

us Report on the Visit to Monterey, California by the Nanao City Delegation JP

This report summarizes the visit of the Nanao City delegation to Monterey, California, primarily to attend the 30th Anniversary Commemoration Ceremony of the Sister City relationship. The delegation also engaged in exchanges with Monterey citizens, visited the Monterey Bay Aquarium, and interacted with the organizers of the Monterey Jazz Festival.

Mayor Yoshitaka Chatani (Head of Delegation)

Courtesy Visit to the Mayor of Monterey: We expressed gratitude for the relief funds received from Monterey citizens and organizations following the Noto Peninsula Earthquake. We also shared a video on the recovery and reconstruction efforts and explained the current situation in Nanao City.

30th Anniversary Commemoration Ceremony: After the courtesy visit, the 30th-anniversary ceremony was held. Both sides reflected on the history of the partnership and pledged to build an even stronger friendship. A strong desire was expressed for the resumption of youth exchange programs, particularly the middle school exchange, which has been suspended since the COVID-19 pandemic. Both the current Mayor Tyler Williamson and former Mayor Dan Albert, who this year celebrated his 95th birthday and attended as a guest, emphasized the importance of resuming these reciprocal exchanges. As Mayor of Nanao, I am committed to making this happen.

Monterey Bay Aquarium: We were able to exchange views with the Vice President of Guest Experience, Natalia Hurley. Although established under different circumstances, it is a public facility, similar to Notojima Aquarium. Natalia was scheduled to visit Japan the following week, and was very accommodating, offering explanations about the aquarium's history and operation. We mutually acknowledged that Notojima Aquarium, although managed by the prefecture, is a vital tourist and exchange hub for Nanao City, and that tourism promotion is essential for our recovery. I am grateful to Ms. Hurley, who is also very busy with her work as a university professor, for quickly accommodating our visit.

Monterey Jazz Festival (MJF) Venue: Although our time was limited, we visited the MJF venue, and I had my first reunion with Ken Gordon, Chairman of the MJF Organizing Board, in two years. Chairman Gordon expressed his surprise at how much the people of Nanao cherish Monterey and offered a firm handshake, stating that the Organizing Board is willing to cooperate with Nanao's recovery efforts. I believe this meeting will help in inviting the All-American High School Band and MJF Board members to the "Monterey Jazz Festival in NOTO" in the future.

Lastly, renewed thanks for the friendship of Monterey citizens: We were warmly welcomed by the people of Monterey in various settings, including exchange gatherings. At the exchange meeting, we got to know many citizens and enjoyed a performance by a band composed of Monterey High School students. This exchange program owes a great debt to the efforts of Dana Russell, President of the Monterey-Nanao Friendship Association, and her staff, who prepared extensively through numerous meetings. I express my heartfelt gratitude to Mr. Wada, Alex, Laurie, and other Monterey friends, as well as the Nanao members of the goodwill delegation, and conclude this report.

Toshio Moriyama (Head of Delegation)

To conclude, the visit to Monterey was a great success.

The initial objectives were threefold:

To celebrate the 30th anniversary of the sister city relationship.

To promote Nanao's culture, hold a "Nanao Day" event, and foster citizen exchange.

To deepen the bond which celebrates our history of cultural exchange, and carries our friendship forward into the future across the various aspects of culture exchanged as part of the commemoration celebrations.

All three objectives were met beyond expectation, and I am certain that the citizen exchange between the two cities will build a unique future, marking a major step toward the 35th and 40th anniversaries.

In a world increasingly marked by division, it is crucial to build relationships that foster mutual understanding of cultural differences, tolerance, and cooperation. This is the very significance of continuing exchanges through this sister city affiliation, a sentiment echoed by Mayor Tyler Williamson in his address.

As always, the warm welcome from the Monterey side, led by the Monterey Friendship Association, was astonishing. I am always humbled by the fact that Dana Russell, Alex Flannikky, and Randy David (former manager of Casa Munras Hotel) and his wife came to see us off at 5:00 AM for our early bus departure. When I mentioned this to Randy, he replied, "That's what I learned at Kagaya Hotel." I was truly delighted to see the spirit of omotenashi (Japanese hospitality) alive in Monterey.

