

2015 Issue Number 153



**Yu - Ai**

**Friendship**

**Newsletter of NPO World Friendship Center**

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This issue of Yu-Ai is largely one of good-byes, both to and from our soon to leave beloved WFC directors Xinia and Richard, and to Minowa-san and Lynne Shivers, who have passed on in the last few months. In that way, it is a sad issue to read, but also full of thankfulness as we remember each person with thanks and the good times we have spent together. Xinia and Richard, thank you for giving so much of yourselves during your two years with us at the WFC - we are really going to miss you in so many ways!

This issue is also one that is looking forward in three different ways. First, to the future that Japan faces with or without nuclear power, as Chizuko Taguchi tells of a WFC members' visit to the Shimane nuclear power plant. Next, we look forward to the future of the WFC. We have celebrated our 50th anniversary, but we need to think and act with care to make sure that the WFC is able to continue its valuable work; staying focused on our mission, and looking for opportunities to involve younger people in the work of the WFC. Finally, we are looking forward to meeting and getting to know the new directors of the WFC.

Welcome, Maggie and Bernd!

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### ***1. "Until we meet again"***

***Xinia Tobias***

***(WFC Co-director)***

There is a famous song called "I left my heart in San Francisco". For both of us the song expresses somewhat how we feel about leaving Japan. Parts of our hearts were left in Ohio and now parts will be left in Japan. So many of you have touched our lives and the love we feel for each of you



cannot be written in words. What a privilege it has been serving as co-Directors of the World Friendship Center these past two years, 2013-2015. Having to leave will be one of the most difficult good-byes we have ever had to say. We will cherish the wonderful friendship of each of our Japanese brothers and sisters. Being here has also provided us the opportunity to meet great people from so many countries of the world. What a privilege it has been knowing those called Hibakusha, to listen to their stories and to feel their sorrows and pain. Their stories have made a lasting impression on the two of us. So many of our guests told us sitting down with a Hibakusha was the highlight of their time in Japan. Another high point of our stay was getting to know our English and Spanish students, from them we learned a great deal about Japan, a wonderful place that

provided us to broaden our horizons, and to learn to eat the many Japanese dishes.

We appreciate all the help we received from our volunteers who came when we were overwhelmed by the number of guests. How can we express how we feel about your kindness providing us with food, coming to the Center and cooking for us, lending us books, taking us places, inviting us to your homes, taking us out for lovely dinners and lunch and so much more? We also were the recipients of great concerts, recitals, special events, day trips and also overnight trips. We so appreciate the times you took us to karaoke. Your beautiful voices will never be forgotten. It was also such a pleasure going to the Mutsumien nursing home every month to celebrate the Residents birthdays. To see how Shin-chan brings such happiness to their eyes was a real joy. Our dear friend Michiko, you are such a talent!

You will never know how much we appreciate your coming to celebrate with us the most special time of the year for us, Christmas! It was also much fun to play Santa Claus for the preschoolers. The kindness shown to Xinia's family who came to visit for Christmas is highly appreciated! Our sister Jeannette and family and also our sister Bellanice, will never forget your generosity and kindness. In fact my sister Bellanice expressed her happiness and fulfillment with this sentence "Now I can die". For them and for us, Japan and its people have taken another meaning.

We are also very thankful for the privilege to go to Nagasaki. This trip provided us with the opportunity to learn about the experience of the devastation of yet another city destroyed by an Atomic -bomb. We came here to serve the WFC; however because of the generosity of our volunteers and friends we have received so much more.

In closing I must say there was a time when our hearts felt the heaviness of sorrow. How devastating it was the news of our beloved friend Minowa-san when he shared with us that he was diagnosed with cancer of the esophagus. Our greatest hope was that it was detected soon enough to provide medical treatment to cure him. However this was not to be. Furthermore in February 16, 2015 we lost our dear friend who did so much for us and the WFC. He will always be missed!



*Richard & Xinia in Miyajima Island*



*Xinia & Richard in Adachi Museum of Art*

## **2. Good-bye Message**

### **Takaaki Kanda (Tuesday Night Class)**

Hola Xinia,

A few years back, Mr. Ron Siney, the former director of the WFC, asked us to express ourselves in an adjective. My reply to that was "Inquisitive". My inquisitiveness led me to books and I became an avid reader from an early stage of my childhood. But there were not much books around me at that time; food, cloth and paper, everything was lacking during and after WWII. I've read any book available. Yes, then I became an avid reader.

