (yet again) and sat on cushions at low tables. We had bitter, sweet and sour– the "sour" was yellow pickles made of radishes; the "sweet" was a chestnut served in a small paper bag which was tied with a gold colored string; and the "bitter" was a kind of tea we'd never had before – bright green with a froth on top and served in tea bowls rather than cups. It was a kind of tea ceremony tea. The whole thing was very traditional.

Back at the hotel we had a Japanese dinner at the usual low tables. You have to start training as small children to sit at those tables. Otherwise the experience can be paralyzing – or, in Dick's case, fidgety. The Aomotos showed us the Japanese bathrooms where you sat on

22. belt worn with traditional Japanese clothing, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Obi_\(sash\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Obi_(sash))

23. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tsumago-juku>

24. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nakasend%C5%8D>

a low stool, soaped yourself, poured rinse water all over yourself – and then you got into a tub full of hot water. We weren't up to trying it so we missed a truly Japanese experience, but we did have a marvelous night's sleep on the futon with the sound of the river below our window to lull us to sleep.

Sunday morning, after eating a Japanese breakfast (the best so far – fresh, not dried, fish was part of it) we went back to Tsumago to browse for another hour before catching a bus over narrow winding mountain roads to Magome²⁵, a town where Toson Shimazaki, a great author and poet from the Meiji period²⁶, was born. Both towns were well supplied with bus loads of Japanese tourists, but they were both charming, small old towns and well worth a visit – Tsumago especially was a delight. In one open shop two women were sitting making traditional "coolie" style hats. The Japanese tourists got a charge out of buying things like that. Lots of them took the hike along a path that goes between Tsumago and Magome.

We were too laden down with luggage to do that but we had lots of company on the bus. Between the two towns the road was narrow enough in places so that when the bus met a car, the car had to back up until it came to a place in the road wide enough to make room for the bus. The views of the forest covered mountains with the last remaining wisps of fog from the previous day's rain were beautiful to look at.

After the village of Magome we returned to the rail line where we caught a train to Tajimi in Gifu Prefecture. With a taxi driver to give us a tour of the city, we started at the Gifu Prefectural Ceramics Museum whose strength is Mino-yaki ware dating from as far back as the Heian period (794-1185) and extending to the beginning of the Meiji period (1868-1912). It's a rough, almost crude type of pottery, mainly in white and gray with some red, with which we were previously unacquainted and which we found quite appealing. From there we went to a kiln which was still in use, rebuilt over the years undoubtedly but in the style used several centuries earlier. Finally we went to a Zen Buddhist temple with a very lovely garden which included raked patterns in the gravel. Back at the train station again we went on into Nagoya, where we spent the night at the Aomotos' house. Their hospitality has been phenomenal, as has been the case with all our Japanese hosts.

On Monday we made like a band of gypsies and moved all our luggage to a university guest house. Dick and Aomoto went off to the mathematics department and Mrs. Aomoto and I went to the Arimatsu district of Nagoya where shibori (tie-dyed) cotton fabric has been made for over 350 years. A number of traditionally styled buildings in which the cloth has been sold for centuries still remain. In one building there is an exhibition of shibori fabric done by experts at it; displays showing the three main methods of doing it; and two women who, between them, had fifty years of experience, showing how it was done and answering questions. The craft is not really being maintained. One woman said her granddaughter helped her do it when she came home from her part-time job as a swimming instructor, which paid her more than her grandmother made making shibori.

There was a brochure, partly in English, and a movie with English subtitles from which I learned such things as that it can take from ten to twenty days to do the knotting for a single strip of fabric and that it takes from 50,000 to 200,000 "dapples" to make one kimono pattern. Therefore it takes between four and six months to complete the cloth for one kimono. Despite this, Arimatsu produces 1.2 million pieces of cloth a year. One elderly woman pictured in the film has been declared a Living National Treasure by the Japanese government for the quality of her shibori craft work. It may be tie-dying, but it bears little resemblance to what you can buy on the Library Hall in Madison!

25. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magome-juku>

26. 1868-1912, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meiji_\(era\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meiji_(era))

When we finally returned to the guest house, after taking one train, two subway lines and one bus, Dick greeted me with the news that I had become a grandmother. The next day when Mrs. Aomoto picked me up to go to the main library in Nagoya she brought more gifts, including a ball which a cousin of hers had made and which she wanted Benjamin to have.

The main library is in a very handsome two year old brick building, I saw the children's department, which includes a story-telling room and a crafts room (and a card catalog which alphabetizes by title and by author – all, of course, in Japanese. The adult catalog also lists subjects). I was introduced to the man who runs the department for the visually impaired (which, among other things teaches people to read Braille Japanese) – Nagoya's first blind librarian. Mrs. Aomoto and I went to the basement level where she pointed out two large study rooms, one for high school students and one for everyone else – and then she and I had tea and coffee in the library cafeteria.

Mrs. Aomoto does reading for the blind through the public library. She also runs a home library in her home which has perhaps two thousand books on the shelves. Many belong to the Aomotos but she can borrow books, to the amount of three times the number of neighborhood residents who are members of her library, from the public library every three months. Six women help her run the library and there are donations for book purchases from sources other than her own pocket. She said about fifty home libraries belong to an association of home libraries in Nagoya. The actual number of such libraries is higher than that, but they don't all belong to the association. The association can bring in visiting speakers on such subjects as child psychology, or bring in children's book authors such as Eric Carle (which they did last year) or ask for training from the public library in Nagoya or from sources in Tokyo. This month the group is running story hours on Thursdays at the main library. The whole idea of home libraries was appealing – and it was fascinating to see Make Way for Ducklings and Good Night, Moon in Japanese.

This afternoon I've read, mended and written here – but haven't yet written even "first round" letters to anyone but Suzanne and David, Jim and Kathy, and the folks. A rare day. There's been much less time for reading and writing in Japan than we managed to find in the U.S.S.R. Tomorrow we're off to Kyoto. In a city which has so much to offer we may have even less time to rest, read and write. R. and R.²⁷ in Australia, I guess.

Saturday, October 31

Four days into our Kyoto stay and we already know that there won't be time enough to see everything we want to see here. We've been to Sanjusangendo Temple to see its 1001 gilded wooden statues of the Bodhisattva Kannon and the attendant twenty-eight dieties – marvelous wooden statues, beautifully carved. Higasihongen-ji, one of the Jodo-shinshu Buddhist sect's main temples and the second largest wooden building in Japan, was another stop.

One morning²⁸ Jimbo took us to the gardens of Shugakuin Imperial Villa²⁹. Reservations are necessary but admission is free to this property of the royal family. The gardens are on three levels connected by avenues lined with pines. The tea house at the highest level of the villa overlooks a beautifully landscaped pond – all views walking around this large pond are beautiful views – a Japanese garden at its very best.

We've also seen the Heian Shrine³⁰, a shrine built 5/8ths of the size of the administrative building of the original imperial palace built in 795; the Kyoto National

27. R. and R.: rest and recreation

28. On October 30 according to Jimbo (private communication to Tom Koornwinder)

29. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shugakuin_Imperial_Villa

30. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heian_Shrine

Museum, which was featuring a show of medieval armor (a fascinating part of the display was a room of helmets – one that looked like a shell, one with the look of a rhinoceros horn, one with rabbit's ears, one shaped like an umbrella and so forth); the Kyoto National Museum of Modern Art, which featured a show of old Belgian lace and also had some very nice recent Japanese pottery, some of it based on old Japanese designs; and the Kyoto Museum of Traditional Industry which showed beautiful examples of traditional crafts (weaving, metal work, dolls, pottery, jewelry and much more) – much of it for sale.

