

I am in Togo as a home economist studying the culture and cooking

Peggy Warden Matsuya

December 1975

Unification Church Missionary to Togo



I am here as a home economist studying the culture and cooking. People are always eager to share their country's heritage. As the people here spend time in cooking and eating, this gives me an opportunity to make contact easily on a casual basis. I've also thought about visiting hotels and restaurants to learn more.

Our experiences so far have given us a deeper insight into the character of the people. We have learned the necessity of patience and wisdom. It's not so common for white people to seek out blacks and several times when we wanted some of the children to eat with us or when we wanted to help clean or do something when we visited a family, they were embarrassed. So it takes adjustment on both sides.

We are making a close relation with one woman who works at a hotel here. Last weekend she took us to Palime, the second largest city, but still very small. We spent the weekend with her brother's family. They are very nice people. The women and children work so hard. The women are cooking almost all day, and the children are up at 4:30 or 5:00 a.m. to clean and begin preparing for the day. Life is very much centered around the family. It's a hard life for many people. Across the street from us they are building a huge new post office. As they don't have modern equipment here it's all done by manual labor. It gives us such a feeling of admiration for the people. The women and children transport very heavy loads on their heads. They are very strong people, emerging from one era into a new one.

We have several contacts with young women, one of whom we met in a popular German restaurant where we go every Saturday. She came today and prepared an African meal for us. It really takes time to develop a deeper relationship with the people. Many of our friends are much more at ease eating with their hands than with forks. We, on the other hand, are not so skilled with our hands as they.

So many of the people are very surprised when white people come to them to initiate a relationship. But often they are pleased and then want to give so much. The people are for the most part uncomplicated and really long for some purpose for their life. I feel so much the necessity of having a very parental heart for the country and the people. They look to Asia and Europe as their dream.

We feel like we've been here for years. Each dusty street, each tiny lizard, and many of the people are so familiar to us now. Daily our love grows and deepens for the country.