I was extremely impressed by the words and actions of Mayor Tyler Williamson:

In his welcome party address, he expressed concern about the Noto Peninsula Earthquake and pledged continued support.

He attended all four meetings (Welcome Party, Official Visit/Presentation of Letters of Appreciation, Nanao Day, and Farewell Party) and stayed until the very end of most of them. Local people commented that this was unprecedented for a meeting in Monterey.

As a concrete step toward continuing exchange into the future, he declared that he would consider restarting the Junior Wings youth exchange program, demonstrating his intent to continue the relationship between our cities.

Notably, Letters of Appreciation were presented from Mayor Tyler Williamson to Mr. Sadahiko Oda (received by his daughter, Ms. Hitoko Yamazaki, in proxy) and from Mayor Yoshitaka Chatani to former Monterey Mayor and former Friendship Association President, Dan Albert.

Going forward, both cities and friendship associations have a significant role to play in carrying these exchanges forward into the future.

The two sons of Ms. Hitoko Yamazaki who accompanied us (Mr. Teruhiko, a high school freshman, and Mr. Kaito, a middle school sophomore, both grandsons of Mr. Sadahiko Oda) were visibly excited and deeply moved by learning about Mr. Oda's contribution to Monterey. They both expressed their desire to return and study abroad in Monterey. Hearing their words, "We want to see the world," and then, "We want to see Japan," made me feel that Nanao's future is bright.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude for the support from Nanao City that ensured the success of this visit. I also wish to acknowledge the unseen contributions of Director Ken Matsuzaki, Section Chief Makiko Ohara, Assistant Section Chief Yoshiko Okajima, and the Chamber of Commerce secretariat staff, to whom all delegation members are deeply grateful. My sincere thanks also go to Vice Head of Delegation Yoshihiko Kitahara and all the delegation members for their cooperation and support.

(The report continues with excerpts from the diary, detailing daily activities from September 24th to 28th, but the key takeaways are summarized above.)

Yoshihiko Kitahara (Vice Head of Delegation, Vice President of Nanao Chamber of Commerce and Industry)

The Background, Achievements, and Future of the Nanao-Monterey Exchange

This section reviews the thinking behind Nanao City's study delegation visit to Monterey about 40 years ago, the achievements derived from it, and future exchange plans.

1. Background of the Monterey Visit: In the 1970s and 80s, Nanao City faced economic decline due to stagnation in port and tourism industries, shrinking commerce, and population outflow, leading to a decline in civic morale and pride. Concerned young business people and citizens created the "Nanao Marine City Concept," aiming to revitalize the city by re-evaluating the asset of Nanao Port. However, lacking a realization method, Mr. Sadahiko Oda, the concept's leader, sought an exemplary city. Through a college professor, he consulted Mr. Tim Ashida, which led to a study tour centered on Monterey. The goals were: 1) to learn from Monterey's city planning and apply it to Nanao, and 2) to foster future city leaders and supporters among the participants. Mr. Tim Ashida's efforts in coordinating the visits and providing interpretation were invaluable, as was Ms. Joann Peace, then Executive Director of the Monterey Peninsula Chamber of Commerce, for acting as the initial receiving contact.

2. Lessons from Monterey and Achievements in Nanao: Monterey, a central city on the peninsula with a similar population size to Nanao, provided numerous lessons. The observation of the Monterey Fisherman's Wharf directly inspired the realization of Nanao's own Fisherman's Wharf. The successful redevelopment of the Cannery Row district, overcoming the crisis of depleted sardine catches, was also a significant learning point, as were lessons in central city commercial revitalization and landscape preservation. More than the physical development, Nanao absorbed the spirit of loving and cherishing one's city and the willingness to take on new challenges. The warm hospitality extended to us, the "pushy in-laws" from Nanao, was deeply appreciated. Nanao City's infrastructure development based on this concept included the opening of Noto Shokusai Ichiba Market (1991), two redevelopment projects, Nanao Marine Park (2001), and the Symbol Road (2010), totaling 30.8 billion yen in investment over 22 years. Beyond infrastructure, the cultivation of a 'can do' civic mindset was a major achievement, leading to the creation of numerous active citizen groups focused on city planning and community improvement.

