



Season's Greetings

6/38 Minami-cho
Itabashi-ku
Tokyo, Japan

Dear Friends,

As I mentioned in my last letter after I was assigned to the Tokyo Student Center, I moved to a triplex nearer the student center. The other apartments are occupied by Dottie Lane, assistant treasurer at our mission office, and Virginia Highfill, assistant WMU Executive Secretary. We have three Japanese girls living with us and really have quite a gay time on our "old maids" compound.

One of the compensations of Tokyoites for the hectic life amid the traffic and crowds is that we frequently have the opportunity to see other missionaries and tourist friends as they pass through. One of my first house guests in my new apartment was Rita Duke, former Baptist Student Director at Livingston and a friend from Florence days. Rita is a newly appointed missionary to Taiwan. While in Hong Kong this summer, I saw Dorothy Rolan Deitrich and her family who were en route to Thailand. I enjoyed talking with her about Florence acquaintances as I have with Vernon Yearby during his four months stay in Tokyo in connection with the New Life Movement. Phillip Williams, a Florence State graduate and old B.S.U.'er, came to Tokyo from Korea while I was in Hong Kong. I regret that I did not get to see him then, but we have plans to get together in January. Those of us from Alabama especially enjoyed the visit of Lois Privett and Orline Florey in June. Missionaries and military personnel live and work in two separate worlds here in Japan, but we do have occasional opportunities for fellowship. I have really enjoyed visiting with Juanita Seale Wood, niece of the Kelleys in Florence, and her family who are stationed at Tachikawa Air Base.

One day recently as I returned home after my night class at the student center I was feeling very keenly my own personal inadequacy in dealing with the two hundred non-Christians attending classes each week; and I was depressed over lack of progress in the language which is so necessary for effective spiritual counseling. When I reached in my mail box, I found a letter which was completely covered with characters and stickers indicating that it had made the rounds in Tokyo. The letter mailed five months earlier with a four cent stamp was addressed "Josephine Randall, Tokyo, Japan". I was impressed that I had become so famous the letter was delivered! When I opened it, this is what I found written in a nine year old boyish handwriting on a school tablet:

Dear Miss Randall,

I would like to give you mine and everyone elses
sincere thanks for your work there in Japan.

We will pray for you!!!

Sincerely,

The C. D. Tipps Chapter of R. A.
Houston, Texas

P.S. I hope that you have much luck with those 350,000
college students in Tokyo who are not Christians.

David Mitchum

It appears coincidental to some that this letter came just when I needed the encouragement which it brought, but those of us here find in these experiences the assurance that God is with us in Japan working out His will and that you are helping to supply the power which we need through your prayers for our work. Certainly during this season of prayer for foreign missions we join with you in concern for a lost world and we give thanks for your prayers on our behalf.

One of the most consecrated young Christians I have in my Bible class at my church is Tashio Aono, truly an example of cooperative mission endeavor. In the summer of 1960, Aono San went to America as a high school exchange student of the American Field Service. He was assigned to live in the home of devout Christians in a small town in New York. Aono San says that he was first impressed by the love for God and each other evidenced in the daily life of his adopted family. In order to practice English, he read the Bible each day for the family worship period, and at this time each of the four members patiently answered the many questions he had concerning this faith which was even stranger than the too-soft bed in which he was sleeping. Coming from a land where Sunday is no different from any other day, he was especially impressed with the way in which the family observed the Sabbath. As his English improved, he understood more and more of the pastor's messages, but like many Japanese young people he found basic doctrines irrational and unacceptable. With time, however, a sense of sin and conviction came upon him causing rebellion on his part which resulted in somewhat of a gulf between him and his friends. During this period of spiritual struggle within, Aono San could sense the prayers of the family which were made for him privately. In February Aono San resolved that he would respond to the pastor's invitation. When questioned about his decision by his American Dad his reply was "I want to be a Christian because Christianity is good". This reply revealed the concept which he had and which many Japanese have that Christianity is a moral or ethical code aiding in living a good life. His Dad registered his disappointment momentarily but with Christian love and gentleness continued to show by word and deed that Christianity is a personal encounter of God with man rather than affirmation of a creed. In April Aono San was baptized in the Baptist Bible Church of the town after having had this personal encounter. As he joined the other international students to return home after one year in the States, he said "many of the foreign exchange students have probably become better speakers of English than I and probably they learned many more things in America, but unless they too came to know Jesus Christ as Saviour they have not acquired the most valuable and precious thing". Aono San is now earnestly witnessing to his own family who live in Shizuoka where his father is a high school English teacher. I know that you will pray for him as he witnesses and thus continue our cooperative mission project. I hope that

his experience will inspire you to do more to witness to the three hundred thousand international students studying in America. When converted these students can be more valuable than we missionaries in leading their people to Christ.

The Japanese take much joy in presenting gifts to friends and others on every conceivable occasion. The shelves of my study at home and at the student center are lined with Japanese dolls given me by students when they return from vacation trips. When I moved to my new apartment, following the Japanese custom I visited each of the neighbors and presented them with ten postcards. Formerly food like Japanese noodles or eggs were given on the occasion of moving into a new neighborhood, but nowadays taking postcards is most popular. Frequently one has to rush home to be there when the neighbor returns the visit also bringing a gift. Originally this gift presenting habit was not a mere social custom. It had a considerably deeper meaning. It represented the spirit of mutual help and particularly of sharing food with all. In this land where gift-giving has become almost second nature to the people, at this season of the year I am burdened that less than one out of a hundred has received God's gift of Christ and His abiding presence in the heart. May we be reminded that Christmas is God's inexpressible gift of love, good will, and Christ; and may we dedicate ourselves anew to the task of sharing this Gift.

Very sincerely,

Mary Jo Randall