



Young Participants - "Pilgrimage to Hiroshima"

Annual Report 2006-2007

YWCA of Japan

1. President's Message

YWCA of Japan entered in the second century of its activities in 2006. The history of the first century was full of hardship for Japanese women, during which YWCA members strived for women's self-reliance. We do our best to promote women's self-reliance, and their empowerment in the new century.

In November 2006, we held the 29th National Convention, and adopted "Vision 2015 of YWCA of Japan" and determined to build peace by non-violent ways and non-nuclear tools, and to develop leadership among young women and girls.



One of the urgent tasks we grapple with is to protect Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, which renounces war forever as a means of resolving conflicts or disputes and prohibits the maintenance of armed forces and other war potential, because the new Prime Minister Abe's administration being in power since the autumn of 2006, insisted that it should revise Article 9 to be able to wage war within 5 years. As we believe that Article 9 is not a utopian dream but the realistic alternative to a vicious circle of the armament races, wars and violence, we have been taking part in an active network of NGO movements against the stream for its amendment, to promote a global Article 9 principle campaign to abolish war. We are preparing for a big world conference in Tokyo, May 2008 with them. I would like to ask you to join this conference.

We also have started to talk about some new joint programmes with YWCAs of China and Korea, in order to make peace and reconciliation among nations of the northeast Asia through people's network and cooperation, for we feel deep repentance of the sin that YWCA of Japan abdicated its responsibility as a Christian organization, and cooperated to the war of aggression to these nations during the World War.

In "Vision 2015", we also decided to develop young women's leadership through all our activities and programmes, particularly our joint programmes with YWCAs of Korea and China, and to make a sort of system to train leadership as soon as possible.

Bearing in mind that Jesus Christ said "Blessed are the peacemakers : for they shall be called as the children of God, "we are devoted to achieving our goals. We pray that all the members of World YWCA might be the true peacemakers bound by enduring solidarity and sisterhood.

**Mayako Ishii
President, YWCA of Japan**

2. YWCA of Japan -Profile



Local Association.....	26
Members.....	3545
Associate Members.....	939
Jr./Sr. High School YWCA.....	33
Members.....	505
Programme Beneficiaries.....	17603
Supporters for YWCA of Japan.....	479

3. Vision

“Vision 2015 of the YWCA of Japan” was adopted in the 29th National Convention in November 2006, which consists of the following five movement priorities for the next 9 years. Our goal is to build peace by non-violent and non-nuclear ways and by strengthening women’s leadership. The past one year activities have been carried under this vision.

1. Retaining Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution that renounces war and use of military forces and expanding its principle globally.

The YWCA of Japan, regarding it as a 'hope' for all people and an effective contribution to world peace, has led campaign to protest the Japanese government’s attempt to revise its Constitution to allow the troops to be dispatched into the war abroad. In 2006, local and national YWCAs took various actions to promote the importance of the “Peace Constitution”. These actions included study programmes, advocacy on the streets, providing movies and dramas, peace education workshops, lobbying, petition movement and demonstrations. Workshops to promote creative ideas and actions to make peace proved to be very effective and so will be continued.

2. Peace making in Northeast Asia through civil network and cooperation

There are politically strained relations in Northeast Asia. As an international NGO, it is worth exploring civil networks and communication to promote mutual understanding. To know and respect one another must be a first step to peace building.

YWCA of Japan has deepened a good relationship with YWCA of Korea and YWCA of China through some joint programmes. In August in 2006, the first “Northeast Peace-making Meeting” was held in Hiroshima with the participants from YWCAs of Korea, China and Japan. Last summer we also had guests from YWCA of Korea and YWCA of China in the 30 year long peace programme “Pilgrimage to Hiroshima”.The annual “Korea-Japan Youth Conference” was held in Korea in 2006 and was well received by youth participants. These programmes can provide opportunities for youth to exchange different viewpoints, and develop ideas and skills to take action for peace. In the 29th National Convention in November 2006, the guest speaker, Ms. Wei Jin, Acting General Secretary of YWCA of China, gave an impressive message titled “The Call to YWCA for Action-oriented Peace Building in Northeast Asia”. Some positive actions and approaches to work together for peace were proposed and are now expected to be implemented step by step.