3. Future Exchange: Forty years have passed since Mr. Sadahiko Oda first led a delegation to Monterey in 1986 to focus on "human resource development," a crucial issue for Nanao's progress. The sister city agreement was signed 10 years after the initial civilian-led visit, and 30 years have passed since then. Such a long-lasting, citizen-level exchange is rare. It is vital to continue

cultural exchanges, such as the recent Nanao Day, and to ensure next-generation exchange. With the promised resumption of the Junior Wings program, we plan to develop programs for middle school, high school, and young adults (20s and 30s). We also aim to deepen exchanges through programs like the Monterey Jazz Festival in NOTO, and various music, sports, arts, and Japanese cultural activities. We also received substantial support after the Noto Peninsula Earthquake. We hope the people of Monterey will witness the recovery process and feel Nanao's resilience and spirit. Nanao's recovery is our way of responding to their support and showing gratitude for our long-standing exchange. In a world facing a growing risk of division, I am confident that citizen-level exchanges that deepen mutual understanding contribute to global peace and stability.

Sadahiko Oda (Representative of Kagaya / Interview Summary by Yoshihiko Kitahara)

Lessons Learned from the Monterey Exchange and Future Revitalization Measures for Noto/Nanao

This is a summary of an interview conducted on October 16, 2025.

1. Motivation for Exchange: The exchange began from the idea that to realize the "Nanao Marine City Concept," the quickest way to achieve understanding and action was to let many citizens see an exemplary city. The goal was to continue the visits at least 10 times. Mr. Tim Ashida introduced Monterey, a city similar in size to Nanao, which became the turning point.

2. Learning and Sister City Agreement: We learned many successful examples of city revitalization from former Mayor Dan Albert and Ms. Joann Peace of the Chamber of Commerce, such as leveraging the Pebble Beach Golf Course (named after Bing Crosby), the Monterey Jazz Festival, the classical music festival, and car shows/wine festivals—making Monterey an "Event City." The sister city concept arose from the kindness of the locals and the many valuable lessons learned.

3. Revitalization Measures for Noto/Nanao: Based on experience of the unprecedented earthquake and torrential rain, I propose:

Event-Driven Regional Revitalization: Inspired by MJF, propose regular events like a "Mozart Festival" or a "Squid Festival" to attract visitors.

Festival Revitalization and Collaboration: Utilize existing, diverse local festivals (Fire Festival, Oyster Festival, Hōtō Lantern Festival, etc.) to create a year-round attraction. Provide funding and operational adjustments (e.g., shortening parade routes) to address the shortage of bearers.

Landscape Improvement with Lighting: Light up Nanao Port (like Kanazawa Port) and Nanao Castle Ruins (with sponsors) to make the city visibly brighter and more energetic.

Promote Aquaculture: Promote land-based aquaculture of abalone and pufferfish. Given the Mayor's graduation from Kindai University, I hope to apply the university's expertise in tuna farming to Nanao's fisheries.

Utilize Cultural and Artistic Assets: Leverage cultural assets (e.g., Suzuyaki pottery, Wajima-nuri lacquerware, Kutani-yaki porcelain, artist Tōhaku Hasegawa, novelist Ryūtarō Abe) in

conjunction with tourism and events to elevate Nanao's cultural profile.

Promote Relocation and Tourism: Attract tourists and future residents through building villas, lighting up landmarks, and hosting attractive events.

Women's Empowerment: The active role of women is essential for regional revitalization.

Wakura Station and Rail Access: Improve access to Kanazawa by building a large parking lot behind Wakura Station to encourage rail use from Oku-Noto. Enhance the appeal of the Nanao Line with special trains (SL, limited express) and direct links from Osaka.

Develop and Utilize Tourism Resources: Focus on existing resources like Tōhaku Hasegawa, Castle Hill lighting, the Sushi Kingdom Concept, upgrading the Quasi-National Park to a National Park, and developing a "Fish Heaven" at the Wajima Morning Market. Consider establishing a "Sushi Academy" to train chefs quickly to address labor shortages.

