



Yu - Ai

Friendship

Newsletter of NPO World Friendship Center

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1. The Middle East Oleander Initiative

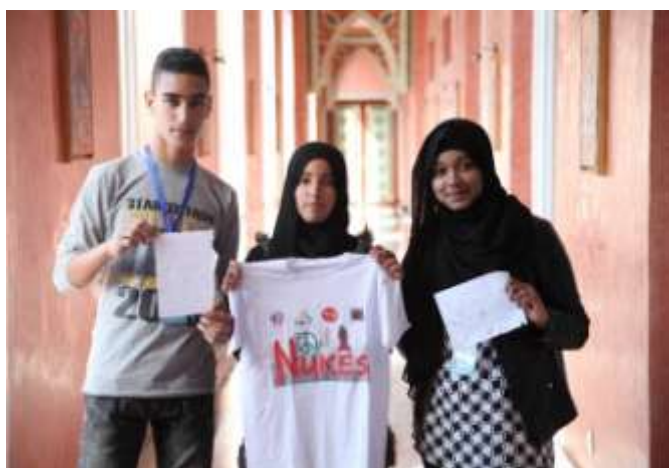
Ray Matsumiya (University of the Middle East Project)

From August 2 – 9, 2016, 11 educators from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and 1 American educator gathered together in Hiroshima to attend the Oleander Initiative. During the program, Oleander educators developed lesson plans for their students designed to raise consciousness about the catastrophic global impacts of nuclear war and inspire our next generation to work locally to promote peaceful societies. The Oleander Initiative was implemented in partnership with the World Friendship Center.



Oleander participants and staff with Soh-san in front of the World Friendship Center

Oleander participants have accomplished amazing results with their students since they returned to their home countries. In Morocco, an Oleander teacher implemented a student peace conference for over 60 students. At this conference, students performed plays dramatizing the events of August 6, 1945, folded paper cranes, and engaged in peace education activities. Among the highlights of the conference was a tee shirt design contest on the theme of nuclear weapons disarmament.



Tee shirt design contest



Students attending the Student Peace Conference in Marrakesh, Morocco

Another Oleander teacher implemented a “train the trainer” workshop that transmitted what she learned in Hiroshima to 54 teachers in her city of Casablanca. With each teacher teaching approximately 250 students a year, this training program has the potential to impact 13,500 students about the lessons of Hiroshima and the need to work for peace.

The Oleander Initiative will return to Hiroshima in August 2017. The 2017 program will increase the number of educators to 18 and include a higher number of American teachers in response to the surge of Islamophobia, increased instability and increased potential in the use of nuclear weapons brought about by the recent US elections.

2. Peace Choir Events

Asaka Watanabe (WFC Riji)

The peace choir practices on the first Thursday each month at WFC. It takes part in various events such as visiting the A-bomb nursing home, “Mutsumien,” gathering in the Peace Park, joining Coventry Day, WFC’s Christmas Party and so on.

The Peace Choir participated in the opening ceremony of a bonfire festival on August 5, 2016. The stage was especially prepared on the other side of the river across from the A-bomb Dome. A poem written by Shinmin Sakamura was read by a group of parents and children in Japanese there. Mr. Ron Klein, a board member of WFC, read it in English. The WFC peace choir and citizens’ chorus group sang “Life of the World, the Spirit of Hiroshima.” We also participated in the gathering in front of Barbara Reynolds’ monument and the lantern floating ceremony on August 6, 2016.



Mandolin performance by Kaoru Takahashi



A-bomb Dome and Bonfire Festival



Peace Choir at Bonfire Festival



Peace Choir at Coventry Day event on November 13

3. Interns from Shudo University

Kaori Kurumaji (WFC Riji)

The WFC received two interns from Shudo University for 10 days from September 1, 2016. Taiga Nishimura and Narumi Hosoda, who belong to the English Department of the Faculty of Humanities, were the interns this time. For their introduction, please see the last newsletter, No.155. The following is Taiga's short report of his internship at WFC.