3. Protecting Women and Children’s Rights

Child abuse and DV (domestic violence) against women are not only individual but social issues. It is known that the causes of Public Violence (military force) and

Private Violence (violence against women and children) are link share common roots and can be reinforced by each other. Local YWCAs have provided various programmes to show possible ways how the weakened can emerge from the violence and be empowered with the support of civil networks

In the end of December in 2006 in Japan, the Fundamental Law of Education was amended. Education policies are becoming elite-oriented and nationalistic More strictly controlled management of schools can affect children's circumstances. YWCA of Japan has voiced our serious concern about children whose rights to have opportunities to learn with pleasure should be protected. This has included lobbying, sending faxes and petitions against the administrative party, and appealing together with other NGOs in front of the Diet.

4. Support and Work in solidarity with YWCA of Palestine for Peace in the region

World YWCA, one of the UN advisory organs, positively supports Palestinians' inviolable rights guaranteed in the Charter of the United Nations and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. YWCA of Japan, since 1991, has taken action to voice against the violation of their human rights through visiting YWCA of Palestine, and distributing update information to publicize their suffering. In 2006, we worked for fund-raising and advocacy to support various programmes provided by YWCA of Palestine, such as job training, keeping nursery schools, income generating, empowering youth under occupation and Olive Tree joint Campaign with YMCA of East Jerusalem.

5. Developing Young Women's Leadership

Building system to develop young women's leadership is highly prioritised. We support Youth to join various programmes like "Pilgrimage to Hiroshima" and "Korea-Japan Youth Conference" on the issue of migrant women so that they can raise awareness and exchange ideas about peace-making from young women's viewpoints. Positive involvement in the programmes facilitates their communication and problem-solving skills and eventually can develop their leaderships and willingness of commitment in the society.

In the 29th National Convention last November, young participants in these programmes said that they hoped to engage in planning and managing processes by themselves the next time. Local YWCAs also provided many different programmes to empower youth to grow into active peace-makers in their communities.

4. Community Service and Activities by Local Association

Local Associations in Japan provide various services to their communities to meet needs of women, children and youth according to the purposes of YWCA.

✦Child Care Support Programme by Hiratsuka YWCA

From May to November except August In 2006, Hiratsuka YWCA provided monthly programme to support young mothers. With babysitting service and welcoming atmosphere, mothers could enjoy workshops in a peer group on the theme of self-empowerment through reflection on themselves and their daily human relationships. One participant said, "It is possible to get convenient tools and lots of information about child care from the Internet and books, but through this community service I could meet people, talk and share living information. Mrs Imai, our trainer, made me aware of importance to be myself. Feeling warmly accepted made me accept myself and then my child and others. I could be refreshed and make a new step forward. The role of such service in the community is crucial for helpless young mothers, and I hope I'll be able to share my experience with the younger generation."

✦Peace Festival by Shizuoka YWCA

Shizuoka YWCA has continued an annual peace festival every August. Held In 2006 was the 21st exhibition of pictures by Hiroshima witnesses depicting the atomic-bombing. The diaries and the pictures of one young Israeli girl, who was killed while involved in a suicide bombing, were also exhibited. The lecturer, Ms. Norman Field (a professor of Chicago State University) introduced some inspiring messages by national and international peace activists and encouraged Japanese individuals to have pride and identity to speak out for keeping and activating Peace as stipulated in Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution. She stressed that Japan would be able to get more favourable attention in the international communities not simply as an economically successful country but as a country leading an alternative path to peace and prosperity in the present world.

✦World Peace Forum 2006 (Vancouver, Canada 23-28 June) Yokohama YWCA

The WPF was led by the "Peace and Justice Committee"'s call to world civil networks and NGOs. About 5000 people from around the world gathered. There were plenary sessions with key-note speeches by some world-famous peace activists as well as various kinds of workshops. Peace Education Group of Yokohama YWCA starting from the programme on "Disarmament and peace education " held in September,2005, also took part in this forum and provided a workshop on Japanese constitution Article 9 with a facilitator, Ms.Ayako Nishi. The participants discussed the recent critical situation around this "Peace Clause" and how to lead an efficient

anti-campaign against the clear intention of the leading political party to change the Constitution to allow Japanese military to be integrated into the US security strategy in the Asian region and in the world. One impressive opinion was to build skilful communication networks in English between Japanese and many American peace groups to share update information by training more people to be good communicators as soon as possible.

Peace parade in Vancouver's downtown was dynamic. There were also powerful workshops facilitated by such young people as a British musician, Costa-Rica Peace Army, and a Japanese woman (a grand-child of a Hibakusha* killed by A-bomb in Hiroshima) providing workshops on A-bomb to American elementary school pupils.

"Vancouver Appeal for Peace 2006" was adopted on the final day and sent to every government in the world. In the Appeal, is a call for "governments to constitutionally renounce war (as in Japan's Article 9)".

