

BASF Delegation Travels to Asia to Establish Sister City Ties

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In December of 2005, during her installation address, BASF President Joan Haratani opined that as globalization continues its major effect on the practice of law, BASF lacked international relationships to assist its members abroad. To fill this void, Haratani created BASF's Sister City Bar Initiative to build relationships abroad, to foster goodwill and to offer practical assistance to BASF members in their practices.

Over the course of last year, a task force comprised of Joe Malkin, Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe; Paul Finigan, Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP; Haratani and myself, started developing relationships between BASF and bar associations in various cities throughout Asia. The effort culminated in October with a trip to Osaka, Tokyo, and Hong Kong.

The Osaka Bar Association (OBA), which may be the most impressive bar association in the world, was the first stop. The OBA just completed construction of an ultramodern 12-story building (for those lawyers traveling by helicopter, the OBA has a helipad!). Their location adjacent to the courthouse allows them to fully support the interests of their mem-

bers with conference rooms, a law library, and a cafeteria, among other amenities. The most impressive part of the OBA was that the entire first floor housed legal services for the local community.

Our next stop, the Dai-ni Tokyo Bar Association, is the most progressive of the three bar associations in Tokyo. Dai-ni was most proud of its intake center for pro bono cases and direct legal services and explained that with no formalized legal aid organizations in Japan, local bar associations are left to provide those services. Dai-ni's intake center, serving thousands of clients a year, is reminiscent of a bank lobby with teller windows based on various areas of assistance.

We did not have the opportunity to view the headquarters of the Hong Kong Bar Association (HKBA) as we visited the city on a national holiday. In meeting with the bar's vice president, he expressed the association's concern over the lack of legal aid services in Hong Kong. He explained that after the government changeover, newer lawyers have started to carry the flag for legal aid where others previously had not.

As we visited each bar association, it was nice to see that BASF offers member services, programs and



Seated left to right: Osaka Bar Association Vice President Tatsumi-sensei, 2006 BASF President Joan Haratani, Osaka Bar Association President Kotera-sensei. Standing left to right: Haratani's husband Ralph Latza, Kabashima-sensei, Osaka Bar Association; 2006 BASF Board member Edwin Prather, Chikamori-sensei, and Murakami-sensei both of the Osaka Bar Association.

direct legal services that rival some of the best bar associations in the world. It was also refreshing to find that bars across Asia have a common ground with their concerns for and dedication to legal aid for marginalized communities.

With the success of the yearlong effort to develop sister city relationships, the Sister City Initiative has now become a subcommittee of the BASF International Law Section.

As we continue to develop relationships with these sister bars, BASF will use this common ground to grow and mature our relationships for many years to come.

Osaka and San Francisco: Sister Cities for 50 Years

2007 marks the 50th anniversary of the sister city relationship between Osaka and the city of San Francisco. Through the introduction by Tom Flippen of Law Room, Inc. and Eric Sibbitt of O'Melveny & Meyers, the BASF delegates were able to meet with and tour Oh-Ebashi LPC & Partners, the largest law firm in Osaka. They also met with representatives from the office of the Mayor of Osaka, as goodwill ambassadors of the 50th anniversary celebration.