Narumi and I prepared, served and cleaned up guests' breakfast, did bed making, and cleaned the center as our work. It was a bit hard to work from early morning and during hot daytimes, but it was also fun, thanks to the cooperation and hospitality of the directors and everyone at WFC. Apart from this work, we attended English classes, Peace Park guiding, translation class, Q&A class, Hibakusha accounts, and the monthly board meeting. Through those, we learned about the history of Hiroshima, facts about nuclear power plants, international situations, and so forth. It was a really productive and meaningful internship program.

Every year, I tell the interns about the history of WFC and its activities for about two hours. I had a chance to talk with Taiga and Narumi on September 3 at WFC. I was so glad that they listened to me earnestly. On the last day of their internship, WFC directors, both Bernd and Maggie, Taguchi-san, Yamane-san, and I took them for lunch to a restaurant near the WFC. Shudo University held an Internship Report Meeting on October 20, 2016. Six members of the WFC attended it. The presentations of the internship at the WFC were made with PowerPoint by Taiga and Narumi. Narumi spoke calmly with confidence and Taiga spoke both in English and in Japanese. Both of them also attended Coventry Day, which was held at the International House on November 13, 2016, to recite poems. I hope many students from Shudo University will come to visit the WFC through these two interns from now on, because it is urgent for WFC to involve the younger generation in its work.



Left Taiga Nishimura, Narumi Hosoda



*Left back Taiga, Kaori Kurumaji,
Narumi, Left front Michiko Yamane,
Bernd Phoenix, Maggie Phoenix,
Chizuko Taguchi*

4. Phoenix of Hiroshima Project, Inc.

Michiko Yamane (WFC Chair)

I received the exciting news from Jessica, a daughter of Barbara Reynolds, in October 2016. It was about a magnificent plan that the *Phoenix of Hiroshima* will rise from the bottom of the river and sail again to appeal for peace and the abolition of nuclear weapons. Jessica Reynolds Renshaw is the secretary of this project. The following is what Jessica wrote in her email.

"Fifty-two years after the *Phoenix* and *Golden Rule* became a tag team united in history, long after the original crews had lost touch with each other, both boats were found derelict on the California coast in 2010, within 225 miles of each other.

"*Golden Rule* had been beached and abandoned, her masts gone and her hull stove in. Veterans for Peace adopted her as their project and restored her over the next 5 years.

"Meanwhile *Phoenix*, also a mastless hull, was offered on craig's list: "FREE: 50-foot yacht." John, the young man who took possession was towing her up the Sacramento River to work on her when she hit a dock, sprang a leak and gradually sank in 25 feet of brackish water. John signed her over to Dr. Naomi Reynolds, Earle's granddaughter, bringing the *Phoenix* back into the Reynolds family.

"The yacht *Golden Rule* has been restored, re-launched, and is a "mobile" peace monument of the Cold War era, educating people up and down the western seaboard about the dangers of radiation and giving residents short cruises.

"Now people's attention is turning to her sister yacht. As the *Golden Rule* led the *Phoenix* to sail in protest against nuclear weapons, she leads the way to being restored to sail again. . . .

"Owner Naomi Reynolds has turned over ownership of what was once a family yacht to the corporation which will restore her as a vessel belonging to peace activists, humanitarians and adventurers everywhere.

"Brian Cowden, President of the newly minted Phoenix of Hiroshima Project, Inc. is currently organizing an international festival, CROSSROADS 2020, to bridge Cold War Nuclear Testing to Climate Change. He is hoping the *Phoenix* and *Golden Rule* will be able to sail together to the Marshall Islands in the former nuclear test zone (they) sailed to in 1958--and from there to Hiroshima."

In 2020, if the *Golden Rule* and the *Phoenix of Hiroshima* sail into Hiroshima Harbor together, the seeds of peace sown by Barbara Reynolds will sprout and bloom, prompting the movement for a lasting peace. I am so looking forward to the project being realized in 2020.



