


Yu - Ai 友愛 **Friendship**

The Newsletter of World Friendship Center
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PAX 2006, The Trip to America

By Mieko Yamashita

A PAX team of four was sent to the US from World Friendship Center for three weeks from September 11 to October 3 in 2006. The American Committee of WFC hosted the team while in the States. The team consisted of two A-bomb survivors, Horie from Hiroshima and Komine from Nagasaki, a graduate student, Ueyama and a long-time WFC member, Yamashita. The areas visited were Washington DC, Akron, OH, North Manchester, IN, Goshen, IN, Bluffton, OH, Elgin, IL and Seattle, WA.

The purposes of the PAX visit were to: *Share our message of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; no nuclear weapons and no war
*Experience and learn American efforts at peacemaking

*Dialogue with people trying to make a difference in the world

*Celebrate Japanese and American efforts at peacemaking, friendship and bridge-building.

Our 3-week-long visit was eventful and meaningful. We were exposed to the abundant American hospitality; amazing portion of good food, large house with beautiful garden, breathtaking sunset and rare double-rainbows that appeared after a tornado warning siren in Elgin---everything was impressive to me. But what impressed me even more was the people

of peace churches and the church systems that work for peace and justice worldwide. In America, peacemakers are mostly Christians and their zeal for peace is genuine. I thought of President Bush who is said to be a religious man with strong faith in God.

While on the Capitol Hill tour in DC, we came across "Camp Democracy", whose tents stood three blocks from the White House and witnessed the strong anger and dissatisfaction of conscientious Americans who were determined to pull down Bush for the sake of peace and justice. Standing by the tent was a big Pinocchio balloon that had a long nose.

During our three-week visit, we had about 30 sharing occasions in all, ranging from a small "family forum" to a large gathering of 50 or more people at church or school. In areas such as Goshen, Bluffton and Seattle, we had many school visits from elementary school to college including a number of middle and high school classes. Peace club members at the Bethany School in Goshen were impressive with their peace activities. At the Bluffton Elementary School on the World Peace Day, Sept.21 and days later at the Seattle Country Day School we saw young students full of spirits, whose bright

eyes seemed to me a promise as future peacemakers. "Seeds of peace were planted to more than 300 students in one week, and each would spread to their families and friends," Larry Sims, our host in Seattle said to me, which was very encouraging.

In North Manchester I had a great joy of meeting WFC former directors, together with various peace group members in the area such as non-violent conflict resolution educators, Christian Peacemaker Team and many others. In Goshen, in Elgin, in Seattle, our hosts invited various peace activists or friends or family members to their homes so that we could have lots of sharing and fun time as well. We were very grateful since having conversations in a setting like this was exactly what this PAX mission hoped for.

We visited and learned of the peace and relief efforts at Mennonite Central Committee. I envied its system and volunteer power that stemmed from religious faith, something that Japan is lacking. I also noticed that schools had a clear educational intention to foster a sense of world citizenship in students by teaching diversities. Those students are likely to grow to be free from prejudice of all kinds such as color, religion or race.

We passed our message from Hiroshima and Nagasaki to American people. I stressed that it wasn't a history but today's problem and spoke about the similarly dangerous DU weapons. Soh and Hide sang a duo so well, someone asked us if WFC chose the PAX members by audition, which amused me. My message was; the more peace culture dominates, the more war culture shrinks.

We are deeply indebted to all the hosts including the WFC American Committee. We are very grateful. Thank you so much once again.

My thoughts on our Mission to the US

By Hidetaka Komine

Every single day during our visit to the United States was unforgettable to me.

Seven families hosted us during our stay. They met us in smiles and treated us with utmost kindness.

They took us to the local sightseeing spots they were proud of, and the scenery was so spectacular I felt like lingering there forever. Also, we were treated with delicious food, sometimes with pure white rice and miso soup.

We had about 30 occasions to speak including schools from primary, secondary and college. I spoke not only of the tragedy of the A-bombing, but also about the sacredness of life, peaceful thinking, nuclear abolition and so on. I spoke in a different way taking into account the ages of my audience.

In Seattle, we stayed with the Sims' family, Larry, JoAnn and Kyle, for one week. At all gatherings, I had an intent audience. Mike Stern, a singer-song writer who must have strongly impressed with my story, wrote a song for me sitting up all night. He played it at the Church Peace Concert. I was very moved with the music, although I did not understand English.

