

Japan Diary

David Notkin

1 14 June 1990 – Arrival, TIT, Stupid Pet Tricks

Well, Cathy and I left for Japan a week ago today (well, maybe tomorrow, because of the International Date Line). Without question, it has been one of the strangest weeks of our lives. Rather than give a play-by-play, I'll try to hit a couple of highlights instead.

We're staying at the Tokyo Institute of Technology (TiTech, TIT, or ToKoDai, as you prefer) International Guest House, which is very modern and quite nice. We have about 400 square feet, including a bathroom, the tiniest washing machine you ever did see, a living room/dining room/kitchen combination, a bedroom, and a balcony (with some poles that are the dryer to go with the washer).

Monday was my first day on the job. I felt like I was on Letterman doing stupid pet tricks. All four of us (Cathy, Kevin, Kelleen, and me) were shunted from office to office, being introduced to people for reasons that have not yet become clear. Kevin and I signed our contracts (most in Japanese, although a couple were in both Japanese and English). The most unusual document (of the ones I could read) said:

NOTICE

Dear Mr. David Samuel Notkin

Starting June 9, 1990 you are expected to accept employment as a faculty [sic] member at Tokyo Institute of Technology. I wonder if your employment with us should in any form affect your citizenship resulting in the loss of your nationality under the laws of your country. Although such seems unlikely in your case, let me call your attention to the possibility by way of friendly precaution.

Yasuhara SUEMATSU
President,
Tokyo Institute of Technology

Of course, I had just signed many forms in Japanese that could easily have been renouncing my US citizenship, but why should I worry? Actually, I figure that this form is here since my position is funded by Toshiba, and that the Congressmen who smashed Toshiba products with sledgehammers on the steps of the Capitol passed a special law nuking folks funded by Toshiba.

Noriko Matsumoto is the secretary for Takuya Katayama and Takehiro Tokuda, who are my hosts. After the first round of document signing Matsumoto-san took us to several other offices, including the library and the "money" office. In the money office, we were introduced to several people, continuing our practice in bowing (which we both needed and got quite a bit better at by the end of the day). A woman then served us green tea. We all figured we were waiting for something (for instance, travel reimbursement). However, after about 15 minutes, Matsumoto-san stood up, said goodbye, and ushered us out. I still have no clue as to why we went there.

Cathy will be taking an intensive Japanese course in Yokohama starting next week. She was instructed to call when she arrived to make plans and such. The first two or three times she called this school, she couldn't

get anybody on the phone that spoke English. Similarly, when I called a number to get an extra copy of an English language phone directory, nobody there could speak English either.

Japanese TV is pretty amazing, from what we can tell. Sumo wrestling is, of course, one of our favorites. Sixty-two Japanese sumo wrestlers just visited Brazil, and we saw some of the action. The most incredible thing was the size of one of these guys. They say these guys are mostly muscle, but this guy was fat, fat, fat. I'd guess 400 pounds easily, and it could have been 500 or even 600 pounds. Another outrageous show had this buxom Japanese woman, maybe 20 years old, in a bathing suit. In a style like that of Candid Camera, they had guys walk up to her and touch her nipples. When they did this, they got an electric shock. This went on for maybe 15 minutes. Where's the Moral Majority when you really need them? One other show was wild, too. It was a game show with four or five contestants of various ages. One question they were asked, for instance, was to figure out the area of a specific trapezoid. (Remember, this is on prime-time TV.) Those that got the wrong answer (about half), got a tambourine to wear around their neck (or their hat). At the end of the show, the guy who had the most tambourines on his neck was hoisted into the air over the stage in a sling. Run the credits.

2 21 June 1990 – The Lab

On Sunday Cathy and I were out for a walk. There was a baby in a stroller wearing a cap that said “Lusty.” And there is a Honda that sits in the parking lot outside of the building my office is in. It has a bumper sticker that says: “My Other Car is a Rolls-Royce.”

