



# Christmas 2003



It is hard to believe that another year is almost over. This year has been as busy as the previous. Being so busy after I retired I now wonder how I ever found time to work.

In the spring of this year we went to Cleveland Ohio to attend the wedding of our niece Miwako to Matthew Renninger. Matthew is in the U.S. Navy and is stationed in Japan on the Aircraft Carrier Kitty Hawk. Matthew and Miwako meet in Tokyo where she was working as a translator during the World Cup playoffs. They had a wedding at Matthew's home town in Ohio. Miwako's parents come from Japan and we accompanied them to Ohio.



In September they had their Japanese wedding at the historical Shinto Shrine at Dazaifu. We were able to leave early for our trip to Australia and traveled via Japan. This allowed us to attend the wedding. The wedding was something to see. Tsuchino and I had a Shinto wedding when we were married, but our wedding was nothing like this. There was over a hundred people in attendance and the ceremony took

over a hour.

We had a reception after the wedding. It is a Japanese custom to honor both sets of parents with flowers. The picture to the right shows the event. Miwako also honored Tsuchino since she considers Tsuchino to be her American mother. While going to college at Eastern Washington University she was with us for almost five years and was like a daughter. Some day I will write about the experience of having a teenage girl moving in and taking over the spare bedroom and bathroom.





After the wedding in Japan we returned to Tokyo where we meet a group of our friends from Seattle. The whole group then left for Australia. We attended the Australian chapter of the Japanese International Marriage Society's 10th Annual Conference. The conference was held in the Australian capital of Canberra.

We entered Australia via Brisbane and spent 3 days

in Canberra. After the conference we were invited to a reception at the Japanese Embassy. After the reception we toured Canberra visiting the Australian Parliament building as well as the Australian War Memorial. We then visited a WW2 Prisoner of war camp where Japanese, German, and Italian prisoners of war were housed. The town of Cowra has the only Japanese war cemetery located outside of Japan.



We went from Canberra to Melburn where we spent one day. Why we went there I don't know. We were not there long enough to do anything useful.

After Melburn we went to Sydney where we



toured the Opera House and a wild life sanctuary where we got to pet Koala bears and Kangaroos. We then went to Blue Mountain which is Australia's version of the grand canyon.





I have spent the last several months working on my book. I have a publisher for the book. American Book Publishing of Salt Lake City has accepted it for publishing and I am working with one of their book editors. The process is very time consuming and sometimes it seems that it will never get done. Most of the editors do this as a part time job so the turn around on the edits takes a couple of weeks. My original target was to finish right after the start of 2004. Now it appears that it will be March or April before we are finished.

Working with a professional editor has really improved the quality of the book and I am hopeful that it will be a success. The most common comment that I have gotten from people who read the manuscript is that they couldn't put it down and read it in one or two sessions. One of our neighbors at Hood Canal told me that they took turns reading it to each other since it sounded better when read out loud.

This summer we had the pleasure of a visit from two of my cousins. My cousin Mike Forrester and Ed Forrester and their wives visited us after they completed an Alaska cruise. I haven't seen either of them for almost 30 years so it was a pleasure to talk about old times.

During our last visit to Japan in May of 2002 I injured my knee when I fell climbing one of those Japanese bridges that are shaped like a half circle. It was quite painful for a few days and I needed to use a couple of Tsuchino's pain pills. I figured it would get better in a few weeks but it did not. After suffering with it for several months I had an MRI which showed that I had a torn miniscus. I had to wait until after our trip to Australia to have the surgery to repair the damage. The doctor would not let me travel for 6 weeks after the surgery and that would have prevented me from making the Australia trip. So two week after we returned from the trip I had orthoscopic surgery on my right knee. The doctor who did the surgery was the same

doctor who did Tsuchino's hip replacement surgery. She told me that the tear had folded over and under and that is why it was giving me so much pain. She called it my origami tear. The surgery was 6 weeks ago so I am still in recovery mode, but everything is going well.

Tsuchino and I have been elected to be members of the board of the Seattle Japanese Language School. Now we are on two boards, the Japanese Language School and Japanese Community Services of Seattle. Tsuchino has started a project to develop a Japanese book library. We have converted a classroom at the Japanese Language school to a library and have had custom made bookshelves installed. Tsuchino and some of her friends are sorting through the Japanese books that have been donated and we hope to have the library open in a couple of months. I have been assigned the task of building a computer for the library and developing a database software program to track the books and members.

I have finished my Japanese classes at Bellevue Community College and am considering attending the University of Washington to continue my studies. The university is located about 20 miles from where we live so it is a pain to go all that way for only one class. Tsuchino wants me to study for a Doctorate but I am not sure that I have the energy. I most likely will enroll in third Year Japanese next year.

If you have an internet connection be sure to check out our web site at [www.MikeandTsuchino.com](http://www.MikeandTsuchino.com). I have a large number of pictures as well as a copy of this Christmas letter, with the pictures in color, on the web site.



We hope that you have a happy  
and joyous Christmas

*Mike & Tsuchino*