Larry said, "A chance like this is important, so you should spread a circle of peace movement. I'll try to tell my friends and acquaintances so you'll have more chances to talk."

This trip was not necessarily free from a happening, but I was glad that I came to the US. I am grateful to all the WFC community.

Participating in the PAX Program

By Kohei Ueyama

Previously I was a member of the Korea PAX Program of WFC and this year I visited the United States as a PAX member. I learned of the peace commitment in the various places there. I was encouraged to learn that many American people were involved in peace activities, which should inspire all Japanese to work harder for peace. Young people in America are actively working in many peace groups. I learned that young people can find peace groups to join, particularly in churches and religious groups, which provide them with opportunities to engage in their activities.

This summer in Japan, I worked as a member of the steering committees of two major international peace conferences in which many Hiroshima young people participated. Although many young people are interested in peace activities, most of them do not know how to focus their interests, and struggle to find their own ways, groping in the dark. Some groups promote symposiums or forums; others hold charity marathons supported by sponsors; or work for deepening the relationship with Iran by using video equipment. Many of them create their own activities free from the existing peace movements, but on the other hand, they often seem distressed because of limited communication with other peace groups. I believe it is necessary for them to have closer links with other groups or generations whether or not they form their own group.

American peace groups have opportunities to take actions together with other groups regardless of generations or issues, because churches intentionally

unite the various groups with similar issues. I wonder if we can create such group activities here in Hiroshima or Japan. I wonder if religion plays some roles in that.

The peace movements in Hiroshima or Japan are divided by generations, which limit leadership opportunities for young people. Young people need to be included in decision making. It has long been said that Japanese youngsters are not interested in peace matters, but that is not necessarily true because the existing peace groups have not given them opportunities for their activities. I believe that young people in Hiroshima have started peace activities for themselves because they have been deprived of opportunities in existing groups.

The adults are obsessed with the idea that young people are indifferent to peace. If people in Hiroshima and Japan support young people interested in peace, these young people will participate in the existing movements. It could become no less powerful than those in the United States.

I hope that such an environment will be provided. I will try to create the environment for the next generation to engage in peace activities more easily. I envy America because it provides such a peace environment. I am eager to create that environment for our next generation.

I am very grateful for the opportunity to visit America with the PAX team. I will commit myself to the peace movement in Japan and also to the peace exchange between America and Japan.

We Were Greeted With a Smile

By Soh Horie

First of all, I'd like to express my heartfelt thanks for the hospitality received during my 3-week stay in the U.S. and the help of Japanese persons concerned with this PAX tour.

We were under great stress and displeased with the tight security check in American airports. However, we felt relieved and relaxed to be greeted with a smile by many people wherever we visited. I thought there was a gap between their kind attitude toward us and what the U.S. government has done for years. Each of the four PAX delegates, all different except for the fact that the two are A-bomb survivors and the same age, spoke his or her own thoughts for peace from a different viewpoint in schools, churches and homes where we stayed about thirty times. I was very happy to have such valuable experiences. I recognized many Americans seek peace from the bottom of their hearts and go out of the country to tackle the peace activities. I was thankful for a warm welcome in every location I went.

My message was:

Although the world population is getting larger, the production of grain per capita has reduced since the 1980's. The environment surrounding us is getting worse due to the global warming, desertification, decrease of arable land and increase of nuclear-polluted areas. The resources, especially the energy resource we use, will be drained in the not far distant future. In such circumstances, can we afford to fight wars?

I addressed my audience by showing the data I managed to obtain. To my regret, it is a reality that many people throughout the world are employed in the war industry, beginning with America. I said, "I want you to create eco-friendly, peaceful industries so that the workers in the military industry can change jobs." I

was pleased that my opinion was printed in the local paper.

I deeply appreciate Mrs. Yamashita and Kyle's interpretation for me. I couldn't have appealed my idea to them in my limited English. I'd like to make use of this experience in the U.S. to enrich my future life. The following phrases are written in front of the gate of Chuguji temple:

***Don't ask for a reward for what you did.
Don't forget the obligation you received.***

If you meet any American visitor to Hiroshima who remembers my name "Soh", a catchy name, some day, please let me know immediately. Thank you very much.