The main laboratory here has the usual array of workstations, printers, manuals, etc. There are only two unusual things to point out. The first is that it's dirtier and messier, by far, than any lab I've ever seen in the US (and this is saying something). The second is that people smoke (constantly) in the lab, and there are huge piles and cans of cigarette butts scattered all over the lab.

Wait! An update on the state of the lab. Matsumoto-san just called and had Kevin and me go downstairs. (As usual, I couldn't even guess why.) But, it was really a big occasion. The students had just cleaned the lab up, apparently for the first time in four years. And they were having a party, with noodles and (I kid you not) Kahlua. At least there was a Kahlua bottle there. During the clean-up Shinoda-san found a camera he had been missing for awhile. They also found a mouse-pad with a pin-up girl on it, it's called a Bachelor's Pad. But, not to worry. By the time the party was over, there were well over a half-dozen cigarette butts in most of the cans. I figure it'll look just like before by the time I leave at the end of August.

Kelleen has been looking for jobs speaking English, which has been complicated because she has only an entry card (not even the same as a tourist visa) and because she's not willing to lie about how long she'll be in Japan. She has gotten at least something, though, with a slimy guy named Mr. Sato who runs what appears to be a slimy business. In any case, she got a copy of the dress code for teachers. It says that you can't wear Hawaiian shirts, disco outfits, or zoot suits. So now Kelleen has to go buy a whole new wardrobe, just so she can teach.

Because it's so hot, we asked Matsumoto-san about finding a place to swim. She said there was a pool on campus, but that it was a dangerous place to go swimming because it was, and I quote, “too deep.” Hmm...

3 27 June 1990 – The Sento

Here's one for all you e-mail fanatics out there to think about. One of the students taking my class is from Toshiba. I asked him for his e-mail address, and he answered: “Sorry, I'm only an implementor, so I don't have an e-mail address yet.”

Last Friday night, Cathy and I visited the local “sento”, or public bath, for the first time. We had been to an “onsen”, or hot springs, last year, so we knew a few of the ropes, but it’s still a little overwhelming at first. The place is only about a five minute walk from our apartment. “Sento” throughout Japan are designated primarily by a 23-meter high gray chimney with a black marking at the top. Women go to the left at the entrance (in this one, at least) and men to the right. Take off your shoes at the entrance, of course. Just inside the entrances there is a counter for the person in charge. When you enter, you pay him or her 310 yen (about \$2) and grab a locker. Although the women and men are entirely separated, the person in charge sits at a counter that oversees both locker rooms and both baths. It’s a sort of interesting way to see how the Japanese think about nudity. (My understanding is that it was only after the Western influence came to Japan that separate bathing became the rule.)

After you strip down, you go through some sliding doors into a room that contains a bunch of buckets, little plastic stools, and pairs of hot and cold water faucets (placed very near the ground). You then sit on a stool (or just squat down, which is probably easier if you’ve grown up using squat toilets, which are still quite common around here) and wash and wash and wash until there is no dirt left even near you. To help wash and to keep a modicum of modesty (if you want), you use a little towel about 2-3 times the size of a normal washcloth. I took about 10 minutes to wash, but Cathy said she took more. Only then do you get into the bath. There were three tubs, one still one and two swirling or bubbling ones. They were probably different temperatures, by 2 or 3 degrees centigrade, but it didn’t matter, since they were all *extremely* hot. But you get a little used to it. There is a faucet with some cold water right there, so you can cool yourself off a little if needed. One older lady kept coming over to Cathy to make sure she used the cold water, since it was obviously too hot for a foreigner. In any case, after all this, you go out, dry off (if that’s possibly in this humidity), and head home. It really does feel great. More on the social structure and the decor at the bath some other time.

