



Annual Report 2004/2005

YWCA of Japan

President's Message

The YWCA of Japan celebrates its 100th Anniversary this year. When YWCA was founded in Japan 100 years ago, it was a meaningful for Japanese women to become more aware of what was going on in the world through YWCA women's networks. When Japanese women were struggling to find their way especially during the post-war (second world war) period, YWCA sisters all over the world supported and encouraged them.

Now we in the YWCA of Japan do our best to support our sisters throughout the world through the Global Campaign and the Resource Sharing Programme. At the same time, peace building is the core of our movement. Although the Japanese government is taking steps in a direction opposed to YWCA principles, we will never give up in our struggle to achieve a durable peace in the world without the use of military force.

This is the first issue of the Annual Report of YWCA of Japan as an alternative information source to *The English Newsletter*.

It is our hope that the various activities we are engaged in will be compatible with the heart and soul of Jesus Christ. In addition, we pray that we can be used as instruments through which a society filled to overflowing with love and peace might be realized.

Keiko Aoki
President
YWCA of Japan

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1. YWCA of Japan – Profile-

History & Background

The YWCA of Japan was founded by Japanese Christian women under the leadership of foreign missionaries sent by the World YWCA in 1905. The YWCA of Japan joined the World YWCA the following year. Its activities focused on the liberation of women and the improvement of social welfare.

At the end of World War II, we in the YWCA of Japan resolved to do all we could for building peace. We did this because we were deeply remorseful that we had not done more to oppose the war. Our activities continue to be grounded in the belief that true peace does not simply mean the absence of war, but rather means the situation where all people are able to live with dignity, being free from want and fear.

In 2004, natural disasters caused heavy losses both at home and abroad. We reaffirm that not only providing economic aid but also encouragement and consolation are important in helping people to put their lives back together. The YWCA of Japan aims “to live together with the community”. We must be certain of how we work as a network within the present society that places its priorities on economic growth and convenience.

In 2005, the YWCA of Japan celebrates its 100th anniversary with 27 local YWCAs serving people of all generations and a variety of different backgrounds.

Members & Local Associations

■ Supporters of the National Association: 496

■ Local Associations: 27

Members: 3407

Associate members: 1058

Programme Participants/ Beneficiaries

(courses/ classes/ programmes) : 8032

Single Programme Participants/ Beneficiaries: 39160

Supporters: 854

■ Junior/Senior High School YWCAs: 33

2. Movement Priorities

■ Peace Movement

“Peace Constitution”

The YWCA of Japan strongly supports the Japanese Constitution promulgated in 1946 for its stance on human rights, the sovereignty of the people, and peace especially Article 9, which focuses on the renunciation of war.

Abolishment of nuclear weapons

The YWCA of Japan believes that humanity and nuclear weapons cannot co-exist. We also promote the full-fledged use of environmentally friendly energy as an alternative to nuclear power. Since 1971, every August, a study tour “Pilgrimage to Hiroshima” provides participants from Jr/Sr High schools and local YWCAs with an opportunity to meet atomic bomb survivors and learn of the horrors of the atomic bomb.

In 2004, the Pilgrimage to Hiroshima was held August 9-11 with the theme “Joining hands with others around the world who love peace”. The keynote speaker was Asaho Mizushima, a professor at Waseda University. A number of special guests from abroad attended this year including international students from 5 countries and two guests from the YWCA of China.

Sharing Experience with those at Home

Participation in the Pilgrimage to Hiroshima caused me to think seriously about the importance of peace. It was only three days, but during that time we walked through Hiroshima Castle and visited the Memorial Hall, the Monument, a hospital, and an elementary school among other things, where I learned of the sinful nature of war and atomic weapons. As I looked at the examples of bombed-out buildings and melted glass, I trembled imagining the horrendous pain and suffering the people of Hiroshima must have experienced.

You only have to walk a short distance to see the A-bomb Monument and Memorial Hall. Through their anti-war and anti-nuclear weapon movements, the people of Hiroshima appeal to the world for peace. I was extremely impressed by their work and dedication.

The thing that impressed me most in this pilgrimage was our tour of the Memorial Hall. The tiny materials exhibited and the scale models that were constructed from the first-hand accounts of what happened by survivors really brought home to me the hell into which war and weapons can push people. I don't want to put emphasis only on the victims of war in Hiroshima, but I want to talk about the importance of peace in the world, and how important it is to never allow such a disaster to happen again.

Through this experience, I was able to get to know youth from other countries. I hope Japanese youth will be able to visit China and see for themselves the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall so that youth from our two countries can delve deeper in what we can do to bring about world peace. It would be wonderful if these experiences would lead to new developments in peace education.

Linda Huang, YWCA of China



■ **Advocacy**

Eliminating Violence against Women

The aim of the YWCA of Japan is to bring about a society where women can live safely with dignity. We have focused on eliminating violence against women. Domestic violence is not an individual problem but a societal one. YWCAs in Japan do advocacy work for gender equality and provide support to victims of domestic violence in communities.