Phoenix of Hiroshima derelict on the river in 2007

5.The Effect of Cesium Contamination after Nuclear Accidents

Bernd Phoenix (WFC Director)

In Germany, I worked in a laboratory analyzing plutonium from 1983 until 1986. That was at a company called Alkem GMBH in Hanau. This company produced uranium / plutonium mix oxide fuel elements for light water reactors. At the time, I believed in recycling spent nuclear fuel as a good method to reduce nuclear waste. After the 1986 accident in Chernobyl, I lost my faith in the nuclear energy solution since the accident contaminated all of Germany and many other European countries with cesium 137 and plutonium 241. I saw this in my backyard when I took an alpha radiation monitor home that measured 5000-6000 cps on the grass. I knew of the dangers of ingesting a strong alpha and beta emitter like plutonium 241 and Cs137 and I spent the last few weeks at Alkem analyzing food items that people brought in to check for contamination. This I did with a gamma ray spectrometer and I found the signature Chernobyl contamination in all fresh food. At that time, I started experiencing heart palpitations for which doctors had no explanation and I met other people with this symptom. Only recently have I found out about the damage Cs137 can do to the heart and how many children have died in the Ukraine from heart failure.

My son was born 3 weeks before the Chernobyl accident and sadly was exposed to some fallout since we did not hear about the accident right away. He developed an aggressive cancer in his chest 10 years later, that I blame on Chernobyl. The cancer was surgically removed and, so far, thankfully has not reappeared.

When the Fukushima accident happened, 13% of Japan was heavily contaminated with Cs137 and that does not take Tokyo into account where independent researchers also found contamination. After the accident, the radioactive cloud was blown towards Tokyo before the wind turned and it was blown back north to Fukushima again. The fallout from the cloud rained down in many different areas, but the main contamination is around the stricken power plants. There the level of cs137 is as high as in the Chernobyl exclusion zone. The idea to require the population to return to the contaminated zone is cruel to say the least. The recent earthquakes have shown that the crisis is far from over. TEPCO is very worried about the still existing and aging cooling ponds that contain spent fuel rods. Also, the cores from two reactors have not yet been found and nobody knows yet how to recover this material out of the ground. It poses a constant danger for the region and its water.

In the case of Chernobyl, two million people in Belarus live on lands severely contaminated by cesium 137 that are outside of the total exclusion zone. Most of the children who live there are not considered to be healthy, although they were healthy before the nuclear power plant at Chernobyl exploded in 1986. Fourteen years after the explosion, 45 to 47 percent of high school graduates had physical disorders, including gastro-intestinal anomalies, weakened hearts, and cataracts. And 40% were diagnosed with chronic "blood disorders" and malfunctioning thyroids. I am afraid that there are many Japanese people now living on lands equally contaminated with radioactive cesium. If Japanese children are allowed to routinely ingest foodstuffs contaminated with cesium 137, they will likely develop the same health problems that we now see in the children and teenagers of Belarus and the Ukraine. Cs137 will take 180 to 300 years to dissipate.

Nuclear power phase out is the only alternative:

Following the March 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster, Germany has permanently shut down eight of its 17 reactors and pledged to close the rest by the end of 2022, amended to 2036 at the latest. Italy voted overwhelmingly to keep their country non-nuclear. Switzerland and Spain have banned the construction of new reactors. Japan's prime minister in 2011 called for a dramatic reduction in Japan's reliance on nuclear power. Taiwan's president did the same. Shinzo Abe, the new prime minister of Japan since December 2012, sadly announced a plan to re-start some of the 54 Japanese reactors and to continue some nuclear power

plant sites under construction. For Japan, I see geothermal power as an alternative for the future. In Germany a study was performed to show that Japan has enough volcanic power sources to be energy independent. Already machinery made in Japan is powering all of energy independent Iceland by using geothermal power. Nuclear Power Phase Out is the only alternative!



Bernd gives a special report on Chernobyl and nuclear phase out

6. WFC Peace Activities

Maggie Phoenix (WFC Director)

World Friendship Center was involved in a variety of Peace activities throughout the last half year. As always, we continued the important work of presenting Hibakusha stories, guiding guests through the Peace Park monuments, and discussing WFC history, nuclear power, and nuclear weapons with guests. Lately, we have begun providing these services to more visitors to Hiroshima who are not overnight guests at WFC.