On Saturday we went to Yokohama to visit Matsumoto-san’s house. Yokohama is a small city about 30 minutes from (our part of) Tokyo. Only about 3 million people. In any case, Matsumoto-san met us at the station and took us to her place, about 15 minutes by train and another 5-10 on foot. She’s been telling us how tiny her house was, but it wasn’t. The garden is really incredible. They have about 400 bonsai trees in the back yard, along with lots of other plants and trees (including a persimmon tree). There’s a little pond with carp. It’s just like you imagine a Japanese yard to be. Before we went inside, Matsumoto-san and her father took us on a nice 10-15 minute walk to their vegetable garden. (Having a second piece of land like this is unusual, I think. The family has lived in Yokohama for 40-50 years, which accounts for some of it, I suspect). Lots of tomatoes, cucumbers, beans, asparagus, lettuce, daikon (white radishes nearly two feet long), and lots more.

Back at the house we were served lunch. The four of us (Cathy, Kelleen, Kevin, and I) sat down in their dining room, on the “tatami” mats at low tables, as is usual. Her father sat with us, pouring beer (which tasted great, since it was so damned hot) while Matsumoto-san and her mother served. It was really strange, but he sat and watched us eat. And eat. And eat. Finally we asked if they were going to eat something, and they did in fact start. We’re still not sure if they were waiting for us to ask, or if they were just ready to eat then. As with all Japanese meals, the food was laid out meticulously, with each item in a separate and special plate or bowl. The few courses I remember include a cold egg custard (with shrimp, tofu, etc. inside), cold tofu with a ginger/soy sauce, tempura (made from vegetables we had picked at the garden), and the most incredible plate of sashimi (sliced, raw fish, like sushi, but without the rice). And there was *lots* more (including rice, which comes alone at the end, like salad in Europe).

4 4 July 1990 – Donald Duck & Funny Toilets

Last Friday I went to Yokohama Stadium to buy tickets for a Yomiuri Giants vs. Taiyo Whales game held on July 20th. The line was two hours long. And there was a separate line for the game on the 21st. I got the cheapest seats in the stadium (2700 yen, about \$18), because nothing else was available. I'm going to the game with Matusmoto-san and her parents: I bought the tickets, they'll bring the food.

I just noticed that on the outside of the door to the men's room on the 3rd floor of my office building is a little sticker showing Donald Duck peeing into the hole on a golf green. It made me feel like I was at home in the US, since it looks like something Lazowska would have around.

Being handicapped in Japan would be overwhelming. We've seen a couple of things intended to help out blind folks. In one or two subway or train stations, the ticket machines have prices (I guess) in Braille. And in Yokohama, blind people are also aided by music that is played when the stop lights turn color — in fact, one of the common tunes is “Coming Through the Rye” (honestly). But it was only this week that I actually saw a blind person. Last week we finally saw two people in wheelchairs, too — getting around Tokyo in a wheelchair is simply too much to imagine.

We went to dinner last week at the house of an American family who are here for six years (the man works for Boeing). Both Cathy and I were too chicken to actually try it, but there was a “paperless” toilet that washes and dries your butt automatically. Luckily for us cowards, it also had a flush handle for P.O.T.S. (Plain Old Toilet Service).

5 19 July 1990 – Baseball

At dinner last week with some faculty from Keio University, one of the guys ordered some kind of seafood combination. When it came to the table, there was a fish that had a skewer through its head and tail, keeping it in the shape of a U. My hosts pointed out that the fish was in fact still alive. I thought they were joking, but it was indeed still flapping a bit. As they said, this way you know it's fresh. I really don't mind raw fish, in fact I like it a lot. But I'm surely glad my dinner was DOA.

Well, I finally went to the Yomiuri Giants and Taiyo Whales baseball game, held at Yokohama Stadium. Matusmoto-san and I went there together from work, and the two stops on the train from Yokohama to Kannai Station, where the stadium is, were the most crowded I've ever seen. I'm pretty sure that I didn't have my feet on the floor for a while. I wasn't too bad off, though, at 6' tall, but I really felt sorry for the shorter folks with their noses (or worse) stuck into armpits (or worse).