Sunday, November 1

Another day of hard touring! We meant to take a bus but ended up walking close to an hour to Hokyō-ji Temple to see a doll exhibition. There were clay dolls, dolls dressed in beautiful kimonos, one case of dolls from various countries including a black doll from the U.S.A. In addition there were three scenes with life-sized figures in kimonos depicting historical scenes (we thought – it's hard to tell when the accompanying description is in Japanese only). This temple hosts a doll exhibition twice a year. The temple was built for an imperial princess in 1368-1378 as a home for dolls and the tradition continues. There were beautiful dolls, some of them very old – well worth the seeing.

From this temple we walked to the Nishijin Textile Center which had displays of traditional Nishijin weaving, which dates back to 1477 in that area. Both the older and newly produced materials were very attractive – some quite beautiful – and many articles from hankies, to ties, to kimonos had been made from this locally made cloth, and were for sale at the center. We paid 200 yen and went in to see a "kimono show," which turned out to be not displayed items but a kimono fashion show with music and narration. It was very well done and ended with models in silver and gold kimonos – a stunning finale.

Next stop was a brief one at the Kyoto City Archaeological Museum – interesting but, again, it would have been more so if we could have read any of the labels. We finished our sight-seeing with three more temples and shrines: Honryū-ji Temple; Senbonshaka-do Temple, which includes the oldest remaining structure in Kyoto (Dick took pictures of a couple of statues on the grounds); and Kitano Jinji (or Kitano) Shrine, which is a large Shinto shrine, the approach to which is lined with tomb statuary, including a number of oxen. We hope when we see the slides that they will bring back specific memories of each place. Each had a different flavor and it would be a shame to lose that because we saw too many places in too short a period of time.

From Kitano Shrine we took a loong city bus ride to Kyoto Station to buy our shinkansen tickets to Tokyo on the twelfth. Fortunately we were standing behind a woman who was American, we thought, but who spoke some Japanese – fortunate, because the man who sold train tickets spoke no English. It's nice to have that out of the way. Tomorrow it's back to mathematics for Dick and back to reading and writing letters for me – and resting tired feet.

Monday, November 2

A nice rainy day for writing and reading. Dick's off doing mathematics at the university. Comments from earlier days sound like an annotated itinerary, so maybe I can improve on that today.

Kyoto is a big, modern Japanese city – something that may not come across in a list of temples visited. Its main streets bustle with the same commercial activity as all the other cities which we have visited. It is, however, easier to find one's way around here since the city is laid out in a grid pattern based on that of the Chinese city of Xian. A great deal of

textile making goes on here, as we've seen in visits to the Nishijin Textile Center and the Museum of Traditional Industry.

Prices here are high – and not just because the value of the dollar is sinking, although that doesn't help tourists like us. Much as I enjoy my tea break I'm looking forward to paying less than 300 yen for a "cuppa." At the moment the dollar is worth about 137 yen, so that's over \$2 for a cup of tea.

Land and housing prices probably hit the Japanese themselves even harder, however. An opinion article in the November 1 Japan Times cited a typical price of 40,000,000 yen for a small apartment that's a two hour commute from the center of the city. Japan's high rate of savings may well reflect the high cost of urban land and urban housing. There's much talk in the newspaper on the Economic Planning Agency's annual White Paper on National Life which states that the country's affluence has been in national economic terms but not in living environments, which the report equates to that of a developing country. The article that comments on the forty million yen apartment equates the banks, corporations and under-taxed professionals with the feudal daimyos and samurai who held economic power in earlier times. Even people who make good money, like the Watanabes, are affected by high urban land prices however. That's the impulse, according to what we've been told, behind their tearing down the old houses on their property and rebuilding housing which will house three parts of the family and provide rooms to rent to Americans.

