Japan's Love Hotels, Sex Shops & the Search for the Legendary Vending Machines Dispensing Schoolgirl Used Panties (Contents are suitable for an immature audience. Viewer discretion is advised.) March 2016



I was already in shock and fear of freezing to death, having left Bangkok's balmy 98F to be slammed by Japan's murderous +50, when I was in for another blow. As the taxi drove up I wondered what in hell kind of hotel The Dragon Lady had booked us into, and for five nights of our three week stay. Besides garish, it was in the middle of nowhere. Surrounded by rice fields!



But when I saw the discrete parking, a lightbulb flicked on over my head. Bangkok's short-time hotels offer the same privacy. In fact so discrete is this place we had a helluva time finding the (tiny) reception.



"Su-san! You booked us into a Love Hotel!" I stared in disbelief at the industrial strength vibrator hardwired into the wall. She smiled, "I know. For \$50(US) it was by far the best deal, especially for the amenities. You saw the tiny room we had last night after we landed at Osaka." Sometimes I can't believe the lengths she'll go to to try to manipulate me into having sex. Now she's tricked me into a Love Hotel!



But it *was* a helluva deal. Huge Jacuzzi-cum-steam room with mood lighting. Three TVs, all pumping porn. But they digitally checker out the naughty parts. The Japanese do everything else so well, but their porns sucks. Well, maybe that's the wrong word but you know what I mean.



It was pretty vanilla from what I've seen on youtube. No theme. No mirrors on the ceiling.



But it did indeed have amenities. Want sexy lingerie? There's a vending machine. Frosted windows. Big vibrating/massage armchair. Vibrating exercise machine. That Japanese staple—karaoke. Expensive Frog shampoos and body lotions and bottles of other gunk only a woman would know what to do with. Fresh sheets, towels and bath robes daily. They even supply a crimson feather as a tickler.



There's several menus so you can order in Japanese. Expensive munchies though. Looks like (top right) two hours is \$300. The vending machines reminded me of a search I wanted to make: for the mythical ones dispensing used school girl panties. Not for me, of course not, but for, uh, for...for – Garth! Yes, for Chicken Legs! That's right, he asked me to bring him back a pair. Honest. Really.



When you're played out from playing the slots in bed, there's this one.



I'm relieved The Dragon Lady didn't book us into the STD section. But I want you to listen to me. I'm not going to say this again: I did not have sexual relations with that woman.



We explored the southwest—to the left—of Kyoto about in the middle. Never thought of it before, but Japan looks like a disembodied caterpillar with a dragon's head.



The Dragon Lady's dad's dad was from Miekem Prefecture (state/province) in southern Honchu, the central big island. They were believed to be saki makers, although Hattori translates as tailor. As such, it's a common name as names like Smith and Baker are, reflecting occupations.



Naturally she dragged me through several saki shops, to buy a representative bottle.

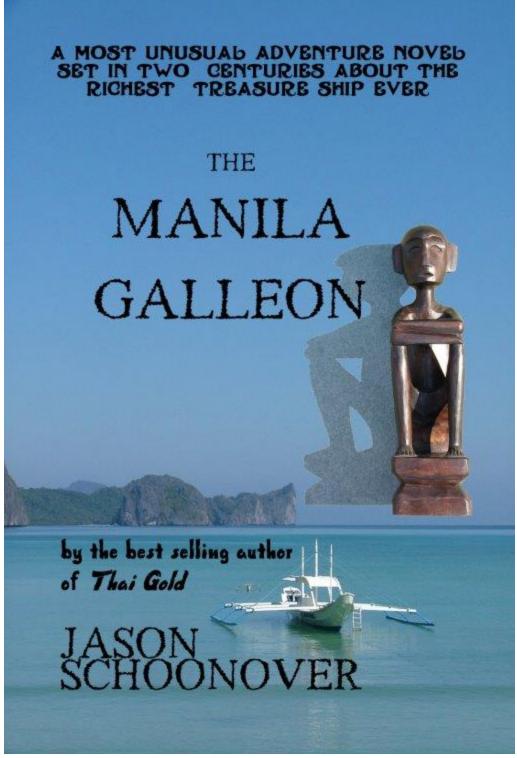


Ise is a living museum. One gets a feel for the world he lived in, then left, about a century ago. Little is known about him and, indeed, Su doesn't know who her relatives are back in the Old Country. But she's ultimately related to all of them. Indeed, it's difficult enough for me tell her apart from other Asians since they all look alike, of course. Here it was impossible. On more than one occasion I almost returned to the hotel with the wrong girl. Unfort—, uh, fortunately she caught up and straightened me out.





