



希望の鐘 *The Bell of Hope*



The Y's Men's Club of Kawagoe

〒350-0046 川越市菅原町 7-16

tel:049-226-2491 fax:049-226-2304

c/o Kawagoe YMCA, 7-16 Sugawara-cho, Kawagoe, Saitama 350-0046 Japan

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Chartered 1998

Club President: Taro Tonegawa/ CP's Theme: Return to the origin and support the Kawagoe YMCA.

Vice President: Atsuko Matsukawa

International President: A. Shanavaskhan (India)

Treasurer: Kimiyo Yoshida

IP's Theme: Together for a Better World

Secretary: Katsusaburo Yoshino

Slogan: Arise and Shine

Asia Pacific Area President: Joan Wong (Hong Kong)

Theme: Make a great impact.

Japan East Region Director: Kohei Yamada (Utsunomiya)

Theme: Instill Confidence in our Youth

Kantotobu District Governor: Goshiro Yamamoto (Kawagoe)

Theme: We may be small, but we are not powerless!

Scripture for February

Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day.

(Matthew 6:34)

December Statistics (For Jan. 25th & 31st)

Attendees: 9 members Attendance Rate: 90%

Kawagoe Club's January meeting report

Taro Tonegawa, Club President

As the saying goes, January comes and goes, February runs away, and March goes by in a flash. It seems like we welcomed the New Year yesterday, but it is already March.

Although it is spring according to the calendar, the cold weather is still expected to continue, as we expect a cold wave that comes only once every few years. I wish you all good health. Now, let me report on the January meeting.

1. Hosting arrangements for Mr. and Mrs. Venkatesh, BF delegate:

The Kawagoe Club will host Mr. and Mrs. Venkatesh from January 29 (Wed.) to February 1 (Sat.).

The main activities and the person in charge are as follows:

29th: noon, at Kawagoe Station, Taro and Keiko Tonegawa will meet Mr. Watahiki of the Tokyo Tama Smile Club. and take Mr. Venkatesh to Kawagoe YMCA, etc.

30th: Hisayo and Kenji Arai take Mr. & Mrs. Venkatesh to the Iwatsuki Dall Museum and the Omiya Bonsai Art Museum.

31st: Mr. Katsusaburo Yoshino will take them to the Railway Museum

Feb. 1st: One-day tour of Kawagoe guided by Ms. Miki Oikawa and Ms. Kimiyo Yoshida. The tour includes the Honmaru Goten (the keep of the Kawagoe Castle) and Candy Street.

31st: Welcome dinner at Hermitage

2. Regarding the bus trip on Saturday, March 29th
• We will be using the YMCA bus, which seats 27 people.

• We have received 50,000 yen in support from the CS fund.

• In addition to the 10 students from the Kawagoe YMCA Clover Class and other students, 2 accompanying staff members, and 9 Kawagoe Club members, there is room for about 6 more people. So, if you would like to participate, please contact Tonegawa.

• The activity plan will be created at Kawagoe YMCA, focusing on Nagatoro and Hotosan. The YMCA will consider where to have lunch for the 27 participants, including where everyone can eat a packed lunch.

• The participation fee will be decided as soon as the activity and lunch plans are decided.

3. Regarding the IBC with the Hyderabad Club

• We will wait for a response from Hyderabad before proceeding with the schedule for the signing ceremony for the IBC.

4. Regarding the manuscript for the bulletin, "Bell of Hope."

• It was decided that the club members would take turns publishing articles in the bulletin.

• The authorship order will be Yamazaki, Matsukawa, Arai, Oikawa, Yoshida, Yamamoto, Yoshino, Keiko Tonegawa, Taro Tonegawa, and Kawai.

• The content of the articles will be left to the authors' discretion and can be anything, such as recent events or random thoughts.

5. Regarding the coffee charity funds

The sales price will be revised to 1,800 yen from March 1st. In line with this, the coffee charity account will be transferred from the funds to the main account.

