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Friendship

Newsletter of the World Friendship Center, NPO

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My Life at the World Friendship Center

Dannie Otto Volunteer Co-Director, WFC

As we were looking forward to making the move to Hiroshima to serve as volunteer co-directors of the World Friendship Center, I confidently told people that I thought I knew what to expect. I had been to Japan twice and nearly 40 years of exposure to Barbara and her family gave me a pretty good idea of life in Japan. Even so, I have been surprised at how much I enjoy our life here.

A large part of our assignment is hosting overnight guests. As expected, this involves mundane tasks like cleaning, preparing breakfasts and so on. The rewards are the great conversations we have with people from many parts of the world. So far, southern hemisphere countries like Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, Singapore and Hong Kong are home to the largest number of our guests.

We had a particularly memorable time with a Thai scholar who researches “peace museums” who brought her sister and niece along to Hiroshima. The 14 year old niece came to do research on the attitudes of Japanese young people to the bombing of Hiroshima. She interviewed students at the Peace Park and also wanted to interview Barbara and me on our motivations to volunteer for this job and our attitudes on peace. We ended up having two extended conversations with her. She had the most penetrating questions. It is heartening to think that the future of our world will be in the hands of young people like her.

Another part of our assignment is to lead English classes. These classes have been a part of the center since its inception in 1965. The revenue generated from these classes provides a substantial portion of the center’s budget. Some of the students have been taking classes for decades. I quite frankly was not looking forward to doing this. However, it turns out, that some of my classes are the highlights of my week. With one group, we are reading John Hersey’s



Dannie

classic text *Hiroshima*. With another group I am reading *Silent Voices*, an account of the Los Alamos portion of the Manhattan project to develop the nuclear bomb, blended with accounts of the Japanese Americans who were sent to internment camps and the story of the Navajo Indians, known as “code talkers” who were pressed into service by the American military to send coded messages during WWII. Reading these accounts within a mile of the hypocenter where the first atomic bomb to be tested on a human population was denoted is very powerful.

Another pleasant duty is eating. We enjoy eating and we enjoy Japanese cuisine. As we are able we enjoy exploring the eateries in our neighborhood, of which there are many. The ramen noodle shop on the corner of our block is very good!

Reflections on our first three months at the WFC

Barbara Shenk

Volunteer Co-Director, WFC



We arrived in the intense heat of early August and can hardly believe we are already experiencing Hiroshima’s gorgeous fall color and cool temperatures.

Before arriving at WFC we had a rough idea of teaching schedules, guest procedures, the location and layout of the facilities, the nature of the Peace Park and museum, and historical and natural attractions nearby. But we had not met any of our colleagues, students or guests, and these relationships have been the greatest and most gratifying discoveries for us.

Barbara (Barb)

The English classes have been such a joy and we have forged many friendships in the classroom. From the first day of classes I have been impressed with how determined each student is to

convey truly meaningful thoughts in English. They do not shy away from the difficulties of the task and it often becomes a group effort to articulate their ideas. We have shared many life experiences in this way. An added bonus is learning about places to visit and enjoy in the Hiroshima area.

One of my concerns before arriving was how we would weather the constant and intense focus on the terror of August 6, 1945. We have indeed heard many stories from survivors that have moved and grieved us deeply. The horrors are unimaginable. And yet we are so grateful to those who are dedicated to conveying their experiences to WFC guests from around the world and to young people in Hiroshima.

Each story is utterly unique, but I hear a common thread of finding hope and the strength to live on. It may have been a teacher's voice, a blade of green grass, a patch of blue sky, the *aogiri* tree sprouting new leaves, or the oleander blooming once again, that kept their spirits from being completely crushed.

The other common thread is the impassioned plea to work for a world free of nuclear weapons. The passage of the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the recent decision of the Nobel Peace Prize Commission to award the 2017 prize to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) was felt to be a personal triumph among the hibakusha who have been speaking out over the years, around the world.

The resilience and passion of these hibakusha is inspiring to all who hear them. American visitors to WFC in

particular are touched by the kindness and generosity that they are shown in spite of where they come from. If we ever wonder what long term effects these encounters may have on the world, we remember the words of Barbara Reynolds, "To foster peace, one friend at a time."



Barb and Dannie

Internship at the World Friendship Center

Ryuki Nakamoto

**Department of English, Faculty of Humanities and Human Sciences
Hiroshima Shudo University**

• REASONS FOR APPLYING TO THE WFC

I was born and raised in Hiroshima Prefecture. But I was not sure what was going on in Hiroshima at that time. Or maybe I should say that I was a little bit afraid to know the facts of the atomic bombing. One day when I was watching a show on TV, some students from other countries were listening seriously to “hibakusha stories” from survivors. The students tried hard to ask different questions of them and the survivors told them about the things even if they were painful experiences for them to tell the people about. I was very impressed to watch the scene, but at the same time I realized that I did not do anything for peace for Hiroshima. So, I decided to apply to the WFC to tell the world what was going on here and what a beautiful city Hiroshima is.



