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Yu - Ai **Friendship**

The Newsletter of World Friendship Center
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**Celebrating Christmas in
a Winter Wonderland**
Don and Pauline Hess



Morishita-sensi delivers a moving tribute to our founder, Barbara Reynolds as Mieko-san interprets.

Our Christmas program on December 18 was a great success despite our third snowfall which dumped about 6 inches of snow and **surprised all of us** on Sunday morning, the day of our program.

The program included cast members, soloists, choir members and pianist. All present joined together in celebration. The program began with Morishita-sensi lighting a candle and describing the early days of Barbara Reynolds and her vision for World Friendship Center (WFC) and Kido-san

doing the same for Dr. Harada. Pauline Hess read a modified Christmas story interpreted by Chizuko-san, as the Christmas pageant was reenacted by WFC members. The Peace Choir sang a number of carols.

Steve Leeper and wife, Elizabeth, entertained us with their voices and guitar and Santa distributed gifts to all present. Michiko Yamane was the MC and refreshments were served. Despite the weather we had a great time with everyone enjoying the holiday spirit. It is a delight to get to know these wonderful people in a number of different spiritual and social environments and to learn about our cultural differences. We have so much to learn from them.



The cast of the WFC Christmas program directed by Michiko Yamane.

Reflections of a Young American Guest

Matthew Aaron McVicar

It was at the top of a mountain on Miyajima yesterday that I realized how full of kindness and beauty my life truly is. It was a tough climb, I hadn't eaten much breakfast and my legs were fighting each step of the ascent. When I finally reached the peak, I met a view in every direction that could only be described as spectacular and a Japanese woman who had just made the same climb. We exchanged greetings and sat admiring the view, and before I knew it she had brought over a cup of hot coffee and a bag full of food. What compassion! In these two weeks of travel I have continually been in the care and company of theretofore strangers with an uninterrupted stream of kindness. These events have made me realize it is not suffering and hardship that would change me in my travels, but a force much stronger – love. That mountaintop revelation shed light on my visit to the Peace Park in Hiroshima as well.

I was, at first, nervous to go, knowing what I'd see would be horrifying and sad. I went, though, and after starting at the A-Bomb dome walked toward the Children's Memorial. Only two sentences into the placard's explanation of the monument and I began to cry. It just got worse each time I tried to stop or look at the monument, and I sat down on a bench nearby, sobbing. Ten minutes went by this way until I saw a little girl approaching with her mother. She looked a little nervous and concerned, and bravely held out her hand to give me a small piece of candy. I tried to thank her and couldn't get through all the "arigato gozaimasu" before the tears began to flow stronger than ever.

Eventually, my eyes dried, I explored the rest of the park and the museum. The

reality of that day in 1945 sunk in with every caption read, every blood-stained uniform solemnly observed. And now the hints of that day are clear as well. Though we face and have faced ultimate sadness and terror, there is hope in the simplest gesture. To pursue a peace that is universal we must open ourselves to the unending bounty of kindness all around us and the potential within ourselves to be that caring stranger, World Peace from within. I will do my best to achieve that goal, inside and out, so that the people who have helped and protected me – be they children with an outstretched arm, no more than five, or a couple at the World Friendship Center, providing a true "home away from home" – may never have to face fear or violence to the degree that war and weapons introduce.

My experience here in Hiroshima has been splendid; I am certain that I will one day return. Thank you to everyone who has helped me along the way and to those that will.



Matthew Aaron McVicar

Age 20, Student from Massachusetts, USA

(Editor's note) Matthew also visited our Wednesday morning English class and was a delight, answering numerous questions with maturity, expressing himself in Japanese on many occasions, and indicating a strong desire to return to Japan as a teacher.

The Peace Trip to Hiroshima

(Editor's note): Rev. Oh Sang Teul and seven members from the Yeoul Church in Korea were guests at the WFC and were escorted around Hiroshima. The following report from Rev. Oh describes their visit.

Each night the eight members, which included elementary, junior and senior high school, university students and adults, reflected and discussed the day's events. All had read the comic book, "Barefoot Gen", which depicted the A-bomb disaster very realistically, so they were not so surprised with the artifacts and displays in the Peace Memorial Museum. Before their visit to the Museum, they were deeply moved by Yamaoka-san's A-bomb experience. They also expressed their appreciation for the kindness and warm hospitality by Mr. Morishita and Ms. Taguchi, who guided them to Miyajima, for the warm welcome and tea ceremony by Ms. Kido, the warmth and generosity of Don and Pauline and the inspiring story about Barbara's life.

