

# DIARY: 1978

## JUNE

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### [Trip to Japan and South Korea]

29 Thursday

Just caught the university bus at 7.10 am. We met Ba at Mongkok then took a taxi to the airport. Cathay Pacific CX 510 to Taipei and Fukuoka - a boring trip with most Japanese tourists ignoring the no-smoking area signs. Total time took 4 ½ hours. On landing, spoke to a Cathay chap to try to reconfirm the flight. Then a bus (¥180 ea) to Hakata Station. A bus station worker took us across to JTB station where we worked out a route and paid for it: Hakata --(¥1200 + 500 express)--> Nagasaki; Aso --(basic fare ¥8300)--> Tokyo (via Beppu, Matsue, Himeji, Kyoto, Tokyo). Youth Hostel was full (or so they said) so walked to a Japanese inn costing ¥4400 (total) without meals. Bought a melon (¥500) on the way back and had it for dinner! Then we went for a short walk through the dental school and a park. Had a Japanese-style bath (first YF - scared - then me). Slept on a tatami. They turned off the air-conditioning during the night so did not have the best of sleep.

30 Friday

Had the other half of the melon for breakfast! Left about 9 am and walked to the station. Bought milk (¥70 for 200 cm<sup>3</sup>). In a supermarket under the station bought whole-wheat bread (¥170), milk (¥110, ½ l), lettuce (¥100), bean curd drink (¥100 ½ l). Then took the express to Nagasaki - paid an extra ¥300 each to sit in the reserved seat coach. Took 3 hours - conductor very friendly. On arrival, went to JTB (next door to the station) and bought two sightseeing trip tickets to Mt Aso (¥3610 ea). Raining a little as we walked to the hostel - eventually found it. Booked in for two nights (¥2700 total). Went for a walk up the hill behind the hostel (½ litre lemon juice ¥140, ice-cream ¥50). Took some movies then came back to the hostel. I had a bath then we had dinner (¥500 ea). Played a game of Japanese cards with a Japanese 'friend' before bed.

31 Saturday

Awoken at 6.30 am. Got up and had breakfast (¥400) - rice, raw egg, seaweed, bean curd, soup. Walked slowly up to flower gardens - eventually decided to have a look (¥400 ea!). On the way back, bought milk (¥130) and a chocolate bun (¥70); sat on a wharf and ate them. Walked back to JTB but closed. Took a tram (1 or 3 OK) - ¥60 each - to the atomic bomb area. Saw the peace statue, fountain and a monument at the epicentre. Took a No 3 tram back close to the hostel, Bought some food for tomorrow (5 tomatoes ¥100, 2 peaches ¥80 each,

chips ¥100, Hi-C orange ¥130, bread ¥150). After dinner, went for a short walk then back to play cards for an hour or so. Had a second shower (cold) to cool off after the first bath.

## **JULY**

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### 1 Sunday

Up a little earlier. Shared our one breakfast then walked from the hostel to catch the bus to Aso. Only six people on it! After one hour, had a 16 minute break overlooking a beach near the entrance to Unzen National Park. Then up through the park, past “little hell” (but didn't stop there) then down the other side of Mt Unzen to Shimabara where bus crossed to Misumi (one hour) on a ferry, arriving at about noon. Continued to Kumamoto then up to Aso.

Enquires at the train station (next to bus station) and started to walk to the hostel, then met a New Zealander and his Japanese girlfriend who were just leaving Aso. Then a farmer picked us up and took us to the hostel. Decided to hitch-hike to Mt Aso - did so easily, taking about 25 minutes. Walked up to the crater's edge - lots of steam coming out, and a noise like the roar of a jet engine. Hitch-hiked down again to the hostel. After a wash, had a ¥450 dinner (soup, pork, Japanese salad, rice, tea) at a small restaurant by the toll-gate. Went to bed early because of the early start tomorrow. Only three blokes at the hostel and YF who had a room to herself. Slightly cooler during the night - slept under the sheet.