We met Matsumoto-san's parents at the seats. About 2.3 seconds after sitting down (on a clean towel that Mrs. Matsumoto laid down), we were wiping our brows with icy towels and drinking a cold beer. Then she pulled out the five or six course dinner, all in matching pieces of tupperware, and started to feed us. Chicken drumsticks (with little pieces of aluminum foil at the end so we wouldn't get our fingers messy), fish, rice balls, tempura shrimp, and so on. It took us three innings to finish dinner. The game was pretty much like in the US, although there were some differences in the stands. Each side had a huge cheering squad, that screamed, sang, and pounded plastic clubs together essentially continuously while their team was a bat. The Giants color is orange, and the Whales is blue, and everybody in the fan clubs wore the right color. The songs were pretty amazing, including many, many, many, many rounds of “It's a Small World After All” (which is in fact heard everywhere throughout Tokyo), the theme song from “The Beverly Hillbillies”, and fragments from various Beatles songs. The food being hawked was standard baseball fare, like hotdogs and beer, plus the usual Japanese food. You could even buy whiskey and water at your seat, for under \$4.

The Whales won 4-1, which upset Mr. Matsumoto, who is a serious Giants fan. Three of the four Whales

runs were driven in by American players. The “hero” interview at the end, however, which appeared on the huge scoreboard and was broadcast over the loudspeaker system, was for the Whales’ pitcher, Nomura-san. A reasonable choice, for sure, but I think the offensive star would have gotten the benefit of the doubt in the US.

6 8 August 1990 – Hanabi, Yakuza & Toads

Little “Lusty” has grown-up. The other day we saw a little girl wearing a t-shirt that said “Leper.”

A couple of weeks ago a friend of ours took us to the Sumida-gawa (Sumida River) Hanabi (which is “flower” + “fire” = fireworks). This is an annual affair, attended by between 500,000 and 1,000,000 people. (By the way, converting big numbers between Japanese and English (and vice versa) is something that even experienced bilingual speakers have trouble with because in English we group by three-digits (thousands, millions, billions, etc.) and in Japanese they group by four-digits (ten thousands, hundred millions, etc.).) The fireworks are fired from two separate bases on the river, about 2 kilometers apart. We could only see the fireworks from one of the bases, but they were still the best fireworks I’ve ever seen.

We showed up at around 5:30 hoping to get a seat somewhere. The three stops of the subway were packed (about like that I described in going to the baseball game a couple of weeks ago). And the papers had recommended buying a return ticket on arrival, to avoid the lines at the machines on the way back. This, it turns out, was a fabulous idea. Well, our friend Yoshi took us up a street parallel to the river. On the way, we got fans (with a map of the area) that were being given to everyone and some beer (to go with the M&Ms we were bringing along). When we got to the park where Yoshi thought we’d be able to get a seat, it was already packed. This football-field sized wire-fence enclosed area had a couple of pathways but the rest was covered with plastic groundcloths staking out areas for families and groups. There were some really tiny spots left, and Yoshi took us to one, and asked the people nearby if they could give us some room since he had some “gaijin” with him. Instead, they actually gave us another area they had staked out about 10 meters away. But even stranger than that was that everyone (except for the vendors and an occasional rebel) took their shoes off to walk across this patchwork quilt of groundcloths. It was, however, all on top of dirt so these cloths (and all our feet) got filthy. But that’s tradition!

It’s hard to describe even one specific display, and these lasted for almost two hours. They started with this incredible flare that looked like a huge fountain starting right on the river. It was a stunning and exciting beginning. After about an hour, they started a contest among 12 firework companies. Each was permitted something like 50 separate shells and up to one minute. There were judges, I understand, although I never heard the results. In any case, the contest was the least exciting part. Cathy’s theory is that they are designed by the oldest, senior men in the companies, and that they don’t have the creative spark anymore. In any case, it was worth fighting the crowds to see these fireworks. Don’t miss it if you’re in Japan in late July.

Cathy has seen several articles in the Japan Times about raids on “yakuza,” which are the organized crime groups in Japan. The thing that she has noted is that although they often arrest 50 or 100 people, there is usually at most one handgun confiscated in the raid.