Occasionally, we'll have a visitor (local or overnight) who makes use of our extensive library on Peace topics. Elyssa Faison, a U.S. professor specializing in Japanese history, stayed with us in June for 5 nights. She looked through many of our videos and books to help her in her Peace-related research. Elyssa also intended to spend more time researching at the Peace Resource Center at Wilmington College.

We had student interns helping and learning at WFC in August and September. We also had the Oleander Initiative Group of Middle East educators stay with us in August. You'll find more information about these important activities in separate articles in this newsletter.

We met several times with staff from NHK World who were gathering background information for documentaries on Barbara Reynolds and other peace activists.

During August 2016, the Directors attended the August 6th commemorative ceremony for the first time. At WFC, Goro-san told his Hibakusha story to the WFC Riji, WFC members, and 10 student guests from Ritsumeikan University. Other commemorative activities the Directors participated in included singing with the WFC Peace Choir, gathering at Barbara Reynolds' monument for a service, and the floating of lanterns on the river. Once again, UNESCO held the Peace Bell event, where Bernd gave a short speech.

In November, many members from WFC took part in Coventry Day at the International House. The program included short speeches, singing and music, poems, and a couple of presentations. Another November event we participated in was the HIP (Hiroshima Interpreters for Peace) International Day of Exchange and Cooperation. Bernd and Maggie helped out by leading groups of English learners in reading English texts.

Bernd became an official plaintiff in the lawsuit against the Ikata nuclear power plant in November. He participated in a march to the court hearing and gave a statement of his views on nuclear power to the press. In December, Bernd gave a longer speech on the phasing out of nuclear power in Germany and the dangers of radiation from Chernobyl.

The Directors and Riji Chair Michiko Yamane attended the publication party of the book, "Women's Hiroshima" in January. This book of the experiences of several women hibakusha included the stories of Matsubara-san and Okada-san from the WFC Riji. The WFC library received a set of the 3 books in this "August 6, 1945" series (recounting Women's, Men's, and Family stories from Hiroshima).

Often our Fun Time in English topics cover various Peace issues: differing viewpoints on war and peace among Japanese and American people with speaker Elyssa Faison; movies such as "On the Beach" and "Chernobyl Uncensored;" and the popular Shikoku 88 Temples Pilgrimage Walk.



Goro Nishida's Hibakusha story on August 6th, 2016

7. Visit to Radiation Effects Research Foundation in Hijiya

Bernd Phoenix (WFC Director)

On January 16th, 2017, we had a scheduled guided tour at RERF with Jeffrey Hart from visitor relations. The participants were from the Thursday morning English class and the WFC directors.

We were greeted by Jeffrey with an introductory video about RERF and its mission in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Then he explained about the extensive data that has been collected and stored here and in Nagasaki with matching backups of everything in both cities. This is in case of a major catastrophe destroying one center.

Next, Jeffrey explained how one part of the facility is still used for Hibakusha health screenings on a periodic basis. Then he explained how from the very beginning, these health assessments were always meant for radiation effects data collection, not treatment. In the early years, there had been a dozen beds for emergencies, but it was never a hospital. For actual health problems, the Hibakusha were referred to local hospitals. This was a new insight for me and

cleared up a misconception I had from hearing comments from survivors about RERF.

We learned about some of the various research projects RERF has carried out over the years: the Life Span Study, Adult Health Study, and Children of Atomic-bomb Survivors Study.

We followed this with some questions about 'Black Rain' and associated radiation contamination and health problems caused by it. Jeffrey clarified that not all black rain that fell on Hiroshima was radioactive. Most of it was soot from secondary fires being washed down by rain. And also, some of the clear or clean looking rain had been radioactive. So just from the color, it could not be known which rain was dangerous. Only later through extensive testing for contamination on the ground were they able to determine which areas had received the most fallout. There is a map on the RERF website that shows this. A few weeks after the bomb, there were two very damaging typhoons with a lot of rain that washed most of the contamination out to sea.