The PAX journey begins in Washington DC



And ends in Seattle, Washington

Memories of Hiroshima

By Andrea Geiger

(Editors note: Andrea Geiger visited WFC on her first return to Japan since she left in 1971)

In 1967, my parents, Walton and Nicola Geiger, made the decision to take their family to Japan to live and work at the World Friendship Center. My mother arrived in Hiroshima that fall and my dad, sister and I followed in February 1968.

Almost forty years later, in November 2006, I had a chance to return to Hiroshima and to stay at the World Friendship Center. It is no longer located in the same building in Minami Kanon Machi where we once lived, but I was heartened to find that the spirit was still very much the same. It was lovely to meet the current directors, Don and Pauline Hess, and to spend a few hours with one of my dad's former students, Michiko Yamane, and Masako Kido, who also remembered our family, looking for the site where the first house was located. Like the rest of Hiroshima, Minami Kanon Machi had also changed dramatically during the intervening decades and we discovered, to our dismay, that the building is long gone. The *negi* fields that surrounded the area in the late 1960's, likewise, had long since been replaced by shops and new apartment buildings.

The change that I found most striking, though, was how very large the trees had grown. In 1968, there were still relatively few trees of any size in Hiroshima and almost no buildings more than three or four stories in height. Now huge trees arch over boulevards lined by modern buildings of many stories. How heartened both my parents would have been to see Hiroshima emerge again as a vibrant, living city, even as those who died as a result of the dropping of the atomic bomb continue to be remembered in a series of exhibits at the Peace Museum

which tell an even more complete story today than they did then.

Returning to Hiroshima was all the more poignant because my mother, Nicola Geiger, who served as director during the year we lived at the World Friendship Center while Barbara Reynolds was abroad, passed away on July 31, 2006, in Santa Cruz, California, where she spent the last decades of her life. Both she and my father, who passed away many years ago in August 1976, had become Quakers in the early 1960's, drawn to Quakerism by the commitment to pacifism and nonviolence that is at its heart because of their own wartime experiences. My mother, born in Hamburg, Germany, had lost all but two members of her family, including her first son, to bombing raids and other wartime conditions.

My father, an American recruited to work on the Manhattan Project as a junior scientist during World War II, had taken advantage of an opportunity to leave the Project eight months later after realizing its intended purpose but had always regretted that he had contributed in any way to research that would be turned against other human beings. The opportunity to come to Hiroshima and to dedicate some small part of his life to its people, as a result, was profoundly meaningful to him. A deeply humble man, despite the contributions he had made to brain research and to such breakthroughs as the discovery of streptomycin, he gave up his job as a research biochemist in Pennsylvania to teach English at the YMCA in Hiroshima in order to support our family and to allow my mother to devote herself fulltime to the work of the World Friendship Center.

One of the projects my parents initiated during their time at the World Friendship Center was teaching English without cost to whoever wanted to come

for several hours on Saturdays in Motomachi, which was then still a very impoverished area in Hiroshima. We would head off together along with other World Friendship Center staff on Saturday afternoons. My sister, Vanessa, and I would play English-language games with children who wanted to learn a few English words in one corner of the small hall that was rented for that purpose, and the adults would converse in English with older students in other corners of the room. My parents explained to us that this was likely the only chance that people who lived in that neighborhood at that time would have to hear English spoken by native speakers. It was their hope that our efforts would give some child or young person an opportunity to hone their language skills they would otherwise not have had.

On other days, we would make the trip out to the U.S. military base in Iwakuni with other WFC staff to hand out paper flowers on which were written prayers for peace in Vietnam. I will always remember WFC staff member Chris Cowley climbing up on a tank on display for visitors to place a few flowers on its guns. Occasionally, we also had a chance to visit with survivors, some suffering from illnesses caused by the atomic bomb, and many with vivid memories of where they were and what they saw on the day that it was dropped. I will always be grateful to them for their willingness to revisit such a terrible moment in their own lives in order to share it with the child that I was then.

All these experiences shaped my life in innumerable ways. Hiroshima today is a testament to the triumph of life and renewal over death and destruction. My parents would have agreed, however, that it is critical never to forget what happened and always to honor the spirits of those who died as a result of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima.

*Andrea Geiger
December 2006*

PE-A-CE-LO-VE 2006.

