

Moiliili Hongwanji Mission  
Pilgrimage to Kyoto, Japan  
May 12 – 23, 2011

Shinran Shonin 750<sup>th</sup> Memorial Service and  
14<sup>th</sup> World Buddhist Women's Convention

It was difficult to describe my feelings as we began our Pilgrimage to Kyoto with Moiliili Hongwanji, Jikoen Hongwanji, and Hilo Betsuin. I was anxious to meet the other 60-70 Hawaii delegates yet felt lonely and sad leaving my Fujinkai sisters behind. I carried in my handbag a collage of pictures comprised of the Puna Hongwanji Choir, the BWA group picture taken under the Bodhi tree, and pictures of Tsugiko and Tsugie. It was a promise to Mako and Kiyoko that everyone would attend the service and convention in Kyoto, Japan.

The delegates were warmly welcomed wherever we went. Beginning at Honolulu International Airport, a delicious snack of cone sushi and tempura prepared by Kay, was shared with Harue, Yukie, Nancy, Fred, and Rev. Nishiyama. We were so hungry and appreciated Kay's thoughtfulness. The familiar faces of Mitsuyo Saito (who was a prize winner in the Memorial Service essay contest) and Bishop Eric and Tamayo Matsumoto were a delight to see. Everyday was spent getting to know the rest of the group. I hadn't seen my classmate Ernie since high school, Edwin since he left Hilo, Patricia's cousin Cynthia, and I finally met the "email" coordinators of the trip – Donna, Lois, Joy, Jeanne, Mika.

The day of the Memorial Service was finally here. Mrs. Tsumura, residing in Japan, met us at the Honzan. Our Puna Hongwanji group was now complete – Rev. Ikeda, Mrs. Tsumura, Dora, Carol. This Memorial Service was also dedicated to those affected by the Great Earthquake and Tsunami of March 11. The Hawaii procession representatives proceeded to the Annonden (designated area) where we would rest before the service. After putting our shoe bags and service bags away, we entered a big tatami room where men and women in Engi Procession attire were awaiting instructions. Cynthia and I were over-whelmed with excitement and tears flowed from Cynthia's eyes. The Hawaii procession representatives formed 3 lines to begin practicing how to walk in step, how to turn the corners, how to bow. It was not easy.

The procession started for the 30 Hawaii delegates attired in Aloha wear and yellow eyelash leis. We walked on white fabric from the Amidado to the Goeido (main hall) passing many fellow Jodo Shinshu Buddhist..... and the TV camera! After bowing at the naijin, we took our seats. To my right was a special lady whom I knew since Kindergarten, Mrs. Mimaki! I held her hand; my way of saying arigato for being a caring and nurturing kindergarten teacher who taught me "All I Really Need To Know I Learned In Kindergarten" (by Robert Fulghum). The Golden Rule, love, basic sanitation, ecology, politics, equality, sane living and more. It was an emotional time of deep joy and gratitude to be participating in the procession and Shuso Sango Saho (Musical Service) of our founder and singing /reciting the Choraimon, Shoshinge, Wasan, Ondokusan. Thank you Rev. Ikeda and Rev. Kondo, Lee and Hatsume for practicing the musical service with us at Puna Hongwanji.

The Convention – 4000 plus delegates and ministers from Japan, Hawaii, US mainland (BCA), Canada (BCC), South America. Rev. Kondo and I lost count of the bus loads of people. There were magic shows, balloon animals, juggling act, Ryukoku University Marching Band performance, workshops (origami, sachet making, calligraphy, wearing kimono, tea ceremony), Japanese classical dance performance, concert by Dolce string quartet. Mrs. Saito introduced Hawaii's performance number to the hula dance "Spread a Little ALOHA", BCA did line dancing to "Walk On" and "Working In the Coal Mine" (Tanko Bushi), BCC sang "I Believe" and "Namu Amida Butsu", South America sang a song and Japan did an obon style dance to "Shinransama Onamae Yobeba". We heard speeches from Lady Noriko Ohtani, Monshu Ohtani, Shinmonsama, Bishop Eric Matsumoto, and other Governors, Bishops, and Panelists. All expressed their deepest appreciation for the Funjinkai's participation in the 14<sup>th</sup> World Convention and the 750<sup>th</sup> Memorial for Shinran Shonin. They also expressed their deepest condolences to those who lost their lives and to those who are facing hardships due to the devastating earthquake and tsunami. The Hawaii delegation was honored to take a group photo with Lady Ohtani.

The panelists talked about sharing the dharma with our children. "It is important to nurture and communicate with our children daily. Teachings come from practice. Live life step by step. Be thankful for rare opportunities." from Keiko Yoneda, president of Jo'enji Temple BWA. Lily Horio of Jikoen Hongwanji in Honolulu said Shinshu followers follow KANDO in their daily lives. Examples were the Pacific Buddhist Academy (Pieper Toyama) where Peace Education is taught. In 2007, a resolution proposed by the Federation of Jr. YBA to establish a "Peace Day and to nurture peace in our world was passed. The United Nations International Peace Parade is held annually in Honokaa and is coordinated by Miles Okumura of the Peace Committee. Kando: KAN – to feel, DO – to move.

Six ladies from Gifu Prefecture joined us at our table for the dinner. One was the minister's wife, one was the BWA president. We met many who attended Hawaii's World Convention in 2006. The Hawaii delegation exchanged gifts of Aloha with old and new friends (Naalehu's Bodhi Leaf cards made by Marge, Mauna Loa Mac Nuts, Kona Coffee, Koa items, leis, fabric gift bags, Hawaii's 50<sup>th</sup> state quarter, etc.) Everywhere we went, the Japanese thanked us for coming to Japan. We were showered with gifts, messages on notecards, hand shakes, words of gratitude and applause as we headed for the bus. It amazed me to see Rev. Ikeda, Rev. Kondo, Fred Nonaka talking story with so many from around the world and others calling out their name to say "Hello". I have never seen so many people under one roof (Pulse Plaza, a very huge convention hall).

What's my most memorable and funniest moment in Kyoto? It was group photo time at the Honzan. Donna literally wiggled herself between Rev. Ikeda and Harue. She looked back at me, put her arms around Rev. Earl and said, "My Reverend". In shock, I replied, "Oh, no, not until August!" We were rocking sensei back and forth laughing like little girls. Isn't it grand to be wanted by Puna Hongwanji and Moiliili Hongwanji!

Puna Hongwanji Buddhist Women's Association (President K.T. Cannon-Eger), Puna Hongwanji Kyodan (President Gordon Heit), Naalehu Hongwanji (President Jim Anderson), Rev. Earl Ikeda, Rev. Midori Kondo, my Ohana – Mahalo, Arigato, Thank you very much for your monetary contribution and support in making this trip to Shinran Shonin's 750<sup>th</sup> Memorial and the 14<sup>th</sup> World Buddhist Women's Convention a reality. Thank you to Moiliili Hongwanji, Hilo Betsuin, Jikoen Hongwanji, Bishop Eric Matsumoto and ministers for inviting the Puna Hongwanji BWA delegates to join in the Pilgrimage to Kyoto, Japan.

Bishop Eric Matsumoto reminds us that we are guided by the Dharma and especially taking to heart the words of Shinran Shonin "**May there be peace in the world, may the Buddha's teaching spread!**" will tread the path of world peace for all forms of life, all existence.

The 15<sup>th</sup> World Buddhist Women's Convention will be held at Toronto, Canada, in four years. Let's start planning from now to attend the next convention!

In gratitude and in gassho,  
Carol A. Tsunozumi