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Yu - Ai **Friendship**

The Newsletter of World Friendship Center
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Introducing the PAX Team 2007



PAX Team 2007 at WFC

Maggie Gilman
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Maggie attends Goshen College as a Peace, Justice and Conflicts Studies major with a minor in Women's Studies. She is involved in many organizations and activities including the Goshen Student Women's Association (GSWA) steering committee and has helped organized events including "Take Back the Night". Her summer volunteer work has included rebuilding houses for Hurricane Katrina victims with Mennonite Disaster Services. Maggie continues to dedicate her life and studies to making a peaceful difference in the lives of others and plans to continue to work for peace and justice following her graduation.

Rolando Sosa
email: rasgranados@schwarz.ambis.edu

Rolando is a graduate of Goshen College and graduated in 2003 with a dual degree in theology and social work. He now is a full time student in a dual degree program (Masters of Divinity and Masters of Social Work) at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary and Andrews University. Rolando was born in El Salvador, Central America, but fled that country as a war refugee at the age of 21, immigrating to Canada in North America. He has worked as a teacher, a tutor, a translator and often as a community peace maker including his remarkable work with rival gangs in Elkhart County. Rolando plans to continue the path of making peace and bringing about positive changes.

Emi Kathryn Oda email: emi.oda@emu.edu

Emi grew up in Sapporo, Japan raised by her American born mother and her Japanese father and at an early age discovered the identity issue of being "different" while also embracing the joys of blending different cultures. She is now a Peace and Conflicts and Justice studies major at Eastern Mennonite University, in Virginia. In addition to her recent PAX Team 2007 visit to Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Kyoto she has traveled to the Middle East, Turkey, Greece and Italy. Her volunteer work includes translating, working with those that are disabled, and Habitat for the Humanity work including helping to build a shelter for a family in the Philippines.

Mary Cox email: MECox@manchester.edu

Mary is a Peace Studies major with an emphasis on Interpersonal and Group Conflicts and is beginning to think about continuing a career in Nursing. She grew up in the pacifist Church of the Brethren and has participated in a wide variety of peace activities as well as local and global community projects. She spent a recent spring break with Jubilee Partners in Georgia, hosting refugees from other parts of the world, during their first few months in the United States. She has met and helped families from Liberia, Burundi and Sudan. In addition to her PAX 2007 experiences in Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Kyoto she has traveled to New Zealand and next will go to Nicaragua, Central America for a two week medical practicum.

Emi Oda's Reflections

I know that I have had an incredible experience when I find myself struggling to write about it. I've wracked my brain for the past week trying to figure out how to communicate my experiences to people who I know would be anticipating stories from me. I can tell you this much: if you have never been to Hiroshima or Nagasaki, plan a trip to both locations as soon as possible. The world needs to hear the stories of the survivors of the A-bomb while they are still alive.

The hibakusha have stories. If you will listen to them, you will find yourself baffled. You will tell yourself over and over again, "I had no idea...." And it will be true. You will feel overwhelmed and guilty, ashamed and embarrassed. Then it will happen. You will see the treasure of the person to whom you are listening. Granted, the hibakusha may be missing an ear or a number of fingers, they may have scars all over their bodies, they may be deformed in a way that may be difficult to look at, or they may look completely unscathed externally but suffering internally from nightmares, guilt, horror scenes that they cannot escape from decades ago, or radiation induced cancer that is eating away their insides. Despite all of this, I can guarantee you one thing: hibakusha are some of the most

beautiful, courageous people you will ever meet. You will treasure their stories in your heart and feel empowered to carry them with you. By doing this, you will be changed forever. At least this is what happened to me. I am not the same person.

During the course of two amazing weeks, as I was on the move from place to place, forming relationships with people who have committed their life to work for peace, my love for Japan was rekindled. I discovered that I had never given Japan a chance. She is a gem. Seeing tens of thousands of colorful peace cranes at the two Peace Parks are images that I will never forget, nor will I ever forget the pain I felt as I forced myself to leave one of the most beautiful sights I have ever seen in my life-- the sight of thousands of lanterns bearing messages of peace from all around the world, afloat on the gentle current of the river that runs through the Peace Park in Hiroshima. Japan's desire for peace in the world and its denunciation of war through its constitution are two valuable pieces of information that have been branded in my heart. I am honored to share them with anyone who is willing to listen.

The journey that is behind me was a beginning of something big in my life. My encounters helped me to find myself more fully as a citizen of Japan and my responsibility as a citizen of this world. I have also gained more confidence as a spokesperson for peace. The people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki seemed to have a heightened sense of being alive. I think that it rubbed off on me. Because both Nagasaki and Hiroshima share a story of death, their will to share their story of rebirth and life are probably the most powerful in all of the islands of Japan. I would return to Hiroshima and Nagasaki any day to see my brothers and sisters, my aunts and uncles, my mothers and fathers. Their home is my home. My home is their home. My heart is theirs.

