

POSTCARDS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

A Cultural Mindset or a Way of Life

by Robert Alan Black, Ph.D., CSP

We all experience examples of high levels of professionalism as speakers, whether we are doing a volunteer speech held in a small-town Chamber of Commerce workroom or a keynote address in the five-star level convention center on the waterfront in downtown San Diego.

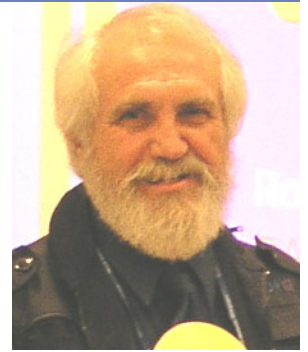
"You have a printing order for me." "Yes we do, Dr. Black." I was in Warmbad, South Africa, a mineral bath resort town 90 miles northeast of Pretoria in the bush country. I had e-mailed PDF files of my originals two weeks prior to leaving for Africa to travel for nearly two weeks in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana, Namibia and South Africa prior to going to Klein Kariba, an oasis-like resort outside of Warmbad where the conference is held each year. The previous year, I had found the small shop with one copy machine and two computers set up for Internet access. A very friendly young woman employee had hand-collated 50 sets of handout materials for two workshops and stapled them, for a price one-third of what I was used to paying in the US. After that first experience with the shop, I decided to see what else they might do. *That's professionalism.*

A smiling face and a large sign with my name boldly printed on it greeted me at 12:30 a.m. in Columbo, Sri Lanka. He was my 70-year-old cab driver. A bigger-than-life smiling face with a sign that read "Dr. Aran" greeted me in Daegu, South Korea. She

was a student of my host, Dr. Ando in Fukui, Japan, who would drive me to the largest Buddhist monastery in Japan, two museums of art, a bamboo-carving artist's huge studio prior to my meeting my host, her professor. Two women with beaming smiles approaching me, "Welcome to Hobarth, Alan," as I walked down the ramp from my airplane. *That's professionalism.*

A technician working with his equipment in the most high-tech-equipped 1,000-seat auditorium I had seen by then, helping me access my web site to project it in Istanbul because I asked if it would be possible. A basket of native fruit with a friendly welcome note in my university guest room in Taipei. A driver I had only known via the Internet, picking me up at my hotel in St. Petersburg, Russia, on time and continually changing course, rapidly taking a totally unplanned course through back streets to avoid rush-hour traffic, completely across the city and then running ahead of me, carrying my bags to the check-in gate to make sure I made my flight to Moscow. *That's professionalism.*

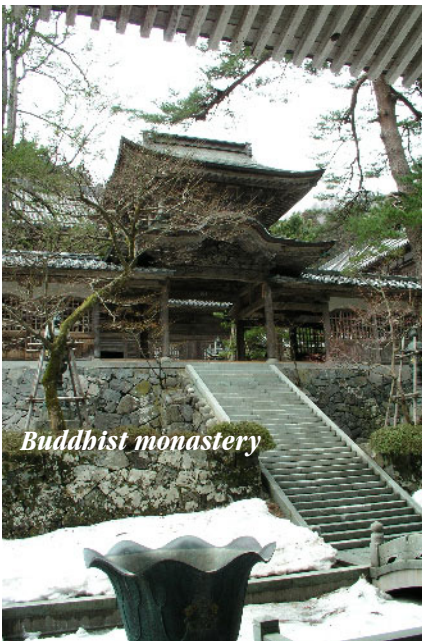
Guided tours for four days of temples, shrines, museums and theaters in Osaka, Kyoto, the famous Hemejijo Castle and so



Taipei tour



Buddhist monastery



St. Petersburg arch



Kyoto lunch



much more, all unexpected, combined with an 18-course meal in Kyoto one night. A tour of local restaurants one night around Kuala Lumpur, one course at a time. A drive to and tour of Stonehenge and dinner at a pub in the countryside. Invitation for four days to stay at a home in Singapore when a program was cancelled at the last minute. A personal guided walking tour of Copenhagen. A surprise night at a famous puppet theater in Bangkok. A day in the countryside in Austria touring museums and castles and riding in a boat on a fabulous lake. *That* is professionalism.

An unexpected visit to the largest used book sale I had ever seen at my host's church in Perth, Australia. Airplane tickets arranged via cell phone on the spot while in Sestri Levante, Italy,



to Bangkok, because I asked for some translation help. An all-day tour of southern India near Chennai, India, arranged for me because there was no other way to get there. A day-long personal tour of the island country of Mauritius with a government official. *That* is professionalism.

All of these examples were totally unexpected gifts, honors and bonuses provided by clients. They represent true examples of ultimate professionalism: going beyond all expectations.

*Since earning his CSP, **Robert Alan Black** has spent much of the last two years traveling the world and speaking on his expertise, Creativity. While he is traveling internationally, Alan can be reached through his web site: www.cre8ng.com.*