Nearby Naiku and Geku are the spiritual homes of all Japanese. Their Shinto temples are rebuilt every 20 years so they're always in exquisite condition. It's an animistic religion raised to a sophisticated level, one I find myself very at home with.



It was a sub-theme I wove into *The Manila Galleon*, the first anthropological adventure-thriller, a new sub-genre I launched, and the book I'm frequently told by readers is my best. It's on my Amazon author's page for Kindle <u>http://www.amazon.com/Jason-Schoonover/e/B005PO6CKI</u> at \$3.99.

Paperback at \$18.95 at <u>http://www.lulu.com/shop/jason-schoonover/the-manila-galleon/paperback/product-286920.html</u> "The Manila galleon was the annual treasure ship sailing between Acapulco and Manila for 250 years. *The Manila Galleon* is dovetailing adventures: one set in 1704, the other today. Protagonists in each—one a privateer from the frontier town of New York, the other an adventurer from modern Manhattan—try to claim the prize. Each tries to understand the purpose of a mysterious statue aboard. In the past, it is possessed by a Jesuit with earth-shaking ambitions. The stakes are equally high on the modern side—a fortune in treasure. If Muslim terrorists seize it, the Religious World War will explode to unimaginable levels. Past and present converge in a multi-layered climax, restoring a legend to his rightful place in history."



This is also the famous pearl diving area. We saw a tourist demonstration. This exchange Actually took place. Su-san: "Oh look! She found an oyster!" "...Susan...," I groaned. She caught herself and laughed, embarrassed. Of course they dump them back for the next demonstration.



It's still a very important pearl growing area and picturesque. Neat this Japanese twist to Vermeer's *Girl with a Pearl Earring*. We fell in love with the original, on loan in San Francisco in 2013. (See http://www.jasonschoonover.com/blogs/2013-2_i_left_my_heart_in_san_francisco.pdf)



While there we had to try the famous lobster, here breaded. The Japanese are very poor. They can't afford chairs. Or forks and spoons. You have to eat with sticks. Little sticks.



Despite this, the Japanese are the most refined, civilized people in the world...well, except for this lout clipping his toenails. We used a rail pass. \$514US each for three weeks.



Figuring out transportation 35 years ago was a nightmare but today Engrish signage is everywhere. It's still sometimes confusing but by looking lost and stupid, which comes natural to me, someone will hurry up to help. The Japanese are extremely friendly and helpful. Please, they're even more polite than us boring Canucks, thank you!



The bullet trains are fabulous. Japan has, hands down, the best transportation system (including transit buses and subways) in the world. You can set your watch by them. In Canada, you're lucky if you can set your calendar.



On the way to Hiroshima, Su-san said I was just like a bullet train, which I took as a compliment. Look at how polished and handsome they are. Then it occurred to me that she said it scornfully. What could she mean by that...?



Public drunkenness is accepted due to the high stress. Signs like this appear at train stations. Even the toenail clipper didn't raise eyebrows. However, we saw no evidence of this, or I would be posting the picture.



Not sloshed, just tired. The Japanese work loooong hours.



The scenery from trains is monotonous and urban, despite Japan being still 67% forested. Most Southeast Asia countries are a fraction of that. Japan's cities are huge and blend into each other, like Osaka, Kyoto and Nara. From the air they remind me of giant computer chips. Japan is dense and it's being felt: the current 127 million is projected to drop by a third in the next 50 years. I'm not surprised, having seen their porn. It's enough to turn anyone off sex.



A short ferry across to Miajima Island from Hiroshima is the 0-torii Gate of Itsukashima Shrine, a World Heritage Site. It's the eighth erected since the Heian Period (794-1185), this one being raised in 1875. Amazingly, it withstood the A-bomb across the water just a few miles away. This is one of the three most photographed sites in Japan.

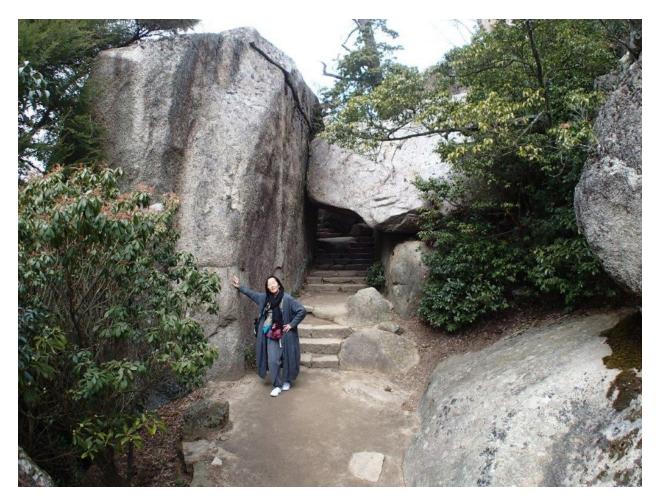


Mt. Fuji is certainly a second. What the third is I don't know but suspect it's the Japanese themselves. I swear I should do a book on selfies and call it just that—*Selfies*. Sooner than later someone will, mark my words.