Attract Sports Training Camps: Develop facilities (like a public-private arena for all-weather practice) to attract soccer and tennis training camps, which is important for Wakura Onsen.

I believe combining these various measures will lead to the revitalization of Nanao and Noto. I have high expectations for the young generation's flexible thinking.

Naoki Miyanishi (Wakura Onsen Ryokan Association)

Monterey, founded in 1770 by Spanish settlers, has a history older than the 1776 American Declaration of Independence and remains a charming area rich in history and culture. The second day focused on observing tourism hotspots by bus, with the mission for each member to experience the appeal and mechanisms that draw tourists.

17-Mile Drive, Lone Cypress, Pebble Beach: This spectacular coastal drive, featuring lavish homes that harmonise with the beautiful seascape, demonstrated a successful development model achieved through administrative regulation of architecture/landscape and private investment/creativity.

Carmel: This "city of art," of which actor Clint Eastwood was once mayor, is filled with old-fashioned Spanish and English-style buildings and abundant seasonal flowers. The famers' market full of local produce, as well as cafes and art galleries, offer a pleasant, beautiful, and extraordinary space full of colourful experiences. Every member of the delegation boarded the bus with shopping bags full of souvenirs.

Cannery Row and Monterey Bay Aquarium: The Cannery Row area, famous from a 1945 American novel, was once a sardine canning district. After the decline of the fishing industry, the area successfully repurposed these historic factory buildings into a waterfront tourist area (e.g., restaurants).

The Monterey Bay Aquarium was particularly impressive compared to the Notojima Aquarium. Monterey wins for its natural resources, as wild seals and sea otters can be watched right from the aquarium, adjacent to the beautiful Monterey Bay. However, Notojima Aquarium wins for its main attraction: the Whale Shark, compared to Monterey's 9m-tall Giant Kelp exhibit. The surprise expressed by locals at the Farewell Party when the Whale Shark from Notojima Aquarium was shown on screen reinforced that what is familiar to us can be "amazing" to outsiders.

Conclusion: Monterey (pop. approx. 30,000) is smaller than Nanao (pop. approx. 45,000), yet its tourist areas and nightlife were bustling, largely due to tourists. It's clear that Monterey relies on tourism for foreign exchange to support the regional economy and create economic circulation.

Akira Ishida & Yoshinori Minami (Nanao Rotary Club)

September 26th: The city tour began at the Monterey Sports Center, which is largely funded by donations. Mr. Sadahiko Oda was recognized as a major contributor. The facility (with a 30m pool, 3 basketball courts, a gym, and full air conditioning) is affordable and used by about 3,000 people daily.

Old Monterey History: We then moved to the Fisherman's Wharf area to learn about Monterey's history, starting at the Custom House, California's oldest historic building. Monterey, with its long history under Spanish rule, was the capital of Mexican California until its annexation by the US in 1846. At California's oldest theater, we met Alexa, a former Junior Wings participant from 10 years ago, who kindly offered an impromptu tour of the museum.

City Services: At the Fire Department, they demonstrated their ladder truck, with a young firefighter climbing to the very top (the highest building in Monterey is 110 feet). At the adjacent Police Station, we toured the basement jail and shooting range and even sat in a patrol car (which has a plastic back seat with no cushion). We learned that both police and fire calls go through a single 911 center in Salinas.

Library and Colton Hall: The city's oldest library contained photos of early Japanese immigrants, showing the depth of the Japan-Monterey relationship. We concluded at Colton Hall, where the California Constitution was drafted in 1849.

Hospitality: We learned that Monterey was a significantly important historical location in California. We also highly appreciated the friendly, humorous, and distinct hospitality shown by the staff of Monterey City throughout the tour.

us Nanao City Councilor Miyako Kinoshita's Report

Monterey Sister City 30th Anniversary Commemorative Project

September 24 (Wed) – September 29 (Mon)

【Courtesy Visit to the Mayor of Monterey】

A delegation of four, including Mayor Chatani, Councilor Kinoshita, Delegation Head Moriyama, and Vice Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce Kitahara, paid a visit.