Last week Cathy went to the “Gawa Matsuri”, or Toad Festival, at Mt. Tsukuba. This festival is to honor toads that have been made into grease, which is used to help heal cuts and scrapes. She missed the bus and would have had to wait for two hours, but a Japanese salesman offered to take her there. They made good time, with only a few stops to hand out special toad fans, toad keychains, and toad towels to various stores along the way. They got there about 11AM, he hustled Cathy into the main tent to show her off to all the locals. Two beers later she got to look around a little, including take the “death defying cable car ride” to the top of Mt. Tsukuba. Apparently, it was the wimpiest ride ever. Cathy did see a couple of toads at the

festival, but they were all in aquaria. She was upset, however, to miss the part of the festival where guys carry around human-size toad effigies. But she came back with toad fans, toad keychains, and even some toad grease, so it wasn't a toad-al loss.

7 10 September 1990 – O-Bon & Karaoke

For you technical people, if you're ever invited to join a panel or attend a workshop in Japan, double-check what the language is. I forgot to do this the other day, and spent over half a day in a meeting where the only presentation – 10 minutes of a panel session — that was in English was mine. It wasn't really a waste, though, since it is fun listening to all the Japanized-English words, like “o-bi-jye-ku-to”.

About 10% of the 60 attendees at this workshop were women. In fact, a woman made a presentation, which is only the second I've seen since coming to Japan (and I've probably heard over 50 presentations, both formal and informal). But there's hope. At one of the companies, I asked whether they were satisfied with the number of women in technical positions. The response was: “Well, women are well-suited to software engineering, since they don't have to move heavy things like in lots of other engineering disciplines.”

On a lighter note, Cathy and I went to Tokyo Disneyland. It's virtually identical to the one in southern CA, although I suspect R2D2 and C3P0 don't speak Japanese there. On the way home, the train had a poster advertising concerts for B.B. King and Ricky Lee “Jorns.”

Last month was the O-Bon festival, where people return to their home towns to pay respect to their ancestors. The dates of this festival are hard to figure out, since they seem to differ among cities and towns. But there is a peak time, in mid-August, when it seems like almost everyone travels home. This year, a typhoon hit near Tokyo the Friday before the biggest travel day. The bullet trains had to stop because of the torrents. This set up an unbelievable Saturday morning (which, thankfully, we just heard about on the news): Over 1000 people were lined up at 4AM in Tokyo Station to try to get unreserved seats on the bullet trains to Kyoto, Osaka, Hiroshima, etc. The trains ended up running at 400bumper-to-bumper traffic jams that spanned something like 60 kilometers (I may not have this quite right, but it's in the ballpark).

We went (during the week) to a park near Shinjuku to watch the Bon Odori, a folk dance associated with the festival. There was a large multi-level pavilion built in the middle of a large fountain. There were five or six women, in beautiful traditional garb, on the pavilion demonstrating the dances. The top of the pavilion were the musicians, including a drummer of some sort. Around the fountain, people dressed in beautiful yukata, as well as dresses and suits and ties, danced along. We tried a dance or two, but they were of course far harder than they initially appeared. After cooling off with a lemon shaved ice, we headed home.

Tony, one of our friends from Seattle, came to Tokyo for a week in late August. He stayed at a standard “businessman's” hotel nearby. In contrast to the ritzy \$200+/night hotels aimed at rich Americans and sheiks, this place is geared towards Japanese salarymen in Tokyo for meetings. In the lobby there is a row of vending machines: a change machine, a newspaper machine, a cigarette machine, and a pornographic magazine machine. I saw one guy go right down the row, getting change first and then buying something from each machine in order.

