Asia Calling: Jastrams in Japan

Temple grounds in Kyoto, Japan

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Memories of Reverend Tamiyoshi Omi

"Life stories of Omi-sensei filled my mind when I read the March 10th death announcement," Dan tells me. "Rev. Tamiyoshi Omi was one of the reasons I accepted the call to be a missionary." This month I, Joan, thought it would be fitting to share how this beloved man and the Jastrams' lives intertwined.

It is 1953. "Mr. Omi was twenty years old and battling tuberculosis when my father, the Rev. Robert Jastram, a newly arrived missionary to Shibata, visited him and invited him to church. My father nurtured him in the faith and later baptized him. And, as his health improved, he encouraged the young Mr. Omi to catch up with high school courses, enroll in university, and then later attend and graduate from our Tokyo Lutheran seminary in 1967. My father also married Mr. Omi to his lovely bride, Kiyoko."

Fast forward to 1999. "My father is retired from the ministry and it is twenty-two years after returning to the States. He is bedridden. Pastor Omi, after decades of faithful ministry himself, is sent to Minnesota by Japanese Lutheran friends to make an extended pastoral visit to his former missionary pastor and dear friend. Pastor Omi shares news of Japan, and comforts my father by singing hymns and reading Scripture at his bedside."

The summer of 2014. "I was considering a call to be an LCMS theological education facilitator in Asia based in Japan. One of the hopes I had carried in accepting the call was to minister to Pastor Omi as he had for my father."

Dan did have this privilege in some small way after we arrived.

In Japan, virtually all Japanese are buried with a Buddhist funeral in Buddhist cemetery. For believers, a plot is often set aside where brothers and sisters in Christ are laid to rest with their *spiritual* family, awaiting the day of resurrection. This was the case for Pastor Omi. In the picture above you can see the church tombstone with the cross and the pastoral stole of Reverend Omi.

Prayers and Thanksgiving

- Pray for Dan in his supervisory role for theological education in Asia.
- Pray for a smooth transition of our regional office and missionary families moving from Hong Kong to Taiwan.
- We are thankful for the visitors this month, first from a fellow missionary and daughter from Sri Lanka and also a group of lively Minnesota women touring Japan.We enjoy reconnecting with fellow Lutherans!

Kyoto Conference

What a delight for me to gather with other mental health workers this last month in Kyoto, which was the capital city of Japan for over a thousand years. Kyoto is known for its many religious sites of over 1600 temples and shrines. It wasn't surprising then that the conference held its meetings in one of the buildings in the Shinkoin temple grounds (pictured on the left).

That first evening we conferees enjoyed soba (buckwheat noodles) at a restaurant established in 1642, surely the oldest restaurant in which I have eaten.

I appreciated learning more about "internal family systems" and am looking forward to incorporating what I learned at the conference in my work as a clinical psychologist with fellow LCMS missionaries!

Thank you for your prayers & support!

To support the LCMS through the work of Dr. Daniel Jastram you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

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Our prayer—for the church at home, the church abroad, and the Church Universal: "What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus"(2 Timothy 1:13).

~Daniel and Joan

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