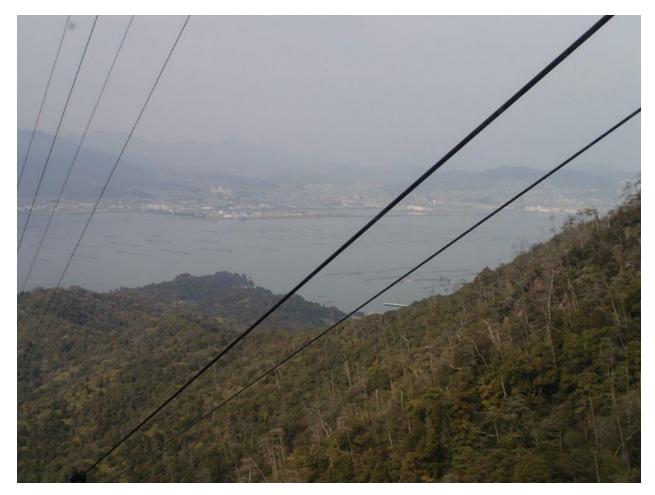




Cool place. One of my favorites in Japan. Tranquil. I was pleased to see how many Japanese women still dress in kimono. Not a lot, but a few—though in Kyoto it's common. We'll get to that. It's such a bright, happy style with all the colors, if it does nothing for their waists and boobs. And they're pleased to be noticed—and photographed.



Mirajima consists of a national park and mountains. It takes two cables cars to lift you near the summit of the highest. The last kilometer is a steep climb but worth it. Shrines and neat boulder formations are everywhere.



From there I was able to look down on Hiroshima's three sided cauldron, the flat city and its many rivers sloping gently to the sea. It would have channeled the blast my way and I was still too close for roasting good marshmallows. Note the skeletons of dead trees still standing. The haze and smog (mostly from China; the Japanese have theirs under control) prevented a good shot from the 1,500 foot peak so I took this on the way down, which is a little better. In '82 I did a story on Hiroshima, a full page job widely picked up by the Canadian and US papers Istrung to. Never thought I'd be back.



We stayed at a ryokan. It was another indication of just how poor Japanese are. They couldn't afford to supply a bed, chairs, proper table and some furniture. We even had to go to a public bath in the basement. Surprised me because we were paying \$130. Still, I slept so well that I wasn't aware that it snowed briefly that night. Su-san was kind enough not to tell me for several days, knowing it could cause a panic attack.



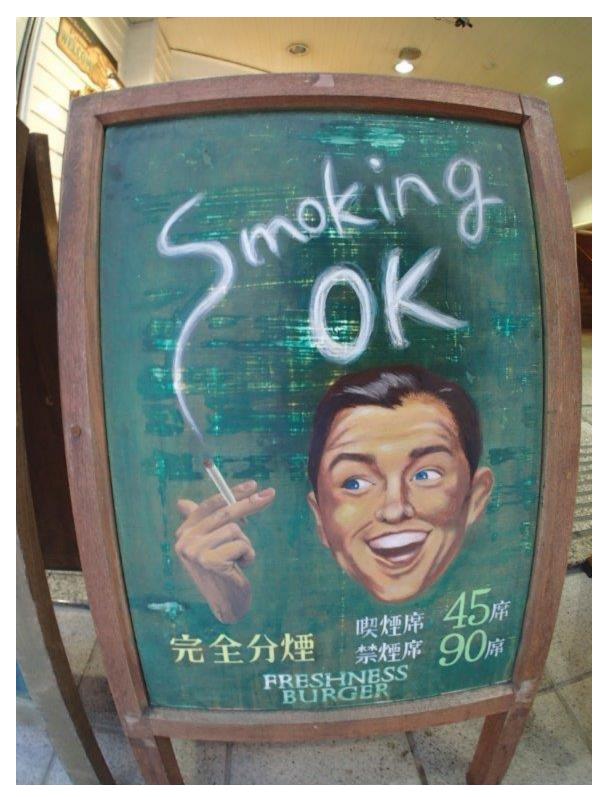
The only other place I've seen rickshaws was in Calcutta. Poor guys. But they gotta put rice and seaweed on the table. This is the main form of transportation all over Japan, of course. They export all those Toyotos and Nissans.



Gawd, they're so impoverished they have to eat plastic food. Yes, this is all plastic. No wonder they're thin. They're not getting nutrients. They have to live longer than anybody too.



