

**7. OFFICIAL CHRISTCHURCH DELEGATION VISIT TO KURASHIKI,
MAY 1998**

RR 8009

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| Corporate Plan Output: Sister Cities Events Management | |

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the visit in May 1998 of the official Christchurch delegation to sister city Kurashiki, as part of the 25th anniversary celebrations.

BACKGROUND

The Mayor of Christchurch and an official group were invited to Kurashiki to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the sister city relationship between Christchurch and Kurashiki. Councillor Newton Dodge, Chairman of the Christchurch-Kurashiki Sister City Committee led the delegation to Kurashiki, from 18 to 26 May 1998.

The last official Christchurch delegation visited Kurashiki in 1993 as part of the 20th anniversary celebrations.

THE DELEGATION

The 14 person delegation was led by Councillor Newton Dodge and included:

- Ailsa Dodge
- Councillor Lesley Keast
- Councillor Anna Crighton
- Keith Nuttall, Community Board Member, Fendalton
- Brenda Nuttall
- Tony Preston, Director, Robert McDougall Art Gallery
- Sue McFarlane, International Relations Co-ordinator, Christchurch City Council
- Dennis Preston, Landscape Architect, Christchurch City Council
- Angelina King, Rates Unit, Christchurch City Council (private)
- Marlene Westwood, Canterbury Museum (private), New Zealand-Japan Society of Canterbury Vice President
- David Bolam-Smith, Christchurch-Kurashiki Sister City Committee member
- Junko Bolam-Smith
- Grant Batchelor, Canterbury Judo

THE PROGRAMME

The group left Christchurch on Monday, 18 May and travelled to Osaka, spending one night in a hotel. The other two days and nights in Osaka the delegates were generously home-hosted, arrangements having been made by the Kansai/New Zealand Society.

In Kurashiki the delegation were again home-hosted. This was the first time an official delegation had had the opportunity to be home-hosted and in doing so gained a real insight to the Japanese culture and family life, encountering so many more experiences than previous delegations.

In addition to the official occasions the group enjoyed guided tours of the Seto Ohashi Bridge, Kurashiki Tivoli Park, Hiroshima Peace Park & Museum, Miyajima Island, the Korakuen Gardens, and visited the Bikan Historical Precinct of Kurashiki, all of which added to the cultural benefit of the tour.

OFFICIAL OCCASIONS

Day 1

- On arrival in Kurashiki on Thursday, 21 May the delegation was received by Mayor Takeshi Nakada, Deputy Mayors Takashi Matsuo and Tetsuo Nakato, Director of the Mayor's Office Mr Bunya and his deputy.

Day 2

- An official 'Silver Jubilee' Ceremony was held on Friday, 22 May, with addresses by Mayor Nakada, Councillor Newton Dodge, the New Zealand Ambassador Neil Walters and Council Chairperson Tadahiro Yasuda, with gifts exchanged between the two cities.
- An Anniversary Tree Planting Ceremony of two New Zealand Cabbage trees.
- A traditional Japanese tea ceremony.
- An official lunch was hosted by the Kurashiki Friendship Society at the Kurashiki Kokusai Hotel.
- An official dinner and reception was hosted by Kurashiki City Office at the Ivy Square Hotel, to which Assistant English Teachers from Christchurch were invited, along with leaders of exchange groups, who have recently or will be visiting Christchurch this year, and home hosts.

Prominent guests included:

- New Zealand Ambassador to Japan, Mr Neil Walters and his wife, Mrs Berys Walters.
- New Zealand Consul General, Mr Stephen Paynton
- General Manager, Air New Zealand in Japan, Mr Albert Lovell and his wife, Mrs Shannon Lovell.

The Ambassador spoke enthusiastically of the benefits of sister city links, mentioning that Prime Minister Jenny Shipley had referred to the Kurashiki-Christchurch sister city link in a speech during her recent visit to Japan. The Ambassador also spoke of the excellent work Mr Ueno of Christchurch is doing in promoting trade between New Zealand and Japan.

Day 3

- On Saturday, 23 May an afternoon tea exchange party was hosted by the Christchurch Friendship Association.

‘YOUTH MAKE THEIR MARK’ ART EXHIBITION

The ‘Youth Make Their Mark’ art exhibition opened at the Kurashiki City Art Gallery on Tuesday, 26 May, for one week. The exhibition, of some of the finest art works produced by senior art students in Canterbury, was previously exhibited at the Robert McDougall July/August 1997. The exchange exhibition was supported by ASIA 2000 Foundation of New Zealand, the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, the Christchurch-Kurashiki Sister City Committee and Singapore Airlines, who transported the art works.

