

# IOC Newsletter

## July 2005

### Contents

Greeting

Event Reviews

Shimanami Kaido

Wakayama River Trekking & Camping

Tokushima Sea Kayaking/Scuba Diving

Nichinan Kaigan & Sakurajima

The "Big" Oki Trip

Fuji-san

NEW!! Literature Corner

And Finally



*Jeremy's Birthday Bash*

### Greeting

Phew – Haven't you guys been busy this month? 8 Events!! Well, all you're activity has meant that we have a special bumper edition this month (all 17 pages worth), including a new literature corner at the end. Thanks and congratulations to Shinobu for designing the new IOC T-shirt. I'm sure we'll all look forward to getting our very own as soon as they're ready. Make sure to place your order early! So, without further adieu, let's get down to business...

## Shimanami Kaido Cycling by Benoit

1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> July

Leader: Shinobu

Participants: Fumie, Noriko (n<sup>o</sup> 3), Junko, Yuka, Kei & Benoit.

We left on Friday evening from Kobe and took the ferry there till Imabari. The ferry was a bit austere (only big rooms with tatami), noisy and shaky but it was fun. And, we had some time to discuss the trip. We arrived very early at Imabari (5am) and crossed through the fish market (which was just opening), then had our first stop (after 15mn walk...) at a bakery to fill our stomachs. It smelled good, so the choice was difficult especially for some of us who wanted to taste everything! Fumie, Noriko, Junko and Yuka rented a bike and arrived at the first and longest bridges on our list (Kurushima Kaikyo Bridge). It was quite impressive. But Mister Rain also wanted to join our tour and accompanied us with a small shower. He was so happy to be with us that after half an hour, the shower became rain... and after one hour, the rain became a barrage! It was raining cats and dogs, or ropes in French!! Whatever the expression, we were totally wet but didn't despair. Actually, it was kind of fun to ride our bike with 5cm of water running down the road! And surprisingly, we were even faster than Shinobu had expected... We arrived at Ohmishima Island just in time for lunch! Luckily, the restaurant was empty and did accept "7 sponges". What a nice feeling to eat something hot in a warm and dry place!! And for the digestion, we decided to have an onsen. Mister Rain was sad we left him and finally disappeared... Thanks!!



*Jeremy wonders if he is growing breasts...*



So, in the afternoon, we settled in a nice hut (much better than a tent with these atmospheric conditions!) and had some fun on the beach, playing like young Japanese kids in their traditional summer camps: Let's make a pyramid! Let's make a chain!... Lots of stupid but very funny photos... In the evening, we had a party together with enough snacks and drinks. As my Japanese is still far from good, I didn't understand most of the conversation. But as it was mainly gossip (apparently, there're many interesting stories about IOC members!), it's better for everybody I didn't understand! The party ended with small fireworks.

On the second day, we left early to have some more free time in the afternoon to do some sightseeing. As the weather was nicer than the day before, we were quite fast, with Shinobu leading. Kei had his camera grafted on his hand and was taking pictures of everybody with an impressive rhythm (at least one picture every 10 seconds!!...). The yellow-helmet team was following with some difficulties sometimes. But it's not easy to talk and pedal at the same time! We eventually arrived at Onomichi (after a quick hello to the newly built Yamato while being on the small ferry to Onomichi). The last challenges occurred at the station with new pyramids and chains in front of some quite surprised habitants. Thanks to Shinobu's sex-appeal, two young students joined one pyramid. We ended again at another bakery followed by a restaurant. Food is always much more appreciated after some effort!



Kansai IOC members...



The yellow-helmet team at Onomichi station.



A more detailed map of our cycling trip...

Most of the time, there is a specific road for the cyclist. So, we were not annoyed by the cars...

As you can see, we rode on 6 bridges + a small boat to reach Onomichi.

Innoshima Bridge is located between Innoshima and Mukaijima islands.

Tatara Bridge is located between Ohmishima and Ikuchijima islands.

## **Wakayama River Trekking by Kaori**

**2-3<sup>rd</sup> July**

Two weeks ago we went on a great river trekking trip to Susami-cho in Wakayama. We were deep inside the mountain, just a short 10 minute drive from the ocean. Naoko and her friend rented a small elementary school that had been reformed into a summer river trekking school for children. On the first day, our group left from Kobe, Osaka and Nara early in the morning. We met up at the Kinokawa SA on the highway at noon. It rained all day but we still managed to have fun.