6. The charity Kawagoe Sweet Potato Funds sold 55 boxes to 49 donors. Thank you for your cooperation. Next year, we plan to sell "Aikomachi" instead of "Silk Sweet."

The main points of the meeting are reported above. The next meeting will be held at Kawagoe YMCA on Saturday, February 15th, at 14:00.

[Kawagoe Program for the BF Delegate, Mr. Venkatesh and Mrs. Venkatesh](#)

Taro and Keiko Tonegawa

As the BF delegate for the 2024-2025 Y's year, Mr. Venkatesh and Mrs. Jayanthi Venkatesh (YMC of Kolam Royals) visited Japan, and the Kawagoe Club hosted them from Wednesday, January 29th, to Sunday, February 2nd, to deepen fellowship.

All members of the Kawagoe Club collectively took responsibility for this exchange, which strengthened our relationship with Mr. and Mrs. Venkatesh. We will provide details of the exchange program here. Each member will report on the day they were in charge in a relay format.

On Wednesday, January 29th, Taro and Keiko Tonegawa met Mr. Koji Watahiki (Tokyo Tama Smile Club) and Mr. and Mrs. Venkatesh at Kawagoe Station at 11:30. After leaving their luggage at the hotel, we went to a nearby Japanese restaurant for lunch. Mr. Venkatesh could eat cooked seafood and chicken, so we tried some sashimi, and he said it was delicious. His wife is a strict vegetarian. She ate vegetable tempura with miso soup and rice. They were both friendly people; we immediately got on well with them.

First, we visited the Kawagoe YMCA and provided a brief overview of the programs. Then, as the weather was nice and they wanted to go for a walk with a nice view, we visited Mt. Hodo in

Chichibu. The Japanese allspice was in full bloom, and we enjoyed a walk in its wonderful fragrance. They listened with interest to the origin of the name of Mt. Hodo and the legend of Susanoo-no-Mikoto.

For dinner, we gathered around a tomato hot pot at my house. Fortunately, there is a South Indian restaurant nearby, so we got some takeout for Mrs. Venkatesh, and we had a fun dinner together. Mr. Venkatesh was quite intense with alcohol and drank a lot, but he was still in good shape. At the end, his wife was poking him under the table... I was strangely satisfied that this is common all over the world.

On Thursday the 30th, the second day, Mr. and Mrs. Arai, Hisayo, and Kenji showed them around Saitama City. We will leave the details with Mrs. Arai's report.

On Friday the 31st, the third day, Mr. Katsusaburo Yoshino showed them around the Railway Museum. Please also see Mr. Yoshino's report.

On the 31st, the Kawagoe Club held a welcome party at the restaurant Hermitage. The attendees (titles omitted) were Mr. and Mrs. Venkatesh, Katsusaburo Yoshino, Fujiko Yoshino, Atsuko Yamazaki, Hisayo Arai, Goshiro Yamamoto, Miki Oikawa, Haruna Kinoshita, Keiko Tonegawa, and Taro Tonegawa. The total was 11 people.

Everyone gave a speech introducing themselves in English, and we enjoyed a pleasant time together. Mr. Yamamoto used PowerPoint to introduce the activities of the Kawagoe Club over the past 25 years, while Mr. Venkatesh shared with us the activities of the Kolam Royals Club and the current situation in India.

The head chef of the Hermitage restaurant specially prepared a course meal for the couple, and the wife enjoyed all the dishes with peace of mind.



On the fourth day, Saturday, February 1st, Ms. Oikawa and Ms. Yamazaki guided the participants around Kawagoe City. I will leave the details of this with Ms. Oikawa's report.

The fifth day, Sunday, February 2nd, was the final day of the Kawagoe Club. Mr. Yamamoto guided the participants around the junior high school club activities and then handed over to the Tokorozawa Club. For more details, please see Mr. Yamamoto's report.

