

# *Les Clefs d'Or Japan*

# *Key News*



*June 2024 Vol.78*

*Publisher: Aiko Imaizumi*

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# 68<sup>th</sup> UICH International Congress in Bali, Indonesia

**By Akihil Tiwari**

Team Les Clefs d'Or Japan participated in 68th International Congress, BALI, INDONESIA held 21-26 APRIL 2024. Total 8 members from Japan were able to join congress and around 500 delegates joined the Congress from all over the world. We were accommodated in two hotels Sofitel Bali Nusa and The Westin Resort Nusa Dua both located in Nusa Dua the most luxury resort area in Bali.

**Day 1. On April 21,** delegates arrived at Denpasar Airport one by one throughout the day, and we all were warm welcomed by Indonesian Committee Members at the airport security zone and were transferred straight to the hotels by vans. There was Gala & Welcome Dinner at Sofitel Nusa Dua which was about 10 minutes on foot by the beach from Westin Hotel. The participants were in joy for the uniting with members from other countries.

**Day 2. On April 22,** there was First-Time Attendees Meeting for the new members/1st timers. Les Clefs d'Or" and Congress Orientation Presentation was conducted by Mr. Michael Romei, Former General Secretary, UICH Les Clefs d'Or and member of the Education & Training Committee followed by General Assembly (formerly referred to as BOD Meeting) at Sofitel Nusa Dua.

There was also a CSR Activity with the theme of Keys for Trees. Tree planting was done in memory of Ferdinand Gillet – for Young Award Candidates at Sofitel Bali Nusa Dua Beach Resort.

The rest of the members attended the Bali Tour and visited Traditional Penglipuran Village & Kintamani mountain range. It was about 3 hours bus ride from the hotels. The delegates had lunch with a spectacular view of active volcano and the lake. In the evening we enjoyed Balinese Seafood Night on the Beach venue at Jukung Bal.



**Day 3. On April 23,** It was the educational day. Mr. Richard Schestak, Vice President Operations, Asia | Raffles, spoke about Fusion technology with tradition followed by the Panel Discussion. We were fortunate to have the **Panelist, Mr. TRISTAN GADSBY**, Co-Founder and CEO | Alliants, **Mr. STUART GREIF**, Executive Vice President, Chief Strategy, Innovation & Operating Officer | Forbes Travel Guide and **Mr. SHANE O'FLAHERTY**, Global Director, Travel, Transport & Hospitality | Microsoft. After lunch, the members attended the Workshop; followed by the presentation from Mr. TRISTAN GADSBY CEO of Alliants, by dividing 500 members into small groups, we were provided with Scenario, and we all did exercise through AI and experiment how much we could respond to the guest request by using AI technology. In the evening, we had Country dinner at St. Regis Bali and all the Asian Section had gathered and enjoyed the time together.

**Day 4. On April 24,** the members attended the Open Forum. After the opening speech was done by Mr. Yoga Rahiyang Anggakusumah the President of Les Clefs d'Or Indonesia. Mr. Burak Ipekci, General Secretary UICH Introduced all the National Presidents and Board Members to all the members in the hall. We also had a minute silence for all the passed away members after the last international congress in Istanbul.

Mr. Randy Villanueva Santos, President, UICH, did a presentation for International President Report and Mr. James Ridenour 1st Vice President, UICH presented the Young Leader Award 2024 Report also other UICH committee members went through CSR Report and some future projects as well. Speech by one of the sponsors of International Congress The AMEX was also given about the recent trend for the travelers. In the evening, members participated the poolside dinner at Locca Sea House.





**Day 5. On April 25, we joined the Bali Grand Tour.** Explored Uluwatu Temple, a 10th-century sea temple perched on a steep cliff and GWK Cultural Park with some astonishing gigantic stone statues. Finally, we were escorted by the police to the Gala Dinner with the theme of Batik Night at Grand Imperial Ballroom of Intercontinental Jimbaran and the congress was concluded. During the Gala Dinner, we have celebrated the winner of Les Clefs d'Or award 2024 Ms. Julie Benhaim from Four Seasons George V, France who has been won the award from number of strong candidates from the world.