As soon as we arrived at the school, we started cleaning up the bedroom, kitchen, etc. and then prepared a BBQ dinner. Once it got dark, we let off some fireworks on the school grounds. Courtesy of Dan!

The next day we went 'river trekking'. The weather was still cloudy, but thankfully there wasn't any rain. The river was clear and the water level wasn't too high, but the current was a bit fast. We chose an easier one hour course. Some parts were a bit scary, but most of it was great fun! At the mid point of the trip we jumped into the water from a big rock near a waterfall. Every thing was beautiful. Thanks very much to our leader, Naoko & Keiko. I'd like to go back there again this summer!

## **Tokushima Diving Trip by Dan**

**9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> July**

Seven members (Rie, Damien, Esther, Keiko, Dan, Kaori, and Shinobu) went to Tokushima prefecture for scuba diving and kayaking. We camped one night at Maze-no-oka, a very luxurious campground with a picturesque view of the Mugi-ura bay in the southern part of Tokushima. Unfortunately, kayaking had to be cancelled due to high wind and rain. On Saturday night Rie planned a gourmet Mexican taco dinner. The tortillas were a bit fussy to make but after some practice Kaori and Esther became pros. The meal was delicious and we all ate till we were stuffed. It rained almost non-stop for the duration of our trip so we tried to pitch our tents in the BBQ pavilion. Just as we were about to go to sleep we were kicked out of the pavilion by a campground ranger, apparently there are some rules about camping in the BBQ pavilion.

Sunday we packed up camp early in the morning, and headed to the dive shop. The shop had excellent facilities, rental equipment, and staff. It was rained all day but that doesn't really matter for scuba diving. The water was not so clear but we were still able to see some interesting coral and

wildlife. Enough can not be said about the friendly and professional staff at this dive shop. This is a great place for beginners and new divers. The guides give excellent advice and information about the sea life and the dive plan. A translator was even brought in to accommodate the non-Japanese speakers on the trip. It's not the cheapest place to dive, but you definitely get a great value. Rie organized a great trip and everything went smoothly. We travelled by car but the Mugi-ura bay can also be reached by public transportation. Great place for a weekend escape from the Kansai area.

Maze-no-oka Campground:

<http://www.kaifu.or.jp/>

Club Noah Mugi Dive shop:

<http://www.tk2.nmt.ne.jp/~noah2000/>

### **Nichinan Kaigan & Sakurajima**

**15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> July**

Leader: Shinobu

Participant & Report: Kei

We went to Miyazaki from Osaka by ferry. In planning the cycling course on the ferry, we found a picture taken from the sky on the wall. There was a beautiful island, Aoshima. As soon as arriving in Miyazaki, we went to Aoshima. Aoshima is called "The washing board Demon". Many wide steps of rock are like a washing board. But, we saw only many wide steps of rock (Picture 1). We should have rented an airplane! After that, we cycled in search of the next new world (Picture 2).



Picture 1



Picture 2

We went to Miyakonojo from Miyazaki city to look for the Goat world. We had Goat soft serve ice cream, Goat Bento and

Goat milk (Pictures 3-5). I do not have to explain about these. You can know all from her smile.



Pictures 3, 4, 5

We went to Sakurajima. It was 155km to Sakurajima from Miyazaki. At first, Sakurajima was covered with cloud. As going near Sakurajima, it showed us many faces from some angles (Pictures 6, 7). I saw the grand view deeply to forget tiredness for just a moment. After eating Chinese noodles and Shiro-Kuma (ice shavings) in Kagoshima city, the first day made us sleep soundly.



Pictures 6, 7

On the second day, we went to JR Yamakawa from Kagoshima city by train. JR Yamakawa is an extreme southern JR station with a station employee (Picture 8). We weren't satisfied with the station. So, we went to the extreme southern most JR station by bicycle. The station name is Nishi-Oyama (Picture 9). There wasn't even one station employee to be found! From the station, we looked at Kaimon-dake from a green field. When you see the mountain, you're awestruck.

