

Denver is My Second Hometown

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In September 1962, I came to the United States to study at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. In July of the same year before I left Japan, a group from Denver, Colorado, visited Takayama as the first of the sister-city exchange visit program. They were Mrs. Elizabeth Rose (who was the first chairperson of the sister-city committee) and 15 boy scouts from the Denver area. I traveled with them in Takayama for a few days, and we got to know each other. One of the boy scouts, Dustan Osborn, offered me to stay at his home in Denver when I visited Denver on my way to Illinois, and I did so. Elizabeth and I traveled together to Tokyo from Takayama by train, we got to know each other quite well, and became friends for many years to come. She advised me to use "Tad" as my nick name in the United States.

Late August in 1962, I left Japan carrying with me a message of Takayama's mayor to the people of Denver. On August 31, 1962, I delivered the message to the Denver's mayor when I visited Denver on my way to the Univ. of Illinois. While in Denver, I received warm and kind welcome reception from many people, such as the mayor's staff, Elizabeth, Mr. and Mrs. Willard Mounts (a Scout Master), Mr. and Mrs. Osborn, and other families of the boy scouts. When I was leaving Denver, Elizabeth said to me that Denver is your second hometown and thus you should be back to Denver whenever you could.

Four years later in June 1966, I had an opportunity to visit Denver and the University of Colorado in Boulder. As soon as I got off at the Denver airport, I saw a "Yatai" (a model of the famous float of the Takayama festival), which reminded me of Takayama. Willard who came to pick me up at the airport told me that there was a parade of the Takayama festival in Denver two years ago (1964) and showed

me the movie of this parade filmed by Willard. Later Willard and Ginnie took me to Estes Park and we enjoyed playing golf there, while viewing beautiful snow-covered mountains of the Rockies.

(I had opportunities to visit Denver a few more times, but skip paragraphs about these visits.)

Since 1962, I exchanged Christmas cards every year with Elizabeth and Willard. There was the 100th birthday party of Elizabeth on April 19, 2002. Unfortunately, I had a conflict with my professional meeting and could not attend the party. Her daughter, Margaret asked me to write any recollection about Elizabeth. So I sent a message saying in part as follows: I have been using the nick name "Tad" given by Elizabeth in 1962. Nowadays I write "Tad" on my golf balls and get back most of my lost balls, since many golfers and workers in the golf course I play know who Tad is and bring them back to me.

Unfortunately, Elizabeth passed away on May 8, 2006 at the age of 104. I recall that she wrote, once in a while, in her Christmas card something like: "Since Denver is your second hometown and I am your second mother, come back to Denver whenever you can." I miss her dearly.

The above is only a small fraction of my fond memories and relationships that I have had with people from the sister city of Denver for the past 48 years. Having my second hometown has been the biggest mental support for my living in the United States, and having known such wonderful people from Denver is certainly a treasure of my life time.

This essay is a partial translation of the essay submitted to the essay contest held in Takayama for the occasion of the 50th anniversary celebration of the Denver Takayama Sister City Relation, and won one of the best essay awards.

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Born in Takayama, Japan in 1938, received his B.S degree in Electronics from Tokai Univ. in Tokyo, Japan in 1962, and his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Electrical Engineering from the Univ. of Illinois at Urbana in 1964 and 1966, respectively. In 1966, he was appointed as Assistant Professor at the Univ. of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). At present, he is a Distinguished Professor Emeritus at UIC. During occasional leaves of absence from UIC, he taught at the Univ. of California at Berkeley, Tokai Univ. in Tokyo, Osaka Univ., and Asia Univ. in Taiwan. He served as visiting researcher at laboratories and universities in Germany, France, Italy, and Spain. Major awards he received include the first recipient of the Carl Adam Petri Distinguished Research Achievement Award, IEEE Best Tutorial Paper Award, U. of I. University Scholar Award, UIC Distinguished Professor Award, UIC Distinguished Research Award, etc. He is listed in Who is Who in America, and 20 other Who-is-Who publications.