What I haven't figured out is how people who have experienced hell could come to a place where they can laugh, grin widely, be kind and generous and so humble, be interested in my life and my small-scale experiences, treasure me like a little chick and send me off with a thousand

blessings. I saw God in the eyes of many men and women. I thought that I was already in love with the human race before this journey, but I fell into a deeper love with my brothers and sisters of Japan and the world at large. For the first time in my life I saw the true beauty of peace work with my own eyes and I desire for it to be part of my destiny.

Mary Cox's Reflections

To listen to a person express her guilt for giving people a drink of water because as an 8-year-old she didn't know it would kill them; to hear how her frightful memories from when she was a child still haunt her today; to see drawings of hell by hibakusha of August 6 and August 9, 1945; to see today's children of Hiroshima and Nagasaki speak out against war and nuclear weapons; to see the strength in hibakusha and their will to continue to tell their story; to more fully understand that the atomic bomb happened to real people, and that it is still happening to them, through illness, nightmares and fear; to realize that we are all hibakusha in some way; this is the experience I had in Japan - this and much more.

Though not all of my experiences in Japan were about the A-bomb and its consequences, that certainly was the major purpose of my trip, and I intend to tell people about it. I will share about the pain that I saw and the courage. I will pass on the message that the atomic bomb should never be used again. I will also tell of the many kindnesses I received from the Japanese people. For instance, I nearly left my purse on a train while traveling to Hiroshima, but right before I stepped off, a woman called out and held it up. I was given many, many gifts everywhere that I went. Also, I was welcomed into Japanese homes and made to feel like a family member. I am so grateful that I had the opportunity to visit Japan and learn about peace in such a personal way. I sincerely hope that future PAX teams will have as good of an experience as I did.

Roland's story: Reflections on my trip to the Land of the Rising Sun

In my reflection on my recent trip to Japan, the Land of the Rising Sun, there were many different themes that emerged from my exciting visit, and it was difficult to choose which one upon which to focus. For example, I could have reflected on Japan's superb transportation system where trains use state-of-the-art technology and depart from the terminal at precisely the scheduled time. I could have reflected on the beauty of the country; Miyajima Island, where deer and other animals roam freely without threat of another atomic bomb. I could have also reflected on the great beauty of Nagasaki or Kyoto and its ancestral history. I could even have reflected on Japan's politics or on the government's desire to change Article Nine in Japan's peace-oriented constitution. I decided however, to reflect on the beauty and resiliency of the Japanese people; resiliency which is shown not only in the material prosperity of the country, but particularly in the survivors of the atomic bomb, otherwise known as the Hibakusha.

The Hibakusha are people with a message of peace and reconciliation, advocating with governments around the world for the elimination of nuclear weapons--evil devices of mass destruction which human beings have developed in an ambitious desire to intimidate and subjugate other human beings.

Seeing the Hibakusha give their testimonies is both a moving and inspirational experience. Such was the case when Fumiko Sora and Miyoko Matsubara shared their testimony during the Remembrance Day Ceremony of the Atomic Bomb on August 6, 2007. In her presentation, Fumiko asked three very important questions for our reflection. She asked her audience:

1. What is war?
2. What are the causes of war?
3. What power can keep peace?

For her part Miyoko reminded her audience that the inscription on one of the monuments in Peace Memorial Park proclaims:

“Let the souls here rest in peace, for we shall not repeat the evil.”

Then she commanded us, her listeners, to go and tell the people where we live that that is the spirit of Hiroshima. With a broken voice and tears in her eyes she cried,

“When you go back to your home, I urge you to please tell your family, friends and relatives about the horrors of the atomic bomb and about the intense desire of the people of Hiroshima to eliminate nuclear weapons.”

Since Hibakushas are the direct victims of the evil results of the atomic bomb, they are well equipped to speak against the proliferation of nuclear weapons. But these beautiful amazing people are dying, and I am afraid that along with them the voice against nuclear weapons may be dying as well. That is why in her closing remarks Miyoko Matsubara called on us as Peacemakers to replace the ever-vanishing voices of the Hibakusha.

“We rely on you to continue our fight for nuclear weapons abolition around the world. We also rely on you to prevent the evil from being repeated. We rely on you to work towards creating a peaceful world. In other words, we, the Hibakusha, are passing the torch of hope and peace to you. Please “keep the torch burning-- forever.”

I couldn't end my reflection without mentioning the beautiful characteristics that I saw in our Japanese hosts. Whether in Hiroshima or Nagasaki, our host went the extra mile to make us feel at home. Their deep sense of respect, bowing and showing sensitivity to us as foreigners, is something which baffles my mind and which we in the West need to learn from—specifically so we can be more sensitive to even our own people.

