

GOING AND COMING

The truth has out. We went to Japan, *gomen nasai*. Not only once, but three times last year. Since they were dubbed as business trips, we shall not write anything about business.

Being a beginner, we took a boat and the first port of call en route was Hong Kong. Previously, we had carried on correspondence with a brother Mason, Bro. Wing W. Kwong, who had a share in the establishment of the Grand Lodge of China in Shanghai some thirteen years back. He escaped the communist regime and settled in Hong Kong where he set up an import-export business.

Because we are a pen-pusher for the Cable Tow, as if you did not know that, we were welcome to a small group of brethren in the crown colony. So, it was lunch at Alexandra House with Bros. Peter T. H. Chao, William Choy, Y. K. Yang, R. Y. Cheng, and of course, Bro. Kwong, who knows his way around Hong Kong, being known in government and YMCA circles also. I missed my fellow Zapotero, WB Ruben Mendoza, Adm. Officer of the Philippine Consulate, the first time. He had official business to attend to then, but in my second trip in August, Bro. Kwong and we caught up with him; we three had lunch together with Mr. Salmengo, the commercial attache there and now assigned to Tokyo.

At the Alexandra House gathering, we had a chance to learn about Masonry in Hong Kong. There are some fifteen Lodges there under the

Grand Lodges of England and Scotland who welcome brethren from other Grand Lodges recognized and who welcome brethren from the Grand Lodges of the Philippines and China, however, prefer to be together among themselves. Since 1919 they have banded together as a "Square Club" for social and fraternal purposes. The club has a membership of over one hundred; they meet once a month, but do not do degree work. I find in the roll six brethren from Island-Luz-Minerva 5, Mencius 93, Cebu 128, and Noli Me Tangere 148. The rest are members of Lodges of the Grand Lodge of China, all of which are now meeting in Taipeh and also other Grand Lodges. When possible some of the brethren go to Taipeh for stated meetings. If they cannot, they satisfy themselves with their monthly gatherings of the Square Club. Some of the members who maintain memberships in Lodges recognized by the Grand Lodges of England and Scotland, can attend lodge meetings in Hong Kong.

At Yokosuka, Japan we attended a meeting of the Eastern Star chapter there. We were agreeably surprised to find WB Norman Karschner, the District Deputy Grand Master, who was last year's Worthy Patron of the Eastern Star chapter. Historically-inclined persons will associate Yokosuka as the first port where Commodore Perry landed in 1860 bringing with him a letter from the President of the United States asking Japan to open her ports for

trading with other countries.

Beginning in June 1960, the Japanese celebrated the 100th anniversary of their trade and cultural relations with the United States; oddly enough, with a labor group asking that President Eisenhower do not visit Japan. We were told, however, that it was not the sentiment of the majority of the Japanese people; but to avoid embarrassment, the Kishi government had to accede to the importunings of the vocal and militant group.

But back to Yokosuka and Commodore Perry. It will be recalled that Count Masahiro Hotta, premier at that time, welcomed the Commodore in Yokosuka. It has been a big naval base and is presently maintained by the U. S. Navy and in part used by the navy group of the Japan Defense Forces. It is a long way from Yokosuka to Sakura City; but in Sakura we were taken around the feudal estate of Count Hotta and saw the ruins of his castle. The big estate has, since the establishment of land reforms in Japan, been divided and sold to former tenants and workers.

When one has been a teacher for over a quarter of a century, he has a tendency to revert to type on short notice. After a visit to the schools of the city, we were asked to speak to senior high school students and later made an honorary citizen of Sakura city by no less than Mayor Hotta, the great-grandson of Count Hotta.

At Tokyo, we met many brethren, but did not have a chance to attend any of the lodge and chapter meetings. There was the summer recess in August and in December winter, in below zero weather outside, the temptation was too great to stay in

the hotel room. We made friendship with a former Lions Club secretary and organizer who asked about Masonry. It was not until he asked a third time that we took it upon ourself to introduce him to WB Murayama of the Japan Times and a Past Master of Kanto Lodge. That was in the summer and when we came back in winter, we found the friend due for initiation a week after our leaving.

The daughter of a late brother, an active and loyal Mason in Bulacan, herself a singer of note in America and Europe, had planned a concert in Tokyo last October. Her friends, both Filipinos and Japanese there were wondering how best to get newspaper publicity for her concert. Having been asked by one of them, we contacted staff members of Japan Times and Asahi Evening News, already known to us, to see about the publicity.

The third trip was easily an adventure in Rizaliana. We got permission to reprint two articles on Rizal by two Japanese writers; the first one in this issue by Masahiro Sasagawa of the Asahi Evening News and the second in the coming July issue by Tatsumaro Tezuka of the Tokyo Metropolitan Historiography Institute.

We were able to do some researches which will be written up in the future. Just to get the feel of it, we stood several times on the site of the Tokyo hotel where Rizal stayed. We had to dodge streetcars because the site is now the center of the tracks. We spent hours at the Metropolitan Historiography Institute, read the original reports and accounts, looked at the maps and pictures of the places visited by Bro. Dr. Rizal when he was there in March 1888.