Japan and Korea share a sad history of colonization of Korea by the Japanese imperialism which has led to anti-Japanese resentment or hatred toward the Japanese people by the majority of the Korean people.

Rev. Oh expressed his personal views when he stated: "I, too, used to have similar opinions as Koreans in general. When I was a university student, I was so moved by the book written by Takashi Nagai, who was an A-bomb survived doctor in Nagasaki. Since Korea opened the door to introduce Japanese culture, I have seen most of the animation movies by Hayao Miyazaki. I was so impressed with his works appealing anti-war, pacifism, reconciliation between human beings and nature. I had a chance to meet homeless people in Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka three years ago. That occasion made me review my basic recognition toward Japan.

Under these circumstances, the book, "Barefoot Gen" last year brought me the special meaning. Through the "Barefoot

Gen", I understood that the A-bomb killed innocent people instantly and caused a lot of sufferings to the survived people. We, the Yeoul Church group, had a chance to meet Kohei Ueyama and Michiko Yamane last February. I thought it was very difficult to reach mutual understanding. However, since then I wanted to know more about Hiroshima and meet people there.

After visiting Hiroshima, I realized again that the most important thing is to meet people face to face, and open our hearts so that we can build better relationships. Through this peace pilgrimage, we came to understand that Japan is different from what we had learned. We really want to express our gratitude toward the WFC people who spent time and energy for us with kindhearted humbleness.

I think this is only the first step to build good relations between us. I am convinced that if we can continue this exchange program for a long time, Korea and Japan will be the closest countries, though there might be twists and turns before we reach that stage.

We sincerely hope that Yeoul Church members and WFC members can walk together along the path toward peace."



Korean Church visitors with WFC members. Top row (l to r) Pauline Hess, Kim Mary, Kim Jiinwoo, SUH Keonwoo, Middle row: Toshiko Kono; Kaori Kuru Maji; Michiko Yamane; front row Pastor OH Sang Yeul, Lee Sun Hee,, Kim Jina, Kim Jin and Zang Hanarae

The Perceptions of a Military Veteran for Peace

Don Hess

(Pauline and I have been serving as co-directors for 9 months. I was asked by the Riji to share my views as a veteran of military service who has also worked for peace. I shared these views to members and guests at a recent Friendship Afternoon and this article is a brief summary of those thoughts.)

As the first military veteran to serve as a director of the Center my purpose was to convey the idea that many soldiers like me are seeking peaceful solutions rather than war and that it is the American government that sends soldiers to Iraq and not the military leadership, nor the American people.

I was on active duty as an Army officer for 23 years and then as a lobbyist for improving the health care and benefits for retired military persons. I am convinced that we all share the common goal of peace in our time without nuclear weapons.

My career also included three separate assignments within the Pentagon, the headquarters of the Department of Defense in Wash DC and the White House Communications Agency as a military administrative officer. I worked in the Army headquarters office to eliminate the draft and develop an all volunteer Army. We were successful and since those days all military personnel, both men and women, are volunteers.

In the U.S. the White House, Capitol and Pentagon are the 3 most important buildings where major military decisions are made. On foreign policy issues, like war, the White House establishes the policies, the Congress approves them and the Pentagon carries them out.

I also served in Vietnam with an Army Engineer unit building roads in the southern part of VN. Those roads are still being used today. I requested this assignment in VN where our purpose was to build roads and not destroy property and lives.

During many of those years I was a minister in the Church of the Brethren (one of the 3 historic peace churches with the Quakers and Mennonites) preaching in many different churches and leading groups at the local and national level. I have a strong commitment to peace and belong to many religious and other organizations desiring peace. In the 1980's I helped to organize a Veterans for Peace organization within our church denomination and last year participated in a panel discussion with two pacifists at our Brethren Annual Conference. Our church denomination is opposed not only to war and the abolition of nuclear weapons, but to violence in any form and continues to work quietly in practical ways for peace.

There are many NGOs or nonprofit organizations in the US working to change the culture of war into a culture of peace. I was a member of Veterans for Peace, a national organization of military veterans who also belong as an NGO organization of the United Nations. Just as the Mayors for Peace organization started by Hiroshima also is an NGO organization of the United Nations, Veterans for Peace opposes all nuclear weapons and withdrawal of troops from Iraq. Other Veterans and religious organizations are very concerned with the intervention of the US in the Iraq war and are lobbying for the withdrawal of American troops from Iraq.

All these organizations are attempting by peaceful means to change the political climate in the U.S. Their goals include reduction and eventual abolition of nuclear weapons, and withdrawal from Iraq.

