

Women's Federation for World Peace, USA E-Newsletter

Becoming Women of Peace

July/August 2005

Dear WFWP,

This August, Women's Federation for World Peace, USA had the opportunity to participate in the Goodwill Exchange for Peace in Beijing China, the purpose of which was to build bonds of friendship and sisterhood with Chinese women through our trademark Sisterhood Ceremony, as well as learn about Chinese culture and history, and hear directly from Chinese women about their day-to-day experiences in that country.

For those of you who were unable to join us, we are highlighting this issue with an article including reflections by participants, as well as the deeply personal testimony of one of the participants.

Other articles include a report of a spring benefit concert in upstate New York, as well as the experience of one young woman who volunteers at one WFWP-supported school in Africa. Finally, we have included a new section, the 'Intern Corner', which introduces one intern from our national office in Bridgeport, CT. We hope this gives you a chance to get to know some of the young women who are being exposed to Women's Federation for World Peace through internships. I sincerely hope you enjoy this issue!

Jennifer Ang, Editor

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Creating a Legacy of Love and Peace through Beijing



by Betsy Jones

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A Peace Delegate to Beijing

by Nin Sharyn Bebeau, Ambassador for Peace

For me the trip to China was a sacred journey. It was a rare and wonderful opportunity to connect heart to heart with a large number of amazing women. They came in all sizes, shapes and colors; yet beneath the differences was the same desire to be part of creating a world where peace is blossoming.



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A Spring Benefit Concert in Upstate New York

Spring Benefit Concert



by Dorothy Hill, WFWP Regional
Chairwoman of Upstate New York

Last May the Upstate New York Region of WFWP- USA was pleased to sponsor a Spring Benefit Concert to help a school on the western tip of Africa. Recently built in 2002, the Sunac Primary School

is a humanitarian project of WFWP in Guinea Bissau, which is one of the ten poorest countries in the world. Since only 25% of the children there have the opportunity to receive an education, this project is fulfilling a critical need. The purpose of our concert was to raise funds to help this special school maintain itself and prosper.

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Through the Eyes of a Visitor: Reflection upon visiting the New Hope Technical Institute in Rwanda

by Miki Saito, WFWPI Volunteer

Two years have passed since I visited Rwanda, and this is the first time I have sat down to write a reflection on my experiences there. Honestly, I did not have much to write about at the time. Looking back, I suppose I should have written a "deep" or meaningful reflection. I wanted to, but I could not. I could not because I was not able to fully understand the situation while I was there. I was just a visitor.

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WFWP Office - Intern Corner

Esther Teo has been part of the Bridgeport community for 4 years. Before that, she lived in Singapore. What she loves most about the Bridgeport community is its vibrant spirit and the many opportunities for community service and involvement it offers.

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Creating a Legacy of Love and Peace in Beijing

August 17-22, 2005 * Beijing, China

By Betsy Jones

Introduction

From August 17th to the 22nd, 2005, 450 women from over 25 countries converged in Beijing, China for a Goodwill Exchange for World Peace, in support of the 2008 Olympics. This convocation was hosted by the Preparatory Committee for the Goodwill Exchange for Peace, with full support from the Women's Federation for World Peace, International. Many of the participants took a 14-hour flight on faith, not knowing what would happen. Many had never been to China, but came with open hearts and arms ready to embrace the experience and the people.

Judith Riggs, a participant, shared about her understanding of the event and her feelings: "The purpose of the convocation is to support ongoing cooperation between the U.S. and China, and to promote friendship between nations for the realization of peace." She said, "I'm excited to attend and I feel this exchange between sisters will help alleviate tensions and therefore, advance peace."

Several themes emerged throughout the stay: a sense of gratitude to God for opening the way to be there; gratitude for the stimulation and interaction with each other; and gratitude to Rev. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon for providing the vision for such an event. This report is an attempt to share, through the eyes and hearts of several participants, the opportunities to view historical landmarks, attend key events, and even to shop at a pearl store and a silk factory.