Our "home base" for two weeks in Kyoto is the Holiday Inn. It has all the services – and the prices – of a Holiday Inn in the U.S.A. Fortunately the mathematics institute at Kyoto University has provided us with discount coupons which lower the price we pay. That's rather nice since the only thing this hotel offers which the others did not, and which I use, is washcloths.

And I guess it's nice on a rainy day like this not to have to leave the hotel for any meals. Here they have a coffee shop, a restaurant which serves buffet style, a Japanese restaurant, a Chinese restaurant, a Japanese noodle restaurant, a restaurant that serves light meals like pancakes and salads along with fancy desserts and ice cream drinks, a Colonel Sanders and a McDonalds, a steak restaurant – and probably one or two others I've lost in the shuffle.... All of which reminds me that it's noon and I'd better go in search of food at one of those places.

I was reminded at lunch how much I enjoy the hot cloths you're given in restaurants to wipe your hands and face.... And in the elevator, to the usual " Do not use the elevator in case of fire" is added "or earthquake." Another difference!

Thursday, November 5

Tuesday the third was a national holiday – Culture Day – and we joined throngs of Japanese tourists for a visit to Kiyomizudera Temple³¹, which was established about 1200 years ago. It's best known for the gorgeous view down the mountain and across Kyoto from the wide veranda of its main hall. It was a rainy day, which may have cut the size of the crowds minimally, but it didn't lessen the beauty of the view. In a couple of weeks when the vivid red of the maple trees is more predominant the view will be quite spectacular – perhaps just in time for us to miss it. As Dick remarked a couple of days ago, the leaves were beginning to turn color as we left the Soviet Union; the leaves were beginning to turn as we left Madison for Japan; the leaves are beginning to turn as we prepare to leave Japan in a week. By the time we return to Madison the trees will be bare and we may well have missed

31. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kiyomizu-dera>

the peak of autumn color everywhere we've been. It's spring in, so we'll see a totally different season there.

After enjoying the view for a while and walking past a number of the other buildings in the temple complex we walked down one of the narrow, shop-lined streets that leads up to the temple. Both here and on the street we took that climbed steeply up toward the temple there are many pottery and souvenir shops (the area has been serving the needs of tourists – pilgrims, in earlier days – for many centuries now). Land prices are too steep for kilns to remain in this area but although they have moved, many commercial outlets for the Kiyomizu pottery produced in this area for centuries still remain. We wandered in and out of numerous shops and saw a variety of ceramics ranging from highly decorated to very simple and almost crude in style. Prices, too, varied from a few yen for "touristy" ceramic dolls and pottery to tea bowls, vases and pots worth thousands of dollars.

At the foot of the hill on which Kiyomizudera is built is the Gion entertainment district. We walked along looking at everything, since a month in Japan is not nearly long enough for things to look less than exotic to us. By chance we spotted Shinmonzen Street which is a street full of art and antique dealers. Since that is something we can't resist looking at, off we went, our flagging energy renewed. One shop in particular, Y. Tsuruki and Company, had a number of first rate inros³² and netsukes³³ – a feast for the eyes. The proprietor told us that the first lot of inros and netsukes we saw had belonged to Japanese daimyos. They included maki-e (powdered gold) lacquer inros and other lacquer inros with very fine detailing. A number of these ran from 1,200,000 yen to 1,800,000 yen and that's a lot of money whether in yen or in dollars. Fortunately looking is free. He showed us other ivory and wooden netsukes which included some very nice ones at about 400,000 yen. Some were newer but many of them dated back to between 1700 and 1850. That's the first large number of netsukes we've seen in Japan. We expected to see small but fine collections in some of the museums we've visited but such collections are either not there or we've been looking in the wrong places.