The south is where the legendary mandarin oranges grow. Convincing Japanese that our Canadian use of "Jap" is 150% affectionate is nigh on impossible. They have no understanding of the positive and huge impact "Jap oranges" had on us in Canada (and probably the US) growing up in the '50s and '60s—that the Christmas season didn't really start until the first delicious shipment arrived in December. They're still focused on the WW-II connotation. Even Su-san, a third generation banana Japanese, only allows me to use the J word, under duress, once a year because of the racism her parents experienced. And it looks like I've used it up for two years....



I was delightfully surprised by the amount of jazz heard everywhere in Japan. Chicken Legs, married to a real, live Japanesette, is frequently here and always bringing back excellent jazz. And it's all from the 1950s and early '60s, my favorite periods.



Next stop was the southwestern most island, Kyushu—and we were back in the warmth! I wasn't going to freeze to death after all. And Kumamoto with the loudest pachinko arcades I've heard. I thought they were noisy in the '80s with their mechanical machines, but they were known as "parlours" then. Now they've gone full Vegas—and it's a deafening roar in here.



Its covered arcade is typical of Japan.



Vending machines are everywhere, but a third of the way through the trip and still none dispensing school girl's used panties. I was getting anxious. There's 5.52 million vending machines in the country and if I was going to check them all, I'd have to hurry. (And most can be outside because of the honesty of Japanese. In Canada and the US, they haul ATMs away with chains, so these would last a couple weeks there.)



With one of the three best castles in Japan, protected by fierce, scowling samurai. The dunce cap and Mickey Mouse ears are designed to make enemies die laughing.



Two hours and 100 miles across open ocean took us to the World Heritage Site of Yakushima. Man, can this thing move.



The wind was up with waves 12-feet-high but that sucker cut right through them.



But I see the kinds of seas that inspired Katsushika Hokusai's *Great Wave* of 1829-32. One of my favorite works.



The island and its hikes reminded me of British Columbia's Wet Coast, with soaring cedars and moss. And incredible fishing.

"Poke loin" "Tonkatsu" "Fired poke" "Saute chicken" "Fried chicken" "Broiled mackerel "Baked flying fish" "Fride flying fish'

It's also the flying fish capital. I passed on the "Poke loin" as more appropriate for the Love Hotel, but went for the Fride flying fish, both fride and sashimi, or raw.



Flying fish—delicious—once was commonly found on menus on Thailand's islands but I haven't seen it in 35 years. That's a fride wing in top left and sashimi, top right.



Did I say the Japanese, for all their homogeneity, are magnificent eccentrics? This is the doll look. Like those in kimono, they loved being recognized and photographed. We're back on Kyushu, at Kagoshima. The view out our 9th floor hotel room is a smoking volcano.





The ubiquitous noodle shops are an epicurean cornerstone of Japanese culture, as honored in that 1985 Japanese cinematic cult classic *Tampopo*. This family of happy noodlemakers has been at it since 1950.



I can't resist test driving a successful recipe. Japanese food is simply fun, right down to slurping noodles because everyone does it. Why Su-san frowns on this when we're at home, or at a Japanese restaurant in Canada, when I'm sensitively honoring her culture, I can't fathom. Bowls of noodles start at about \$6 and the fat ones, udon, are my favorite. Confectionaries are also everywhere and have bento boxes starting at the same price.



Kyoto is...charming. One of the world's greatest treasures. At 17 it has one of the largest collections of World Heritage Sites. The old imperial capital wasn't bombed during the war and its past is very much alive in the present. I was thoroughly enamored with Japanese temples on an earlier visit, and this city has over 1600.





They're the most magnificent in all of Asia. And, as I've said, Shintoism appeals to me.



But in Kyoto where we spent our last eight days and I haven't found those vending machines! I was getting desperate. School girls are everywhere, and I thought of bargaining directly with them, cutting out the middleman. But since I don't speak Japanese I'd have to use sign language to explain what I wanted, I thought that might get me arrested, so I reluctantly crossed that idea out.



I was desperate enough that I thought of hiring this guy's dog, but then it seemed focused on boys' drawers and I don't think that's what Chicken Legs wanted so I nixed that one too. I'd just have to keep searching.



In the meantime I was back to shrining. I was pleased to see that they're not mere relics of a bygone age but rather very much alive. On a Sunday the Japanese flood into them like a happy tsunami.





The Fushimi Shrine with its 1,000 Senbon Torii gates is famous. They snake to the top of the mountain behind the shrine, the grounds being enormous. You can easily spend a day exploring all the mini-shrines and pathways through bamboo forest.



I've always wanted to see a real Japanese garden, not the ersatz kind out of the country. In the same way you never get real Thai food in North America, I can't expect you'd get real Japanese gardens. Hojo is one of the most famous.