This is a preliminary report, but I hope it provides an overview of the exchange activities at the Kawagoe Club.

As the club president, I would like to highlight that all club members took a day out of their busy schedules to help welcome the BF representatives. I was once again impressed by the members' language skills, international outlook, and interests. I am confident this experience was very valuable for the Kawagoe Club, especially for the club president. Once again, I would like to thank everyone involved. Thank you very much.

Report on Thursday, January 30

Hisayo Arai

On the 30th, I was in charge of guiding Mr. and Mrs. Venkatesh. I picked them up at 10:00 a.m. from their hotel in a car with my husband, Kenji Arai. We met them in the hotel lobby. As Mr. and Mrs. Tonegawa had informed me that they were pretty punctual, they were already waiting for us.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Venkatesh were cheerful and friendly. So, it was easy to talk to them, and we had a great time. We visited the Iwatsuki Doll Museum and the Togyoku Doll Shop, then had lunch at the Yoroken Cafe, located adjacent to the museum. They had a plate lunch with European vegetables. On his plate, Mr. Venkatesh ate most of the chicken and the vegetables (without the dressing or bagna càuda sauce), but Ms. Jayanthi only ate the minestrone soup and the bread. So, we took the leftover chicken and vegetable salad in a doggy bag and had them for breakfast the following day. As Mrs. Venkatesh was a vegetarian, we were careful about what she ate, but I think I learned a lot from talking with them.

After that, we moved to a nearby bonsai garden to see the bonsai trees. On the way, we had a 40-minute tea break at our house. We served coffee and my husband's homemade sweet kumquats. Jayanti-san ate a large kumquat in one mouthful while limiting her sugar intake. Mr. Venkatesh also tried my husband's homemade plum wine. They both said with smiles that the homemade food was delicious, and for a while, we talked to each other about the tastes of our families and our usual meals.

After inspecting the interior and exterior of our house, Mr. Venkatesh asked us questions about the structure and materials, which we answered. He also told us about the way many homes are built in southern India. The conversation continued, covering topics such as the climate and the local culture.

Afterwards, we visited Hikawa Shrine, and while talking about how to worship, we enjoyed ourselves. At 4:30 in the afternoon, when the sun was starting to set, they both said it was pretty cold. I think they felt colder than Japanese people would feel. We returned to the Kawagoe Tobu Hotel at 5:15 pm.

We had dinner at the Japanese soba restaurant "Aun" with the Tonegawas from 6 pm. Mr. Venkatesh ate sashimi and salad and enjoyed Japanese sake and shochu! He seemed to have felt

they were delicious. Jayanti also ate vegetable tempura, eggplant with miso sauce, yogurt, rice, etc. Seeing her eating relieved me.

I recommended the food to them while asking if they could eat it. Talking about food is always interesting, and it's fun to understand their daily lives.

Also, the couple and I have a son and a daughter, so we could talk about things like their children's growth and marriage. This was a chance to make another connection, and as the days passed, I felt even more grateful for the opportunity. Thank you.



I gave a tour of the Railway Museum in Omiya.

Katsusaburo Yoshino

On Friday, January 31st, I was in charge, but as there was a welcome dinner for the Kawagoe Club starting at 6:00 pm, I gave a tour of the Railway Museum, which I could adjust the time for.

I had taken over from Ms. Arai the day before, and we had agreed to meet at the hotel at 10:00 a.m. However, I didn't know that the Tobu Hotel had moved, so I was late. I'm sorry.

First, in the lobby, I reconfirmed the schedule for the day and introduced the four important Indians in the history of Japan-India relations that I was aware of. They were:

•Rash Behari Bose

He married the daughter of Nakamura in Shinjuku to raise funds in Japan to support Rajiv Gandhi's activities for India's independence.