On our first evening, the host committee planned a dinner followed by the presentation of a very daring acrobatic performance. We felt warmly welcomed and awed by the skill and balance of the performers.



Summer Palace

On Thursday, August 18th, we went to the Summer Palace, where we saw a beautiful lake, exquisite nature, temples, and mountains. As we walked along, we saw a man brush-painting the pavement with Chinese characters that meant Peace, Joy, Gratitude, and other wishes to "ward off evil spirits." The following statements reflect the beauty and the distinctness of the landscape:

"What moved me most was the Summer Palace. I felt close to the Chinese people and Chinese spirit. I felt a universal sense of harmony through the nature there." *Monique Simon*

"The Summer Palace was one of the most beautiful sites we have ever seen. It was designed and built by the Dragon Empress, one of only two female rulers in 2000 years. It really opened my heart to the way the people of China have worked to create beauty in their land. The lake with water lilies and the bridge were so distinct. The corridor to walk to avoid the rain was so special. Being at these sites with all the Chinese people and seeing them enjoy the same sites was also a heart-opening experience."

Arlene Candelaresi



On the evening of August 18th, we attended a spectacular performance by a dance troupe. Their colorful costumes and dynamic routines were very unique. Each dance was introduced by a theme in poetic Chinese, related to home, mother, family, harmony, the idea of an open society, and the world coming to China for the 2008 Olympics. This was an innovation, as similar performances in China usually include political themes.

This event succeeded in shifting the focus from politics to family and ethics. These themes were introduced by Dr. Lan Young Moon, President of WFWP, International, in a speech that was described by several Chinese listeners as "very beautiful." She explained the work of WFWP to the audience of 3,000 people. She said that the mission of women is to bring peace in a world where people from different nations often have a history of conflict. Our coming represented an acceptance of China's role in the world and support for the 2008 Olympics and for international harmony.



Great Wall

On Friday, August 19th, we traveled to the northern part of China where the Great Wall stretches from east to west, winding over mountains and across grasslands. It spans a total of 5,660 kilometers and has been named by the United Nations as one of the world's cultural heritages. Many of our sisters climbed and walked along this Great Wall and felt somehow that they experienced part of the soul of China. Some felt the history, and some felt the investment and sacrifice of so many who died making the wall. Grace Lee said,

"It was a challenge to climb to the top but the feeling of making it was so rewarding. I also felt such a sense of history as I walked up the steps and touched the rocks which were built hundreds of years ago."

Other quotes about the Great Wall:

"To see the Great Wall in Beijing was my dream for the last 40 years. It came so suddenly and I enjoyed every bit of it."

Emi Watts

"What an amazing experience. We got to climb and enjoy the awesome surroundings. At the same time, one could reflect of the suffering of those forced to build it." *Anonymous*

"Always the creation of the Great Wall had astounded me. For in making such a landmark, I realized how much toil the Chinese workers must have gone through. Not only their toil, but their cooperation, unity, and strong sense of purpose and determination to finish what was begun gave me a general sense of the Chinese people." *Somiya Chapman*



Sisterhood Ceremony

On the evening of August 19th, we participated in an International Sisterhood Ceremony with the Chinese women. It was very moving to meet each other and as Professor Daphne Benyard said, "These relationships will be like a royal carpet to pave the way to world peace." Remarks were made by Dr. Lan Young Moon and Mrs. Alexa Ward, President of WFWP, USA and Vice President of WFWP, International, Mrs. Tetsuko Kuboki, Chairwoman of WFWP Japan, and Mrs. Gum Sook Pak, President of the Oriental Peaceful Ideal Family League, representing Korea, America, Japan and China.