This is the answer to your query you posed the other day; whether I am an avid reader. I enjoy reading and love to talk about books. So I am pleased to hear of that you appreciated the stories of Nevil Shute which I lend to you, and that you and Richard have read some of the same books as me. It is a pity therefore that you are going to leave soon. But I won't say "Adios" but "Hasta Luego!", since we can talk about books or any matter any time with the means of mails, n'est -ce pas?

The words of an old novelist: "The habit of reading is the only enjoyment in which there is no alloy; it lasts when all other pleasures fade." Anthony Trollope. (1815-1882)

Hello Richard

It seems not so long ago when you came to Hiroshima and we met in WFC June 2013, in our Tuesday evening class. We learned that you joined a Heifer Project after WWII which sent cattle to Germany and you worked on the ships to and from Germany and were called a sailing cowboy. So that (?) now you love Western movies and you remember well the stories and cast, we enjoyed very much talking about movies and ball games. One day we talked about politics and you commented that a benevolent dictator is better than any political system, which reminded me that I heard exactly the same view from Mrs. Beverly Eikenberry (former WFC director (2003-2005)). I mentioned this and you said that you and she had been in same high school then, so she must have learned it from the same teacher.

I got to hear about the WFC the first time when Beverly came to the courts where we were playing tennis. She eventually joined our tennis team and played every Wednesday while she was here. Talking about that in the class I learned you play tennis too. So I invited you to play with us. You joined our tennis team and played on Saturday morning. The tennis court is located on a hill over Municipal Botanical gardens and we enjoyed a nice view of Hiroshima bay. You came to the court in the car of Mrs. Yamase (Wednesday student Taeko) who lives near the WFC, and the Yamase couple are leaders of our tennis team. Now our team will lose a distinguished member and it is a pity for us that we will not be able to see your fast straight ball down the side line anymore. Anyhow we were able to enjoy the time in the class, and in the court to be with you; many many thanks.  
All the best!



*(From left Richard Tobias  
Takaaki Kanda,  
Tamiyuki Okahara,  
the guest from England,  
Kuniaki Shiraogawa)*

### 3. Good-bye Message

**Naomi Oomura (Wednesday Class)**

Once there was an innocent boy named Richard who sang songs about Japan as an enemy in America and a naive girl named Xinia who sang many shiny Spanish songs in Costa Rica. Some years later they met and got married. And they came to Hiroshima hand in hand in 2013. Now Richard sings very peaceful and warm songs with his guitar for the people in Hiroshima and Xinia adds spice to his songs with beautiful voice like colorful birds flying in the central American sky.

Both of you worked very hard day after day at WFC, washing the sheets, making beds, preparing breakfast, washing dishes, cleaning the house and so on. You taught English and Spanish very pleasantly and patiently. You visited Mutsumien, institution for hibakusha, every month with a bunch of flowers and sang a birthday song. And what's more, this year, 2015 is 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of foundation of WFC and you did your best to succeed in the ceremony and many other events in April. Everybody is deeply impressed by you and everything you have done in these two years. We owe you a lot.

How time flies! There will soon be the Pacific Ocean between us. However large the ocean is, our hearts will always be with you. However long a time goes by, our memories will never fade. With eternal thanks and love to you, Richard & Xinia.



*After One World Peace Concert  
(From left Naomi Oomura, Richard, Xinia, Jessica)*