It's clear and sunny this afternoon with the mountains around Kyoto clearly visible. Dick will be back from a couple of mathematics appointments later this afternoon and then we'll take off for two or three hours in central Kyoto. He gave his talk yesterday and was also at the mathematics institute at Kyoto University all day on Monday. I read all day yesterday and have been writing so far today – except for a break to read today's Japan Times. Since Sunday and Tuesday were spent doing a lot of "pavement pounding" it's been a pleasant contrast to take it easy on the other days this week. That way I build up both energy and enthusiasm for a day of being an active tourist. And tomorrow we intend to get up early, eat a quick breakfast in our room and leave for a day in Nara, which was Japan's capital before it moved to Kyoto in 794 a.d. Some of the things we want to see there won't be on display after this week-end. Many of the temples, both here and there, air their treasures once a year and put a limited number of them on public display, so you can't wait to see these things at your leisure.

Last night we finally figured out that something we took to be a bathrobe, which many of the hotels in which we've stayed have left out for guests, is in fact a sleeping kimono. I tried one for the night and found it fairly comfortable but it was too different from what Dick is used to sleeping in, so he finally got up and put his pajamas back on.

Oh, did it get cold out today! After Dick's return we took a bus to Myohoin Temple which was showing its treasures for public viewing. There were many lovely screens and paintings as well as some lacquerware, ceramic pieces and one or two kimonos. The gardens,

32. inro: a case suspended from the obi, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inro>

33. netsuke: miniature sculpture, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netsuke>

as well, were quite lovely. It would have been nice to linger but ours seem to have been the last tickets sold and the girls who were providing guide services through the temple hurried us along. We weren't there for more than 20 or 25 minutes but the quality of what we saw made us glad of those all too short minutes. Before we left we visited the kitchen which was built about 1595 a.d. in the Momoyama style and has been declared a National Treasure. It's a rare kitchen that would be declared a national treasure! This one was an interesting and quite large structure. From there we went out into the cold, inadequately dressed for it, and walked for 35 minutes to Kyoto Station where we had supper, browsed in the station shops and then caught the Holiday Inn shuttle bus back to the hotel.

Sunday, November 8

Nara³⁴ proved to be a "mixed bag." We had expected the most out of the Todai-ji temple complex. There, in the largest wooden structure in the world, is housed the Great Buddha, the largest bronze sculpture in the world. Both are, indeed, impressive but after seeing treasures from Todai-ji at the Art Institute in Chicago about one and one-half years ago, we had expected to see wooden Buddhist sculptures and other works of art from among the temple complex treasures on display. If they were there we never found them. On a guess, they probably weren't on display. Since arriving in Kyoto we've learned that many temples customarily put only some, not all, of their treasures on public view and only for limited periods of time each year.

What we did see at Todai-ji were great quantities of school children – all in their uniforms – the grade school children wearing hats fastened under their chins with elastic straps – one class of youngsters all in pink hats, another in blue, a third in yellow and so forth. Usually the whole class wore the same style of jackets and sometimes whole suits alike. The high school kids tended to be dressed more somberly, unless they were dressed in exercise outfits. The boys dress in black military style uniforms and the girls in navy blue or gray uniforms with some variety in styling. Many of the students we saw had sketched and painted with watercolors many of the buildings scattered around this huge complex. Many of the pictures were quite well done. Obviously the trip was part of an art class project.

At one point a man who was there with his English class asked if we would mind if each of his students asked us a question. That was fine with us. All the questions but one were easy to understand but we weren't so sure the students could understand our answers. They must have been beginning students.

Something else that was a bit of a disappointment was the Nara National Museum. It, like the Kyoto National Museum, was built to hold local temple art treasures (which are usually easier to see and better preserved in such museums). The disappointment was in the items on display, which had been taken from the Shosoin Repository which was begun in 756 a.d. to hold possessions of the Emperor Shomu, and was dedicated to Todai Temple by the Empress Komyo after her husband's death. We had seen a TV program on the items on display – and so had many others, to judge from the crush of people there. We couldn't get close enough to some items to get a good view – and we both had the feeling that the best items on display were those that had been shown on the TV program. One advantage of going to the show was that there were English labels – everything connected with the TV show had been in Japanese. It was nice to know what those items we'd seen on the TV show were.