•A. M. Nair

He was active as Bose's right-hand man. He married a Japanese woman and, after the war, opened an Indian restaurant in Ginza, which is still operating under the name "Nair", but is temporarily closed until March.

•Radhabinod Pal

He represented India at the Tokyo Trials, which judged the war criminals of the Pacific War. He argued for the innocence of all the Japanese defendants, including Hideki Tojo. There is a stone

monument at Yasukuni Shrine in Kudan with his face and an explanation of his life carved on it.

• Indira Gandhi

The daughter of India's first prime minister, Nehru, and the eighth prime minister. During World War II, all the elephants in Japan were killed. So, in 1949, he donated an elephant named "Indira" after his daughter to the Ueno Zoo. I saw Indira in 1956.

Mr. Venkatesh took many commemorative photos at the Railway Museum. For lunch, we ordered curry with a meal ticket and asked to serve white rice on a separate plate for Jayanti.

Feb. 1st City Tour

Miki Oikawa

On February 1st, Ms. Yamazaki and I showed Mr. and Mrs. Venkatesh around Kawagoe City.

After meeting at the hotel at 10:00, we went to the Kawagoe YMCA after shopping at Seria on the 2nd floor of U Place.

At the Kawagoe YMCA, Jayanthi sought handmade bags and bead accessories among the donated bazaar items. Ms. Yamazaki and I also bought some items.

After that, we went shopping on the second floor of the Tobu Store for Japanese goods and at Don Quijote for perfume, etc.

Then we took the bus to Renkeiji Temple, where they prayed. They then took a break at the dumpling shop in the precincts, where they ate dumplings, dried gourd shavings wrapped in sweetened rice flour dough, and inari sushi (fried soybean curd cooked with soy and sugar and filled with vinegared rice). It seemed that the two of them liked the inari.

From Renkeiji Temple, we walked and took the bus to the old-fashioned storehouse-lined streets, Kashiya Yokocho (Candy Street), Hikawa Shrine, and Kawagoe Castle Honmaru Palace. At Hikawa Shrine, she tried her hand at the popular "tai (sea bream)" fortune telling. Her fortune was good.

From Hikawa Shrine, we took the Koedo Tour bus back to the hotel, where the couple rested in their room for a while. Ms. Yamazaki and I went to a cafe for a rest. Later, Taro and Keiko Tonegawa joined us, and we all went out for Indian food for dinner. We enjoyed the Indian food very much tonight. It was good that Mr. and Mrs. Venkatesh could try various dishes.

We parted ways, promising to meet again in Kumamoto.

February 2nd

Goshiro Yamamoto

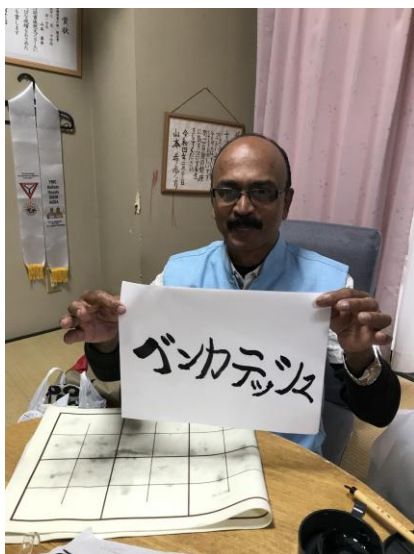
I went to pick them up at the Tobu Hotel in Kawagoe at 9:30 am, and the couple checked out of

the hotel at 9:30 am as planned. We then got on the train and came to the Tsurugashima station where I live, and I first took them to the junior high school my daughter attends, where they watched the kendo club in training. I had told the Kendo club advisor and the club members in advance that I was bringing guests from India, so they all came out to greet them. Although a little embarrassed, the junior high school students explained about Kendo and the Kendo club's practice in English. Although they didn't have much language ability because they were junior high school students, they enjoyed explaining about the shinai and protective gear and showing Mr. Venkatesh how to use it. After explaining, they also let Mr. Venkatesh hold the shinai and actually try swinging it. His wife, Jayanthi, was interested in how they sat on the floor and bowed, and she said it was like yoga. It was a little less than an hour of observing the Kendo club's practice, but I think it was a good exchange for both sides.