I am aware that the perception among many Japanese people involved in the peace movement is that military people cannot work for peace because they enjoy killing. Nothing could be further from the truth. Over 55% of American military men and women are married. Many have children. They are concerned about the same things that non-military families are concerned about, educating their children, living a quality lifestyle, living in decent housing, and facing the added burden of

moving all around the world when they are ordered. Many are reserve soldiers called up from their civilian jobs. The military does not choose to go to war. The government sends them to war. Many senior officers strongly objected to going into Iraq and they were told to follow orders or retire. Many did retire and have openly expressed their opinions.

It seems that so many of our world leaders have bought into the idea of the inevitability of war. Once we assume that war is inevitable, it usually results in military action. A large part of our U.S. society is conditioned to the possibility of military action. We remember the Cold War with Russia, the Cuban Missile crisis, the Gulf War and especially 9/11!

I think the climate in the U.S. is ripe for a change. You see it in the organizations marching against the war; you see it in the questioning of our leaders, you see it in the awakening of the American people. The American people are ready for a change. Not just a change but a transformation. War is inevitable only if we refuse to work for peace.

We came to Hiroshima because we wanted to experience the culture of Japan in a peace setting where we could relate our own experiences as peacemakers. I have seen first hand the horror of war, the maneuvering of politics, and the inevitable result. Over 100 million people perished in the 20th century in wars; most of them civilians, non-combatants like the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. At a certain point, things are going to have to change. Many people have worked diligently to bring about this change with NGOs and religious organizations urging the government to change our culture of war. In the long term, Peace is inevitable, and we can either begin the process now or we can wait until half the planet is dead.

As co-directors, Pauline and I are committed to opening up dialogue with citizens to work for world peace. We believe that all citizens around the world should be aware of the horrors of war and work for peaceful solutions to conflict.

Tanimoto Kiyoshi Peace Award

Kaneto Shindo, a prominent film director was the recipient of the 17th annual Tanimoto Kiyoshi Peace Award held November 13 at the Hiroshima Campus of the Hiroshima Institute of Technology.

Kaneto Shindo, 93 years old, was honored for his film making. He was born in Hiroshima and is still active in the film business. For more than a half century he has been appealing the cruelty of war and the horror of nuclear weapons through his film directing. His most famous masterpieces are "Children of the A-Bomb" and "Fukuryu-maru No. 5."

The Tanimoto Kiyoshi Peace Award was established in 1987 as part of the program of the Hiroshima Peace Center by the son and family of Rev. Tanimoto. The Peace Center was established in 1950 by Rev. Tanimoto to realize his belief in peace, love and volunteer service. This award has been given to a group or an individual whose peace activity, particularly related to the A-bombing in Hiroshima. Former recipients included Norman Cousins, Floyd Scome and, John Heresy.

The WFC was the recipient in 2000. Eight members of the WFC, led by Chairman Morishita and Yamoaka-san attended the ceremony honoring Mr. Shindo.



Yamoako-san appeared in his film and Chairman Morishita's calligraphy was featured in another film.



A Peace Seminar Report

Chizuko Taguchi

Barbara Reynolds, the founder of the WFC wanted to create world peace by eliminating nuclear weapons. The mission of WFC is to follow her will. The Peace Seminar offered at WFC since 1990, when the Gulf War started, is a place for studying war and peace issues both foreign and domestic. In the course of studying Japan's 15 year war, nuclear issues, and Chernobyl, we learned about the project of the nuclear power plant in Kaminoseki only 80 km from Hiroshima. We have invited lecturers to study and discuss this project and many other subjects for more than 11 years. Summaries of our study in 2005 are as follows.

1. Breakdown in the NPT Conference

One of the WFC members joined in the NPT Conference in the U.N. in May, 2005. But the conference mocked our trust. U.S.A. has forcibly pushed her missile defense strategy since September 11, 2001, and has applied the alliance between Japan and America to force Japan to cooperate with America. It is believed that going to the Yasukuni Shrine is a sign of Prime Minister Koizumi cooperating with America. Japan should have a spirit ('even a worm will turn'), find her own situation different from America, and steer toward world peace.

2. Kaminoseki Iwai Island oppose the construction of the nuclear power plant

It is said that nuclear power is part of peaceful use, but the uranium used in it can be developed for nuclear weapons. In 1982 Chugoku Power Company announced the project of constructing the nuclear power plant in Kaminoseki next to the Iwakuni American Military Base. Kaminoseki faces the Inland Sea, so this area is ecologically very important because of the home of scarce species. Out of 8 Fishermen's Cooperative Associations in that area, only Iwai Island has demanded that the project should be withdrawn, and has

refused to receive compensation for, 24 years. However, recent water warming has led Iwai Island to stagnation, so Iwai Island fell into the red budget. Iwai Island Fishermen's Cooperative Association has been urged to approve and take part in the union made of 58 Fishermen's Cooperative Associations in Yamaguchi.