**Day 6. On April 26, the delegates were promising to reunite again in the future congress and departed to their destinations with sweet memories of 68<sup>th</sup> International Congress, BALI, INDONESIA which was well organized.**



## FAM Trip to Ibaraki Prefecture

On June 13, a monitoring tour for concierges was organized by the Ibaraki Prefectural Government Tokyo Office to introduce them to the attractions of tourism in Ibaraki Prefecture.

By Nozomi Sagasaki

First, Mr. Adam Jones, Bonsai Master and owner of **Tree House Bonsai**, showed us around his house in Inashiki-gun, Ibaraki Prefecture. The property has a large circular garden for bonsai and a Japanese-style house where Mr. Adam lives with his family. Members were explained about bonsai in English and helped us with the actual care of bonsai. He also showed us a demonstration of applying a wire to a bonsai, which deepened our understanding of bonsai.

After Tree House Bonsai, we had an excellent pork steak at **Saibitei**, a longtime local favorite. Originally a butcher store, the restaurant has since opened its doors. You can enjoy "Hitachi-no-Shineki" and "Rose Pork," which are Ibaraki's brand-name pork. The hearty 350 gram pork steak was very satisfying, and the delicious meat was a perfect match with the accompanying vegetables.

In the afternoon, we visited **Yamato Horse Park**. Chairman Tetsu Fujita lovingly raises horses, and everyone, from old to young can enjoy horseback riding in an environment where even novice horseback riders could

relax and surrender themselves. In the park, you can wear a costume and experience traditional Japanese horseback archery "Yabusame". Even first-time riders can enjoy the experience with careful instruction. Horse trekking, BBQ, tree house, are also popular.

We then visited **Isokura Sake Brewery** in Kasama City, where we were welcomed by Mr. Iso, the fifth-generation owner of the brewery, who explained the brewery's business. The Isokura Brewery uses local water and rice, and brews sake the old-fashioned way, by hand. In addition to the brewery, there is a store that sells sake ware made by local artists and a bar with a nice atmosphere where visitors can enjoy sake tasting. We learned that only sake can have the same taste year after year, and we were able to deepen our understanding of sake through the tour.

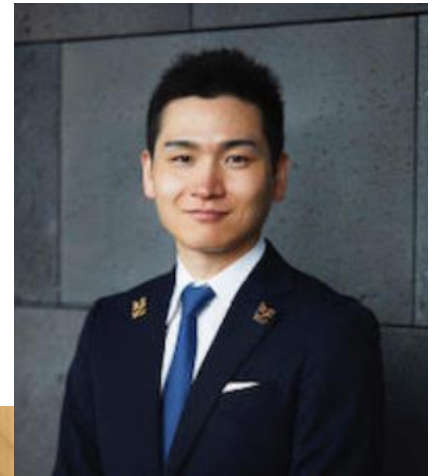
Through this monitoring tour, we were able to experience the unknown charms of Ibaraki Prefecture and hope that many people will have the chance to experience them.



# Getting to know our members!

## Aman Hotel Tokyo Chief Concierge Shuta Takeuchi

**Experience as Concierge: 6 years**  
**Member of Les Clefs d'Or: 2 years**



### Highlight of the Hotel

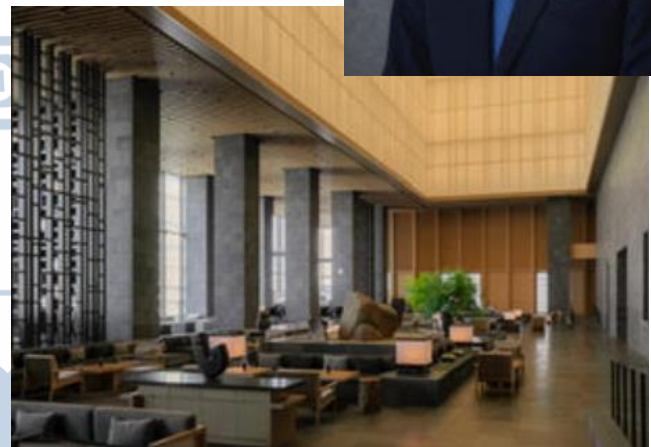
From the heights of the Otemachi Tower, Aman Tokyo tempers urban dynamism with a profound atmosphere of serenity. Inspired by Japanese design tradition, with ikebana displays, washi paper doors and engawa platforms, the vast lobby, ryokan-style rooms and Aman Spa are all among the city's largest.