Gallery Director Tony Preston joined Mayor Nakada, Kurashiki Friendship Society Chairperson Mr Kiyoshi Moriya, Mr Michael Gorman (who initiated the sister city relationship) and Mr Satoru Kubotsu from the Kurashiki Education Board in officially opening the exhibition, with Christchurch delegates Grant Batchelor and I also present. Tony Preston escorted Mayor Nakada in viewing the exhibition and the Mayor stayed twice his scheduled time, to the surprise of his staff.

FORMAL MEETINGS

A number of meetings were undertaken by Councillor Dodge and City Council staff.

International Relations Meeting

Councillor Dodge and I met with Director of International Relations Tsunao Kameyama and International Relations Co-ordinator Sam Dyer and were able to discuss in detail:

- the anniversary year’s programme of exchange visits;
- the 25th Anniversary official delegation visit from Kurashiki in November;
- the Turning Point 2000 projects taking place in Christchurch and the opportunities for Kurashiki’s involvement;
- the visit of a second group of Physically Challenged youth from Kurashiki in March 1999, with a reciprocal visit by a group from Christchurch suggested for the later half of 1999;
- the possibility of a ‘Mothers’ group’ visiting Christchurch and being home-hosted in 1999;
- the proposal for a stone lantern from Kurashiki to be part of a Garden of Friendship being built at the University of Canterbury. I was later able to take photographs of stone lanterns and obtain a quotation for transportation.

Vice Director of the Ohara Art Gallery

Objective:

Tony Preston met with the Vice Director of the Ohara Art Gallery, Mr Michihiko Hara, who is responsible for the daily administration of the Gallery, to see whether there was any possibility that some of the world famous impressionist and post-impressionist works in the Ohara collection might, for the first time since they were acquired and since the museum opened in 1932, be considered for loan to sister city Christchurch, to celebrate the opening of the new Christchurch Art Gallery in 2003.

Outcome:

Mr Hara spent four hours on a Saturday, showing Tony Preston the Ohara's collection.

Despite all previous approaches being dismissed politely, but firmly, the new Director Mr Tadao Ogura will consider such an approach and Mr Koyoshi Moriya, Chairman of the Kurashiki Friendship Society and a trustee of the Gallery, voiced his support for the exchange.

The proposed focus for the exhibition would acknowledge 'east meets west' with a selection of the important late 19th and early 20th century masters, accompanied by Japanese works of the 20s and 30s, which were powerfully influenced by the arrival of the Ohara's rare collection.

Tony Preston also had meetings with New Zealand Ambassador Neil Walters in Tokyo, and Consul General Stephen Payton in Osaka, who both agreed to raise the matter and support it fully in any discussions with the key people in Kurashiki.

Sister Cities Garden Park Meeting

Turning Point 2000 have proposed that a Sister Cities Garden Park be built as part of Christchurch's millennium projects.

Objective:

Dennis Preston, visited Kurashiki as part of the official delegation to introduce the proposal for the Kurashiki Sister City Garden, seek Kurashiki's full involvement in the technical and implementation side of the project and seek their expertise with regard to appropriate plants from the region.

Outcome:

Dennis Preston found the person to person meeting with Mr Yasuji Fukuyama, Assistant Director of Parks Management Section, City of Kurashiki, invaluable in introducing and discussing with him the Sister Cities Garden Project.

Mr Fukuyama was very enthusiastic about the project and indicated that he would be the first point of contact in the future, once a formal approach had been made to Mayor Nakada. Appropriate plants and layouts for plantings could then be discussed. Some botanical information was given to Dennis.

A trip to Mount Daisen National Park on the outskirts of Kurashiki, also proved invaluable, enabling Dennis Preston to see the trees and shrubs, which it is hoped would be established in the Kurashiki Sister City Garden, in their natural setting.

The Council Chairperson, Mr Tadahiro Yasuda, has been advocating a similar project in Kurashiki.

Osaka Garden & Greenery Exposition

Objective:

Dennis Preston and I visited the Tsurumi Ryokuchi Park to ascertain the condition of the New Zealand display, which was as part of the Osaka Garden and Greenery Exposition 1989/1990

Outcome:

Mr Fukaji, supervisor of the maintenance department of Tsurumi Ryokuchi Park and his assistant met and escorted Dennis and I. Dennis was able to evaluate quickly the

condition of the plants and will be recommending a number of things Christchurch City Council could do to help improve the display including advice on maintenance of the New Zealand plants and the provision of some additional plants, clearance of the area around the Pou Pou and interpretation of the Pou Pou.

Photos were taken of the New Zealand display.