Jeffrey also explained the difference between initial radiation exposure and residual radiation. The former was instantaneous and it depended on the distance from the explosion how serious one was affected. Residual exposure, especially internal, could happen later and was much harder to prevent or measure.

After that, our tour took us to an area with several laboratories that continue to analyze samples from different sources. New hard drives were being installed in a large IT room, which gave one an idea of the tremendous amount of data stored there.

Another stop was two cold storage rooms for biological samples. There was an older room where people have to walk inside and open doors to handle samples. The new storage room is fully automated, with robots locating and retrieving samples. This cuts down on contamination and heat entering from outside air. This new room has been the largest investment in the whole facility.

In closing, Jeffrey showed us a photo gallery of famous visitors to RERF in the past. These even included Marilyn Monroe with her husband Joe DiMaggio on an unlikely honeymoon in Hiroshima in 1954.

If you want to learn more about RERF, there is an incredible amount of information on their website and Facebook page. You can access both by going to www.rerf.jp.



*Left Maggie Phoenix,
Yoko Mimura, Mikiko Shimizu, Michiko
Yamane, Jeffrey Hart*

8. PAX from Korea in May 2017

Mikiko Shimizu (WFC Riji)

Korean PAX started in 2003 and since then each side has exchanged members every other year to fulfill the shared vision of world peace and promote friendly relationships. The WFC has just started preparing for this year's Korean PAX visit, including arranging the very popular home stays.

The schedule for this year's visit is May 3rd through May 7th and we await the 7 participants with anticipation! Six of those members will stay in Hiroshima an additional one day before and one day after the regular PAX schedule on their own. I think it is wonderful that they are so interested in Japan that they extended their trip! We are especially grateful for the warm welcome afforded by our host families in Hiroshima this year.

I'm happy to note that two Korean host families from our visit to Korea last year will be part of the group visiting Japan this year. This will be a good occasion to strengthen the bonds of friendship that exist between us.

Their visit will be in the midst of Golden Week and will take advantage of the beautiful flowers and fresh greenery. As we move forward with their itinerary,

we plan to take them around scenic Hiroshima in addition to involving them in many peace activities. Their visit also coincides with worsening political relationships between Korea and Japan, so it's all the more important that we make this event the cornerstone of our grass-roots exchange program of reaching out to visitors, understanding different cultures, and bridge-building for peace in the world.

All of the staff will make their best effort to welcome them with "OMOTENASHI" spirit - our hospitality - from the bottom of our hearts. We hope that they will take back to Korea a refreshing and positive impression of Hiroshima, the people of Hiroshima, the country of Japan, and the Japanese people. Please watch the flyer about the welcome potluck party at WFC. We hope you'll join us!

The members of the Korean PAX committee this year are Michiko Yamane, Jim Ronald, and Mikiko Shimizu.

The following is a brief introduction of this year's participants.



Mr. Yongin Jeong (M, 41) A practitioner and trainer of RJ for KOPI. A host family from our 2016 trip (with wife Soyoung Choi).

Ms. Soyoung Choi (F, 36) Involved in several organizations in the peace-building community, including KOPI, NARPI, Connexus, and Café Circle. Interested in starting a recycling art shop. Married to Mr. Jeong.



Mr. Gusik Yun (M, 50) A lecturer at KOPI and a host family from our 2016 trip.



Ms. Yeongsuk Choi (F, 43) An office clerk at KOPI. Married to Mr. Gusik.

Ms. Young-in Park (F, 41) An office manager of the Korean Association for Restorative Justice. Lived in Hiroshima for 8 months. Interested in cooking, Flamenco dance, reading, and language.



Ms. Yeoreum Song (F, 26) Admin team member at NARPI. Interested in learning foreign languages, listening to music, watching musicals, and travel. Serves as Japanese translator for PAX.

Mr. Austin Headrick (M) English teacher who is interested in learning to ask new questions that would expand his perspective of the world.

Note: KOPI:Korea Peacebuilding Institute; RJ: Restorative Justice; NARPI: Northeast Asia Peacebuilding Institute; Connexus: English Language Institute

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