



(Left to Right) PDG Takeshi Tanaka, Rotary International President Jonathan Majiyagbe, Past R. I. Director Ryoichi Takeyama, and Rotary Foundation Trustee Fumio Tamamura.

Visit our 2004 Osaka Convention booth

In 1988 Ryoichi Takeyama visited the home of Paul Harris, known as *Comely Bank*, on his way to the Philadelphia Convention. In 1991 he established the RHHIF Japan Branch. While on the RI Board of Directors (1997-99) he advocated the purchase and restoration of *Comely Bank*.

Foundation Trustee Fumio Tamamura visited *Comely Bank* in 2003 shortly before R. I. President Jonathan Majiyagbe and Foundation Chairman James Lacy appointed a joint committee of R. I. Directors and Foundation Trustees to explore ways that R. I. and its Foundation might help acquire *Comely Bank*.

RI's Joint Committee consists of Directors John Germ and Sakuji Tanaka and Trustees Frank Devlyn, and Luis Giay. Foundation staff member G. "Hogie" Hansen coordinates staff support.

PDG Takeshi Tanaka is our fellowship's liaison with the Osaka Convention Host Committee. He arranged for our literature and exhibits in the convention's House of Friendship.

Visit RHHIF's booth in the Osaka House of Friendship to meet members of the Rotary Heritage & History Fellowship and discuss details of the *Comely Bank* acquisition.

A brief history of Rotary in Japan

In January 1918, Umekichi Yoneyama visited the United States as a member of a financial delegation. While in Texas, he was introduced to Rotary by a member of the Dallas Rotary Club, Kisaji Fukushima.

Yoneyama organized the first Japanese Rotary Club upon his return to Japan in 1920. He applied to the International Association of Rotary Clubs for a charter which was granted the

following April listing himself as President and Fukushima as Secretary.

Rotary founder Paul Harris visited Japan on February 9, 1934. Together with R. I. President Robert E. Hill and Mrs. Hill they were enroute to a Pacific area conference which took place in Manila. Adverse weather delayed their arrival for 3 days leaving time for only a 1-day stay. Paul Harris planted a laurel sapling in the Imperial Hotel garden and attended a luncheon.

Umekichi Yoneyama had become Rotary's Japan-Manchuria Governor by September 11, 1940 when he spoke at the last pre-war meeting. The Japanese military pressured him to disband

Rotary. He was told Rotary was treasonous.

After being forced to disband, Tokyo Rotarians decided to continue meeting as the *Wednesday Club* as that had been the club meeting day. The war ended on August 15, 1945. In January 1946 Takashi Komatsu, president of the Tokyo Wednesday Club, sent R. I. General Secretary Philip Lovejoy a letter requesting reinstatement.

In September 1948 R. I. President Sir Angus Mitchell dispatched General Secretary George Means to Japan for an investigation. March 23, 1949 the Tokyo Rotary Club was re-chartered.

By Tadashi Osaka

23—26 May 2004 Rotary International Convention in Osaka Japan