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Japanese Women Discovering Self-Worth, Says BWA Officer

By Nancy Carter

RICHMOND (BP)--Although Japan is still a male-dominated society, women there are "awakening to their own value as independent persons," says a Japanese Baptist women's leader and pastor's wife who was recently elected as a vice president of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA).

"Women want to be independent and free. But there's a peculiar coziness in dependence," the petite Akiko (Mrs. Shuichi) Matsumura of Tokyo said in an interview here.

"You don't have to make your own decisions. You can be dependent on the decisions of your husband. If things go wrong, you can blame your husband. You don't have to take the responsibility."

For these reasons, she said, to be independent is a struggle, but it takes incentive. The way to find value as an individual is to "see ourselves in the sight of God, how God loves me and loves you."

Young people in Japan are sometimes discouraged by their parents from finding the God of Christianity. Mrs. Matsumura recalled how she was received after becoming a Christian.

"I grew up in a Buddhist family, and when I became a Christian my father felt that was a disgrace to the family, because my family had some social standing.

"These days parents encourage young girls to go to churches because they feel that's the place to get a good education, but they discourage them from being baptized because they don't want them to be completely identified with the Christian churches.

"Why? Because the girls will have a hard time finding Christian husbands."

She has found for many, the value of a woman is judged by the social standing of her husband.

"For the past five or six years, wherever I went, I was never introduced as Mrs. Matsumura," she recalls. "They always say, 'Mrs. Matsumura, wife of Dr. Shuichi Matsumura, vice president of the Baptist World Alliance,' or 'Mrs. Matsumura, wife of the pastor in Tokyo.'" Her husband is the pastor of Tokiwadai Baptist Church, Tokyo.

"Sometimes I want to cry out, 'I appreciate and I love and respect my husband, but I am Akiko Matsumura!'" she said with a laugh.

Mrs. Matsumura has done much in her own right. When the Japanese Baptist Convention voted to suspend the women's group because of lack of funds, she helped to organize a self-supporting Japan Baptist Women's Union outside the convention. She is now president of the organization. In addition she is president of the Asian Baptist Women's Union.

In spite of these accomplishments, she sees her recent election in Stockholm, Sweden as one of 12 BWA vice presidents as a recognition of her husband's work for the 1970 Tokyo BWA congress.

Her husband does not speak English, and she translated for him when he served previously as BWA vice president. Since translating was difficult for both of them and for others, she feels she was chosen as a tribute to him.

However, she said, she doesn't want her title to be in name only. She hopes to be a part of the discussions in the BWA Executive Committee and to speak out "as a woman and an Asian."

She intends to make a contribution to the Alliance, "not as the wife of Shuichi Matsumura, but as Akiko Matsumura."

Long, Lonely Journey Ends,
New One Begins at Chaffee

By Ruth Fowler

FORT CHAFFEE, Ark. (BP)--The journey was long and lonely. Both men had left their families, all their loved ones in Vietnam. Both faced new beginnings in the United States, with fear, with hope, with desire to help their people.

Mai and Vinh met in the United States and began a new friendship here. Slowly, but surely, the process of establishing relationships began again.

Some relationships could not be replaced, or substitutions made. Parents, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles--all left behind--could never be forgotten. For Mai, there was also a fiance in Danang who did not escape.

In Vietnam, Mai was an Army chaplain. As a Christian and an Army officer, it was necessary that he leave; to stay would mean capture at best. He had been happy as a chaplain and to be planning a home and family. War changed all of that.

Now Mai wants only to continue to tell his people, any people, about Jesus Christ. He would like a chance to study more and it would be good for him to be sponsored by a minister so he could learn still more. Mai has not made a definite plan; He can't until he sees what part of the United States he will go to.

Vinh had been a student most of his life. He was waiting for the final word on a scholarship to study in the United States. He left Vietnam by chance. He saw the opportunity, considered the door to be closing, and decided to leave. Now his plans have changed.

"I see something new in my life," Vinh said. "I must study a new subject to help my people. I can study medicine and be allowed to return to a country near Vietnam. From there I can also work in broadcasting--preaching the word of God to my people in Vietnam."

To become a doctor takes many years, but then Vinh has many years. He has no family who needs him and can study as long as necessary.