Field trip to Peace Culture Village

• THE WORK AT THE WFC AS AN INTERN

We mainly had two projects as interns at the WFC. One is a small project, which was to update the guest guide books. We worked on it by researching locations, opening times, prices and menus for restaurants near WFC. The other project was a big one, in which we listened to “hibakusha stories” from a total of seven survivors and filmed them to pass on to the next generation. It was very important for us, the young generation, to do this activity because we have a duty to tell these stories to people all over the world.

• AFTER COMPLETING THE INTERNSHIP

I was able to learn various things at the WFC. Currently, global issues are getting more complicated and it is more difficult to resolve these issues. For peace, I personally think that it is most important thing for each person to think carefully and deeply about peace, even if we are not able to take action straight away. Also, I felt the warmth of other people through the

internship. Everyone at WFC treated us in such a friendly way – it felt like our family. I believe that this internship has been one of the biggest experiences in my life for me. Thank you very much for taking care of us for ten days at the WFC. I would like to keep this connection with the WFC forever.



Celebrating after our final presentations at Shudo University



Visiting Barbara Reynold's memorial in the Peace Memorial Park

Ayumu Miura

Department of English, Faculty of Humanities and Human Sciences Hiroshima Shudo University

I'm going to tell you about my internship at the World Friendship Center (WFC). It took place over ten days from August 31 to September 13, with four days off.

Let me begin with my reasons why I applied for this internship. First, I was looking for opportunities in which I could use English during the long summer break. Secondly, I didn't know about Hiroshima, the atomic bomb and peace at all even though I was born and raised in Hiroshima. I found out about the World Friendship Center internship where I could use English and learn about these kinds of issues. That's why I decided to apply for this.

Next, I'm going to tell you about our second project in detail. The project was filming stories told by hibakusha. This is a part of a huge project taking place over a whole year, which is called the "Pass-on" project. This project was launched in order to pass on the memory of the A-bomb not only to younger generations but also to the world. The number of people who actually experienced the war and the A-bomb has been decreasing. We needed to make videos so that young people could know this history and people's experiences. Over three days, we filmed seven hibakushas' stories. Every person to whom we listened was exposed to radiation in different ways: when mobilized and demolishing houses, when still a fetus, and when entering the city after the bombing to find her family. Nobody was affected in the same way. After every story, we asked them the same two questions:

"What do you think about nuclear power, including nuclear weapons and nuclear energy?"

"What do you want to tell the young generations the most?"



Listening to Morishita-sensei's testimony, with cameraman Yuya Miyachi

They all agreed that nuclear weapons must be given up, that we must not make more victims of nuclear bombs, and feel that it is their fault that nuclear weapons still exist. However I don't agree with their third point. Moreover, they said the power of young people is a requirement if we are to ban nuclear weapons. Horie-san said people tend to focus on only the weapons, but he wants us to take action to stop nuclear power plants as well.

To the second question about what they want to tell young generations, they said young people need to learn the history of the A-bomb first, and then they need to learn the facts of Hiroshima. Any way in which it is done is great. Trying to convey the experience of Hiroshima is so meaningful, so worth doing. The number of people who survived the war is not so many, so as young people we need to carry on our own campaign and let people know what we want. It's not enough just to give data like how many people died, because nobody counted the number. What is important is telling the stories in our own words.

Finally, I will tell about what I learned from this internship. I came to know so many things, like how different working with adults is from studying at university. I have to be responsible for my work, and I need to be more careful when I talk with older people. From English classes, I came to know it is never too late to start studying English. In the classes, everyone is older than me and they started studying English after they started working, but they all speak it very well. It was surprising, but it motivated me at the same time. Also, I came to realize how difficult learning English is. During the internship, we discuss many issues in English, and I was struggling to make myself understood in English. Learning English actually means to be able to discuss difficult topics. And I also realized how small the world I had been living in is, how poor my knowledge was, and how little common sense I have.

These are the most important things I think I found through these ten days. Before I applied for this internship, I thought that being an intern is was not something which students do in their second year do, but I did it. And now I found that making the first step is the most important thing to do.



We joined a WFC English guided tour of Peace Memorial Park

We don't know anything before we do something. So I will try as many things as I can, from now on. I also found I need to think about what I can do now, and act. Time is limited and we shouldn't waste time.

From this internship, I learned a lot of things, and I am going to continue to be involved with the WFC. To make peace, the power of young people is essential.