### 2 Monday

Up very early - 6.30 am. No breakfast. Walked to the station (15 minutes) and took the ordinary train to Beppu (3 hours). Checked train times then walked down to the JTB. Took Bus 26 to Kunnawa spa - ¥180 ea, took 20 minutes. Walked through the narrow streets and found the individual spas higher up the hill. Very expensive (¥750 ea) so didn't go in any. Sat by the side of the road and had our lunch - ¥165 tuna, tomato sandwiches, milk. YF saw an advertisement for accommodation in homes - checked in for ¥1500 each. Eventually found dozens of similar places. After a rest (air-conditioned), went for a walk around the spa area and up a hill for a view - hot and the temperature turned out to be 36.2<sup>0</sup>C! Visited a supermarket on the way back. Apple juice (¥320 800 cm<sup>3</sup>), orange juice (¥298 litre), fish eggs (six-pack ¥110). Also got a tray of 20 medium-sized peaches for ¥400, packet of noodles ¥50-60.

### 3 Tuesday

Most of the day spent travelling. Got up about 7 am, caught a local bus back to Beppu, took a quick look at the waterfront, then walked to the station. Caught the 8.36 am train to Kokura (didn't have to pay the ¥500 express fee!) - bought an ice-cream and took an ordinary train to Ogori, arriving at 12.30 pm. Only a small place. Bought some food at a supermarket then

took an ordinary train to Masuda - very hot and tiring. Along the way, the train filled up with primary school kids on their way home. Got off the train at Tsuwauo - a small village in the hills - but then got on again and proceeded to Masuda. On arrival, could smell sulphur dioxide. Asked schoolboys for help - again almost no use! Walked for about 40 minutes in the heat and eventually located the hostel. Japanese style - and not very expensive (¥1100 each for bed and sheet). Went for a walk around the neighbourhood - not very much to see - standard not as high as in other towns. After a bath, persuaded the landlady to give us some hot water for preparing noodles. Had quite a good sleep - cooler than expected during the night.

### 5 Wednesday

Got up just before 7 am. Left for the station at 7.30 - took about 30 minutes. Found some milk then took the 8.20 express to Matsue, arriving at 11.45 - then had to pay the ¥500 express fee. After getting information about the sights, reserved two seats on the Shinkansen from Kyoto to Tokyo (¥4000 fee each). Then tried to cash travellers' cheques - went to four banks before cashing them - and this only after getting annoyed with them for refusing to cash the cheques. Cashed the last of our Yen cheques. Down to the riverbank for lunch. A short walk to a temple/grounds then round a department store. Caught the No 5 bus (¥200!) for the 30 minute ride. Booked in for one night only. Had a ¥500 dinner - very good.

### 6 Thursday

Caught the tram into town (¥80 - much cheaper than the bus and 5 minutes quicker). Walked to the lakeside then saw an old steam train in a park. Walked up to the castle grounds. At first, couldn't find the castle itself. Entrance fee ¥200 - inflation at work as latest price list showed only ¥150. Four floors to the castle. Feeling hot and weary at this stage. Next we went to the Hearn house / Samurai house area. Bought food and milk and had it on the edge of the moat. Spoke to two girls and helped them with English until they had to get into a bus. Walked up to a tea house but didn't go in. Via a supermarket to another old temple / tea house. Then to the same bank as yesterday where it took an hour to cash DM100 - had the help of two Mormon missionaries who had stopped to have a chat with me outside the bank. Then we saw an accident - a driver opened his door and knocked a motorcyclist off his bike. Back to the train station and the hostel. Cooked our own dinner - noodles, lettuce, meat

### 7 Friday

Up at 7 am though awoke earlier.

Took the 7.43 tram to town then walked to the station - couldn't find any milk on the way! Took the 8.41 express to Toyooka (and paid ¥700 each when the conductor came though - ¥500 for 200 km and ¥200 for the other 3.5 km!!). Changed trains and paid ¥500 express

fee to Osaka. Air-conditioning broke down near Himeji. Decided to go all the way to Kyoto. A good connection at Osaka, having to wait only five minutes. Fast commuter train took 30 minutes and we arrived in Kyoto at 6.15 pm. Took a No 26 bus (¥100) and a 45 minute rush-hour ride to Utamo YH. Too late for dinner but had a Chinese meal in a restaurant down the road (¥350 for YF and ¥450 for me). Slept OK but air-conditioning switched off at 2 am!