I didn't know it before but the graveled portion mimics water. There's even bridges. It's pretty hard to improve on nature but the Japanese, who excel at taking existing ideas and making them smaller and better, do a commendable job.



Well, perhaps everything smaller ain't better. Forget about stretching out in a relaxing hot tub unless you're Peter Dinklage. This is in a standard "businessman's hotel." I missed our tub in the love hotel. But get this: once we washed our clothes in the washing machine provided in our postage stamp room, the dryer, operated by a remote control, is the entire bathroom. The Japanese know how to use every available space.



And if you haven't test driven a Japanese toilet you haven't lived. Heated seats, spray wash sex specific and blow dry. Ahhhh, life don't get no better, though I can imagine what the sex shop people could do with this. We've been investigating installing one at home but the choice available in Canada is lousy. Besides, I'd never get Su-san off it to shovel the walk or change the oil in my truck.



This region is where Su-san's mother's side originated. Her grand-dad sailed to San Francisco in 1895, when times were hard in Japan. Moving up to Vancouver, he founded a strawberry farm in the Lower Mainland, married and had six young daughters, then his wife died in the 1918 flu epidemic. In 1941 the government confiscated (that's government-speak for stole) the land and Su's folks were shipped to the beet fields of Alberta.

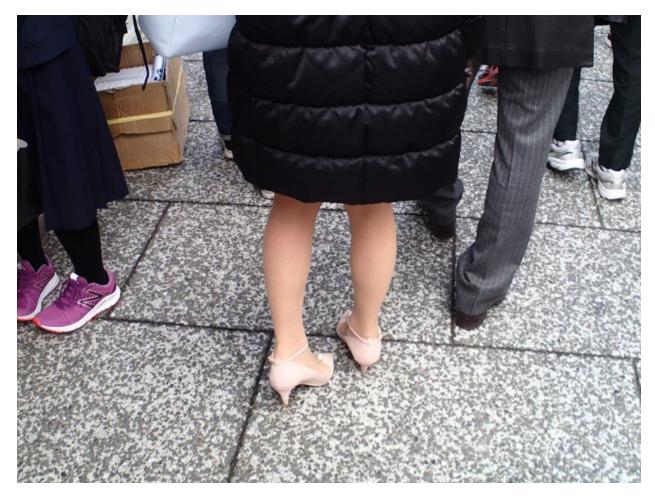


Su's older brother Gene became one of Canada's top photographers. He was the official photographer to Queen Elizabeth in Saskatchewan on five visits, and on other individual visits, for Princess Margaret, Prince Charles, and Andrew and Fergie before they split. He also shot and produced the huge and official Governor General's *Rideau Hall* (resident mansion) tome given to royalty and international leaders visiting Ottawa. Long road to that level of success. He married Judie with whom I went from Grade 2-10 with so he recognizes quality as much as his kid sister. She didn't do so badly herself, become the teaching nurse in ICU as well as a medical researcher (see http://www.jasonschoonover.com/blogs/2014-7_the_dragon_lady_retires.pdf). And nailing me down too of course.



Shirakawa Minami-dori is described as the most beautiful street in Asia and, during cherry blossom season, it certainly would be. It was just beginning when we were there.





An unexpected observation I made was the inordinante number of pigeon-toed women ...? The men aren't. I did a (serious) survey over a week mostly in Kyoto and one in seven displayed it! Genetic? Cultural? Puzzled, I emailed Good Yoko, Chicken Leg's wife, in Canada who is from here. She replied, "They probably need to pee soooo badly....lol. Actually, in olden days, women on kimono were taught to walk like that. Not sure why young trendy women still do pigeon walk...maybe its more feminine, they think?" Oddly, although I saw perhaps 200 women in kimono, not a single one walked this way.



Japanese-toed pigeons. My survey gave me an excu—, er, reason to gaw—, uh, look at women's legs and I've decided to continue my survey worldwide in support of advancing science, physical anthropology specifically.



In the meantime, I continued my study in Japan. Nope. Not this one.



Me? Jason Brooke Rivers Morgan Schoonover of Carrot River at a tea ceremony...? It was actually cool. I'll do it again.



Wouldn't bore you with another castle but this one is incredible. Himeji Castle an hour out of Kyoto as the bullet flies was built in 1346. It just finished a six-year renovation involving 15,000 workers.



You tour in provided slippers. Some might say the Japanese are a wee bit anal since they even politely ask hikers in national parks to put rubber tips on their walking sticks, but, hey, they take care of their environment like no one. They think of everything. Transit buses even lean down yes, tilt to the curb at stops to make it easier for passengers to embark and disembark.



The Golden Temple is to Kyoto what the Eiffel is to that Frog city. It was a shogun's retirement



home before segueing into a temple. The Japanese have exquisite taste.

