

Outside Tokyo

Kiyosato: Alpine Paradise

Today's Kiyosato is a bustling little village catering to the tourist trade. Colorful buildings and bright lights are very inviting to the young and the young at heart. Though a small village of around 2,000 people, Kiyosato has approximately 80 pensions, 45 Japanese family inns and 20 hotels and Japanese inns to accommodate its visitors. It also has a large number of tourist shops with a wide selection of gifts and souvenirs, and coffee shops and restaurants offering a variety of national and international cuisine. However, the town looks very much like any other Japanese tourist town—especially since it was all rebuilt after a fire destroyed the main shopping district not too many years ago—and Kiyosato's real attractions lie outside the village.

The beauty of Kiyosato and surrounding area is unparalleled in Japan. Even the nighttime fog in the rainy season speaks of intrigue and romance in this charming mountain setting. From the main lodge of the Kiyosato Edu-

cational Experiment Project (KEEP), there is a majestic view of Mt. Fuji 40 miles away; to the right are the Southern Alps with Japan's second highest peak, Mt. Kitadake; to the left is the Chichibu Range including Mt. Kimpu; and behind are Yatsugatake's eight peaks. The area abounds in green pastures, in pine, birch and spruce groves, and mountain paths and trails.

Lying 1,400 meters above sea level, the Kiyosato highlands are justly famous for their alpine plants and flowers, variety of trees and wild birds. Each of the seasons has its own natural splendor, and is a draw for artists from throughout Japan. May through mid-June boasts azalea and lilac blooms, including the Azalea Festival in mid-June when the splendor is at its height. July and August give rise to the flourishing alpine flowers—thistles, bellflowers, lilies-of-the-valley, orchids and even thistles—with a Campfire Festival for Kiyosato families (although visitors are also welcome) in late August to mark the end of summer. In October the maple, birch and oak leaves proclaim the autumn season in a flourish of bright reds and yellows. Then all is subdued as winter covers the mountains with pure white snow. The climate is mild and summers are cool, bringing many visitors attempting to escape the heat of Japan's lowlands.

Hiking trails are numerous, and bird watch-

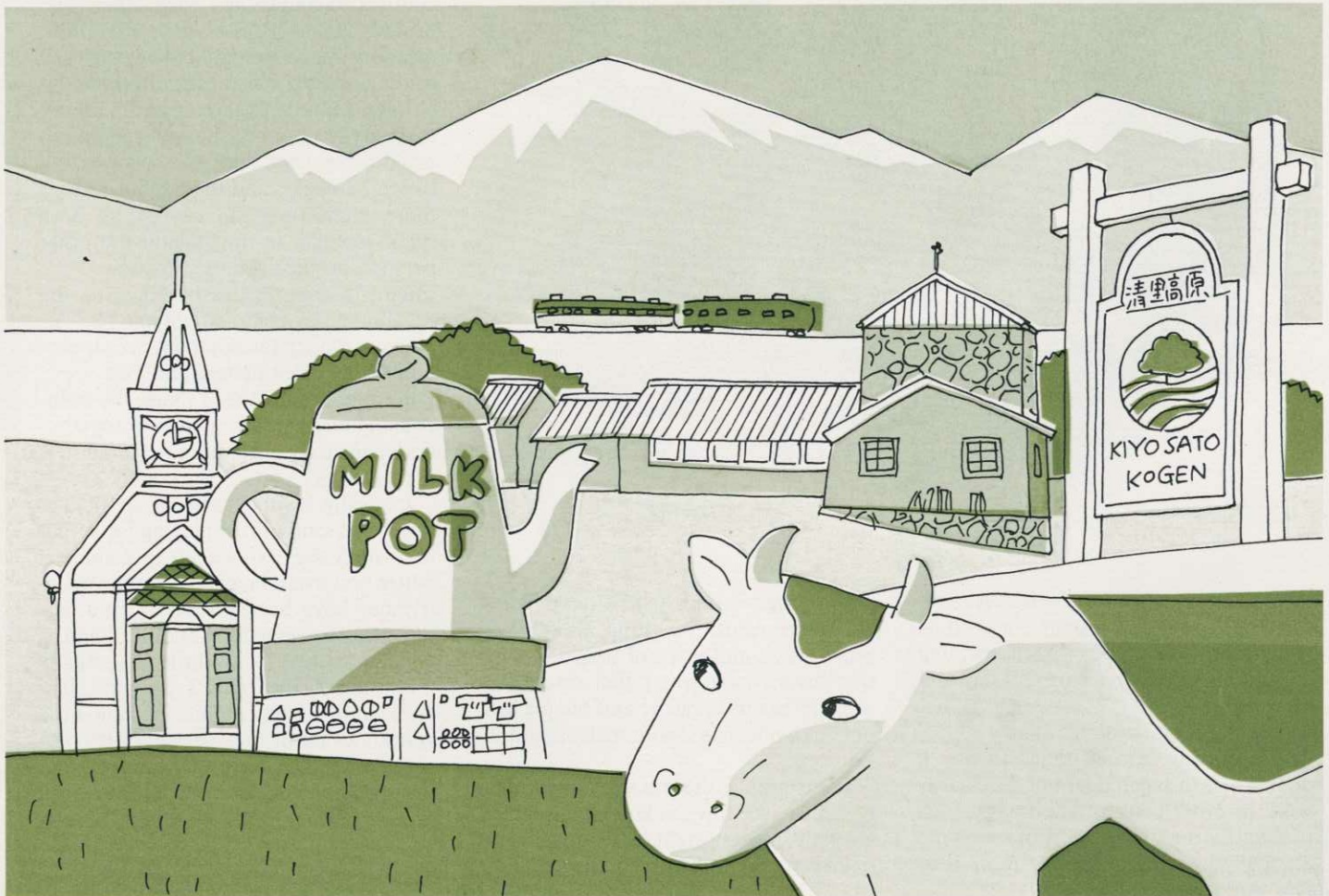
ing is a favorite pastime. Mountain streams offer fishing for the outdoor person, including bull and rainbow trout, and the fields and woods are perfect for family camping and picnics. Cycling and horseback riding provide relief for the footsore. The immediate Kiyosato area also offers tennis and golf, winter skiing and skating.