We got on a ferry at Ibusuki port. On the ferry, I recognized that Kaimon-dake is beautiful again (Picture 10). After getting off the ferry, we cycled to the next port of Shibushi. We kept pedalling for 55km to Shibushi port. On the ferry bound for Osaka, we were satisfied with this cycling enough. And we will look forward to our next adventure.



Picture 8



Picture 9



Picture 10

### **The "Big" Oki Trip by Yuri**

**21<sup>st</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> July**

How many times can you say "Stunning" in a day? The clear seawater which surrounded Oki-island was absolutely breathtaking! !

I met Fumie and William at Itami airport at 9:40am on the 21st. Of course, we all were ready for the great summer trip. Our plane flew for about 50mins before arriving at Oki island. Fumie happily said "Oh! Here is much cooler than Osaka!" There was just great scenery with small houses, a few clinics and hospitals, a few post offices, some schools and so on. No heat came from the big buildings. We took a hydrofoil and arrived at Nishinoshima. After taking a short break, we went to Kuniga seashore for a short hike. While we were enjoying a nice hike, we also could enjoy a wonderful ocean view. Yet, it seemed like William's favourite thing was looking at cowpats (cattle faeces)! Really! The cowpats were everywhere and we had to be so careful so that we didn't step on them. We met a big cow and were a bit worried about whether she was going to attack us or not. However, she was so nice and gave way to us. We truly appreciated it!

Finally, we reached the top of the hill and called for a taxi. In the taxi, we saw the long line of cowpats on the road. It's funny; William still regrets the fact that we didn't take a picture of it! When we got back to the hotel, it was almost dinner time! We knew that we were going to enjoy great seafood BBQ and had been looking forward to it! Yes! The BBQ was so wonderful! The ocean was right there, so that seafood was so fresh and so yummy!! During the dinner, the nice friendly lady at the BBQ place started to talk to us. She was asked us "You're a foreigner, right?" Fumie asked her with impish eyes, "Who do you think it is?" The lady took look at our faces for a while and pointed at me! We all started

laughing. Over the nice conversation with her, she told us about the festival that was going to be held that night. We decided to see it and went to the festival place. The place was packed with so many people and everybody was looked so enjoying. There was a portable shrine which was carried by many guys and it was truly exiting to see! Those guys were so lively and loud (some of them even started to fight each other!), William asked me "Why that shrine is moving like that? Why some of them are pulling it and others are pushing it?" I couldn't understand why either. Sorry, William!! There was also a turret and a small traditional Japanese band played. We found some sweet little girls played, too. They were so cute and we all agreed that if we had Jeremy with us, he was going to definitely exclaim "Kawaii!" with his high tone voice and waved his hands to little cuties!



*One for all and all for one*

Second day was our Kayaking day and our instructor was nice, handsome guy Yamachan! He took us wonderful sea-kayaking adventure with his charming smiling. After getting to know about our skill, he decided to take us some difficult places. He took us into the cave where we can enjoy the harmony of the deep-blue seawater color and darkness inside

of the cave. That was truly mystic!! After landed on shore, we started swimming. There were cute fishes swimming around and I felt like I was swimming with them. That was very enjoyable!! Swimming with them in the beautiful seawater made me forget about how long had I swum and finally I realized that I was so exhausted. Yet, I had to go back to the starting point by kayaking, anyways. Gee! That was a hard work, indeed!! Although, we were so tired, we had to go back to Tougo because we were going to do camping over there. When we arrived at the camp-site, outside was so dark, already. That was a hard job for us to pitch a tent with light from a torch. I felt guilty about that I could not do good job because of fatigue and really appreciate William and Fumie for doing hard work. We did something stupid, though. Next day, we found that there was a light in the kitchen and we could have used it during pitching a tent. Well, that was too late!

On the third day, we went to Jyoudogaura seashore and appreciate fantastic scenery and swam, again. This place was bit challenging because there were so many rocks and stream was bit strong. Again, we just could not help swimming in the fantastic color and clarity of water . There was a cave with hard stream but I really wanted to go though it. I was wondering whether should I try or not, but there was a nice handsome guy again and told me that if I avoid the whirlpool, it was going to be all right for me to try. Actually, I could make it and felt so good! So, did William and Fumie! Afterwards, we went to Shirasaki seashore and so on. Again, those scenery were just wonderful! After we went back to the camp site, we made chow mein for our dinner. Then we enjoyed it with nice conversation. When we finished washing dishes , that was the time for us to enjoy fire-works. Yes! We really enjoyed it just like children. William told us an interesting story that children never know, though. If you are interested in it, please ask him, personally).



