

Probus Japan Trip

September/ October 2018

Report, photos and captions courtesy Judith and Ray Binks.



After some initial rearrangement of flight plans due to Typhoon Jebi, 14 club members (and Janet Jackson's good friend and travelling companion Val Turner) travelled to Nagoya airport instead of the Kansai airport and then by bus to Kyoto. Margaret and John Vickers flew to Tokyo a couple of days later and then travelled by the bullet train to Kyoto separately. Thirteen people caught the bullet train for the Hiroshima extension prior to the start of the main tour. Ian and Val Dale remained in Kyoto.

Hiroshima is an amazing city considering the devastating destruction that occurred as a result of the Atom Bomb. It's now a beautiful and vibrant city with permanent memorials to peace and the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Upon our return to Kyoto we met up with the remainder of our Probus group (now 17 in total) and met the rest of the people doing the **Temples and Traditions of Japan** tour, bringing the total group to 31.

Japan is an island nation consisting of 4 main islands, Kyushu, Shikoku, Honshu and Hokkaido. Over the next 8 days we toured by train and coach around the cities and countryside of the main island Honshu visiting Kyoto, Kanazawa and Tokyo, including Mt. Fuji. We visited many temples, castles and villages and experienced the culture and food of Japan. We found Japan to be much more mountainous than we had expected and we were impressed by their infrastructure in the form of bridges, tunnels, roads and rail. The Japanese people were always respectful, polite and well dressed and the cities were clean with no sign of graffiti. We could learn from them.

For the second part of our tour, we boarded the Diamond Princess at Yokohama to sail around the northern island of Hokkaido. We had various shore excursions at Kurshiro, Otaru and Hakodate and also the Russian port of Korsakov on the southern tip of Sakhalin Island. Hokkaido is the main area used for agriculture, forestry and marine products in Japan. Everybody enjoyed the usual shipboard activities especially the happy hours, dining and entertainment.

After the cruise, 8 members stopped over in Singapore for 3 nights. We toured the city sights on the Hop on Hop off bus and took a tour of the Gardens by the Bay area. On the last night we joined the Singapore Night Out tour to see the Garden Rhapsody light and sound show, the Marina Bay Sands SkyPark and the Singapore river taxi.

Everybody had a great time on both the land and sea components of the tour and we all have many wonderful memories of Japan, the fun times and the laughs. Thanks to all for your support and friendship.



Land tour



Cruise tour



Ready to board the Bullet train.



"Shinkansen" Bullet train. Wow



Hiroshima - Miyajima Island, Itsukushima Shrine.



Lynda-san asking "where is Ian-san"?



Paper Cranes and Children's peace memorial.



Hiroshima, Atomic Bomb Dome.



Peace Memorial Park.



Devastation after the bombing of Hiroshima



Group finally together, enjoying dinner in Kyoto.



Nijo Castle gate Kyoto



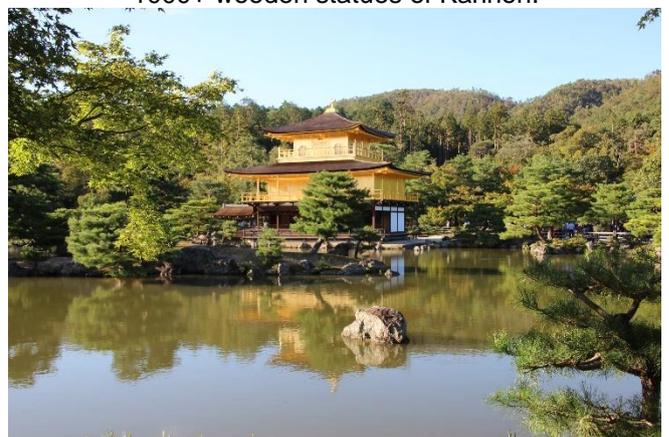
Sanjusangendo Temple



Sanjusangendo temple,
1000+ wooden statues of Kannon.



Most of the group at the Bamboo forest.



The Kinkakuji Temple (Golden pavilion).



Geisha-san, Judith and Maiko-san (trainee)



A wonderful dinner at a Geisha restaurant.



Yunokuni no Mori craft village.



Val showing us her painting technique.



The group walking in the Samurai district.



Nagamachi Samurai Residence.



Judith and Chris in the Samurai Residence.



Barbara and Helen exploring the Samurai district.



Kenrokuen Gardens, Kanazawa.



Kenrokuen Gardens, Kanazawa.



Kanazawa Castle



John and Margaret shopping at the Oumicho Market.



Gold leaf shop,
John looks pleased with his handiwork.



Janet also showing her skills at the Gold Leaf Shop.



Higashi-chaya district (Geisha restaurants)



Higashi-chaya district (Geisha restaurants)



Shirakawago village from the observation deck.



Val at the Ogimachi Observation deck.



Judith and Rita in the Wada house.



All aboard, another train ride.



Happy travellers John and Helen are all smiles.



Cruise on Lake Ashi.



Ian Dale with, Ian & Lynda Andrews on lake Ashi cruise.



Shy Mt Fuji appeared from the clouds for our group photo.



5th Station stop, Mt Fuji.



5th Station stop, Mt Fuji.



