


ISLAND MATTERS *Mufi Hannemann*

Why Hiroshima Needs Our Kōkua Now

Any relationship takes work — an effort by both parties to make it meaningful and fulfilling. The same goes for relationships between governments, and there's no better example than our sister-state and sister-city relationships, those declarations of friendship between our governments and their counterparts in other parts of the world. While the ceremonial aspects of these relationships are a formality, it's what we put into the relationships that make them work.

So it is with the long-standing relationship between Honolulu and Hiroshima City,

which is being brought to the fore with the recent natural disaster there. (This sister-city link, Honolulu's first, dates back to 1959; Hawai'i and Hiroshima Prefecture were bonded as sister-states in 1997.)

This past July, heavy rains in Hiroshima Prefecture and nearby areas caused widespread flooding and landslides, damaging homes and businesses, and resulting in the deaths of over more than 100 people and injuries to scores more.

Like the people of Puna affected by the eruption, thousands of residents of Hiroshima Prefecture have moved to

temporary shelters, and the recovery will likely cost billions of yen.

While we work to help our neighbors here, public-spirited people in Hawai'i with roots and ties to Hiroshima are raising money for the victims and aiding in the recovery effort there, in keeping with the spirit of our relationship.

Called "Hawai'i for Hiroshima," the project is being spearheaded by organizations with links to Hiroshima. In the forefront is Wayne Miyao, who's leading both the Hiroshima Hawai'i Sister State Committee and Honolulu Hiroshima Kenjin Kai, whose

members trace their ancestral roots to that prefecture.

Monetary gifts for this fundraising effort, made out to "Honolulu Hiroshima Kenjin Kai," are tax-deductible and should be sent to Honolulu Japanese Chamber of Commerce, 2454 S. Beretania St., Suite 201, Honolulu, HI, 96826. All of the proceeds will benefit Hiroshima victims.

I believe the people of Hiroshima would welcome this expression of enduring friendship and aloha from Hawai'i, and I call upon our citizens to demonstrate support by contributing to this endeavor.



The author and Wayne Miyao visit the Hiroshima Children's Peace Memorial during the 50-year sister-city bond festivities in Japan.

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I feel a special empathy for Hiroshima because of my work as director of the Office of International Relations and Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism, then as Honolulu mayor, took me there, while we welcomed delegations to our city as well. In fact, I've described our two cities as the bookends to World War II, in that the war in the Pacific began here at Pearl Harbor in 1941 and ended with the bombing of Hiroshima in 1945.

In 2009, on the 50th anniversary of our sister-city relationship, then-Mayor Tadamshi Akiba of Hiroshima City and a delegation came here to reaffirm our ties.

Later that year, a Hawai'i delegation reciprocated by visiting Hiroshima City on a trip organized by Honolulu Japanese Chamber of Commerce and their Hiroshima counterpart. Mayor Akiba made me a Hiroshima City Special Honorary Citizen, and I expressed my gratitude, of course, by serenading them with a song they were very familiar with: *Honolulu City Lights*.

It's worth noting that in 1985, Hiroshima donated the Hiroshima Peace Bell to us, located at the Izumo Taishakyo Mission. In 2001, the Hiroshima Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Hiroshima government donated to the Honolulu

Japanese Chamber the torii (Japanese gateway) standing at the intersection of South King and South Beretania streets.

Bring Back The Pro Bowl

I was glad to hear Hawai'i Tourism Authority is seeking to attract an NFL preseason game to Aloha Stadium. As I've been advocating for longer than I care to remember, we should have proffered this proposal when we were still hosting the annual Pro Bowl to capacity crowds. I said then that on the years that the Pro Bowl is played elsewhere, we should have the option of having a preseason game here.

That would have given us

an opportunity to negotiate from a position of strength, rather than long after the fact, as is the case now. One need only look at what Orlando negotiated successfully from the NFL when the Pro Bowl left Hawai'i for Florida in 2017 — a package deal of the Pro Bowl and a preseason game at the same time!

Too bad the aforementioned idea fell on deaf ears. Nevertheless, let's hope HTA is successful in drawing NFL interest. I know football fans would love the opportunity to once again see the pros in action since more and more of our local "homeboys" are making us proud in the NFL.

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