*"Ah! So **that's** why they call it OKII island!"*

On the last day, here we were at Shirahama beach and were still swimming! Since that place was sandy beach not like Jyoudogaura seashore which was rocky beach, there were so many people were enjoying sunshine. That was amazing, though. Even if the beach was lot more clouded than Jyoudogaura seashore, the seawater was still very clear!

Now, here I am writing this article in Kobe. Yet, you know, I really didn't want to come back from Oki –island. I still remember the beauty of seawater and Yamachan telling me " There is a hospital in here and they are willing to have more nurses. Why don't you move in here?" Well, it would be a nice idea wouldn't be?

Well, my story about wonderful Oki-island is that's it. Yet, in conclusion, I want to say thank you for our wonderful leader Fumie and William who was so dependable as only guy member!

### **Fuji-san by Peter**

**23<sup>rd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> July**

At the 5<sup>th</sup> station, we were caught in a little shower. Luckily, I had put on some winter shorts at the parking lot. Anyway Ken, Larry and I made up the "Ossan Group". We ascended chatting away. At 6<sup>th</sup> station the rain



Dotemba. It takes 30 minutes from here". I believed him. Then we left for Gotemba to meet Jeremy's party. On the way I tried to call Jeremy.

But my mobile had no signal. I realized that the master had lied to me. Darn!! I was cheated. Though 40mins had passed we still hadn't arrived at Gotemba. After 20 minutes we found a trail we'd been on the previous day. At 7<sup>th</sup> station we saw Junko.

She said "Please buy another JR 18 ticket and I will adjust the ticket fare later. And Yoshimi is still in bed. When she recovers, I will take her home". At the 6<sup>th</sup> station we ate noodles at the hut. At the 5<sup>th</sup>, I asked a taxi driver to take us to Gotemba Onsen. Though, he didn't know where it was so I asked a bus driver how to get there. A conductor recommended: "You first go to Susono by bus, then get JR to Gotemba and finally get a taxi." Larry got very tired. He decided to go home directly by bus and JR. We separated there. Then I did as a conductor suggested. I was relieved to see Jeremy at Gotemba Onsen. In this trip I learned a lot about the importance of preparation when planning a trip.



*The storm after the calm*

## Literature Corner

The following essay is from Fukada Kyuya's "Nihon Hyakumeizan", now being translated into English as "One Hundred Mountains of Japan" by former Tokyo IAC member Martin Hood. "Nihon Hyakumeizan" was first published in 1964 and quickly became a classic of Japanese mountain literature.

### Ômine-san (1,915m)

No mountain of Japan has a longer history than Ômine-san. It appears in innumerable ancient records. It was once known as Kane-no-mitake, then Kinpu-san, on account of the gold that was once supposedly mined there. And it has lent this name to the Kinpu-sans of Kôshû, Higo and other provinces that bear its subsidiary shrines, each dedicated to the Zaô Gongen.

Ômine was inaugurated by En-no-gyôja, who practised austerities on its summit in the first year of Saimei (655) when he was twenty-two years of age. This was Japan's earliest recorded 'first ascent'. Ever since, the mountain has been a religious centre and the focus of pilgrimages by emperors, princes, and the aristocracy.

Before making such journeys, the faithful would retire from the world for some fifty or a hundred days at a certain place of retreat. Then they would purify themselves, reciting sutras the while. Known as the Mitake-Sôji or Purification for the Sacred Mountain, this custom is mentioned in both the Eiga and the Genji Monogatari. In the Heian period, Ômine was second in importance among peaks only to Fuji. Its fame spread abroad and it is the subject of countless poems of that era.

It is worth asking which mountain was the original Kane-no-mitake. The Ômine range runs for about one hundred kilometres from north to south, almost through the centre of Yamato province. It is punctuated by some thirty or so important peaks and passes. Most people who make the Ômine pilgrimage

today actually climb a mountain called Sanjô-ga-dake, which is marked out as a sacred place by rows of stone steles and the bronze statue of Zaô Gongen in its principal shrine. As the only mountain in the Ômine group to be forbidden to women, it may be regarded as the representative peak for the whole range.