A very pleasant surprise turned out to be Kofuku-ji complex. Many of the treasures of this complex have been gathered into a single museum on the grounds – marvelous wooden

34. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nara_\(city\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nara_(city))

carvings of priests, the Buddha, temple guardians and more. These items made the trip worthwhile.

The next day back in Kyoto, we were off making the rounds of temples again. Daitoku-ji is a large temple complex with more than two dozen sub-temples. Two of these, Obai-in and Ryogen-in, are Zen Buddhist temples with rock gardens, dry gardens, and moss gardens which are striking in their arrangement and their simplicity. We padded around in our stockings, looking at the screen paintings in the tatami matted rooms which were open for viewing and then, looking at the gardens, we walked around to the veranda which had the full sun on it, sat down on the step which stretched the length of the building and just looked at the garden for a while. In the gardens which included raked gravel, the glare could get rather blinding after a while, as the sun reflected off the white gravel. Small point, that. The sense of restfulness and calm which these gardens produced was just what we were looking for. It was quite a contrast with Daisen-in, the last temple we visited before leaving Daitoku-ji. Even the Fodor Guide to Japan warned about the commercialization of this temple, as we read after we got back to the hotel. Its gardens weren't even as beautiful as those of Gbai-in and Ryogen-in; one of them at Daisen-in was even downright fussy and cluttered.

Our last stop for the day was at the Golden Pavilion, which was re-opened to the public on November 1 after a rededication ceremony on completion of the re-gilding with gold leaf of the top two stories of the Pavilion. And here's where all the tourists in Kyoto were! Traffic policemen directed foottraffic and there was no let-up in that while we were there. A solid river of people moved past the Pavilion, through the grounds of Kinkaku-ji, where the Pavilion is located and back out to the parking lot or the pedestrian walkway to the street. The Pavilion was beautiful with something of a look of unreality about it. It was located at the edge of a beautifully landscaped pond which reflected the beauty of the Pavilion quite effectively. Now if there had only been fewer people there....

It was a long bus ride back to the hotel – longer than it should have been for Dick, who was running a two degree fever by the time we returned. It was just a bad cold, which had started while we were in Mara, but he wasn't feeling too good. So today we just took it easy and didn't leave the hotel.

Thursday, November 19

Our last few days in Japan were no less busy than all the rest of our time there. On Monday the 9th we went to see Nishihongan-ji. Unfortunately there were no tours given that day so we saw very little of the temple and its grounds. There was, however, a nice show of chrysanthemums in front of the temple and that was pretty to look at. From Nishihongan Temple we walked the back streets (always fascinating and always incredibly quiet compared to the main streets so close by. There's no zoning in Japan so shops, homes, small manufacturing areas, warehouses, temples and everything else are all jumbled together. Somehow it all seems to work.) to Sanjusangendo where we again viewed the 1001 statues of Kannon and their guardian dieties. This time we bought a set of large pictures of the guardian dieties, as we should have done on our first visit. They were worth seeing a second time.

On the tenth we started the day at Murin-an, a villa built in the 1890s by Aritomo Yamagata, a veteran Japanese statesman. He also designed the garden, which is representative of the Meiji era, and which we enjoyed strolling through. Close by is Nanzerv-ji, an extensive Zen temple complex, which not only has a garden which combines space and rocks in the ways we found so typical of Zen Buddhist gardens – and so beautiful in its simplicity – but also has many beautifully painted sliding doors with pictures of tigers,

cranes, fans, landscapes and court ladies. These were among the best screen paintings we saw while in Japan.