After that, we went shopping at a 100-yen shop and supermarket in the neighborhood and then had lunch at my house. As vegetarian food is challenging to prepare, we went to a supermarket together and had them choose their own food.

After lunch, they did calligraphy with my daughters. My daughters wrote Mr. and Mrs. Venkatesh's names in katakana, which they copied with a brush and ink. My daughters were a little shy, but they tried their best to communicate with them in English.



After that, we left for the Tokorozawa Park Hotel, and an hour later, we arrived at the hotel. We then went to the Saitama YMCA Tokorozawa Center. The regular meeting of the Tokorozawa Y's Men's Club was held at 6 pm, but Mr. Venkatesh's wife, Jayanthi, stayed at the hotel as she was tired. During the Tokorozawa Club meeting, we held an induction ceremony for a new member. Mr. Venkatesh also gave a presentation about the Y's Men's Club in India. The Tokorozawa Club members introduced themselves and asked Mr. Venkatesh questions. The meeting ended after 8 pm.



About The Recent Issues

Atsuko Yamazaki

Kawagoe Sweet Potato Funds

The annual Kawagoe sweet potato sales have finished. This is the 17th year since we took over from the late Toru Kudo, a YMCA and Y's Men's Club member. When we first took over, the YMCA and Y's Men's Club members were young, and we received many orders through our acquaintances. In total, we sold over 200 boxes.

Nowadays, the world has changed, and the custom of giving gifts and year-end gifts has declined, so sales are now only a quarter of what they were at their peak. However, by continuing to do this, albeit on a small scale, we can support the YMCA and rediscover the traditions of Kawagoe.

This year, we decided to handle Beniharuka and Silk Sweet in addition to Beniaka, taking advantage of the recent sweet potato boom. We have made the sizes 3kg and 5kg, making them more approachable for small families. In total, we have 58 boxes, of which 42 are 5kg, 16 are 3kg, 28 are Beniaka, and 30 are other varieties. This is slightly more than last year.

Many people enjoyed the reddish-brown taste and the fact that they were freed from the difficulty of preserving it. I think we will continue in this form next year, too. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who helped.



Watching over support at YMCA

Atsuko Yamazaki

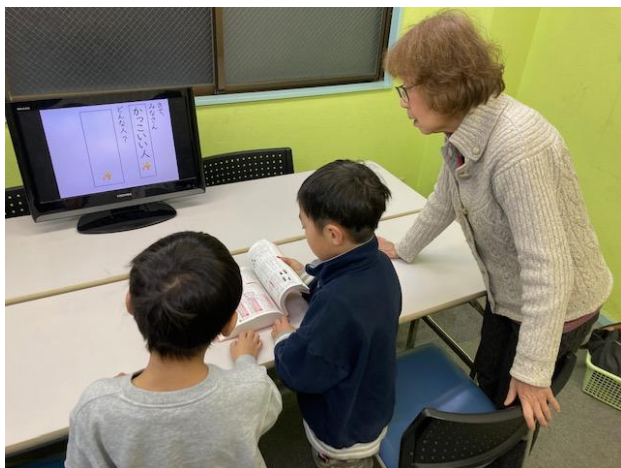
Since last November, Ms. Kawai from the Kawagoe YMCA has asked me to watch over the children on Wednesday evenings once a month. There are three children in the lower grades. After a

long time, I was a little confused and worried about being involved with children again.

The main content is homework, such as calculation drills and kanji dictation, and when they are finished, I watch them play games and so on. I check to see if they can do the calculations without making mistakes and if they can write the kanji properly. I couldn't help but laugh when I saw some of the kanji written so big that they were almost spilling out of the box. I would have warned them if it had been me before. Now, I just let them do as they please and only correct their mistakes.

