



Dear Colleague in Japan,

I want to extend my personal invitation to you to participate in the November Art of Hosting workshop in Kiyosato. Since early this year the Japan AoH Community has been growing. People from all walks of life, and of all ages have been coming together. Why?

We share a belief that it is time to create safe spaces for people to have conversations that matter with each other. It is time for us to speak to each other, and listen to each other, so that we each can find more clarity about the work we will do to create new possibilities in Japan. I am deeply excited to be part of this work.

Let me tell you a little bit about who I am. For the past five years I was co-President of The Berkana Institute (www.berkana.org) where I had the opportunity to work with many people around the world who are creating healthy and resilient communities. In many ways, my own capacity to do this work began 40 years ago when I was a student at Waseda University.

I stepped off the airplane at Tokyo's old Haneda Airport just after six in the morning in late August, 1970 and was assaulted by temperatures already over 35 degrees and humidity that was nearly 100%. I was confronted by a kaleidoscope of bright neon signs that were unintelligible to me, and by people speaking a language I could not comprehend. This foreign place would be my home for a year and would shape me for a lifetime.

The Japan I was introduced to 40 years ago is barely visible. Three, let alone four-generation families have almost disappeared. It is nearly impossible to have an *omiai*. Life-time employment is simply a distant memory. After 54 years of almost continuous power, the LDP was defeated. These changes are obvious. What is less obvious is the churning going on beneath the surface as people of all ages and all walks of life are stopping to question what Japanese society is today and what they want it to be. That is, I believe, what you all are doing. It is an exciting time reminiscent of the Meiji Restoration of 150 years ago.

This movement beneath the surface in Japan parallels what is happening in many countries around the world that I have had the privilege to support. New fields of possibilities are being created in Japan, and Japan AoH is one of them.

This November in Kiyosato we will learn how to use methodologies such as Appreciative Inquiry, World Café, Open Space Technology, Circle and others. We will have rich conversations that help each of us to develop clarity, courage and commitment to the work we each believe needs doing. We will also get clear about our own next steps. I am so glad that you are thinking about spending this time with us. Please join us!

With deep respect,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob" with a small flourish underneath.

Bob Stilger (bob@berkana.org)