Mayor Yoshitaka Chatani of Nanao City stated: "As we continue the 30-year long connection between Monterey and Nanao, we must pass it on to the younger generation. We hope to revive the Junior Wings exchange and deepen youth interaction. We also wish to quickly revive the Monterey Jazz Festival exchange and continue our musical relationship."

Mayor Tyler Williamson of Monterey stated: "We want to continue the exchange through student activities and sports, such as the Junior Wings and Cross-Country programs. It is wonderful that the Monterey Jazz Festival in Noto has continued for 35 years, and let us continue the exchange through music in the future. I want to thank Mr. Oda and former Mayor Dan Albert, who first started this exchange, and pledge to carry on their spirit, ensuring it never fades and connecting it to the younger generation."

Former Mayor Dan Albert conveyed to the delegation: "I want you to connect this exchange to the younger generation without letting it die out."

【Sister City 30th Anniversary Exchange Ceremony】

All participants attended the commemorative ceremony in the Council Chamber.

A 30th anniversary commemorative plaque and a tree were dedicated at the Sister City Park in Monterey. An identical plaque was presented to Nanao City. Certificates of appreciation for the past exchanges were presented:

Mayor Tyler Williamson of Monterey to Mr. Sadahiko Oda, Honorary Chairman of the Nanao-Monterey Friendship Association.

Mayor Yoshitaka Chatani of Nanao to Former Mayor Dan Albert.

Natsuko Nodake (Tea Ceremony Coordinator)

For the 30th-anniversary visit, I was asked to introduce and provide Omotenashi (hospitality) through the Tea Ceremony as part of the Nanao Day event. Moved by the passion of the committee and having personal connections to Monterey through family exchanges, I agreed, hoping to strengthen this bond. I coordinated with a Japanese resident in Monterey who was knowledgeable about tea ceremony and could interpret, exchanging 50-60 emails beforehand. The Tea Ceremony values the spirit of "Wa-Kei-Sei-Jaku" (Harmony, Respect, Purity, Tranquility). I focused on using seasonal decor and high-quality Japanese craftsmanship, transporting the necessary tools with the help of the delegation. Nanao Day, featuring Furoshiki (wrapping cloth), Mizuhiki (decorative cords), Shinobue (bamboo flute), and Bon Odori (folk dance), was a pleasant and harmonious exchange. I thoroughly enjoyed my first visit in 19 years and pray for the continuation of this meaningful exchange into the next generation.

Noriko Moriyama (Furoshiki Culture Representative)

This was my third visit to Monterey, and my first in 10 years. We began the 30th Anniversary Goodwill Delegation activities with a departure ceremony in front of Nanao City Hall. After our flight via Haneda, Alex met us at San Francisco Airport. I was able to reunite with many familiar faces thanks to our past exchanges. Mr. Wada and Dana helped interpret at historical sites, the fire/police departments, and the library.

Nanao Day: We showed a video about Nanao's current situation. My Shinobue performance ("Kōjō no Tsuki" and my original "Miharaigawa") with Mr. Wada's wife on piano was well-received. Ms. Notake's meticulously prepared tea ceremony was moving, showing local appreciation for tea culture. Ms. Kinoshita's Mizuhiki demonstration also drew much interest.

Furoshiki Culture: I had the opportunity to introduce Japanese Furoshiki (wrapping cloth) culture, which I've been promoting for 20 years. I gifted an original Furoshiki depicting Nanao Bay and others provided by the Nanao City Committee for a Comfortable Environment.

Minato Yoisa: Dancing "Minato Yoisa" (local folk dance) with the Monterey locals while wearing Happi coats and holding fans was great fun.

The authentic Monterey Jazz Festival after the final party was stunning. I conclude this report with a wish for the continued friendship between the two cities.

Atsushi Oooka (Nanao Chamber of Commerce and Industry)

The Monterey Jazz Festival is one of the world's three major jazz festivals, first held in 1958, making it the longest continuously running festival globally. It is held at the Monterey Fairgrounds and celebrated its 68th session this year.

The Monterey Jazz Festival in NOTO is a sister festival, and it has facilitated musical exchanges through homestays, with All-American and Monterey County bands visiting Nanao. Nanao's Ishikawa Junior Jazz Academy has also participated in the Next Generation Jazz Festival in Monterey.