PAX Ambassador Report

Ursula McTaggart

My visit to Hiroshima as a PAX Ambassador in August 2017 was a transformative life experience. Although I have always known that I opposed the atomic bombings of Japan in World War II, I had never invested substantial time and energy into learning about the bombings. Listening to the stories of hibakusha was profoundly moving and educational. I was particularly affected by the stories of radiation sickness. In war, the moment of a bombing is clearly devastating. However, I was horrified to learn about the compounding effects of radiation sickness upon those who initially survived. It was difficult to hear Koko Kondo's story about her young cousin who died after entering the irradiated area. It was also enlightening and challenging to hear Soh-san's stories about his family's experiences. He helped me understand how radiation affects families for many years after the trauma of war is over. Illness and fear did not subside for bombing survivors even after peace had settled in for the rest of



At the Radiation Effects Research Foundation

the world. I appreciated hearing the unique and overlapping stories of hibakusha. They helped me understand what it was like to live in Hiroshima on the day of the bombing and in the many years after.

As a professor at a Quaker institution, I loved having the opportunity to build connections between Wilmington College and the World Friendship Center. By learning more about Barbara Reynolds's legacy, I discovered more about what makes my own college special. Moreover, this visit inspired me to build stronger connections between Wilmington and Hiroshima. I would love to encourage students from Hiroshima or elsewhere in Japan who have an interest in peace-making to consider studying abroad at Wilmington College. This trip has also led me to incorporate hibakusha testimonies and poetry into my teaching plans for Wilmington College freshmen. Not only that, but when my 6-year-old son returned home from school to tell me about the patriotic Veterans' Day activities at his school, where he had learned some basic facts about World War II, the first thing I reminded him about was my visit to Hiroshima. He had been taught—at the age of six—that Japan had once been our enemy. I reminded him about the bombings and my visit to Hiroshima. I feel so lucky to have been able to make this conversation real for him. My six- and three-year-olds are both eager to visit Japan with me next time and to learn about Japanese history and culture. I am glad that I am now able to tell them real stories of my experiences in Japan so that they can understand it in its complexities rather than simply as a country that the United States once battled.



Getting ready to float lanterns on the river in Peace Park

On a personal level, this trip led me to begin a study of the Japanese language that I plan to continue. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting warm and friendly people, eating amazing food, and experiencing Japanese culture. I cannot thank the World Friendship Center enough for the opportunity to travel to Hiroshima. It is an experience I will always treasure—and one that I hope to repeat in the future with my entire family.

American PAX 2017 Report

Carly Pritchard

This summer, I had the unique opportunity to travel to Hiroshima with the PAX



Exchange program. I was hosted by the World Friendship Center and their hospitality was so wonderful that I wanted to take some time and recall my experiences there.

I stayed with Chizuko-san and I feel so lucky to have been able to stay at her home! She is a wonderful cook and made food for us every night. I feel that I got to experience Japanese culture every day because I slept, ate, and shared memories with her and her husband. I am so thankful for her loving hospitality!

Chizuko Taguchi, her husband, Jillia and Carly

Our days were so full of meaningful experiences in Hiroshima. We got to explore the Peace Park, RERF, Shukkeien Garden, and even spent an afternoon in Miyajima! We laughed and had fun singing karaoke, but we also really enjoyed the more somber, serious moments at the Bonfire, lantern floating, and Peace Memorial Museum.

As a student, I think it's just as important to experience other cultures for yourself as it is to learn about cultures in the classroom. I thank God for my trip to Japan and the opportunities I got to learn about peace-making in such a vibrant, historic city.



Visiting Peace Memorial Park

I love sharing all that I learned from Japan with my friends and classmates here in the United States. I tried to make okonomiyaki for my school's "International Food Festival" but it was not as delicious as the okonomiyaki I had in Hiroshima! My friends and family are so interested to hear about the people of Japan, especially Hibakusha. I am honored to be able to continue their commitments to peace everywhere that I go!

Peace Culture Village

Mary Popeo English Programs & Public Relations Director

Greetings from two hours north of Hiroshima City! My name is Mary and I am honored to address supporters of the World Friendship Center, which will always hold a special place in my



heart. In the summer of 2013, I had the pleasure of interning at WFC. During that time, the friendly staff and volunteers gave me a tour of the Peace Park, introduced me to an atomic bomb survivor, and helped me with a school research project. In fact, my amazing experience at WFC is one of the reasons I decided to become an activist and move to Japan!

A Boston native with a background in anti-nuclear activism, I am now working at Peace Culture Village (PCV), an NPO, international community, and peace training camp in rural Hiroshima Prefecture. The diverse and committed group of people living on PCV campus run an organic farm, strive to be completely self-sufficient in energy and food, and facilitate monthly workshops in conflict resolution, sustainable living, organic agriculture, permaculture, and more.