## 8 Saturday

Had a lie-in. Had a ¥300 hostel breakfast - cabbage, tea, egg, bread, butter, jam. Set off at about 9 am and walked to the Ryoanji rock garden - took about 40 minutes. YF went in for ¥200 and I waited outside. She was in for about 45 minutes. Then I went in too for a look around the pond and gardens. Starting to get very hot. Then walked down the road to a phone box and called CPA in Tokyo to confirm our Monday flight - expensive, the ¥10 pieces dropping in like drops of water. A Japanese chap helped us make the call and wouldn't accept his money we used for the call. Walked to the Golden Pavilion - very hot and tiring now. Decided to lunch inside so walked around to buy things. Then inside (¥100) and lunch - hot and no wind. About 2.30 pm by this stage. Decided to go and see the Heian shrine. Caught a tram ¥100 ea) and eventually got there. Inquired about No 12 bus stop then took this bus back to the hostel. Had dinner (¥550 ea) though I didn't feel like it as I had a dose of the trots. A young Korean chap bought us a can of coffee (I think to help my trouble). Air-conditioner was on all night though not very cold.

## 9 Sunday

Took a bus to the railway station. Walked up towards the two Buddhist temples looking for 'breakfast' - eventually found a can of Hi-C orange (¥130, 510 g). Near the Nishi Honganji temple by this time so went in (free). Spent a while there, then walked towards the other Buddhist temple (Higashi Honganji). Took a 65 bus up to the old Imperial palace. Sat in the grounds and had some lunch, then watched boys playing softball. Walked to the palace proper, though couldn't get in. Next we walked slowly towards Nijo castle, seeing a funeral procession on the way. We were amongst the last to get into the castle & ¥300 ea) - squeaky floorboards intriguing, gardens pretty. Caught Bus 10 nearby back to the hostel. Checked in and realised that money is running short - may not have enough for airport tax

## 10 Monday

Up earlier and by bus to the station without breakfast. Looked around and found some milk. Bullet train left at 8.25 am and arrived in Tokyo at 11.20 am. Eventually found our way to the information counter to find out about travelling to Narita. A westerner there noticed that a tourist paper gave the relevant information. We took the 12.10 rapid train (¥610) to Narita (arriving 13.25). Walked around Narita (town) - quite a large town - then took a bus (¥200) to

the airport. Baggage searched on entry and again on entering the terminal and twice on going to the aircraft. Had our knife taken away during the flight. Flew in a Tristar, taking about 1 ¾ hours. Not a pleasant flight! [I think this was because water was dripping from the ceiling and the crew could not stop it.] Passing through immigration at Seoul took a long time. Got the knife back then caught a W500 airport bus into town. Got off at a junction near some Youth Hostel but couldn't find it. Eventually walked into a CCC office which directed us to an adjacent hostel. (W4000 a room). Went for a walk after checking in.

#### 11 Tuesday

Slept in a little. Then bought milk (180 cm<sup>3</sup>, W90 ea) and had a look at the Deog Su palace (W220). Light drizzle which lasted the rest of the day. Walked to the Korean National Tourist Corp, but they couldn't help us. So to KTB who were also of little use! So we decided to have lunch in a nearby restaurant. Wanted to buy one W1300 dish but they wouldn't serve only one! Eventually had a Korean meal in a very small restaurant (total W950). Visited then the Cyeoug Bog Palace / National folk museum closed though. A walk up to the royal shrine but didn't try to find it as it was 6 pm. Visited some interesting small side-lanes. Then had some food at a small Chinese restaurant (W630) and walked slowly back to the hotel. Bought a half-litre packet of milk (W250) and bread. Paid W8000 for two nights.