Both men work with the Protestant ministries at Fort Chaffee, one of four government refugee camps. Mai gives an invitation in Vietnamese at the English-language service on Saturday nights. He witnesses throughout the week.

Vinh witnesses and helps the chaplain in his office, typing letters and doing other work.

Both men want to continue in active Christian ministries. The journey to the United States was long. Now they begin a still longer journey--the journey to a productive life, helping their people.

Since they have found a friend in each other, perhaps this journey won't be so lonely.

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"Today" Show to Interview
Pastor on Nagasaki Bombing

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SAN ANTONIO (BP)--Buckner Fanning, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church here, is scheduled to be interviewed on NBC-TV's "Today" show, Aug. 11, he recently conducted in Nagasaki, Japan, to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bomb on that city.

Fanning was among the first Marines to land in Nagasaki at the conclusion of World War II and that experience was a significant factor in his entering the ministry.

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Church Split Wounds Heal;
Now 2 Cooperating Churches

By C.R. Daley

PARIS, Ky. (BP)--More than 20 years ago differences among the members of First Baptist Church here resulted in a split and the organization of Central Baptist Church only a block away.

Both congregations were people of self restraint, so not much was said about each other, but feelings ran deep.

Since that division both congregations have had some high principled pastors who have lived above the discord to minister in the same community as Christian brothers and friends.

The present pastors, William Cubine of First Baptist and Robert Wallace of Central Baptist, help one another and have coffee together regularly. Each seems to delight in the other's success.

In fact, they plan and sponsor joint activities for the two congregations. Some of these are social get-togethers like the annual cake baking contest for deacons and the churches' joint ice cream social every year.

The two congregations have joint outdoor worship services in the summer. They recently held a Christian Home Life Conference and ate together in a family night supper.

The two churches support each other during revival meetings by dismissing one service and providing special music for each other. The pastors cover for each other in hospital visitation and other duties when one is out of town.

The most convincing demonstration of Christian love and cooperation is seen in how the two churches deal with prospects for church membership. They actually share prospect lists.

More than that, they cooperate in bus ministries. Both churches have buses, and instead of each church running them all over the community, they divide the area and transport riders to both locations. Buses drop off riders at each church and pick them up after services for the return trip.

It is as important to learn to forget as to learn to remember. Baptists in Paris have the grace to forget, and the two pastors appear not to know there was ever anything to forget.

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Bicentennial Feature

Patrick Henry Accuses
King, Established Clergy

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HANOVER COUNTY, Va., Dec. 15, 1763(BP)--A virtually unknown young lawyer, Patrick Henry, ignored shocked cries of, "Treason! Treason!" in Hanover County Court as he denounced in impassioned tones the meddling of King George III and pointed an accusing finger at the state-supported clergy of the established church.

Although technically Henry lost his case, the jury was so swayed by his powerful oratory that they awarded the plaintiff, Rev. James Maury, a token judgment of only one penny.

The attorney's moral victory was enthusiastically received by the people, who not only share Henry's dislike for King George's high-handed legislation but have no respect for a clergy which takes its problems to the crown.

Ordinarily the clergy of the established church receives its salary from the state in tobacco, but when the price of tobacco soared in 1758 due to an anticipated crop failure, the Virginia legislature voted to give the ministers their salary in currency at a rate below the market value of tobacco.

Ministers appealed to the king who disallowed the act. In a test case first brought to the courts in April of last year, Maury sued for the remainder of his 1758 salary.

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"A king, for disallowing acts of this salutary nature," Henry told the court, "from being the father of his people, degenerates into a tyrant and forfeits all rights to his subjects' obedience."

It was this bold declaration of the young attorney which some regarded as treasonable. But the jury, while ruling the act of 1758 invalid in view of the king's edict, awarded Maury damages of one penny.

Maury early showed that he was on the side of the crown and plantation aristocracy. He pointed out that three of the jurors should not be allowed to serve because they were "not gentlemen."

"Plain farmers make an honest jury," Henry answered, to the warm approval of the courtroom.

The hearing was well attended by the established clergy who came to gloat over a triumph. But as Patrick Henry's relentless attack raked both crown and "hired clergy" while courtroom and jury gave ill-concealed support, many left in haste before the decision was announced. The so-called "Parson's Cause" may well mark a turn in the affairs of Virginia and the colonies.

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