The delegation visited and experienced the authentic jazz at the Monterey Jazz Festival. We were greeted by Ken Gordon, Chairman of the MJF Organizing Board, and enjoyed the powerful performance of Cory Wong on the Jimmy Lyons Stage. Although time constraints limited us to only this one stage, we toured the venue and absorbed the authentic atmosphere.

Mayor Chatani also visited the jazz festival venue the day before, reunited with Chairman Gordon, presented a souvenir, and enjoyed the music.

Koichi Hirayama, Nanao-Kashima Branch of Ishikawa Prefectural Architects Association

~After the Goodwill Visit to Monterey City~

I had the honor of participating in the goodwill delegation from the Nanao-Kashima Branch of the Ishikawa Prefectural Architects Association for the 30th Anniversary Exchange Project between Nanao City and Monterey, USA. This was my third visit to Monterey, but my first as a member of the goodwill delegation, traveling with a different sense of responsibility and expectation.

Upon arrival at San Francisco Airport, we traveled by bus to Monterey. It was unusually cloudy when we arrived, but after checking into the hotel, I was able to walk around the city and truly feel the local atmosphere. Dinner was held at Fisherman's Wharf, where I reunited with members of the AIA (American Institute of Architects) Monterey Bay Chapter after 12 years. We reminisced about the 20th anniversary of the Architects Association's sister city tie-up, reconnecting across time.

The second day was focused on sightseeing, including the 17-Mile Drive, the Lone Cypress, Carmel-by-the-Sea, the Aquarium, and Cannery Row, where we enjoyed the rich nature and culture of the Monterey Peninsula. The townscape of Cannery Row, which once prospered from fishing and the canning industry, particularly impressed me with its sense of history and the power of regeneration. This area, also depicted in John Steinbeck's novels, has been reborn as a hub for tourism and education, and I felt the presence of local pride and wisdom.

On the third day, we visited Monterey's historical sites, public facilities, and the Sister City Park. The careful explanations and warm welcome from the local residents made us truly feel the history of the exchange between the two cities. The commemorative monuments and exhibits symbolizing the bond with Nanao City at the Sister City Park were especially impressive, underscoring the significance of 30 years of exchange. Following this, we visited the City Hall and made a courtesy call on the Mayor of Monterey. The Mayor expressed gratitude for the past exchanges and hope for future development, making it a highly significant time.

Monterey is one of the oldest cities in California, founded by the Spanish in the late 18th century, and was once the state capital. This historical background is evident in the historic architecture, mission churches, and museums scattered throughout the city, offering new learning opportunities with every visit.

The fourth day was designated as "NANAO DAY," featuring cultural exchange. Interaction with

the locals deepened through programs introducing Japanese culture, such as the tea ceremony, Shinobue (bamboo flute) performance, Furoshiki (wrapping cloth) demonstration, and Mizuhiki (decorative cord) introduction. The event concluded with all participants dancing "Minato Yoisa," a joyous time filled with smiles and cheers. At the farewell party, I met the AIA members again and promised to meet them again in Nanao. In the evening, we attended the authentic Jazz Festival, providing an opportunity to once again feel the depth and diversity of American culture.

Through this visit, I reaffirmed the depth of the sister city bond and the preciousness of human connections. It was a valuable opportunity to learn the importance of mutual understanding and respect beyond cultural and linguistic differences. Looking ahead to the 40th anniversary, I hope for greater citizen participation and intergenerational exchange. As a member of the Architects Association, I intend to continue contributing to this valuable exchange toward the next milestone.

Hitoko Yamazaki (Daughter of Sadahiko Oda)

I was present at the original Sister City signing 30 years ago. It is moving to see the continuity of exchanges in various fields. It was a joy to reconnect with familiar faces and be deeply impressed by the long-standing friendship. The Nanao Day event provided a great opportunity for exchange, affirming that Japanese culture is truly loved in Monterey. I sincerely hope this valuable relationship continues for a long time and am committed to contributing in my small way. I apologize for my father's (Sadahiko Oda's) inability to attend due to health reasons; he was looking forward to it immensely. I was able to show him the ceremony via the web. I hope to carry on my father's strong appreciation and love for Monterey into the future.