On Sunday, October 15, 2006, along with 42 other organizations, WFC participated in the 23rd International Peace/Love Festival at the Hiroshima Central Park Lawn Area. The title itself is the Spanish pronunciation "Peace, Love". This is a Hiroshima festival for people of various nationalities and cultures to interact. A great turnout of WFC volunteers insured a successful program as we sponsored musical entertainment including a Peace Choir; solo; harmonica and hula dance. Others contributed by hosting a bazaar; making paper corsages; teaching English lessons; holding flag quizzes, and displaying WFC posters, pictures and literature. Outstanding planning by the committee of Kono, Okada and Asaka and volunteer efforts by many members resulted in a net profit of 21,161 yen. More importantly, it provided WFC with a wonderful opportunity for friendship building within the international community.

International Exchange and Cooperation Day

On Sunday, November 19 WFC volunteers set up a booth in the International Conference Center to participate in the 7th International Exchange and Cooperation Day. This event is sponsored by the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation for participants to experience different cultures through international presentations such as, lectures, photo and poster exhibits, reports and an international bazaar. Our purpose was to give further visibility to the work of WFC in Hiroshima. Over 20 WFC volunteers and students were involved in displaying posters and pictures, distributing WFC literature to the attendees and presenting a power-point presentation of the scope of our programs. Many old friends of WFC stopped by and new friends were introduced to the work of WFC. Thanks again to our outstanding committee of Kono, Okada and Asaka for their creative planning for this event.

Christmas Program

On Sunday, December 17, 45 members and friends joined us for our annual Christmas program which included the Christmas Bible story, a Christmas classic, the O`Henry play, a solo by Asaka and an appearance of Santa Claus for a gift exchange. A very special day with the many special people who give so much of themselves to the mission of WFC. A donation of 9,390 yen was collected for the Association of Medical Doctors of Asia (AMDA).

Friendship Afternoon with Sister Amano

WFC was pleased to host Sister Amano, a Catholic nun whose convent headquarters is located in Paris. She was born in Hiroshima City in 1935 and now resides here. In 1990 she was assigned as a missionary to Chad in Africa where she remained for 11 years, returning in 2001,

While there, she taught needlework and handcraft to children at the elementary school. She was also deeply involved in Girl Scout activities. During her 11 years in Chad she developed a keen love for the people of this waste land. Her presentation showed that love with her vivid descriptions and remarkable photos of her activities in this poor undeveloped country.

WFC presented a donation to Sister Amano in appreciation for her dedicated missionary service to help the children of Chad.

WFC Home Page

Do you have internet access? If so, you can view our WFC home page, including the posting of our Yu-Ai newsletters and other significant activities of WFC. We welcome your comments at: wfchirosima@nifty.com.

Peace Park Guides Annual Report

The Peace Park Guides meet monthly to review their activities from the previous month and to schedule their guide activities for the current month. In our last issue we failed to recognize these talented, committed individuals for guiding visitors during their year which ended in July 2006. Our thanks to Yoko Fujisaka the outgoing coordinator for her dedication in leading the Group to a successful year. She provided an annual report which is summarized below:

From August 2005 to July 2006 these dedicated volunteers guided 223 people in 59 separate tours using 69 guides.

In addition to their tours they provided written reports on six lesser known monuments to enable them to answer questions from visitors. They also did background book reports on two books, "Discounted Casualties" and "Addicted to War" and made field trips to four monuments outside the Peace Park.

Our heartfelt congratulations to Yoko-san for an outstanding year and a warm welcome to Tanemori Misato for volunteering to be the current coordinator.

Peace Award

On November 12, Directors and 7 other Riji members attended the annual Tanimoto Kiyoshi Peace Award and reception. As a former recipient of this prestigious award WFC was recognized and introduced at the reception following the award. We had many opportunities to dialogue with the leaders of the various peace organizations in attendance.

Thank you to Translators of this issue: Yoshiko Sakuma, Mieko Yamashita, Michiko Yamane, Takako Hiramoto, and Sachiko Hiraoka and to Editors Naomi Kurihara and Don Hess



Peace/Love Festival tent and bazaar volunteers



Peace Choir practices for special events



International Exchange&Cooperation Dayvolunteers



Sister Amano from Chad receives donation



Lithuanian Group staying at WFC present picture to Director Pauline Hess



Matsubara tells her Hibakusha story to Tokyo group



Riji members attend the Tanimoto Peace award and reception.



Directors recognize Peace Park volunteers for their volunteer efforts for the past year.