

## Florida Impressions

Have you ever felt truly cherished? We had all come to Florida with stress from our jobs, our families, our districts. We were tired from working so hard and in need of encouragement and renewed excitement about what we were doing. And it came so quickly. All of a sudden, I had a clearer vision and more energy and joy than I'd had in years.

It was happening to all of us. We felt we could do anything for kosen-rufu. I even volunteered to be a stand-up comic for the talent show that Saturday night. I was the opening act — can you believe it?

The altar in the Friendship Auditorium is awesome. The sound of gongyo there is deeply resonant, like a living organ with a thousand pipes.

The national leaders who were there were determined to do all they could so that none of us would leave with a question about our practice, or the organization, or a personal problem unanswered. They were down to earth, very gracious and incredibly generous with their time.

I regained a sense of joy and beauty about my practice. And as more of us go, it will be easier and easier for us to bring that happy, clear vision for world peace back home with us.

*Florida:  
rainbow over Ft. Lauderdale  
welcomes pilgrims.  
Perfumed evening by the lake  
lightens footsteps.  
My mentor speaks,  
I listen.*

*Gongyo:  
a living organ, the ocean  
Every member a vessel,  
the poor woman's  
lamp oil.*

*The lesson:  
praising the Buddha  
in all I meet,  
raising the Buddha  
inside of me.*

— Anita Nevins Brown, Sacramento, Calif.