One night we had a fancy Japanese dinner with three Japanese friends, Tony, Cathy, and me. Cathy and I have been wanting to go to a “karaoke” (Empty Orchestra) club, which is essentially “Music Minus One.” They have a special machine that has hundreds of songs, usually along with MTV-style video, that play all the music but none of the words (which are shown on the screen, in follow-the-bouncing-ball mode). After dinner, we asked our hosts if we could go to karaoke. Well, most of them had been at most once before, and they were sort of hesitant. Also, the place right next door was about 2000 yen per person, just for a cover charge. But luckily, right down the street, we found: “Karaoke Boxes.” For 600 yen basic rental and 100 yen per song, we jammed the six of us into one of the six or eight karaoke boxes in this upstairs poolhall.

Most of the songs were in Japanese, but there were a couple of great American hits including: “Yesterday”, “Hey, Jude”, “Sherrie”, “House of the Rising Sun”, “Moon River”, and “I Left my Heart in San Francisco.” Let me tell you. With two mikes, six hot bodies, and only one decent voice (Matsumoto-san’s) in the box, it was something I’ll never forget.

Thirty-three Things I Learned in Ecuador

David Hubbell

- 1) *El Sol*: You can get a sunburn just by walking around Quito for 3 hrs., even though the high temperature there seldom breaks 90. The sun has no mercy on the equator at 2800 m.
- 2) *Fun fizzix*: The center of mass of the Earth is south of the equator, and Quito. Evidence: Toilet flushes go clockwise in Quito ($< 1^\circ$ S) and on north, but counterclockwise in Riobamba, about 105 mi. south of Quito. The Coriolis effect, ya know.
- 3) *101₂ things to make with century plants*: a fence, soap, shampoo, booze, and rope! Brought to you by native Andeans.
- 4) *Steep real estate*: Farmland is so scarce in Ecuador that there are people farming 45 degree slopes, all the way up mountains, and *living inside volcano craters*.
- 5) *Technicolor mountains*: The Andes are green. The Cascades, although they are only half as high, are white.
- 6) *Less semiannual confusion*: No daylight savings time in Ecuador. You don't need it if you don't have seasons.
- 7) *Ecuadorian graffiti*: Most of the graffiti in Ecuador is political, whereas in Seattle it's either gang symbols or the ravings of street loonies. They had elections June 16 for Diputados (\approx Congressmen, I think.) so there were election slogans painted on nearly every non-residential wall in the country, urban and rural. Each party had a number; there were 17 parties in all. I saw a cartoon version of voting instructions for people who couldn't read. (The voter in the cartoon looked native.) Predictably, the Communist and Socialist parties were more popular in poorer parts of the country.
- 8) *Religion*: In South America, *everyone* is a fanatical soccer fan, women included. Everybody there was glued to the tube watching the World Cup (El Mundial) while I was there.
- 9) *Breathing*: Quito has no emission controls. Quito needs emission controls.
- 10) *The concrete jungle*: The crime problem in Quito is more serious than here. Most houses have solid steel gates and high walls often topped with spikes, broken glass, or century plants.
- 11) *Old-time religion*: It took the Spaniards over a century to figure out that they'd convert more natives if their religious images looked like natives. They also tried to dazzle the natives with Jesuses and Virgins with movable joints.