However, the adepts of the syncretic Buddhist sects that flourished from the middle ages onwards practised their rites all over the Ômine range, not on Sanjô alone. According to an old record, "They practise the austerities of Shûgendô on the seventy or so mountains between Yoshino and Kumano, they pass over the high and sheer ridges, the steep and rugged paths, the hanging bridges, among the very clouds. The way from Misen, over Shaka-dake, Dainichi-dake, and Tsuchimuro to Tamaki-yama is called Buchû."

"On the mountains" refers, of course, to the traverse of the Ômine range from Kumano in the south to Yoshino in the north. Known as the "Junpô", or pilgrimage of the peaks, this is the route that En-no-gyôja opened. Now most people walk it from north to south, in which case it is called the "Gyakuhô" or "peaks in reverse order".

On the path were the Seventy-Five Trials, or places where austerities were practised. Each has a name and a legend associated with it. The first such place on the Junpô route is the Shôsei-den of the Great Shrine of Kumano, the seventy-fifth is the dry river bed of Muta at the so-called Lodge of the Willow (Yanagi no Yado) where the trials come to an end. Today, few trials await either the pilgrim or the mountaineer who undertakes this path. Indeed, the mountains of the southern half of the route seem to have slipped into obscurity.

I visited Ômine-san in mid-April, before the mountain was ceremonially opened for the year, in the company of Nakanishi Seiichirô of the Senshû Mountaineering Club. First we took a bus to Dorogawa,

at the foot of Sanjô-ga-dake. This village is the traditional gateway to the mountain and, in season, its hostelrys are packed with visitors. Within the enclosure of the temple of Ryûsenji is a spring-fed pool, where adepts purified themselves before setting off, and a stone stele with an inscription proclaiming that the mountain is forbidden to women.

From Dorogawa, a splendid pilgrim's way leads uphill. At the Dorotsuji teahouse on the ridge, it meets the hilltop path from Yoshino. Coming from Muta-no-watashi by way of Yoshino-yama, this path faithfully follows the line traced by the more northerly of the Seventy-Five Trials. On the ridgeline between Dorotsuji teahouse and Sanjô-ga-dake the path passes over many a crag, of which the most celebrated is Nishi-no-Nozoki, from which pilgrims would be ordered to gaze down at the chasm below. If any confessed to sins such as unfilial behaviour, they would be hurled to their deaths here.

We put up for the night in the monastic quarters of Ryûsenji, still deserted at this season, and set off for the summit next day. A large bronze lock adorned the front doors of the temple's magnificent main hall, which would remain closed until the mountain's opening ceremony on the seventh of May.

From Sanjô-ga-dake, the ridgetop path runs southwards past places where pilgrims used to practise their austerities, such as Kozasa-no-shuku and Waki-no-shuku. After that, the relics of religions fade away and we crossed the boundary into pure mountaineering territory, where women were once again allowed. The most exposed and craggy part of the path lies between Daifugen-dake and Gyôjagaeri-dake ("Pilgrim Turn Back!"). We arrived at the hut on a mountain called Misen late in the evening.

Next morning, walking over patches of old snow,

we reached the summit of Hakkyô-ga-take, at 1,915 metres the highest point in the Kinki district. The peaks of the entire Ômine range arrayed themselves in front of us under a blue sky. The ridgetop path led on endlessly away to the south, but this peak was enough for me and we set off for the valley below.

Published here by kind permission of Mr Shintaro Fukada. All rights reserved.

"I hope your readers will find the book interesting. If they do, then let me know next month if you'd like another chapter. I guess you have a copy of the book available, which you can use as a 'menu' to pick your mountain. I have translations ready for pretty much any mountain in the extended Kansai area ..."

### **And Finally**

Although I have no article (tut-tut) I thought you might like me to include a picture from Biwako Camp. By all reports it was a great success. Sayonara to Shinobu who is off to the States shortly and congratulations to Jeremy who turned a year older recently. For upcoming events please check the website. Bye for now.