"WFWP had a Sisterhood Ceremony, with one Chinese sister and three other countries' sisters together. We shared a lot. I discussed how to be a good wife, mother and serve for the society. For a short time, we cried together and hugged each other. We practiced the title of the Olympic game -- "One World, One Heart." *Yasuko Yoshida*

"This experience in China has been wonderful! My new Japanese, Chinese and Korean sisters will always be a part of my life. As this continues, more and more women will participate in promoting less division among us." *Fannie Smith*

Sister-to-Sister Interaction

It is hard to describe the sister-to-sister interaction that took place in our group, but the ceremony itself does just this. A type of bonding took place in our group. Vertell Allison described it as:

"What women do best is what occurred. They made a heart connection."

Other quotes include,

"I have never had an experience even similar to this. Every time I stepped outside myself, I realized I was laughing with a group of women from different countries, races and nationalities. Most of the time I was just aware of having fun with my friends." *Nin Sharyn Bebeau*

"Getting to know one another on a first name basis has been truly interesting. Too many times our titles, etc., do not reveal the real person. When that is removed, one can see what is truly underneath. The sisterhood ceremony produced a brother for me. This really proves that there must be balance."

Rev. Emma Jean Loftin-Woods

"The most precious thing was to meet so many kinds of ladies from everywhere and how we got along so well with each other. This was such a beautiful experience to meet such bright and kind ladies." *Monique Simon*

"We acted as sisters, but I also realized that actually many women had high positions and achievements in their countries. Everyone really enjoyed putting it aside to be just sisters here. I thank God and Rev. and Mrs. Moon for this experience." *Galine Chermomogets*

"Kathy Hwang's sacrifice and sharing, Daphne Benyard's inspirational message "Look at me," Evangelist Gladys Dancy's survival kit, and Carrie Tonkumoh's moving testimony of her Chinese ancestors were high points for me."

Roshan D'Souza



Visit to IEF/Peace Embassy

On Saturday, August 20th, part of our group continued to tour the Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square, while a small delegation of WFP had the opportunity to visit the new Peace Embassy in Beijing. We were

warmly greeted by Dr. Joon Ho Seuk, Rev. Thomas Hwang and Mr. Jacques Marion and their staff. The delegation watched a video of International Educational Foundation activities in China and toured the facilities. The facility was truly impressive. The WFWP delegation then traveled several blocks to the site of an IEF seminar on character education. President Lan Young Moon, Minister Yoon Duk Kim, and WFWP International Vice Presidents Alexa Ward and Tina Coombs greeted the participants. President Moon shared a beautiful Chinese saying, "Once a friend, a friend forever!"

Experiences Relating to Participants' Chinese Ancestry

Carrie Tonkumoh stated:

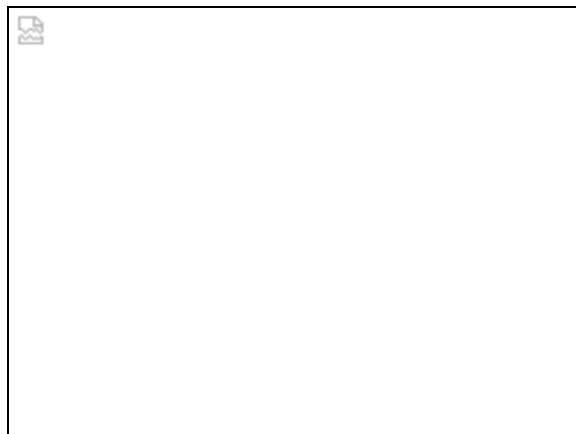
"Beijing is a gift that I will carry for the rest of my life. Most people understand their eternal line of family in the afterlife."

She spoke about going in a teepee at the folk village and how she experienced her ancestors from Mongolia and felt so connected to them.

"A feeling of never belonging left me. I felt my roots are here. And my heart sings for my ancestors' joy to be reunited."

Another sister wrote about the fact that she is 2.5 percent Chinese.