#### 4. Good-bye Message

##### Riuko Hamasaki (Thursday class)

##### What Xinia taught me

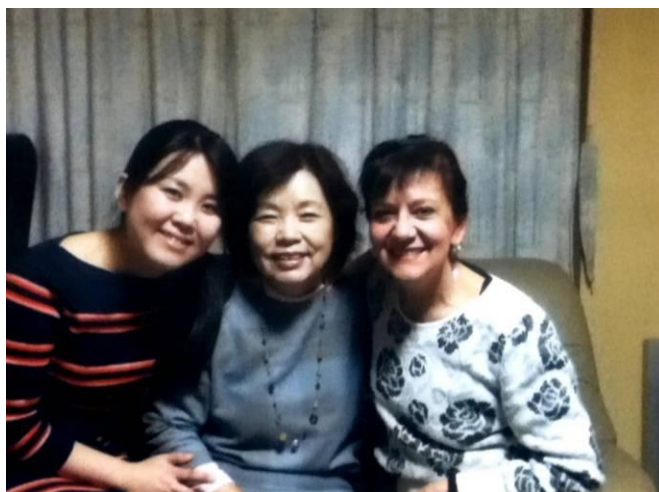
Xinia has eagerness to try to do new things even though she is so busy: knitting, sewing, cooking etc. Knitting was a trigger for us to get close. When I saw her knitting I said, "Seeing you makes me irritated." Because her slowness seemed to try my patience. I took over the yarn and needles from her to show my speedy knitting. She was surprised to see without being offended. I like her attitude to learn anything.

I can never forget what Xinia said. When I invited her to my house she asked me several times, "Can I help you?" I answered, "No, no, problem." It's normal in Japan that guests offer formally as a kind of greetings, not from the bottom of their hearts and hosts refuse politely just only receiving their kindness. But Xinia's words were true! She said, "We are friends so why don't you say "Yes, help me!"" Her words were literally an eye-opener to me. I was so impressed. I admit I focused on treating her as a guest not a friend. Since then I try to be frank forgetting Japanese-style politeness.

One and half years has passed since I visited the WFC for the first time. The time for Xinia and Richard to go back home is just around the corner .Thinking of that makes me very sad though I will definitely visit them someday.

Take care, Xinia and Richard!

See you again!



*(From left Riuko's daughter, Riuko Hamasaki, Xinia)*

## **5. Obituary of Shinichi Minowa**

**Richard Tobias ( WFC Co-director)**

This past February 2015, we at the WFC lost a very dear friend. Shinichi Minowa-san died of cancer. He was a loyal member of our Riji Board of Directors serving on various committees, and a member of the Peace Choir. As one of our volunteers he always willingly gave of his time and talents. If and when we needed transportation Minowa-San provided it for us. How this man could cook! He came and provided Xinia and me with delicious meals. Each month he accompanied us when we went to the Mutsumien Nursing Home for the Hibakushua to celebrate those having birthdays. Minowa-San loved to sing. I so enjoyed his rendition of "I Did It My Way" whenever we went to Karaoke. A more humble, gracious, gentle, and kind man would be difficult to find. Minowa-san my friend, you will forever be in our hearts.



*(From left Michiko Yamane, Richard, Xinia, Shinichi Minowa)*

## **6. Obituary of Lynne Shivers**

**Michiko Yamane (WFC Chairperson)**

### **In remembrance of Lynne Shivers**

Lynne died of heart disease on February 3. She replied to our invitation to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WFC last September, so her passing was a great surprise. From 1966 to 1967 Lynne helped Barbara, then director at the WFC in Minamikannon-machi. I met her for the first time when she came to the WFC as temporary director in 1986. Because she used to teach American literature at a community college, she was very good at teaching. We read "The Great



Gatsby" written by Fitzgerald with her in Thursday class. The book became one of my favorite books. In those days, the WFC was in Minami-machi, close to my house, and she came over to my house a few times.

In 1994, when my husband I were in Washington D.C., Lynne invited me to her house in the suburbs of Philadelphia. She respected George Willoughby, one of the crew of the Golden Rule, so much that she built her first house in his neighborhood. She told me joyfully. While I stayed with her several days, we visited George Willoughby's house. Together with George and his wife, Lillian, who were Quakers and pacifists, Lynne took part in the anti-Vietnam War protest movement for many years. She also took me to historical spots in Philadelphia and Sunday service at the Quaker's headquarters.

According to her will, a part of her inheritance was donated to the WFC. I still remember her unique sense of humor. I am looking forward to seeing her again in heaven.



*(In the study of her house)*

## **7. Visiting Shimane Nuclear Power Plant**

**Chizuko Taguchi (WFC Riji)**

### **Overnight trip October 28-29, 2014**

For the first time in a long time, four women set out on a road trip guided by Mr. Shoji Kihara, our lecturer in Peace Seminar for many years with profound knowledge about the problems of nuclear power plants. After Fukushima No.1 nuclear power plant accident caused by the Great East Japan earthquake, since September 2013 all nuclear power plants in Japan have been suspended. The

nuclear power plant problem is now a major issue as opinions are divided at the courts as to whether it is right or wrong to resume operations.