PCV is the vision of Steven Leeper, former chairman of the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation, the body which runs the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and is the peace and international relations arm of Hiroshima City. Although the devastating consequences of war

are visible around the world, there is little discussion (even in Hiroshima) of how human hearts, minds, conversations, and social/economic/political systems have to change if we hope to create a culture of peace.

PCV is working to fill this gap by providing hands-on, skills-based training to promote peace with others, peace with nature, and peace with self.

When I lived in Boston, I volunteered as an Action Corps leader for Global Zero, an international youth led movement to abolish nuclear weapons. As an Action Corps leader, I led demonstrations, collected petitions, lobbied Congress and UN Missions, and participated in guerilla art stunts. What an incredible experience it was!

However, I soon found myself at a crossroads. I am not a convincing person. In fact, I am easily convinced. When attempting to convince others of the illegality or inhumanity of nuclear weapons, I would instead find myself listening to, and finally being tempted by nuanced views that complicated my narrative. In the end, I decided I was more suited for a style of peace activism focusing on mutual understanding and conflict resolution. PCV was my opportunity to explore this route.



At PCV, we have people of all types: rich and poor, religious and atheist, liberal and conservative. Although we certainly have conflicts amongst ourselves, because we are all committed to realizing peace culture, we don't give up and continue to work together. In fact, I've found living with people I don't like to be the most valuable and illuminating part of my peace culture training.

Working with others and the earth to produce food and energy is an important component of peace culture. Farming gives us ample opportunity to struggle with problems and figure out, as a group, how to solve them. When we work together to grow food, keep warm, and stay entertained, we realize our reliance on one another and, despite seemingly insurmountable differences and conflicts, are forced to cooperate. At PCV, farming is itself a conflict resolution method.



If you happen to live in Hiroshima, or visit from another country or prefecture, please stop by! You can stay updated on the goings-on at PCV by following our Facebook page or stopping by our website:

Website: http://www.peacinstitute.org/peace_culture_village

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PeaceCultureVillage>



Maniwa Biomass Power Plant Tour

Kaori Kurumaji

WFC Riji

The WFC Peace Seminar went on a study tour to the Maniwa biomass* power plant in Okayama prefecture from June 8 to June 9,2017. It was the third field trip for us, following visits to the Shimane and Ikata nuclear power plants. Mr. Kihara, our Peace Seminar lecturer, was kind enough to drive a rental car for the six of us. Maniwa city is located in the northern part of Okayama prefecture, and was formed after nine towns merged into this one city, making it the largest self-governing body in Okayama Prefecture. A total of 79% of the municipality's area is wooded land. It has become widely known for the advanced biomass project it began 20 years ago to make use of its rich forest resources. The current biomass power plant of 10,000 kw, making it the largest in Japan, commenced operation in 2015.

When we arrived at Maniwa city hall, Mr. Kenji Kakimoto, a member of the municipal assembly, met us to show us around the city hall, a structure which is mainly made of wood. After that, Mr.Kakimoto guided us around the city. That night, we stayed at Yubara hot springs, which is famous for its open-air bath.



Visiting Maniwa City Hall Assembly Room

**(Mikiko Shimizu, Asaka Watanabe, Kaori Kurumaji, Michiko Watanabe,
Assembly member Mr. Kenji Kakimoto, Shoji Kihara, Chizuko Taguchi)**

The next day, we took part in a Maniwa biomass bus tour. We gathered in front of the city hall and set off. First, we arrived at the biomass power plant. We were given a lecture outlining the Maniwa biomass city there. Then we took a tour of the plant, the largest biomass power plant in Japan. It uses lumber obtained from thinning woodland, from



bark, and so on as its main fuel. After this, we visited a biomass raw materials collection point. Japan has allowed unrestricted importation of wood since 1964. As a result, the price of Japanese wood dropped greatly. However, Maniwa city is trying to make use of the neglected lumber as a biomass resource. Lastly, we went back to the city hall to see its equipment, such as a chip boiler for heating and cooling systems, solar power generation and power generators for electric cars. The city hall is operated 100% by renewable energy.

After the bus tour, we did some shopping and left for home. I was so happy to see that Maniwa city is making effort towards the realization of a sustainable recycling-oriented society. I sincerely hope this innovative approach will spread all over the world.

- * Biomass is organic material that comes from plants and animals, and it is a renewable source of energy. Biomass contains stored energy from the sun. Plants absorb the sun's energy in a process called photosynthesis. When biomass is burned, the chemical energy in biomass is released as heat.

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