Tour group enjoying Teppanyaki Dinner in Tokyo.



Tour group enjoying Teppanyaki Dinner in Tokyo.



Tokyo, Hotel New Otani, restaurant garden.
What a view while having breakfast.



Tokyo, Hotel New Otani, restaurant garden.



Spectacular 5 storey Pagoda.



Sensoji Temple.



Rita and John are ready to start making Sushi.



Chris and Helen - where do we start???



John with our guide Mayume.



Barbara and John getting some assistance.



The gang in the Ginza shopping district.



Busy Tokyo shopping district.



Most of the manhole lids in Japanese cities are decorated.



Tokyo " Sky Tree" tower.



A great view of the Diamond Princess.



Top deck view.



John, Ian and Val enjoying happy hour.



John, Margaret, Janet and Rita enjoying a drink and chat before dinner.



Ian and Lynda ready for Dinner.



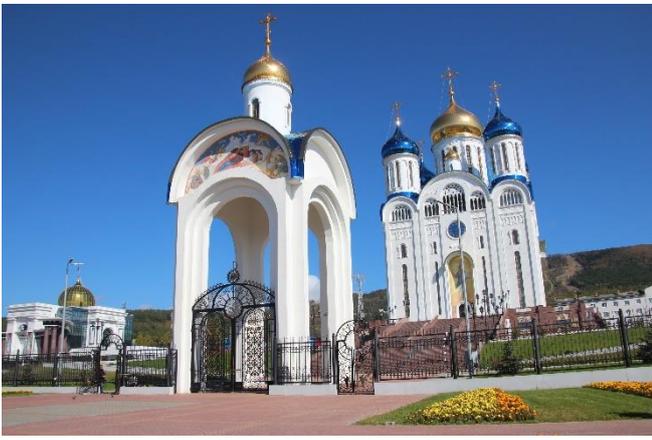
The traditional champagne glass tower.



Moss balls at Churui island Observation Centre, Lake Akan.



Japanese Red Crowned Crane.



Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Victory Square Cathedral.



Beautiful gardens near Glory Square.



Sakhalin Regional Museum.



Ainu (indigenous people) war vest display.



Old Aoyama Villa, "the Herring Mansion".



View of the garden from the villa.



John, Helen, Judith and Ray enjoying the view on the canal bridge at Otaru.



Otaru, Mt Tengu Ropeway, what a view.



Otaru dock, local musicians entertaining us as we returned to the ship. Fantastic performance.



Squid tank at the Fish market in Hakodate. Caught and eaten within minutes Yuk!!!



Hakodate, Goryokaku Tower.



View from tower towards Goryokaku Fort.



View from the Mt Hakodate lookout.



Hakodate, Old Public Hall.



Val, Janet and John chatting at happy hour on last the night of the cruise.



John and Barbara relaxing at happy hour. The cocktail looks good.



Dinner on last night at Sabatini's.



Lynda presenting Judith with a Kimono.

Things that happen on tour should stay on tour. But...

- Ian Dale was told by the attractive waitress at breakfast, you have beautiful eyes!
- Ian Dale again. He had finished his dinner and had been eyeing off the lobster meal that others had ordered. When asked by the waiter, "how was your meal", Ian said jokingly "I should have had the lobster". A few minutes later, the waiter arrived with another lobster meal. It must be those eyes!!
- One of the ladies group was approaching airport security and seeing the male officer patting some of the ladies down, walked to the spot to be told "you have to be selected madam, you cannot volunteer!"
- Val Turner was thinking, a slice of toast would be nice for breakfast. As she approached the large rotating toaster that they have in hotels, she slipped on a step just in front of the toaster and knocked it off the stand with an almighty crash. Suddenly the toast lost its appeal.
- Val Turner again, spilt her hot chocolate drink all over her white pants and also part filled her shipboard pass holder with chocolate. She went back to the cabin to clean up and change. She squeezed the chocolate out of her clothes into the bin, but the bin had a hole in it and it leaked over the floor and then she somehow managed to soak the toilet paper as well.
- Japanese baths are a communal bath. Only a very small towel is provided and barely covers the private parts. It was suggested that the best solution was to cover your face with the towel.
- We were intrigued to hear how our tour guide Mayumi described rain. "Spot spot" for light rain and Zsa Zsa for heavy rain.
- John Page had been sitting and chatting with a few different ladies in the group. Judith was sitting with our tour guide, when she said perplexed "I have been trying to decide who the couples are, but this man seems to be with many ladies." She was relieved to hear that we knew one another as we were part of a group.
- John again. John Page was with the group as we assembled in the Vivaldi dining room prior to leaving the ship for the airport. We received our group number disembarked and hopped on the bus. On board the bus, we realised that John and Chris were no longer with the group. We saw Chris waving in another bus which was also heading to the airport and therefore assumed John was also on that bus. At the airport we discovered John was missing. We had a look around, but could not find him. About an hour later, as we were trying to contact him, he wandered through the entrance looking lost and said "I just went for a walk while we were waiting and when I returned you were all gone". Luckily we were early and all managed to board our flight on time.
- Mayumi our guide, suggested that Lynda-san should keep an eye on Ian-san who was often missing from the group taking photos, but he was not the only one, was he Ray!!!!