*Hibakusha(not only victims by the A-bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but also all those affected by radiation exposures.)

✦Division of International Affairs, Kumamoto YWCA

The international Student Support Group founded in 1989 provides both material and emotional support for international students in Kumamoto. Daily commodities (i.e. linens, furniture, electric appliances, bicycles, kitchen items, clothes) donated from the community are offered at low prices. In 2006, the sale was provided 13 times. An average 43 students and their families from all over the world visited each sale. In 2006, a scholarship was awarded to three female graduate students from China. Recently, an increasing number of international students, especially self-funded students, experiences financial difficulties due to restricted hours of part-time work and an economical gap between their native country and Japan.

International students and their families enjoyed a picnic in May, Japanese cultural events, the Doll's Festival in March, trying Kimono (traditional clothes), Japanese traditional dance, and tea ceremony. Through a Japanese family arrangement programme, 24 groups developed friendly family-like relationship. Japanese language lessons are offered by four skilled instructors filled with volunteering spirit. 32 students studied in four classes. One-year private tutoring programme (2 students), one intensive class (3 students), Summer session (ten times) were provided, too. Twenty Korean students from Tae-jong University participated in the 13th three-week Summer Japanese course last year. Kumamoto YWCA Japanese classes provide fun and low cost Japanese lessons for those in need.

"International Neighbours" provides opportunities for young spouses of international students to meet with Japanese mothers and to grow in friendship. They enjoyed monthly gatherings with a nursery service, including foreign language lessons, art projects, cooking, Japanese customs and so on.

5. Junior and senior high school YWCAs

There are 29 junior and senior high school YWCAs, with about 500 student-members among all the missionary schools in Japan. As some schools have been shifting to co-educational schools, boy members have been increasing in the school YWCAs. Advisory teachers say that they need to explore the path to walk together with boys keeping the part of “W” of YWCA.

School YWCAs have many different activities but the common main activity is volunteering to support children, the disabled and the aged in the community institutes. Students enjoy meeting these persons, becoming more aware of the significance of human-relations. They also foster a volunteer spirit through keeping daily worship at school and committing themselves to religious events.

In each of three divisions in Japan, regional conferences are held annually. In 2006, the programmes were planned and managed by students themselves on the themes of “peace,” “beam of life,” and “dignity as a human-being”. These events provide students a good opportunity for leadership training.

last August in the Kansai block, the conference on the theme of “dignity as a human-being” was held in Kamagasaki, the biggest town for day labourers in western Japan. Learning experience like assisting food delivery service, listening to supporters’ reports and observing job hunting at about 4 a.m., can be an eye-opener for most students. One student said, “I became aware of my ignorance about what was occurring around me. I found it essential to start from knowing the real scene and the background of homeless people. I have to change myself if I wish to help solve the social problems.”



Pilgrimage to Hiroshima: Participants from School YWCAs

6. The 29th National Convention Report

The 29th National Convention of YWCA of Japan was held from November 24th to 26th in Tokyo. During the event, new president and board members are elected. Dr. Mayako Ishii was elected as the National President after serving as a member of the Board of Trustees, and before that as its vice president.

Dr. Ishii has been involved in YWCA movement since her Christian junior high school days. Fortunately for her, she had a chance to attend General Council held in Ghana in 1971 as one of Youth delegates under 30 years old. Since then, she has held many posts in various committees mainly concerning Asian international cooperation and solidarity. Dr. Ishii has been teaching as a professor of International Relations at Keisen University, being its former President, and now an Emeritus Professor. The founder of constituent body of Keisen University, Keisen Jogakuen (Girls' School) was Michi Kawai who was the first Japanese General Secretary of YWCA of Japan. Dr. Ishii belongs to the Peace Studies Association of Japan, where she served as the Vice President and the General Secretary.

New vision and goals were set under the theme of "Making peace by non-violent, non-nuclear methods" and determined to focus on "peace making in Northeast Asia through civil network and cooperation," "To work to maintain the Peace Constitution of Japan, " "Support and work together with YWCA of Palestine for peace in the region," and protecting Women and children's rights." Also, it was affirmed to make systems to develop young women's leadership. Ms. Wei Jin, Acting General Secretary of YWCA of China delivered speech titled "The Call to YWCA for Action-Oriented Peace Building in Northeast Asia." She proposed positive actions and approaches to work together to make peace in the region.