KEEP

The history of Kiyosato cannot be told without talking of KEEP and its founder, Dr. Paul Rusch. Much of the agriculture which grew up in this mountainous area was nourished by the dreams and faith of this man and his Kiyosato project. Until Kiyosato's tourist boom took off five or ten years ago, KEEP was the biggest thing in Kiyosato.

The story begins in the late 1930s, when Paul, then a young, dynamic missionary-teacher at St. Paul's University in Tokyo, and a group of fellow teachers felt the need to establish a summer camp where Japanese young people could gather for Christian study, comradeship and healthy outdoor activities. After examining a number of sites, they selected Kiyosato as the location for the camp. Its brisk mountain air, beautiful scenery and the fact that it was isolated all made it an ideal location.

Even with the newly opened Koumi Railway Line, Kiyosato was remote, and the location of



the campsite far from the village posed numerous problems when it came time to build the camp lodge. Work ran into a rainy season with record rainfall, making it necessary to carry logs one by one up a slippery two-kilometer slope to the construction site. The camp was finally finished, and the first retreat was held in 1938 in the main lodge at Seisen-ryo (which means "pure spring hostel"). By the end of that first season, over 1,000 people had visited Seisen-ryo, proving the project a success.

World War II interrupted the Kiyosato venture, forcing United States citizens, including Paul Rusch, to leave Japan. All activity at Camp Seisen-ryo ceased. But upon returning to Japan in 1945 as member of General MacArthur's staff, Paul began rebuilding the camp. Despite the adverse economic conditions, he was determined to expand and improve the retreat facilities into a viable Christian community. Agriculture was a key element, and Paul would not believe that the Kiyosato land was not tillable. With an additional allotment of land from the local government, he and his campers began the job of clearing the land for vegetable farming. This was no easy task, because the mountain soil was thin and rocky.

Experimental plots were planted while area farmers looked on in disbelief. Amazingly, the crops confounded popular opinion and actually grew. This unbelievable American and his crazy city campers eked a living out of the ground. Offering seeds to the more adventurous local farmers allowed for the cross-checking of growth and production rates for the various crops. Paul's dreams of agricultural possibilities soared, and, amid protests from "more knowledgeable" men, he introduced dairy cattle to the Kiyosato heights.

This project contributed greatly to the post-war recovery by introducing upland agriculture to the then-backward Kiyosato region and freeing it from its dependence on the lowlands for its food. The project also served as a model for upland agriculture throughout Japan. An upper-level agriculture school provided an outreach program for the people, allowing the students to work as apprentice farmers as they studied. Agriculture in the region today includes dairy farming, rice and a large variety of vegetables.

A rural clinic was included in the project to meet the medical needs of the community and to teach them hygiene and nutrition. And in 1948, St. Andrew's Church was founded to serve the growing Christian community in the Kiyosato area. It is one of the few rural parishes in Japan today that is self-supporting.