From Nanzen-ji we walked along the Philosopher's Path, in and out of one or two more temples on our way to Ginkaku-ji, the Silver Pavilion, which is located on the western side of the Eastern Hills of Kyoto. It was originally intended that this temple would be gilded with silver, but this was never done. We didn't feel cheated, though – the garden was one of the most beautiful we saw in Japan. The sand and gravel part of the garden was raked to represent two things – Mount Fuji and Seiko, a lake in China. The whole walk was quite lovely and we should have quit while we were ahead. Walking back toward the hotel we passed the orange torii of Yoshido Shinto shrine and we thought "why not see this, too?" If we had known we were coming in the "back door," which was a very long, mostly uphill walk from the shrine, we wouldn't have done it. We'd already been on our feet for several hours. We did, however, enjoy walking out the "front door" which went through a tunnel of orange torii.

On the eleventh we went back to the antique shopping street where we bought a netsuke which we had V. Tsuruki and Company, Inc., ship back to Madison for us – he will do this on January 15th. We did a little browsing again at the Museum of Traditional Industry and ate a small but good Chinese lunch before returning to the hotel.

On Thursday the twelfth we took the bullet train from Kyoto back to Tokyo, saw Suki for an hour or so, so that she could give us tickets to the Kabuki theater. and then strolled around the area of the hotel before going to bed. Our day at the Kabuki theater³⁵, which turned out to be a birthday gift to me from Suki, was marvelous. The performance started at 11 a.m. and went on until 3:30 p.m. There were four pieces with twenty to thirty minute breaks for scene changes – and for the audience to eat lunch, which they did either in their seats or elsewhere in the theater.

One of the pieces was a "modern" one written in 1916; another was written in 1905, but its subject was the fall of Osaka Castle in the early 1600s; and the other two were written in the 1700s, one with an historical theme and the other a romantic theme based on a bunraku puppet play. We bought an English language program which gave us extensive plot summaries and rented radio guides which provided commentary throughout the performance and, in some cases, even verbatim translations of the dialogue. The costumes were stunningly beautiful; the sets were largely one dimensional but quite effective on one of the widest stages I've ever seen. There were not one, but five curtains, each one a beautiful tapestry – art works in themselves – with very Japanese types of themes: flying cranes, a stand of pine trees by a river, chrysanthemums, a stand of bamboos (which Dick had read was a typical subject for a Kabuki theater curtain). Different styles of acting were used in the various pieces and the battle scene in Osaka Castle was carefully choreographed and mimed.

The last play – the romantic piece – had one musician and the two actors who played the romantic parts (women's roles have been played by men for the last three hundred years) who have been declared "living national treasures." The musician was 89 and the "sweethearts" were 70 and 78. The whole thing was a very interesting experience and we'd both like to do it again.

Suki picked us up at our hotel and we went to the house she and her family share with her parents. Before we left for dinner we walked over to the building across the street which will be the home of Suki's family, her parents, and the family of one of her brothers – with rooms left over to rent to Americans. It's really a not-so-small hotel type of project – a major

35. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kabuki-za>

endeavor. Mr. Watanabe showed us the building plans and pointed out the room we'll have when we come back to visit at the time of the 1990 International Congress of Mathematicians in Kyoto. I guess that makes it all real – we're really going back!

After our return to the hotel after dinner we went to the lobby to do some writing and reading and in one of his passes around the room Dick picked up some copies of a magazine published in New Delhi called Indian and Foreign Review. We'd never heard of it but it contained familiar things. There was an article on Ramanujan with a number of quotations from some guy named Richard Askey. He's used to seeing his name in mathematics journals but this year is different!

Saturday morning we went to Maruzen, a big book store that was established in 1869, to see a display of international children's books. One, a book of Chinese nursery rhymes illustrated by Demi, was particularly attractive and we'll have to see if we can track it down after we get back to Madison. I hope it's still in print.

Well, that was it – the last thing we did before picking up our luggage at the hotel, taking a cab to Ueno Station and catching the Skyliner train back to Narita Airport. That's where we came in! We paid our 2000 yen exit fee and took our Qantas flight for Sydney.