Equal Relationships are a first step toward Peace

In 2003, the Osaka YWCA began "A study programme for women concerning ways of dealing with problems they are having with their husbands and other significant others". It was a series of six programmes for women of the community who want to reexamine their relationship with their significant others. One of the women participants in our support group for victims of domestic violence made the following comment, " At first I had no idea I was in a domestic violence situation, but I kept thinking 'Is this really okay?'" We took a hint from these words and were led to begin this special programme.

Violence (not only domestic violence) is said to occur when a person in power tries to control a person who does not have power. This happens not only in the home, but also in the society, in the school, and in the neighborhood. Situations of this kind can also exist in the YWCA. And the most massive of all violent experiences occurs in war. We feel that building equal relationships with those around us is a first step toward a peaceful world. Therefore, violence against women is not somebody else's problem, but actually the problem of each member of the society including us.

(Izumi Tanikawa, Osaka YWCA staff member)

Protecting the Rights of Children

We believe that children naturally have potential. Communities should be prepared to help children develop their abilities and bring out their talents. Local associations provide various programmes such as book reading for kids and camps in communities. Some of them also offer support for families raising children.

Also, in Japan, a bill to amend the Fundamental Law of Education formulated in 1947 is to be submitted to the Diet (parliament). Education policies are becoming more elitist under the pretext of developing the individualities of each student. The YWCA of Japan strongly opposes this trend.

History/ Civics Textbook Issues

In the process of the YWCA's peace building movement, we respect networking in the Asian region that recalls the atrocities committed by the Japanese Imperial Army with remorse. Thus, we protest the Japanese government's actions to create history textbooks that distort historical facts. We believe that it is important for young people to have a correct historical understanding and to be nurtured as peace builders. A team working on this issue was launched in December 2004 to start lobbying against the approval of civics and history textbooks that distort historical facts.

3. Community Service by Local Associations

Based on movement priorities, local YWCAs in Japan provide various services not only for women and children but also for others who need support in the community.

< Main community services of YWCAs in Japan >

- Health/physical education
- Programmes for physically-challenged children
- Programmes for parents
- Day care centers
- Outdoor education/ camps
- Peer educator programmes for youth
- Care support for the elderly
- Feminist counseling
- Support groups for victims of domestic violence
- Support for foreign nationals/ international students
- Support for people with disabilities
- Support for people living with HIV/AIDS
- Language courses
- Bible study classes
- Courses for volunteer workers

The World of Art - As Sketched in Words-

"I wish I could see *Girl with pigtails* by Amedeo Modigliani". From these words uttered by a sight-impaired person came the Nagoya YWCA Art Guide Volunteer Group over 10 years ago. In the beginning we wondered, "how in the world we could explain works of art in words" as we accompanied a group of sight-impaired persons to the art museum. What happened was that the impaired persons had a wonderful time, and we guides also felt a sense of satisfaction we had never had when we viewed the pictures by ourselves.

This activity was not a one-way street from the guides to the guided. Perhaps you could describe it as having the pictures act as go-betweens in our communication. We as guides, of course, had to give basic information such as the size, subject matter, and composition for each picture, but after that we could just relax and enjoy ourselves as we visited about each work of art.

"I thought after I lost my sight I would never have a chance to visit an art museum again." "This is the first time I've ever been to an art museum, but now I've been able to see pictures and sculptures. It's great." With the encouragement of our sight-impaired friends, we have continued to expand our horizons starting with Nagoya City Art Museum and Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art, and then going to the Museum of Fine Arts, Gifu and the Mie Prefectural Art Museum. These are all located in close proximity to Nagoya. This visit has provided rich experiences for all.

A few years ago, similar programs for the sight-impaired were started in Tokyo and Kyoto. It is our hope that this type of program will spread out across Japan, so that before long sight-impaired persons will be able to have rich experiences visiting art museums any place and at any time.

(Sachiko Hirakawa, Nagoya YWCA)

4. International Networking

■ Exchange Programmes

Sister-to-Sister Relationship Ceremony between YWCAs in Korea and Japan (photo→)
Jinju YWCA – Fukuoka YWCA

Exchange Programmes between YWCAs in Korea and Japan

Pusan YWCA – Osaka YWCA (August 9 –13, 2004: Pusan)
Jinju YWCA – Fukuoka YWCA (August 7-12, 2004: Jinju)



YWCA Youth Members Camp hosted by the YWCA of Korea

Two participants took part in the YWCA Youth Members Camp hosted by the YWCA of Korea in Cheonju, Korea July 27-30, 2004.

“Pilgrimage to Hiroshima”

Two participants from China took part in the “Pilgrimage to Hiroshima” held in Hiroshima August 9-11, 2004.

Young Women’s Global Forum hosted by the World YWCA

Three young women participated in the Young Women’s Global Forum hosted by the World YWCA, and co-hosted by the YWCA of Taiwan, August 26-29, 2004.

Visit to YWCAs in China

Six delegates from YWCAs in Japan visited the National Committee of the YWCA of China, Xian YWCA and Chendu YWCA.