The main form of play is games. They play cards or choose their favorite games to play. Recently, the most fun game for me was "Polar Bear Drop." This game seems to have come from America, but the background is the Arctic Ocean. You arrange blocks to form ice and the sea and then break the ice with a light wooden mallet in a rock-paper-scissors game. If the polar bear falls, you lose. I lost 2 to 1. I only win about once every three times, so they are very happy and satisfied. They started to wait for me. They ask, "Is Atsu-chan coming today?". I'm not so bad about it either.

I feel good about helping create a place for children to be. I'm gradually getting to an age where I'm not expected to do much, but these days, I'm finding that I can feel unexpected happiness.



A new hobby

Around May last year, a friend of mine introduced me to an exhibition she had seen in Ginza. She found a class for me, as I love lace. She had found the class through word of mouth. I couldn't go to the class without trying it out, so I went along. It was called "Shiraito Shishu" (white thread embroidery). When I think of embroidery, I think of a world of beautiful, luxurious colored threads, but this was embroidery on white cloth using white thread. It was beautiful! I'm not very good at handicrafts, but I took the trial course.

The teacher is a beautiful, mature woman in her 50s, and she even picks me up from the station. When it's over, you get a cup of tea, too. Is there any other lesson as blessed as this? Photo No. 1 is of the work I did in the trial lesson I took. I was completely captivated. It's a very difficult technique for me, as my eyesight is deteriorating. However, today's world is a convenient one for everything. If you get hold of and try on the glasses the craft company provides, you will be surprised at how much they magnify. They seem to be suitable for people of all ages. The excuse "My eyes are bad" no longer holds water.

Next is drawnwork, which involves pulling out the weft threads and intertwining the embroidery thread with the warp threads. I used to admire this technique. I feel happiness with each stitch. I am currently working on a piece for an exhibition in March. It's slightly above my level, but I'm doing my best.

It is said that this white thread embroidery has been made in various forms in various parts of Europe since ancient times. I am currently working on the Azur embroidery of the Bologna region in Italy. As we get older, we tend to have less and less to enjoy, but these days, I feel like I want to keep moving forward to new joys.



I



II

Editor's Note

This year, we have decided to have a club member contribute each month. The first batter is Atsuko Yamazaki. Next month, we would like to ask Atsuko Matsukawa to contribute, but please let us know if that is not convenient. We will make the necessary adjustments.

["Keiko's Monthly Briefing of YMI/ASP"](#)

IPE for 2025—2026 has been elected.

Keiko Tonegawa

In the October issue of "Bell of Hope," we reported that Ym. Edward Ong had been chosen as the next president (president for 2025-2026) for 2024-2025,

but the next international president (president-elect for 2025-2026) after President Edward Wong has now been chosen.

Ym. Johan Wilhelm Eltvik will be the International President for the 2025-2026 term. Mr. Eltvik is the Norway Regional Director and the Alexander Scholarship Fund (ASF) Service Director.

Mr. Eltvik served as the World Alliance of YMCA General Secretary for seven years until 2018. Before that, he served as the General Secretary of the European Alliance of YMCAs for one year. Norway and Poland have awarded him titles of nobility in recognition of his international service and outstanding leadership. We look forward to his efforts to develop Y's Men International, using the bonds he has forged with YMCAs worldwide.



Registration for the 31st Asia-Pacific Area Convention has begun.

Registration for the Asia-Pacific Area Convention, which will be held in Kumamoto from August 1st to 3rd, has begun. Please register from the following website as soon as possible.

<https://www.asp-kumamoto.com/>

Obituaries

- Mr. John L. Choa, Past International President
Deceased on Jan. 31, 2025, at the age of 81.
- Mr. Erik Breum, International Treasurer
Deceased on Feb. 1, 2025, at the age of 78.
- Mr. Jimmy Bacani, General Secretary of Pangasinan YMCA
Deceased on Feb. 8, 2025, at the age of 56.