The KEEP project has expanded from the original two and a half acres to an area of over 900 acres. It now includes a church and village meeting hall, nursery school, rural clinic, experimental farm, a university seminar house, conference center, nature center, youth camp and a lodge. If you get the chance, you should stay at the lodge rather than one of the town pensions. Not only will you be closer to nature, you will also be closer to the excellent

soft ice cream that they sell, there—ice cream that is so popular that it causes traffic jams on the main roads as drivers line up for kilometers just to buy a cone.

Regional attractions

If you get tired of walking the mountain trails—though I do not see how you could—the region around Kiyosato offers a host of additional attractions for visitors. The Nobeyama Space Observatory with its big (45-m) telescope and five 10-m telescopes is a short, one-stop train ride for those who wish to mix education with pleasure. If you want to go a little further afield and have a taste for culture and art, the area has two excellent museums: the Yamanashi Prefectural Museum in Kofu, which has a beautiful collection of Millet on display, and the Kiyoharu Shirakaba Museum in Nagasaka with works by Monet. Kofu by day is a world-famous "jewelry town" engaged in traditional crystal cutting and grinding of diamonds, rubies and sapphires. It also offers movies and other nightlife activities for those who are not content with Kiyosato's small-town offerings. Other day trips from Kiyosato could include the Kofu Basin or Mt. Fuji and its five lakes.

Yamanashi Prefecture is known for its orchards and is the largest grower of grapes, plums and peaches in the country. Yamanashi grapes support the Japanese wine industry. In fact, the Japanese industry was born in Yamanashi Prefecture and the prefecture now accounts for 60% of Japanese wine production. At some of these wineries, you can watch wine being made and perhaps even get a sample. Yamanashi also has many top-quality spas available for just plain relaxing.

This fall, there is another reason to visit Kiyosato and Yamanashi Prefecture. The 41st National Athletic Meet will be held there, centering around the prefectural capital of Kofu with some events held in the second-largest city, Fuji-Yoshida, in September and October.

Approximately two million visitors come to Kiyosato annually. What brings them to Kiyosato? Well, it could be the sparkle of the little town, but I think it's the peace and solitude of the natural setting, the breathtaking scenery, the mountain, streams and valleys. Wandering among it all, it is easy to forget the pressures of daily life, to temporarily be at one with nature. Whatever it is that does bring them, two million visitors can't all be wrong. So come and see what you are missing. The odds are that you will enjoy it.

Transportation to Kiyosato:

By train:

Chuo Line from Shinjuku to Kobuchizawa;
Koumi Line from Kobuchizawa to Kiyosato
Total time: 2 hours and 50 minutes

By car:

Chuo expressway from Shinjuku to Sudama;
Route 141 from Sudama to Kiyosato
Total time: 3 hours

For reservations or additional information on KEEP, call:

0551-48-2111 (Seisen-ryo Office) or
0551-48-2114 (KEEP Main Office)

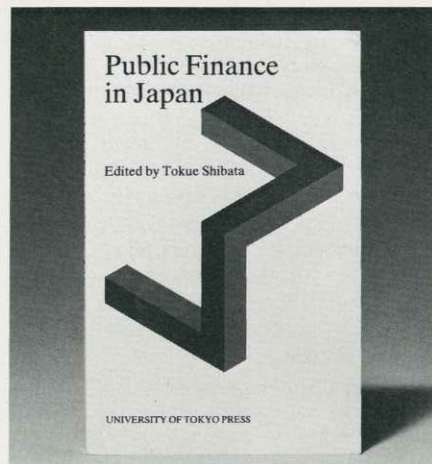
For lodging and general information about Kiyosato call the Tourist Information Office at 0551-48-2200 or 0551-48-2179.

Loraine M. Haase
*American graduate student
who served as a volunteer
with the KEEP program
in the summer of 1986*

Bookshelf

Public Finance in Japan

Edited by Tokue Shibata
Published by University of Tokyo Press
1986, Tokyo
195 pages; ¥3,000



There has never been a greater need to understand public finance in Japan. So much of Japan's public policy agenda—domestic and foreign—is related to some aspect of public finance:

—Japan's trade imbalance with other nations, her role in new efforts to coordinate the macroeconomic policies of industrialized nations, the domestic and international ramifications of the rapid appreciation of the yen against other currencies and current government plans to reduce the economy's reliance on exports and spur domestic demand;

—efforts to "reform" fiscal policy by ending the reliance on deficit financing, reducing expenditures through budget cutting and raising additional revenues through new taxes;

—related debates about the "proper" size of government and administrative reform efforts to privatize public enterprises;

—Japan's pressing needs for basic infrastructure and public amenities—sewers, roads and bridges, housing, parks—which will require huge amounts of money to construct and maintain;

—the relationships between Japan's central