Along the way we marveled at Ms. Michiko Watanabe's story "You see, a long time ago I came upon Hiroshima from Iwakuni driving a red Hino Contessa car." "Over there you can see the panels just like a butterfly spreading its wings, they are solar panels attached to the roof of Kita Hiroshima town office, providing electricity for the public office." Mr. Kihara explained and we were very impressed. Driving along the shoreline of Lake Shinjiko, we arrived at our destination Shimane nuclear power plant located just 10 km to the Northwest of Shimane city area.

First, we visited Shimane nuclear power house (museum) which stands on a hill overlooking the sea. A tower with a big hanging bell stood on the left side of the entrance. I was astonished reading its explanation. The inscription is "the bell of apology and vow", apologizing for the "inspection omission incident" it was revealed that between 500 and 1,000 inspections were not carried out in 2010. Experts on the matter must have done the check-up work; I felt a shiver as I wondered whether they had not cared about radioactivity or whether it had been done due to ignorance. Regarding the handling of the Fukushima nuclear power plant accident, exactly the same situation was observed.

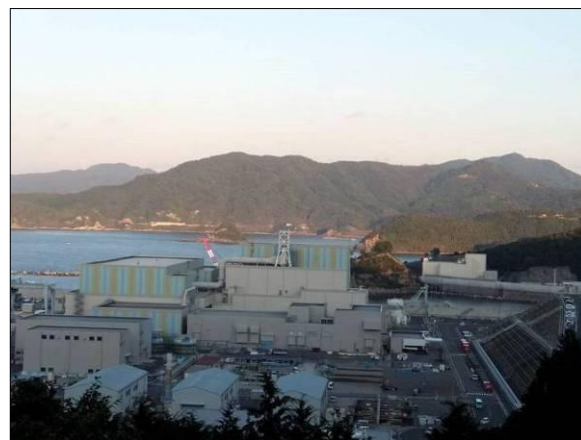
When the earthquake and tsunami hit Fukushima nuclear power plant on March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011, the Japanese government and Tokyo Electric Power Company panicked but refused to accept overseas assistance. In the meantime, there were hydrogen explosions and melt down of nuclear fuel. Four years later TEPCO still can't manage the treatment of contaminated water, and 400t of radioactive water has been flowing out to the sea every day. I can't think but that the nuclear power generation business had been promoted for 40 years without knowledge of risk management, skills and technical expertise for handling accidents.

I wonder if I was the only one who couldn't feel persuaded by the official's explanation on earthquake countermeasures under the new regulations, such as to build an important anti-seismic building, to arrange a high voltage generator and alternative water supply vehicles, to install filter vents and to raise the seawalls, although his attitude was polite and serious. We were informed that it would take 100 years to complete the decommissioning of Fukushima No.1

nuclear power plant with meltdown fuel. The human race have to call upon wisdom to get rid of such mechanism that will continue to threaten people's security and safety for three generations.

Ms. Yasue Ashihara, a nuclear power plant opposition party member and a Shimane city councilor told us "More than half of the 460,000 population living within 30km from the nuclear power plant are objecting to the resumption of operations knowing the risk of the nuclear power plant, although now they have no other jobs. In the current situation, the municipalities with nuclear power plants are expecting to receive 2.7 billion yen subsidy from the government. However we are trying to make a breakthrough somehow." I keenly realized that it is a difficult project which needs great patience, enthusiasm and strength.

Led by Mr. Kihara, we went a little way farther to Izumo Taisha and Hinomisaki lighthouse. The shrine was crowded with a large number of visitors soon after the shrine transfer of Izumo Taisha in May, and the wedding of Kunimaro Senge, the chief priest of Izumo Taisha and Princess Noriko of Takamado on October 15<sup>th</sup>. Praying that this sea will never be contaminated by radiation, I enjoyed a superb time soaking myself in the picturesque scenery as, with the Hinomisaki lighthouse repainted pure white, the white Japanese gulls, the greens of pine trees and the deep blue sea reaching to the horizon, it all fell into place.