Our home stay experiences and families were fabulous. In my case both times when I stayed with a Japanese family, they made me feel as one of the family. In Nagasaki the father told his wife and

daughter, “Please treat him as one of the family.” And when we said goodbye, they told me “Please come again--we are a family.” Kido Sensei, in Hiroshima, not only hosted a tea ceremony for the whole PAX team and the Directors of the World Friendship Center, but took the time to explain and teach us how to conduct a tea ceremony...Thank you.

The Koga family in Nagasaki, Juro, Mariko and Ayako, your hospitality and humbleness speaks louder than words. My prayers are with you as you continue to serve our Lord Jesus.

To the pastor at Nagasaki Baptist Church, Yasushi Tomono and youth director, Shinichi Nishiwaki: may our lord continue to bless you and lead you as you continue to be an instrument in His hands.

I wish I could say as Barbara Reynolds that, “I am a Hibakusha” but I am not. One thing I can say, however, is that in my two weeks in the Land of the Rising Sun, I learned to love and respect the Japanese people. They taught me beyond all else that forgiveness and reconciliation is possible when there is a willing heart.

Acknowledgments:

Special thanks to Ms.Hiroko Takahara, Chairperson of NAC(Nagasaki Appeal Committee),Mr.Hitoshi Suenaga, who guided us around various historical sites in Nagasaki, Mr.Yoshio Sekiguchi,who provided us with excellent translations and explanations ,and all other members who made our trip rewarding and fruitful.



A-bomb site tour – Nagasaki

Kevin Leeder's Korean PAX 2007 story

Several weeks ago I had the opportunity to be a part of WFC's PAX Exchange, continuing a tradition of building friendship and networking between Korean and Japanese peace workers.

As an American, it was an interesting experience to visit Hiroshima as a representative of Korea. In addition to the diversity of the participants, it was challenging as I faced different perspectives of my own, as my American background has given me certain feelings toward Japan, and my Korean experience has given me different feelings towards Japan and the United States.

I found this to be a confusing situation as I tried to understand my role. For example, my father is a retired member of the United States Navy, and as a child I had a deep sadness over the attack of Pearl Harbor, which the US Navy holds as a deep tragedy, and my American education had taught me that the Atomic attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were militarily necessary, and saved lives.

As I learned of Japanese views of these events, history seemed to take an opposite view: the attack of Pearl Harbor was militarily necessary to keep the United States away from interfering with Japan, and the Atomic attacks were unnecessary tragedies.

Thus, to make sense of these conflicting histories is difficult, but from a Korean perspective things became even more confusing - in Korea, Japan has long been seen as an oppressor due the issues surrounding Korea's colonization and the United States can be seen either as a hero or a bully, depending on the issue.

Of course, to take all of these views seriously becomes very confusing. I think that is why most of us, when confronted with such different stories, choose to accept the one that is familiar and most comfortable to us and to reject all other versions of the tale. I am still struggling with finding answers

about the causes of so many conflicts during WW II. Americans believe the American story, Japanese believe the Japanese story, and the Koreans believe the Korean story, and the discussion between different nationalities becomes frustrating and unproductive.

I spent a few days struggling with this conflict, as I felt that there was some truth to each country's story, but of course they couldn't all be completely true at once. So whose tale is true? Who is the victim and who is the oppressor? Who must forgive and who must be forgiven?

A moment of revelation came in Hiroshima's Peace Museum, where we had a chance to listen to a hibakusha's story of the Hiroshima tragedy in 1945. He explained the events of the attack and the horrors he experienced, and I waited for him to blame the United States, who stole so much from him. But then something surprised me. Instead of offering blame, he noted that at the beginning of the war, the people of Hiroshima enjoyed the lust of war, praising the Japanese victory at Pearl Harbor, offering apology for his joy over the loss of American life. He confessed that Tokyo was trying to develop an atomic bomb also, and that if Japan had succeeded it would have happily used it to destroy New York or Washington.

His honest view of history was strange to me. Where was his blame? Where was the hatred and the anger? Instead of claiming one country to be the victim and the other to be the aggressor, he seemed to lay humanity as both the victim and the aggressor, making no reference to nationality. He seemed to realize that when one nation blames another, the hand used to point in accusation is usually already stained with innocent blood.

The sad truth, it seemed, was that it was humanity's tragedy on the days of the atomic attacks. It was humanity's failure in Korea when it was colonized. It was humanity's failure that war began at Pearl Harbor. Nations themselves can be held responsible for events, but I learned that

there is no innocent nation. Nations can be held responsible for war policies or war crimes that they committed, or their attacks on civilian populations, but all nations committed atrocities against innocent people during the wars they engaged in and all nations de-humanized the countries and the people that they claimed were their enemies.

As a peace worker, it is my wish that people would see people of other cultures as brothers and sisters, seeing fellow humans who are simply of different customs instead of thinking of Americans, Koreans, and Japanese as part of a different group.