Chugoku Power Company has steadily pushed the project and already bought 80 percent of the construction site. Hatiman Shrine's land is in the construction site, so the chief priest opposing the construction was dismissed. The paper that he allegedly signed was forged, so he is now filing a lawsuit. Moreover, when the ground of the site was researched, the scarce species in the sea were found dead and scattered. The dirty water is left running. The environment is being destroyed.

On the other hand, Kaminoseki has tried to activate its economy depending on the subsidy amounting to 14 billion yen. But the population has dwindled to 60 percent of that of 1982, and the people above 65 occupy 47 percent of the total. The administration of Kaminoseki promoting only the nuclear power station has brought farmers and farmer's cooperative associations to dissolution. We can say that Kaminoseki is a town deserted by being involved in the nuclear power plant. The mayoral election caused the incumbent mayor to resign because of bribery, so the citizens now begin to notice the money-oriented administration. Fishing is a very important business in Yamaguchi. Taking the occasion of the merger to band together and adhere to fishing, the citizens try to readjust the economy with their own hands. That is the hope of Iwai Island.

3. Learning from Peace Education Symposium between Japan and Korea

Ignoring disasters and wars in foreign countries, the young people in Japan are looking for comfortable lives and amusements. Schools are at the mercy of the policy of the Education and

Science Ministry. Under the name of keeping teachers' neutrality, it's taboo for schools to teach children about political issues. The Symposium implies the future education between Japan and Korea is based on what Japan has done prewar. Our seminar gives us a chance to learn about this.

Helping Others

Kenny Fries, is a writer from America here in Japan as a Fulbright Scholar researching his new book, "Genkan: Entries into Japan," He visited WFC and interviewed Yamaoka-san for information on the Hiroshima Maidens. Michiko Yamane served as an interpreter for this project.



Kenny Fries explains an idea for his new book to Yamaoka-san, who assisted him in his research.

April Friendship Afternoon

We have been in contact with Kadir and Sue Cannon, producers of "Who is Telling Our Stories," a film about the A-bomb victims. They will be coming to Japan to present their original peace program which includes a movie and peace dialogue. The Riji has approved this event for a Friendship Afternoon on April 15 at WFC. In addition, the Cannon's will be staying at WFC and visiting the Peace Park and establishing contacts with other organizations to present their program here in Hiroshima and other places in Japan. Steve Leeper has agreed to assist in getting their peace message out to as many persons as possible.

Cooperation with a Youth Church Camp in America

A summer church camp in Virginia is sponsoring a peace program throughout the summer months with children and youth. They have asked for our support in providing peace information and materials to their campers and the Riji has approved this project. We will begin with literature and envision coordinating pen-pals between Hiroshima and American young people and provides an excellent opportunity to reach out to a younger population (one friend at a time) and has possibilities for a future exchange program. The church camp has always had a strong peace emphasis and WFC can add another dimension to their programs.

International Exchange Day

One of our very enjoyable experiences was a visit to the Day of International Exchange and Cooperation at the International Center. We were dressed in Kimono for two hours at the event and enjoyed witnessing the cultural differences in the many countries involved. Many friends of the WFC were present and we believe that WFC should be a more active participant with a table or booth for next year to give greater visibility to the work of the Center.

PAX Visits

We are beginning plans to organize a PAX trip to the United States in 2006 to continue our work of bridge building. It has been five years since the last PAX visit and the American Committee has agreed to receive them and provide the necessary scheduling, transportation and other arrangements for this visit. Watch for more information.

Also, a PAX team from Korea is planning a visit to Hiroshima in June or July. More details in the next newsletter.

Thank you to Translators of this issue: Yoshiko Horimasu, Yoshiko Sakuma, Mieko Yamashita, Michiko Yamane, Takako Hiramoto, Sachiko Hiraoka, and Michiko Hamai.



WFC members welcome Alice and Sue Ramysever during their recent Hiroshima visit...



Peace Park Guides study documents on the Peace Park Monuments.



Kido-san lights a candle in memory of Dr. Harada at the Christmas program as Pauline Hess assists.



Appreciation day cake presented to the Riji by the Directors in gratitude for their support.



Meeting of the Wednesday morning English class.



A well deserved lunch break is taken by the hard-working crew after the Winter clean-up.