#### 12 Wednesday

(Wedding anniversary.) Rained hard during the night. Up early. Walked to the bus stop and got on Bus 23 for the express terminal - wrong one so changed to a # 91. Took 25 minutes to reach the terminal and so missed the early bus. Took the 9 am bus to Kyong ju (Gyeongju) (W2100 ea) - after collecting our handbag which I had left at the ticket window! Bought eggs (three for W140), a hamburger (W250) and flavoured yoghurt (W150) on the way. Uniform scenery. Arrived at 1340. Nearly accepted a taxi tour and hotel room by a tout at the terminal. Walked towards town and asked a policeman for a hotel; he took us to a grotty little hotel. So we found our own for W2600. Set out to see the sights. Got information by the station then walked to the park with old burial mounds (W200). Then to the "Star" tower - filmed it from the fence as it cost W50! Up to the site of an old palace then wearily back. Had an anniversary "dinner" (W700) in a little restaurant - didn't really know what it was.

#### 13 Thursday

Up a little later than usual at 7.45 am. Left the backpack downstairs then took Bus No 11 (W50) to Pulkasa (Bulguksa) temple - took about 20 minutes. I sat on a box in the bus. On arrival, looked around the temple (W200) and grounds. Took the bus back to the local railway station and then walked almost the whole way to the "Zodiac" tomb - flagged down a No 15 with only about 300 yards left. W60 to look at the burial mound. Caught a bus back

(W95!); a man who appeared drunk fell onto the floor. He was removed from the bus at the stop we got off. Collected the backpack and walked to the bus terminal - just got the 1.30 pm bus to Pusan because it was late leaving - fare W520. The journey lasted 1 ½ hours. Checked in at a hotel not far from the station (W3300). Had a cold bath (Pusan was quite hot) then walked towards the centre of town. Had some food in a “tai pai tong” - dumplings (W20 ea), crushed ice (W50), two sausages (W50). Then down the main road to the tower / pagoda. Dark by this time. A Korean-Chinese boy helped us to get a bus back to the hotel. Our room had a glass door so light came in until we got it switched off.

#### 14 Friday

Slept in a little in spite of the noise outside the window. Had a wash then went for a walk. Looked at the view from a pagoda. Collected our backpack from the hotel then took a bus to Seoul (W2500 ea); the trip takes 5 ½ hours. Took Bus 90-1 into town but ended up in the wrong place. A chap helped us and we took a No 3 back. Bought a dinner for W610. On the way back to the hotel, we met two young people and helped them find an inn. Talked with them for an hour or so.

#### 15 Saturday

Quite a good sleep. Discovered that the heater in the room was on during the night!! Raining when we set out for Suwon to see the Korean Folk Village. Took the subway (W200), taking about 45 minutes. The office was across the road where we bought out tickets (W1000 ea) and got a free bus (eventually) to the village (about 20 minutes away). Very interesting. Spent a couple of hours there. Got a bus back to the station. Subway back (W190 because only to “Seoul” and not our stop, but didn't have to pay the extra). Said goodbye to Amos, collected the backpack from the hotel. Had noodles (W390 ea) in a restaurant, then got a bust to the airport. Amos said it was No 42 but was actually No 41! Arrived only 30 minutes before take-off but delayed due to very slow immigration procedures.

#### Overall expenses

Start:	Travellers cheques	Cash
	DM 450	–
	Y 65 000	22 000
	W –	50 000
	HK 1 300	
Date	Cashed	
29/6	Y 25 000	
30/6	Y 10 000	
5/7	Y 30 000	

6/7 DM 100 (~ Y 9780)

Finish:	Travellers cheques	Cash
DM	350	–
Y	–	700
W	–	4 600
HK	1 300	

Spent: DM 100 = HK 228

Y 86 300 = HK 1984

W 49 400 = HK 455

Total: HK 2667

17 days and nights

Therefore, average / person / night = HK\$ 78

[Japan: average (12 days) = HK\$ 82

Korea: average (5 days) = HK\$ 46 ]

Total cost / person:

Air fare = HK\$ 1760

Expenses = HK\$ 1333

HK\$ 3093