Visit to Dai Shi Fukada Elementary School

Objective:

Sam Dyer and I paid a courtesy visit to Dai Shi Fukada Elementary School on Tuesday, 26 May to deliver correspondence, artworks from their sister school Mount Pleasant School, Christchurch. A relationship between the two schools was initiated in 1997.

Outcome:

We were hosted by Principal Morimasa Myoraku and Vice-Principal Oga. A school lunch was enjoyed and tour of the school and classes undertaken, during which time I gained an insight of the Japanese elementary school system and took photographs for future use in sister city displays and publications.

Materials were exchanged, with Dai Shi Fukada gifting to Mount Pleasant School information on the school, some origami, photographs and a scrapbook of the school by the children.

Assistant English Teacher's Programme

Objective:

I met with Mr Ishida, who replaced Mr Toshiaki Abe as the Assistant English Teacher Consultant to discuss the recruitment process for the 1999 Assistant English Teachers Programme, where a number of Christchurch people are chosen to teach in Kurashiki High Schools.

Outcome:

The system for recruiting the Assistant English Teachers from Christchurch was discussed. It was agreed that I would review the questionnaire sent to applicants and Mr Ishida would prepare application forms and send these to me by November 1998. I will arrange for an advertisement to be placed in 'The Press' the first Saturday in December 1998.

Radio Kurashiki

Objective:

Mr Fumi, Director of Radio Kurashiki approached me seeking a monthly interview with a Christchurch person to highlight local news, activities, forthcoming festivals and events, and sister city associated news from Christchurch. Monthly interviews with people in Kurashiki's other three sister cities are already undertaken.

Outcome:

The possibilities have since been discussed with Miss Catherine O'Connell, President, New Zealand-Japan Society of Canterbury and Christchurch-Kurashiki Sister City Committee member.

Other Meetings

I also met with:

- Mr Otohei Uno, who was previously the Director of International Relations before his promotion to Director of Continuing Education.
- Michael Gorman, who initiated the sister city link. Mr Gorman had recently sought assistance from the Canterbury Employers' Chamber of Commerce in respect of the export of fresh flowers from Canterbury to Japan and also highlighted the growing wine market, with wines available from Europe and Australia, but not New Zealand.

PRESENTATION OF GIFTS

25th anniversary gifts were exchanged between the cities at the official ceremony.

- Mayor Nakada presented to the City of Christchurch a large pottery plate, a style of local pottery, depicting a fish.
- Councillor Dodge presented to the City of Kurashiki a large pottery pot, made by St Albans potter Frederika Ernsten. The pot's glaze depicted her impression of the patchwork design of the Canterbury plains.

Locally produced native wooden products were the theme of the gifts presented to senior Council staff and other officials.

HOSTING

Acknowledgment is made of the outstanding hospitality extended to the delegation by their Japanese hosts, the Kansai New Zealand Society, Kurashiki City Hall and the home-hosts in Osaka and Kurashiki: hospitality that the Japanese are renowned for worldwide.

MEDIA COVERAGE

The Press reported the delegation visit in an item on Monday, 18 May.

In Kurashiki a number of items and photographs about the delegation visit featured in local papers.

The Ambassador, Councillor Newton Dodge and Sue McFarlane were interviewed by Radio Kurashiki and the interviews aired on Monday, 25 May.

A feature article on Kurashiki will appear in *'The Press'* in July, written by Brent Kinninmont, Journalist and Sub-Editor of *'The Press'*, who also visited Kurashiki in May.

CHRISTCHURCH-KURASHIKI SISTER CITY CHAIRMAN'S SUMMARY

“The official and informal meetings held with staff of the Kurashiki International Relations Section were very beneficial. I predict that Sue McFarlane and I learned more about the current year’s programme and the future year’s activities than a thousand faxes could have produced.

All the delegation learned a lot about Kurashiki City, its people and their culture. Many friendships were formed and the groundwork for the four Kurashiki visits to Christchurch later this year has been set. We will be working on the reciprocal delegation programme, due to take place in Christchurch during November of this year.”

Cr Newton Dodge
Delegation Leader, Sister City Committee Chair

(For the Chairman’s full report, see Appendix 1)

KURASHIKI DELEGATION TO VISIT CHRISTCHURCH NOVEMBER 1998

Confirmation has been received of an official delegation of 11 Councillors and some of their wives visiting Christchurch in November 1998. A ‘citizens delegation’ from Kurashiki will coincide with their visit. Numbers will be advised in August.

Official functions will be arranged for Thursday, 12 November.

- Recommendation:**
1. That this information be received.
 2. That the City of Christchurch invite the Mayor of Kurashiki to lead the official 25th Anniversary delegation to Christchurch in November 1998.

Chairman’s

Recommendation: That the above recommendation be adopted.