Kyoto's Nishika Market—the greatest foodie street in the world, 300 meters of exquisite, exotic delights.









We did a day trip to the nearby ancient capital of Nara. Slower in pace with lots of wide open spaces. Japan really started here. Beautiful place to live.

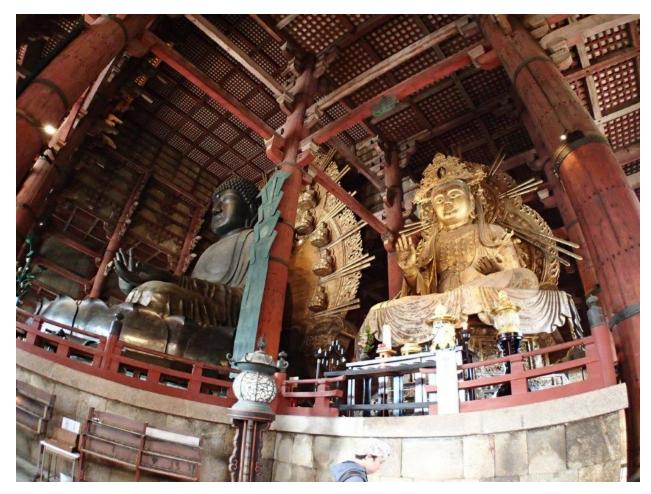


Our Japanese friend Fumiyo in San Francisco set us up with interior designer Hiro who

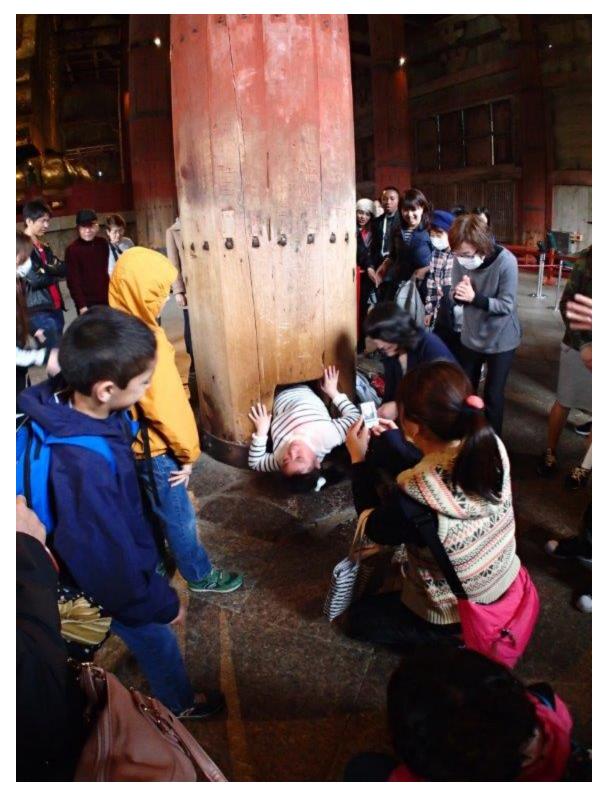
generously took off a day to show us around. And to advise us on a top quality saki from Nara, which we'll ferry home. I love saki. Note the several dentist friends on my blog list: his biggest assignments are for dental offices.



One of the world's largest free standing wooden structures.



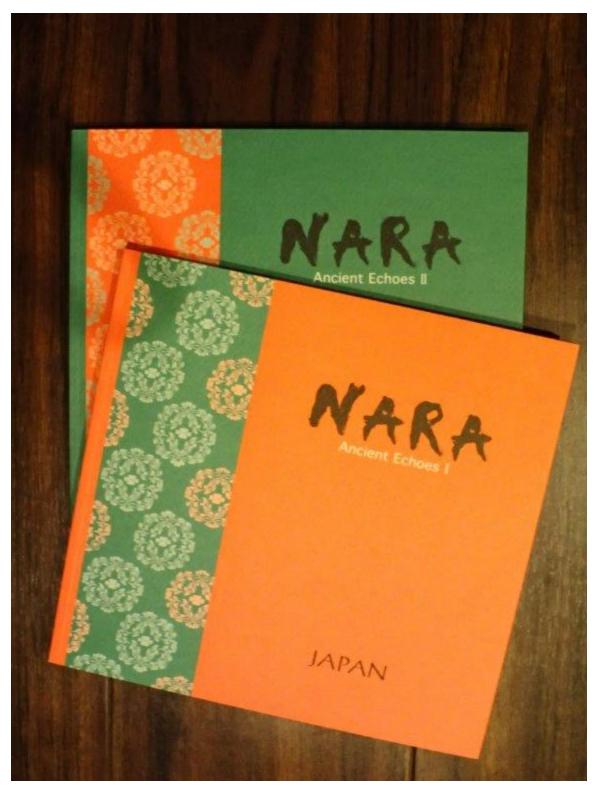
It houses giant Buddhas, reminiscent of the interior of Lhasa's Potala Palace (see <u>http://www.jasonschoonover.com/blogs/2014-6 taking the high road to tibet and everest.pdf</u>).