As I struggled through these different histories, the stories finally began to make sense when each suture was willing to accept its own mistakes and to suffer as a human being instead of only a member of a specific nationality. With this thinking of "human culture" instead of national culture, there is no room to blame or to hate those that come from different places, as both blame and victimization are shared by all.

The tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki cannot be judged based on the number of people who were victims. If it were, what of those killed during the non-atomic firebombing, such as in Dresden, Germany, or Tokyo? What of the Holocaust, which claimed millions of lives? Are these events more tragic? Surely not.

Looking as a human, instead of as American, Korean, or Japanese, we can see that what happened in Hiroshima and Nagasaki was not only the tragedy of a loss of life, injuries, sickness, and displacement of families. The deeper tragedy was perhaps instead that the nations of the world chose to embrace this technology of death for their own governments, refusing to demand that such a thing never happen again.

My time in Hiroshima showed me that many people have discovered this already, and I wonder if that is the energy by which Hiroshima has been able to recover from this tragedy and instead become a city of

life and hope, blossoming as a beautiful city from the ashes of what must have been a true picture of Hell. This spirit of hope and global community is something that all of us across the world can learn from, whichever nation we come from.

Kevin Leeder, Korea Anabaptist Center Intern/MCC Volunteer
Kevin Leeder Bio
Korean Anabaptist Center Intern/ Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Volunteer
www.kac.or.kr/ and www.mcc.org/

Kevin volunteered at the Korea Anabaptist Center through the MCC program SALT (Service and Learning Together). He taught Peacebuilders and adapted the manual for Peacebuilders so that it can become an online and offline resource for other organizations & individuals to use. He is 23 years old, grew up in Florida later lived in Ohio (U.S). He has graduated from Malone College (a Quaker University) last year, and has studied English, History and Economics. At Malone he joined a Mennonite church because of its peace and community focus. He enjoys writing fiction and plans to pursue writing in graduate studies.

World Friendship Center Update By Sarah Sweitzer

As the new WFC volunteer directors, Kent and I have been warmly welcomed. Thank you! In addition to orienting us, WFC volunteers have been very active supporting many events.

WFC Hibakusha continue to tell their stories. A group of approximately 30 students from Italy heard Morishita Sensei and Sora Sensei tell their stories in late May. Okada San tells her story and presents each person with a Peace Crane Plane. Matsubara San spoke when WFC living room was filled with listeners on August 6th. Keijiro Matsushima Sensei speaks at the museum almost every week and WFC visitors often listen. Thank you all for providing international visitors with very meaningful experiences.

Kent and I had the privilege of attending the opening premiere of “White Light, Black Rain”. Yamoka San was one of the featured guests at this film opening during which the film’s director Steven Okazaki was present.

WFC members also attended the “Live Earth” concert in Hiroshima which was organized by the Peace Cultural Foundation.

The end of July found many Riji members at WFC special cleaning day. We wanted to be ready for the PAX Team and the August special events at WFC. Some volunteers spent time working in the apartment next door which had been used for miscellaneous storage and inventory.

After many hours of work, cleaning, and painting, the space was ready to be converted to a new classroom suite. The windows open to face the Peace Garden which can also be viewed from the “veranda” and thus it is now called the Peace Garden Villa. When the choice of calling the new space a “villa” was questioned (a country or resort residence according to the dictionary); we could all agree that in our minds it is a beautiful villa. Our thanks to Morikawa San, the landlady, for the use of the expanded space and to the Riji for their enthusiastic support of the improvements.



Co-Directors: Kent & Sarah Sweitzer

Other Changes and Happenings at WFC

- Fall English classes began on September 4th in the new location. We have welcomed several new students.
- Please visit our website at www.wfchiroshima.net There have been some recent revisions and more are planned.
- The WFC office and dining room at WFC have been renovated and redecorated. Thanks again to our board of directors, our landlady and volunteers.
- Sakura, the former classroom, is now used as a full time guest room.
- Sarah is learning Japanese cooking and Kent is in a martial arts class. We are both studying the Japanese language. We appreciate the support and encouragement of WFC members as we learn about many aspects of Japanese culture. We have attended variety of cultural and art events, as well as exploring the Hiroshima area and countryside.
- We have met many wonderful people since our arrival mid-May in Japan. Thank you all very much for your kindness, generosity and dedication to WFC!

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Also to Editors Kent & Sarah Sweitzer, Sachiko Hiraoka and Naomi Kurihara



Morishita Sensei & Asahi Shimbun reporter



A-bomb tram: Sora Sensei & husband



Tea ceremony –Kido Sensei



**Michiko Yamaoka-san
“ White Light/Black Rain” premiere**



Lantern Floating Aug 6th 2007



Sachiko, PAX Team, Sarah, Mieko & Naomi