- 12) *Yum:* South American coffee kicks butt. The meat is lean, the way I like it. A chirimoya is a fruit that looks like an artichoke on the outside, a grapefruit on the inside, and tastes somewhere between a banana and a pineapple. You can get family-size papayas in Quito. Many Quiteños will toss almost anything into a blender and juice it for later. Tree tomato (tomate de arbol) is also yummy and my dad heard that it reduces blood cholesterol. Corn there has big kernels and irregular rows. There are many commonly-sold fruits that my dad couldn't identify.
- 13) *Yuck:* You wash and peel all fruit because many farmers use human waste as fertilizer. Dairy products are risky.
- 14) *Cultural survival:* Native Ecuadorians, who comprise about a third of the population, seem to have succeeded so far in preserving their languages and cultures. Even in the cities, they still wear the clothes that are unique to their area of origin. Ergo, it is possible to tell rather precisely where they come from by how they are dressed.
- 15) *Difficult survival:* Said natives are, not surprisingly, dirt poor. You often see them carrying huge loads on their backs in the countryside or selling junk in the cities.
- 16) *How to attract attention in Quito without acting funny:* I was the only guy in Quito with long hair.
- 17) *Useful facts about cameloids:* There are few llamas or alpacas in Ecuador because the Conquistadors slaughtered them all for food. They were recently reintroduced from Peru and Chile. There's no such thing as an alpaca sweater made in Ecuador.
- 18) *Money:* The exchange rates were rather lopsided. At one of the sleazier public markets, a beggar kept nudging me. I wanted him to go away, so I gave him the smallest denomination I had, 100 Sucres, which is worth around \$0.12. A young Indian woman next to me stared open-mouthed. I wish I could have told her that 100 Sucres barely buys a pencil in the U.S.
- 19) *Architecture (human, not computer):* Most of the roofs of houses in the country are tile, but where it's so dry that barley (wheat?) grows better than corn, thatched roofs prevail.
- 20) *Cement, mortar, etc.:* You can't get good building materials in Ecuador. It isn't hard to find brand new walls with cracks in them.
- 21) *Driving politely:* Latin Americans use their horns to mean "Look out behind you" instead of "Watch what you're doing, you moron."
- 22) *The many, the proud:* Latin jaywalkers are swift, alert, and truly fearless.
- 23) *More exciting bus commutes:* Buses in Quito are run by private companies. They don't stop; they merely slow down, except for women with young children, women in heels, and old people.

- 24)** *Where the foreign exchange comes from:* Lots o' signs, etc., in English in the touristy bits of Quito. Our tour guide on a trip to Riobamba spoke fluent English but told us that she had trouble with British accents.
- 25)** *Bellyband of the World:* The exact position of the equator was determined in 1731 by a predominantly French team of experts. It took them about three years to do it.
- 26)** *Indiana Jones Heads for the Andes:* Most of the nifty golden Precolumbian artifacts in Ecuador and Colombia were made before the Incas arrived by tribes that they conquered. Laguna de Sangre (Blood Lake) is so named because that's where the Incas decapitated all the men of one of these tribes. There's a legend that the last Inca general that ruled Ecuador hid a big stash of gold from the Conquistadors somewhere in a mountain whose native name translates to "Stone Face." Lots of people have looked for it on this mountain; none have found anything.
- 27)** *Bad karma:* The Conquistadors arrived in the Andes at a time of civil war. The ruler of Ecuador was recognized by the previous Supreme Inca as his successor. However, there was a pretender in Peru. The Peruvians helped the Spaniards take Ecuador, and then the Peruvians got what was coming to them.
- 28)** *Rumble:* The original city of Quito was located next to what is now Riobamba. Old Quito was flattened by an earthquake in the 18th century. The new Quito, 105 mi. to the north, rests on the site of the old Inca capital.
- 29)** *Boom:* The highest active volcano on Earth, Cotopaxi, is about 50 mi. south of Quito. The highest point in Ecuador, Chimborazo, is about 30 mi. further south.
- 30)** *Holding down hillsides:* Eucalyptus trees were imported in the eighteenth century to control erosion, but they're now considered a nuisance because they suck nutrients out of the soil and their wood is useless.
- 31)** *Pardon. Tiene un nombre equivocal:* The phone system leaves something to be desired. My phone emitted single rings several times a day and I got so many wrong numbers that I couldn't help wondering if the switching equipment was out of whack. Since the phone numbers are only six digits, genuine wrong numbers seem less likely. I decided that learning the Spanish for "Sorry, you have a wrong number" was the least I could do. Very few people have phone books.
- 32)** *¡Cuidado!* Public restrooms don't have toilet paper. You're expected to bring your own. The toilet paper made there nearly resembles paper towels here; the plumbing in Quito will gag on it.
- 33)** *How to find your way through Quito during the morning rush:* Catholic schools abound in Quito. Each school has its own uniform, so it's possible to determine roughly which neighborhood you're in at certain times of day by watching for students.