Kaito Yamazaki (Grandson of Sadahiko Oda)

I was overwhelmed by the beautiful scenery of Monterey—the vast ocean, the preserved nature, and the picturesque houses. I felt a desire to live in this elegant, unadorned town someday. Most importantly, I was impressed by the kindness of the people. The sense of security, despite the language barrier, is a testament to the trust built through the long friendship between Monterey and Nanao. I spoke with many local high school students, including international students, who showed great interest in Japan. Though I regret not being able to converse fluently, it made me proud to see how much Japan is loved. I hope to use this experience to re-examine my own country and contribute to future international exchange.

Teruhiko Yamazaki (Grandson of Sadahiko Oda)

This was my first visit to Monterey, and I was excited to finally experience what my family had told me about. I was first struck by the townscape, different from Japan, with its colorful and beautiful streets that made walking around a sheer pleasure—enough to make me want to return. The Nanao Day event gave me many opportunities to interact with locals, reaffirming that Japanese culture is beloved by many. Since I couldn't speak English, I relied on an interpreter, but I resolve to learn English and converse directly next time. I feel a strong desire for my generation to carry forward the bond between Monterey and Nanao.

Yoshiko Okajima, Nanao City Regional Development Support Division

1. Purpose of the Visit

Eighteen members of the Nanao City Goodwill Delegation visited Monterey City to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the sister city affiliation between Nanao City and Monterey City, aiming for the further development of friendly relations and the promotion of cultural exchange between the two cities.

2. Main Exchange Activities

September 24 (Wed)

Received a grand welcome at the Welcome Party hosted by Monterey City, featuring greetings from representatives of both cities (Mayor Yoshitaka Chatani of Nanao, Delegation Head Toshio Moriyama of Nanao, and Mayor Tyler Williamson of Monterey) and interaction among officials.

September 25 (Thu)

Conducted a tour of the Monterey suburbs, visiting Pacific Grove, Cannery Row, and the Monterey Bay Aquarium, deepening understanding of the region's nature and tourism resources.

September 26 (Fri)

Conducted a tour of city facilities, visiting the Monterey Sports Center, Fire Station, Police Station, Old Jail, and Sister City Park, learning about public facility operation and citizen services.

Courtesy Call to the Mayor: Mayor Chatani, Delegation Head Moriyama, and Vice Head Kitahara expressed gratitude to Monterey City for its support following the Noto Peninsula Earthquake.

Commemorative Ceremony: Mayor Chatani presented a letter of appreciation to Former Mayor Dan Albert, who laid the foundation for the sister city affiliation, and the current Mayor of Monterey presented a letter of appreciation to Mr. Sadahiko Oda. Both Mayors also expressed their intention to revive the youth exchange program.

September 27 (Sat)

"NANAO DAY" Implementation

Held a cultural exchange event between the two cities. Expressed gratitude for Monterey City's assistance during the Noto Peninsula Earthquake, and screened videos introducing Nanao City's recovery status, tourism, and culture to deepen understanding and interest.

Genuine cultural exchange took place through a tea ceremony, Shinobue performance and singing, Furoshiki wrapping demonstration, Mizuhiki craft exhibition, and finally, all participants from both cities, wearing happi coats and holding uchiwa (fans), danced the "Minato Yoisa" together, alongside a wonderful taiko (drum) performance by Monterey citizens.

Farewell Party

Interaction took place among approximately 60 participants at the restaurant of the hotel that provided accommodation. The Nanao side presented a happi coat and a tenugui (hand towel) to Mayor Tyler Williamson, who kindly wore the attire for a photo session! The happi coat and the dekayama tenugui headband suited him perfectly!

Attended the Monterey Jazz Festival, a symbolic cultural event of Monterey City. Shared a cultural experience by enjoying authentic jazz music.

3. Impressions

This visit further strengthened the bond with Monterey City and deepened mutual understanding and friendship between the citizens of both cities. In particular, having the opportunity to personally express gratitude for the earthquake support was highly significant for the citizens of Nanao and will serve as a cornerstone for future exchanges. Much was learned in the fields of culture, tourism, and administration, which we intend to utilize in future city management.