For 300 years Japanese have been slipping through this hole for good luck.



We finished a fabulous day with yet another feast—this time a five course meal. This is just one of them. I put on at least a kilo on this trip, dammit. Did I say I love Japanese food?



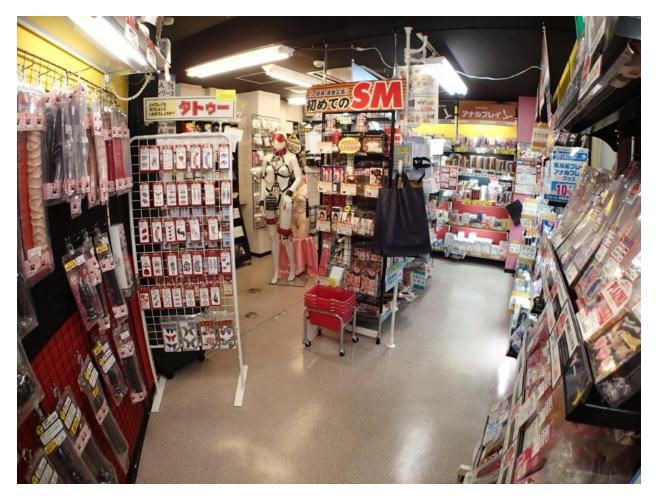
Hiro generously gifted us with his expensive color-plated two-piece set. It'll spend much time on our coffee table back home. And when he comes to visit, I'll gift him in return with my books.



But what about my quest for the holy grail? I moved forward thanks to Google-san! This is the Nobunaga Shoten, ostensibly a bookstore, in reality Kyoto's largest sex shop. The books are all hentai, the "pervert" (that's the translation) form of manga, graphic comic book art somewhat different than my Huey, Duey and Louis favorites of the 1950s. Now it is entirely out of character for me to enter an establishment of this sort. I've been in one perhaps once (cough, cough), well, maybe twice. But since it would make Chicken Legs happy and he has volunteered so much work on this photo blog, I hid my face, took a deep breath and let The Dragon Lady drag me in.



It didn't take long to determine that the Japanese are sex obsessed. In other words, perfectly normal. Besides a main floor of manga, the second floor has thousands of porn tapes. Better than in our love hotel I hope.



The third and fourth floors were where the fun toys were. Welcome to the SM department. Being unfamiliar with these establishments, I think that's means Small and Medium...? There is everything here to tickle your fancy, and fantasy, and all tastefully displayed.



Blow up dolls anyone? Apparently the Tokyo stores have life-sized ones in foam rubber Including males. Whatever your fetish, you'll find it here.



The boob department. Including sets your girl friend can wear if she's a bit lacking.



Men's wear department.



And—*Eureka*—we found it! A vending machine dispensing panties for \$11 Canadian! They're not an urban legend! But, wait...they're not used...? And there's nothing about schoolgirls on the machine. They're new! A 1993 law discourages

schoolgirls selling their knickers for some reason. So I made an executive decision and didn't buy a pair for you Chicken Legs, knowing that as a connoisseur you'd be disappointed.



But wait! What's this? Why, it's used panties!



And each package is authenticated with a photograph of the young lady wearing the

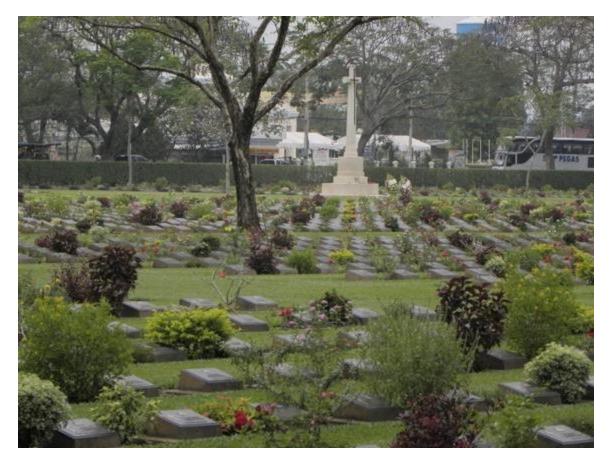
enclosed knickers along with her signature. But wait again: there's no mention of them being authentic school girl panties. So, again, I made an executive decision to bypass them. The price, 3,000 yen, is about \$30US. I'm very, very sorry Chicken Legs. I failed you.