YMCA Report

Kyoko Kawai

Regarding the retirement of General Secretary, Mr. Kotani

Mr. Kotani has been on leave since mid-October, but he will retire as the representative of the Saitama YMCA at the end of January.

The following was approved at the board meeting on January 30th.

February 1st:

- Katsusaburo Yoshino was appointed as the Representative Director.
- Satoshi Ota was appointed as Representative Director and General Secretary.

On February 3rd, an extraordinary staff meeting was held, during which messages were received from Mr. Yoshino and Mr. Ota.

Mr. Yoshino has long supported the Saitama YMCA as Chairman of the Board of Trustees. While he has been involved in various activities in Japan and overseas, he has now decided to take on even greater responsibility as the representative director of the Saitama YMCA. While grateful for his thoughts, each of us staff members would like to create an environment where we can first take care of ourselves and then ask for help from one another when we are in trouble or facing a difficult situation. We have already established a relationship with the Kawagoe Y's Men's Club, but we would like your continued support.

<Seminar on Addiction Prevention from the Perspective of Relationships>

At the three Y's Men's Clubs' Joint Meeting in October last year, Satoshi Ota reported on the "Digital and Good Relationship Project." This time, a seminar to think about addictions in a broad sense, not just internet addiction, will be held at the Child Rearing and Child Raising Center.

The morning session is for junior high and high school students, and the afternoon session is for parents and the general public.

It is a luxurious collaboration of very outstanding teachers.

Please check the attached document and pass it on to anyone who might be interested. We look forward to seeing many of you there.

Date: Sunday, February 23rd

Venue: The Child Rearing and Child Growth Center of the Saitama YMCA

① 10:00-11:30 For junior high and high school students

② 13:00-14:30 For the general public

Admission: Free

Application: Please use the following URL.

<https://forms.gle/zhwMyQgPQKKvQSyz6>

Editor's Note

This "Bell of Hope" conveys the sense of power of our Kawagoe Club. I am proud that all the club members were able to demonstrate their abilities and provided a very good response to the BF (Building Fellowship) delegate from India. I feel the joy of being a member of the Y's movement.

As reported in the YMCA newsletter, I was appointed as the representative director of the Saitama YMCA on February 1st. The predecessor, Mr. Masato Kotani, fell ill, and the boards of

trustees and directors have been considering his successor since last year.

Because Mr. Kotani had been shouldering the heavy responsibilities of Representative Director and General Secretary single-handedly, which had led to his resignation, we have decided to amend the articles of incorporation and adopt a two-person system for the position of President. Compared to other YMCAs, we are not very large; however, we have 35 full-time staff members, and when including part-time and temporary staff, we have over 100 staff members. The new system was launched with the valuable advice of Tsutomu Taguchi, the General Secretary of the National YMCAs of Japan, which oversees all the local YMCAs in Japan.

We are always grateful for the various forms of support we receive from Y's Men's Clubs, and we would like to ask for your continued support in the future, along with Mr. Satoshi Ota, our General Secretary.

As the representative director of the Saitama YMCA, I don't always stay at the YMCA. However, I will do my best to contribute to the management of the Saitama YMCA by listening sincerely to the opinions of as many staff members and other people involved as possible.

I recently turned 80 years old. Fortunately, I am in good health, but I have been involved in multiple jobs for a long time, so I can't just quit them all at once. However, since I have accepted these duties, I have begun to organize my life so that I can devote more time and effort to the work of the Saitama YMCA.

As a charter member of the Kawagoe Y's Men's Club, I have a strong attachment to the club. I love every one of the members. I aim to continue participating in the management and activities of the club as much as possible in the future. I also plan to join in the Kumamoto Asia Pacific Area Convention. (KY)