*(Shimane Nuclear Power Plant)*

*(From left Chizuko Taguchi, Kaori Kurumaji, Shoji Kihara, Michiko Watanabe, Masafumi Ashihara, Yasue Ashihara, Shoko Ishii)*

## **8. The future of the WFC after the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

**Kaori Kurumaji (WFC Riji)**

Thinking of the difficult days of the WFC in the past, I was deeply impressed that the WFC 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary was celebrated in a large scale. This is the result of all WFC members' great efforts and I am proud of the power of our unity. But it's time to consider the future of WFC seriously as a few months have already passed since the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

I heard the request of a board member to place the A-bomb issue at the center of the WFC's activities and learn about it more. Barbara Reynolds established WFC to help A-bomb survivors and inform the world of the disaster of the A-bomb, so in her opinion we should go back to this starting point. It is said that A-bomb survivors are getting old but these days some survivors are even starting to tell their stories in their eighties. The WFC might need to find out new storytellers of A-bomb experiences. And there has been little contact between WFC members and A-bomb survivors. So we should have more chances to listen to their testimonies. The WFC board of directors made a plan of the meeting to listen to Mrs. Komeyoshi's testimony for all WFC members on July 18. I hope this new project will continue from now on.

Next, I would like to mention about the aging of the board members and the handing over to a new generation. These are tough problems but the WFC has no future if we ignore them. There are some good examples in handing over, for instance, the Chugoku newspaper's junior writers and Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum's training of the children or grandchildren of Hibakusha to tell A-bomb experiences. The WFC should not fall behind. After 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a few younger people offered to cooperate the WFC. One offered to help update the WFC website. Another said she could provide sign language service if the WFC had guests who were unable to hear and speak. I found a ray of hope for future of the WFC from these offers of younger people, but they won't be able to continue volunteer work if they have to pay too much costs. That's why the WFC must consider to pay at least their transportation expenses and parking fees. It might not be easy for the WFC to do so at present, so the fund raising campaign should reflect on this.

In August, we are going to have a change in WFC directors. The WFC has interaction with many groups and people through our past activities. It's a wonderful thing but at the same time not so easy to shoulder all the activities and interaction since the WFC has limited numbers of board members and staff. There might be the need for us to reform our activities.

Anyway, if each of us does our best, WFC's perspective on the future will open up. I think WFC has been able to continue for 50 years because many volunteers have worked hard in the past. I remember the first chairperson, Dr. Tomin Harada said it was a miracle that the WFC, a grass roots volunteer group, could exist for many years. If so, the WFC has a high likelihood to make another miracle happen after the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I sincerely hope that the WFC will go on, not only for us but also for the people who were devoted to WFC in the past but are no longer alive.



*(From left Xinia, Richard, Michiko Watanabe, Kaori Kurumaji, Soh Horie at Japan Mint Hiroshima Branch)*

## **9. Brief introduction of new directors**

### **Xinia Tobias (WFC Co-director)**

#### **The New Directors of the World Friendship Center for 2015-2017**

Bernd and Maggie are the new World Friendship Center Directors and will arrive on August 9<sup>th</sup>. Bernd is a Chemical Engineer and Maggie is a CPA (Certified Public Accountant). We are very excited for the new directors, knowing they bring so much expertise and knowledge needed for the work of the WFC to spread the message of peace throughout the world.

Maggie and Bernd are involved in a Japanese Cultural Organization called JIN. They both have studied the Japanese culture and language. Maggie lived in Japan for few years when she was a small child and she speaks Japanese. She is Japanese American and Bernd is German American. Maggie and Bernd met in Germany when she lived in Frankfurt. She has traveled to different countries in Europe and has used Italian, French, German and other languages while in Europe. They both enjoy learning about different cultures and meeting people from other countries. In fact one of the reasons why they are committing themselves to the work of the WFC for two years is due to their desire to experience the Japanese culture and get to know the people of Japan. Maggie and Bernd are strong advocates for the work of peace, something of great importance for the work as directors of the World Friendship Center.

We welcome Bernd and Maggie with open arms and wish them the best as they embark in this challenging and amazing adventure; the experience of a lifetime. We know they will enrich the WFC with their knowledge, abilities and talents, and our beloved volunteers and students will enrich them with their love, generosity and warm hospitality!



*(New WFC Co-directors , Maggie & Bernd Phoenix)*

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