Thus ended our Japanese adventure, just as cherry blossom season was beginning in the south and which sweeps up the archipelago, giving the Japanese an excuse to spread out picnic blankets under the fluttering petals and get plastered. We plan our next trip in the middle of it, for return we shall.



I admit to a prejudice I held which this visit exploded. I resisted visiting again after the 1980s, although Su-san spent almost a year here in the early '80s teaching English, loved it and always wanted to return. There were two reasons. It stemmed in part from my 35-year study of the River Kwai Death Railway and how barbaric the generation of the 1930s and 1940s proved themselves there and in Asia in general, even taking pleasure in innumerable atrocities, Nanking being just one, if the biggest. Sadism, rape, murder and brutality were the norms.



Regular readers will be familiar with my numerous postings on my studies of the Death Railway. Here's one of the first—including what I now recognize as a major misevaluation of Japanese men.

http://www.jasonschoonover.com/blogs/2011-1_the_bridge_on_the_river_kwai.pdf



Here, a group of young Japanese pose at the bridge over the River Kwai, celebrating it as a triumph of their engineering—oblivious to 100,000 Asian coolies and 12,227 POWs who died miserably as slave laborers while in their grandfathers' custody. Dying at the rate of 250 per day. While this photo is irking in the extreme, their government, media, education system and culture hid these facts from them. When those soldiers came home, they didn't tell their mothers, wives, children and sweethearts how cruel and inhuman they had been in Asia. It became The National Secret. And because as a nation they haven't been given the opportunity to absorb and atone like the Germans, it remains the enormous elephant in the East Asian room today. And most Japanese aren't even aware of it.



It's still the cause of bitterness in brutalized countries not feeling they've been properly apologized to, an example being the recent flare up of the Korean comfort women issue. To the Japanese government's credit, instead of denying or ignoring it as they have in the past, they apologised and offered financial compensation. Their stand had been that all these issues, including reparations and apologies, were settled in the 1946 Treaty of San Francisco which, as it turned out, wholly underestimated the deep acrimony left in China, the Philippines to Burma, Malaysia and beyond. But at least the worst of that awful generation's feudal Bushidan values were swept aside after the war—and its best flourished in its stead. It's unfair for the sins of the grandfathers to visit the children and grandchildren, who have lived exemplarily lives. And those grandfathers are just about all dead now.



The second reason was that I had numerous unfortunate encounters with Japanese men of poor quality both in and out of the country. Two in particular spring to mind. One inside was a liar; one of his claims was a philosophy degree I recall. Another, an ignoramus I met in Bangkok (before the sobering Japanese crash of 1990) lauded Japanese superiority in everything and pontificated that the Japanese language would become the world language. Both exuded racial superiority, particularly the latter. I saw a continuity of the generations of the 1930s and '40s and theirs. It amazes me how many ignorant, arrogant Japanese men I met in the 1980s, though most of those encounters were outside Japan. Having now traveled extensively within the country, I recognize that they were wholly unrepresentative. But this sample skewered my appraisal of Japanese men.



Their businessmen have a reputation for arrogance and racism in Bangkok where they keep to themselves. There's even one street of a-go-go bars called Thaniya Road which is for Japanese exclusively. They're off limits to anyone else. They're a difficult group to warm to, unlike those inside Japan. But now I wonder because they don't speak much Engrish, and they work so long and hard, if they just don't feel most comfortable relaxing and getting sloshed with their own...?



By contrast, in my encounters with Japanese women, I found them the best and most sensitive in the world, so I bought me one, if Su-san is watered down by three generations in Canada. She's understandably immensely proud of her roots and can't get enough of Japan. Because of this, this schism, this schizophrenia in my view of the Japanese—and living with one—I was left torn, and terribly, for decades. But this extended visit has sewn the rendered fabric. I now recognize that the modern men are their equal in quality (if they still dominate). I just had the misfortune of meeting a succession of shits. We were treated with great respect, sensitivity, kindness and generosity and without exception the men (and women) in Japan couldn't do enough for us. They're a remarkable people, absolutely unique and, I see, without a racist bone in their bodies. That disappoints me because I'd like to be called a White Devil. I add them to my list of favorite peoples.



Part of the Code of Bushido is a striving for perfection. Today, instead of focusing on the bullshit macho warrior side, these modern day Samurai channel that pursuit for perfection into business, electronics and engineering. Their contribution to the world is providing the highest quality of everything. Indeed, that quality sets the standard, and is a reflection of their culture. The best tenets of the Bushido Code are alive and well.



I look forward to our return and embracing Japan more. Starting with these two. Oh, and I still have to find those knickers for Chicken Legs. Until then, sayonara.

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