Throughout the events, the participants experienced atmosphere of Africa, thinking of World Council in Kenya 2007. On the evening before the National Convention, the charity dinner event was held at the Kenyan Embassy in Tokyo with cooperation of the Embassy. After a speech by Mrs. Violet Awori, wife of Kenyan Ambassador to Japan about HIV/AIDS in Africa, the participants enjoyed real Kenyan cuisine and Kenyan tea. The event was organised not only to learn about Kenya, but also to raise funds to send young members to the World Council.

All the participants enjoyed the Cultural Night on the first evening of the Convention. The theme of the Cultural Night was "Africa." The delegates from each local association brought colourful African-style costumes. The contribution from the participants of the Convention will be donated to World Council Training Support Fund of World YWCA.

7. International Networking and Activities

Pilgrimage to Hiroshima

Nearly 80 participants gathered in boiling hot Hiroshima city from August 10th-12th. YWCA of Japan has organised this peace educational programme for over 30 years mainly for teenagers and students to have opportunities to learn what happened in Hiroshima and listen to survivors of atomic bombings. Participants visited the monuments and relics in the city of Hiroshima and learned the importance of peace. Destinations of field trips included Iwakuni and Ninoshima island. Commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the nuclear meltdown at Chernobyl, participants learned the reality of nuclear proliferation in the world through the keynote speech by Mr. Takashi Morizumi, photo journalist. Four young women and representatives from YWCA of China and YWCA of Korea, as well as international students in Japan, joined the programme and contributed further to its value.



Meeting on Peace Making in North-East Asia

Following "Pilgrimage to Hiroshima," the Meeting on Peace Making in North East Asia was held to discuss peace making in East Asia with guests from YWCA of China and YWCA of Korea. The meeting was planned according to the experience of "International Peace Programme" held in 2005 where young women from YWCA of China and YWCA of Korea opened discussion regarding peace in the region and importance of continuous dialogue among YWCAs in the region. After sharing their impressions of participating "Pilgrimage to Hiroshima," the participants exchange ideas to build effective and practical relationship between the associations.

Korea-Japan Youth Conference



Young members from YWCA of Korea and YWCA of Japan met in Seoul, Korea from September 28th to October 1st to learn about migrant women's issue under the theme "Migrant Women and Human Rights," following the last Conference held in Kyoto, Japan. The participants learned what is happening in Korea and Japan through the

keynote speech by Ms.Kuk-yeum Han from Migrant Women Human Rights Center, and also through presentations by the participants. After those inputs, the participants discussed what they can do to make a difference. They also enjoyed the cultural night and a tour in energetic Seoul city. Through the conference, they shared their vision for peace in the world.

Support to YWCA of Palestine/ Olive Tree Campaign

YWCA members have been involved in the Olive Tree Campaign to show solidarity with Palestinians living under the conflict. Donors and members participate in the campaign not only by fundraising for olive trees but also advocacy for peace in the region. There are many groups in local associations in Japan working to learn about and raise awareness about the situation in Palestine. Distributing leaflets which describes the situation in Palestine and promotes contribution to Olive Tree Campaign. Due to the deteriorated situation in the region in summer 2006, according to the calling from YWCA of Palestine and YWCA of Lebanon, local associations and their members further committed themselves to raise fund for YWCA of Palestine's activities to assist vulnerable people in Palestine as well as in Lebanon.

World YWCA Resource Sharing Programme

YWCA of Japan has been contributed to World YWCA Resource Sharing Programme. All the local associations in Japan raised fund for the contribution. In the year of 2006/07, YWCA of Japan donated 100,000JPY.



Kumamoto YWCA's Program for International Students



Pilgrimage to Hiroshima: Participants from Korea

8.Board Members and Staff Members



Board Members

President	ISHII, Mayako	
Vice-President	MATANO, Naoko	
Vice-President	MIBAE, Ritsuko	
Treasurer	TERASHIMA, Kimiko	
Secretary	ARAKI, Noriko	
Member	FUJIWARA, Reiko	MATSUURA, Hiroko
	FUKUSHIMA, Yuriko	NISHI, Ayako
	IKEGAMI, Mikiko	TAKEUCHI, Yuki
	KATSU, Mie	TAWARA, Kyoko
	MANNEN, Rei	YOKOYAMA, Yumiko
General Secretary	KAWABATA, Kuniyo	

Staff Members

AZUMA, Sayaka	International Affairs& Communication/ Peace Education Prorammes
HAGIO, Izuho	Communications& Networking / Advocacy
MIYAKI, Emiko	Finance & Accounting/ Fundraising
NISHIHARA, Mikako	Advocacy/ General Administration
NITTA, Hiroko	General Administration