

## Here and There

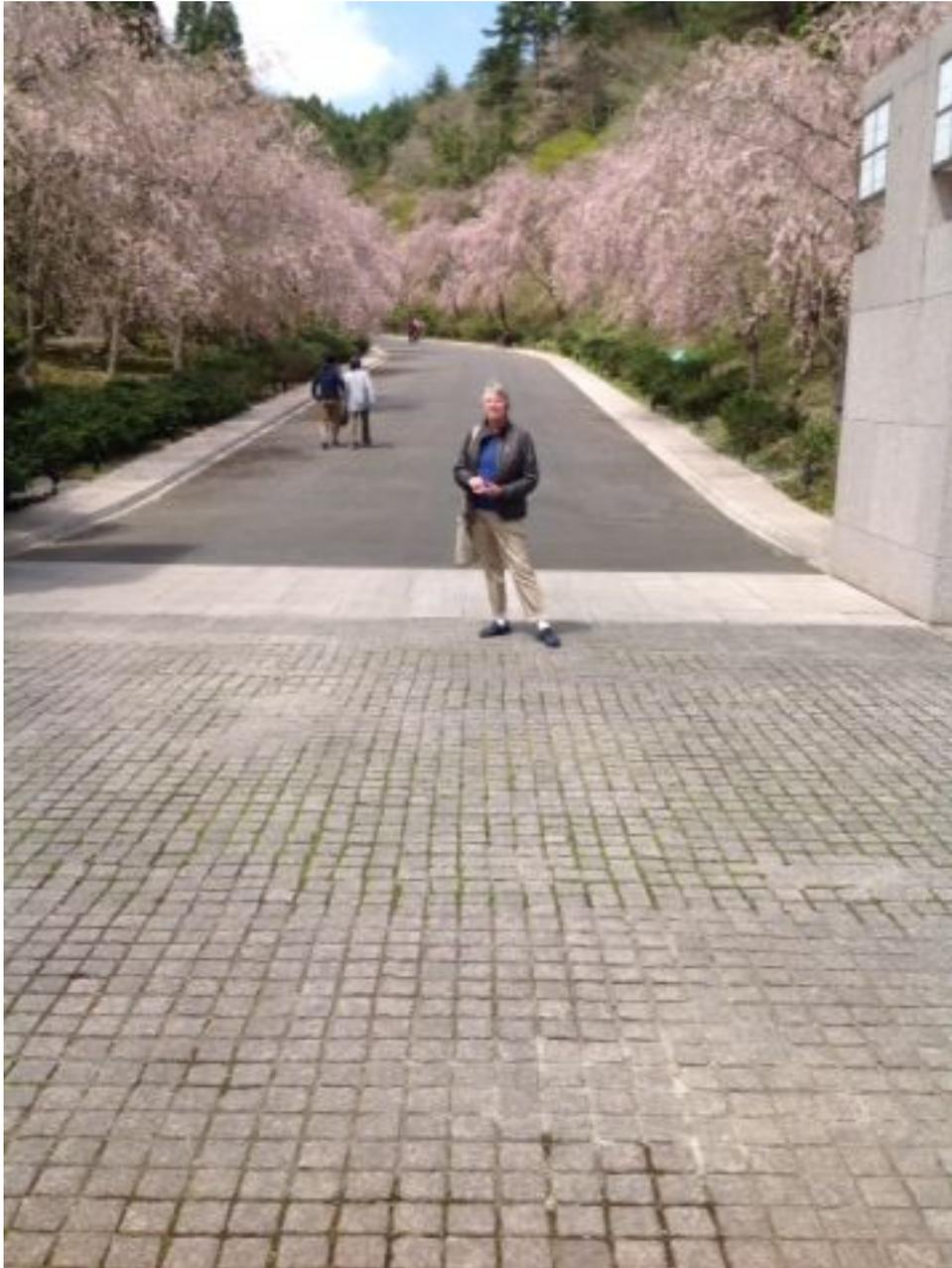
Posted on Jun 09, Posted by [Lois Lowry](#) Category [Uncategorized](#)

How did it become June, when the last time I posted to this blog appears to have been from Hawaii, in January? Time rushes past. And Twitter diverts attention from the blog; and I am working hard on new book, and I have been in the Far East, and then I was sick.....and Excuses, all of them.

I did go, in April, to Japan, and briefly to Korea. It was a nostalgia trip, returning to the places where I had lived in the late 40's, as a child. Of course *Tokyo Then* and *Tokyo Now* are two very different places. But it was fun to go back, and I went to places I had never been before—Sado Island, the place where the famous Koto drummers of Japan live and train—was the most fascinating.

Well, maybe the most. Also quite astounding was the incredible museum designed by I.M. Pei, in the mountains near Kyoto. And I was there in April when the cherry blossoms were in bloom.





I got very, very sick when I got home and was completely incapacitated for almost three weeks...the final ten days on serious antibiotics, which finally fixed me up. Just yesterday I read in the New York Times about an outbreak of MERS, a very dangerous virus, in Korea. If I had read that a month ago I would have panicked, thinking it was what I had. But thankfully that is behind me and I am feeling quite healthy and moving ahead at full speed on a new book manuscript.

I had a book, a middle grade novel 2/3 done when I went off on that trip. But I was having trouble revving up enthusiasm for it, and finally I realized that if I was bored with it,...readers would be as well. What to do, what to do. I still like its premise so I want to revisit it and restructure it...but in the meantime, while agonizing, I suddenly DREAMED a new book. I was excited when I woke, thinking about it. Then, on putting it together in my mind, I found it was not as brilliant as it had seemed in the dream. In fact, it was idiotic. *Darn!* But the basic IDEA was good, I thought, and timely, and so I started there and yes! It is holding my interest completely and I am forging ahead.

Some older books of mine are being re-issued soon with new covers, and in some cases new introductions (by me)... The old Anastasia series, and the series about her brother Sam, and a 1980 book called AUTUMN STREET which has always been one of my favorites.

I am leaving June 25th for Europe, for a couple of weeks, then back here to the farm where I spend summers and where so often friends come to visit. I am at work at this moment in my cozy studio off the barn. Before I leave June 25th I should have completed the first draft of this yet-unnamed novel. I have a city map spread out on my desk because this book takes place in a specific US city (one I have not been to in years). And I find that if I mention a certain street, then I can go to Google Maps and actually look at the buildings...stores...houses...whatever is on that street. Amazing. It doesn't compare with actually standing there. But it is a great starting point.

Thinking about that, I just went, by computer, and strolled the streets of Copenhagen a bit. In writing *Number the Stars* in 1988 or so, I began with maps and photos in books, then went there to experience the actual places. I wonder what it would have been like to have a computer...and Google maps...then. A huge help.

And here is one more photo, taken very near where I once lived in Tokyo, at Meiji Shrine, where I happened on a wedding



Tags: Untagged