



## Trip to Ichijo Ryokan in Miyagi !

### Tour Schedule

July 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011

### Tour Participants

- Masumi TAJIMA  
(Mandarin Oriental, Tokyo)
  - Kay ABE  
(Grand Hyatt Tokyo)
  - Mayako SUMIYOSHI  
(The Ritz Calton Tokyo)
  - Akane TANAKA  
(The Peninsula Tokyo)
  - Naohiko WAKO  
(The Westin Sendai)
- Associative Company  
• Kazuko KUDO  
(Tokyo Pearl CO., LTD.)



### 【Newsletter】

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On July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011, a hot summer day, 5 “girls” from Les clefs d’Or arrived in Miyagi Prefecture to visit Mr. Tatsuya Ichijo, a member of the Japan Concierge Association. His family has been running a ryokan (Japanese inn) called Ichijo Ryokan for more than 600 years and he is now the 20<sup>th</sup> owner. The ryokan has hot springs and he is called “Yunushi,” literally translated as “the Master of Hot Water.”

<http://www.ichijoh.co.jp/english.html>

Ichijo Ryokan is located in Miyagi Prefecture, in the northeastern Tohoku region of Honshu, the main Japanese island.

As you may know, Miyagi Prefecture is one of the regions severely affected by the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami.

Although Mr. Ichijo’s ryokan is very close to from where the disaster occurred, thankfully, his property was not damaged. However he had to close business for a while. As soon as we heard that he reopened his ryokan, we decided to pay him a visit in the hopes of making a contribution.

The local station is Shiraiishi Zao, only 2.5 hours away from Tokyo by Shinkansen (bullet train). When we arrived at the station, Mr. Ichijo was already waiting for us with a big smile on his face. Here we came, with the intentions of cheering him up, but there he was, greeting us with a beaming smile!

We were also joined by Mr. Naohiko Wako from Westin Hotel Sendai, a member of Les Clefs d’Or from Sendai City. On the day of the disaster, he was in the center of the city, and he too, had to close the hotel for a while. We drove by places where houses, schools, swimming pools, and all kinds of people’s lives once stood, now turned completely into wasteland...



We were all distraught and at a loss for words but this was also an important moment that strongly reminded us of the following: long-term support is absolutely essential for recovery and the reconstruction.

After the visit to the crisis-stricken area, we arrived at Mr. Ichijo’s ryokan, built on a very steep hill. At the ryokan, we enjoyed the two public baths and a delicious local Sendai beef dinner with great wines.



Public Bath

Dinner and breakfast were served privately in an authentic traditional dining space.

Cheers!



The time spent with old friends in Miyagi remains a very precious and meaningful moment for us all. Smaller-scale but real earthquakes and aftershocks still occur there on a daily basis. But our friends are out there, working hard to bring everything back together. It is once again time to reflect on how we may engage ourselves in assisting the recovery and reconstruction of the Tohoku region.