Olive-Picking Programme hosted by the YWCA of Palestine

Three young women of YWCA and a staff member of the YMCA participated in the Olive-Picking Programme co-hosted by the YWCA of Palestine, the East Jerusalem YMCA, the Alternative Tourism Group, and the Environmental Educational Center October 23-November 2, 2004. (photo→)



USA's YWCA leaders visited YWCAs in Japan

Ms. Mary Reardon Johnson, Executive Director of the YWCA of Western Massachusetts and Ms. Yvonne Drayton, Executive Director of the YWCA of Southeastern Massachusetts inspired YWCA members in Japan. Ms. Johnson gave a presentation on the women's shelters for victims of domestic violence that was newly opened by the YWCA of Western Massachusetts. Ms. Drayton shared her experiences about organizational changes in the YWCA of the USA. They visited local associations in Tokyo, Nagoya, Kyoto and Osaka.

Cooperation programme between YWCAs in China and Japan

Local YWCAs that have social welfare facilities conducted exchange-training programmes and shared their experiences with their sisters in China.

■ "Support the YWCA of Palestine Project"

YWCAs in Japan support activities of the YWCA of Palestine. To show our solidarity with Palestinians living under Israeli occupation and working for peace through various activities, YWCAs promoted the Olive Tree Campaign organized by the YWCA of Palestine and the East Jerusalem YMCA. Also, a "Support YWCA of Palestine Newsletter" is issued every two months. Some local associations work on fundraising activities for the YWCA of Palestine's work with women and children in Palestine.

First Journey to Visit A-Bomb Relics

Eight persons participated in the first Journey to Visit A-bomb Relics organised by KumamotoYWCA, a trip taken to Dayton, Springfield, and Wilmington, Ohio, USA from August 16-19 2004.

The first day, we visited the U.S. Air Force Museum, viewing the plane that dropped the bomb on Nagasaki. The accompanying sign explained that it was this plane that brought an end to the Second World War. The guide enthusiastically explained how the dropping of the bomb was managed in spite of many difficulties, but she made no mention of what happened in the place where that bomb was dropped.

One positive result of this visit is that we have made connections with several peace organizations in America. Through the showing of the films *Hibakusha* by Hitomi Kamanaka and *DU* (depleted uranium), we were able to talk together about how radiation contamination still continues even today. Many of the American participants said over and over that they had not been aware of the depleted uranium issue. In this age of globalization you can find information from all over the world through the Internet right at your fingertips. Nevertheless, we are faced with the situation where people are completely unaware of issues they don't know about. This experience made us realize how important it is to make the facts known and to exchange information we have with others.

We only met a few Americans on this trip, but it is our belief that they will use their networks to spread the information we gave them, and hopefully this will bring about change.

(Miho Yasukawa, Kumamoto YWCA)

5. CHALLENGES

■ To increase youth members and get them involved in decision-making

Currently, over 25% of the Executive Committee members are under 35 years of age. Some local associations are struggling with a decrease in membership and the aging of their members. To strengthen public recognition of the YWCA, new standards for making the YWCA more visible have been adopted. We are now challenged not only to find ways to conduct public relations activities but also to pinpoint what we want to advertise. We need to strategise how to attract young women to YWCA.

■ Functions of the National YWCA

Functions of the National YWCA have been questioned with relation to local associations. It is necessary to strengthen relations and commutative networks with them. We are now seeking better way of activities, management and leadership development as well as how to support their governance.

■ Christian basis

It has been over 20years since we opened our membership to women of all faiths who support YWCA's vision. How to retain the Christian basis of the YWCA and to promote understandings of Christianity have been called into question.

■ Leadership development

There has been an increase in the exchange of leadership-training programmes among YWCAs in neighboring countries. The YWCA of Japan hopes that the sharing of practical resources and skills between YWCAs around the world will continue to move forward. Also, resource persons from the YWCA of the USA have been an inspiration to local associations in Japan. We would like to increase such opportunities.

6. List of Board Members & Staff

National Board

President	Keiko Aoki	
Vice President	Reiko Kawado	
Vice President	Mineko Nagayama	
Secretary	Mika Kurato	
Treasurer	Ritsuko Mibae	
Member	Kyoko Ishida	Mari Sasabe
	Kiyomi Ishihara	Takako Takei
	Misako Ichikawa	Kimiko Terashima
	Naoko Iwata	Asako Tomita
	Hiroko Umemoto	Kuniko Tomiyasu
	Mari Endo	Mitsue Nakayama
	Takako Okawa	Ikue Nanba
	Kazumi Oshima	Ayako Nishi
	Masako Kajikawa	Junko Fukahori
	Etsuko Kiyota	Satomi Masui
	Noriko Kiyozuka	Naoko Matano
	Sakie Kuninaka	Yuko Matsuura
	Junko Kuroki	Chie Yoshimura

Staff

General Secretary	Kazuko Matsushita
General Administration	Hiroko Nitta
Finance and Accounting	Emiko Miyaki
	Sayuri Ichiki
Local Associations Coordination & Advocacy	Kuniyo Kawabata
Local Associations Coordination	Yasuko Narita
Communications	Izuho Hagio
International Affairs	Sayaka Azuma
General Administration Assistant	Atsuko Ozaki

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