

Soaring Australian Thermals

The Collected Papers of
Garry Speight
from 1966 to 2015



Visit By Mitsuru Marui

By Garry Speight

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This summer, Mitsuru Marui is coming from Japan to instruct for several months at Waikerie.

He and his friend Ikeda will devote themselves particularly to instructing Japanese visitors.

They are not expecting any pay, but they hope to do a lot of cross-country flying in their spare time.

instructor. He has more than 1000 hours in gliders, mainly in Japan. If you have been to Japan, you will know that this is no mean feat!

His home base is at Takikawa, a town of 50,000 people in the northern island of Hokkaido,

Inland Hokkaido has about the best gliding weather available in Japan, although the latitude is 44°N. It also has fields just about big enough for outlandings (250m), and there is some airspace to fly in.



I was delighted to hear of Marui-san's visit to Australia. I find him one of the most interesting and likeable of Japanese glider pilots.

He is an enthusiast for international goodwill, especially in the field of gliding. He hopes that his visit will be one step towards a systematic exchange of visits by Japanese and Australian glider pilots.

Marui-san is a very experienced gliding

Marui-san works in the Department of Education of the Takikawa City Government as the aerospots clerk. His duties include being the manager and CFI of the Takikawa Skypark and Gliding Centre.

What it amounts to is that he has persuaded the city to throw its weight behind the gliding centre in a big way. He has also attracted support from businesses which have become corporate

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members of the Sky Sports Association of Takikawa.

The gliding centre's airstrip is right next to the city centre. As is the custom in Japan, it is in the river bed between the flood-banks.

The club-house/hangar building is just outside the flood-bank.

Because this is Hokkaido, where the land is cheap, the gliders are hangared fully rigged. Two gliders are hoisted to the ceiling above three more gliders and the Robin tug.

During the past season Marui-san and his team have trained 70 glider pilots from other parts of Japan. For the future, there is an ambitious plan for the gliding site to be developed into a "Skypark" of national significance.

This will include not only facilities for gliding, ballooning and parachuting, but also an aerospace museum, amusement park, and general sports park.

The projected cost is about \$4 million by 1996.

Marui-san is also researching the potential for cross-country gliding from Takikawa. He has been surveying routes by motor- glider and by light aeroplane.

Although the mountains are only 2000m high, they dominate the distribution of lift.

Techniques used in soaring the European Alps are appropriate for Hokkaido. Already, a DG400 has soared a triangle of almost 500km from Takikawa.

As an instructor, Marui-san has written a comprehensive training handbook for Japanese glider pilots. This is now in the press.

I expect that his approach will contrast with that of some of the old school of Japanese gliding instructors, who seem to have been concerned much more with discipline than with understanding.

Marui-san is diffident about thrusting himself on to the Australian gliding scene.

Personally, I extend a warm welcome to him. I hope all Australian glider pilots will join me in this.

Marui-san visited Australia often to instruct or compete, and he hosted Australian visitors at Takikawa. Tragically, he died in a mid-air collision in November 1998, while competing in the Australian National Championships at Narromine.