### How to spend my Day Off

I enjoy watching sports as a hobby and often take time off to catch the games I am interested in. I especially enjoy watching MMA events like UFC and RIZIN, Boxing, and Ice Hockey, as I have favorite teams and players. With Pay-Per-View becoming common in Japan, I am excited to have the flexibility to watch matches anytime and anywhere, including recorded ones.

### My Favorite Place

Sesoko Island in Okinawa prefecture is a truly special place. I had the opportunity to stay there for two and a half months during the COVID-19 pandemic while helping with the opening of a hotel. The island has no traffic lights and you can often see hermit crabs strolling along the roads. At night, fireflies illuminate the



surroundings, and early in the morning, if you cross the bridge connecting this island to the main island, you might spot sea turtles swimming by. The natural environment is stunning, the people are warm, and it holds many unforgettable memories for me.

### My Favorite Restaurant

I have numerous favorite restaurants, but two stand out in my memory. First, the chilled soba noodles with grated yam at "Dankura" in Yamanaka Onsen, my hometown is exceptional. I have always loved soba, and this particular dish is unforgettable. I also recently visited "Taka-An" in Aman Kyoto, where I enjoyed a Japanese Kaiseki meal featuring seasonal and local ingredients. The drink pairings were excellent, making for a very special dining experience.

# Monthly Meeting

## May

- The monthly meeting for May was held at the Roof Top Bar of Sorano Hotel in Tokyo.
- We consulted with Ishikawa Prefecture regarding the recipients of donations for the Noto Peninsula earthquake. We were informed that the selection will be made after confirming the purpose and objectives of the association as well as the use of the donation by the recipient. Total amount of donation was 536,500 JPY (366,500 JPY from the co-sponsored auction, 160,000 JPY from Les Clefs d'Or Chinese Taipei, and 10,000 JPY donated by members of the Japan Concierge Association).
- Donation for the Taiwan Earthquake was passed from President Imaizumi to Mr. Kevin Lin, President of Les Clefs d'Or Chinese Taipei at the International Congress. The donation we raised was total 204,500JPY. (100,000JPY from Les Clefs d'Or Japan, 95,500JPY donated at the monthly meeting and 9,000JPY donated by members of the Japan Concierge Association.)
- A meeting with Hakone DMO was held on May 9 regarding the January 2025 seminar. The main speaker will be The Pierre Chief Concierge: Mr. Maurice Dancer.
- In the second part of the meeting, there was a report on the International Congress.

\*See article for details.

## June

- The regular monthly meeting in June was held at Happo-en in Shirokanedai.
- We had a discussion on donations for the Noto Peninsula earthquake, a report on the familiarization trip to Ibaraki prefecture and the dinner in honor of visit for Mr. Sebastian Fernandez (Medero Hotel, Buenos Aires) and Mr. Jonathan Seungjoon Lee, President of Les Clefs d'Or Korea.
- We recently held a second meeting with Hakone DMO about the seminar in 2025. The theme of this Japan Concierge Association and Les Clefs d'Or Japan joint seminar was "developing younger generations" and we aim to make it a special time for deeply engaging and expressing gratitude between the member of Japan Concierge Association and Les Clefs d'Or Japan.
- Mr. Takehito Yamada, CEO of Modernist & Company, spoke about revising the Les Clefs d'Or Japan homepage, introducing new cloud services, and discussed about his company profile and the attractive events that have been held.
- Lastly, as for the future CSR activities, it was divided into the group for discussion, what exactly we can do the things more proactively. The discussion was so passionate that the time allotted was not enough.