"China, Who are you? What are you? To me you are the magnificent land of my paternal ancestry. I am told that I am 2.5 percent Chinese. To me you are 2.5 times a thousand times percent more precious to me and now I have walked on your magnificent land, breathed your air, and ate your food. For this, I am eternally grateful." *Professor Win Win Kyi*



Final Evening

On the final evening, we had the chance to interact with women of China, arranged by Kathy Hwang, the Director of UPI Press Service for Asia, who has lived with her husband and children in China for 20 years. Her

insights, sacrifice and love for China really touched all of us. We also heard from Alice Huang, who told of her work with IEF in Beijing for seven years, from Mei Zi Jin, who explained why she was inspired to focus on marriage and family issues for the Heilongjiang provincial government, and from Professor W. Yang of Beijing Union University, who shared her long experience and insights about Chinese society and education.

"The panel of the final evening was fantastic -- to understand what is going on in this country as it emerges as a strong economic engine and the need for it to find its soul." *Jane Berg*

"When Kathy Hwang spoke that there are still so many people suffering and she cried, it was really moving. I really want to pray for China that it can move in God's direction and the suffering can end." *Hilke Gany*

"On the last dinner, we heard some speeches by Chinese women. They spoke of the moral collapse of youth, increasing divorce rate, and other challenges. I could feel how this country is crying for help from WFWP." *Yasuko Yoshida*

Plan of Action

Much resolve and plans for new thoughts and actions were formulated by many.

"I learned a lot about your organization for world peace. What a concept! We all need to think about the world now. I realize that I should not think about my own wealth only. I will seek to find what I can do to help others from now on." *Emi Watts*

"I love China. I feel for the hard workers, the street people, and the innocent children. I will pray for China." *Maiker Vang-Vue*

"Their history and obvious hardships touched my heart. I hope and pray for a future of peace and prosperity for all people there. I noticed the poor and felt deeply disturbed for them." *Clarice McMillan*

"This has been an awesome experience. I am so happy that I was blessed with this opportunity. God wanted to be here and I believe God wants me to be a part of this organization. Such a simple and modest concept to spread seeds of peace one by one through a mother's heart, one person at a time. I believe peace can be accomplished in this manner. It's hard to hate in the face of love and friendship. Thank you again for this opportunity." *LaVerne Thorpe*

"Coming to China has been a dream come true! I believe that through our sisterhood much work can be accomplished. Even though there is much work to be done by working in unity, it can be accomplished. We should continue to forget about ourselves and think of others and their needs. This is the only way the WFWP mission and objective can be accomplished." *Bishop Shirley Cotton*

"From this experience, my life will never be the same. I shall view the world with new eyes -- the eyes of love, in tune with peace. May I be able in as many ways as possible to plant these seeds through example, tempered action, tolerance and non-judgment." *Catherine Youngquist*

Conclusion

In conclusion, we all felt so blessed to have come. Mary Tessler said, "Being asked to come was such a blessing. I will remember it always."

In her closing remarks, Alexa Ward, President of WFWP, USA, shared how this time together gave us a taste of the world family in reality. She outlined the main tenets of WFWP and talked about our status as a non-governmental organization (NGO) at the United Nations. She described WFWP, USA's work of supporting nine schools in Africa, and she shared about a new website where the second line reads "WFWP, where American women meet the world." She shared her enthusiasm and perspective that God is introducing us to the world, and the world to us. We felt gratitude for her leadership and the efforts of the national staff in Bridgeport, Connecticut, which included Jennifer Ang, WFWP, USA Administrative Director, and Esther Teo, WFWP, USA Summer Intern, who spent two months organizing this trip, as well as Grace Lee, a WFWP, USA Volunteer who joined the trip to assist as a staff member. Many thanks to those women who assisted during the trip, including Sheri Reuter, Caroline Betancourt, Tomiko Nojima, Kathy Hwang, Grace Lee, Beth Deshotel, and WFWP, USA's special advisor, Norma Foster. We all parted feeling so enriched and so joined and knowing that together we will continue our work to create a legacy of God's love and peace for the world.





A Peace Delegate to Beijing

By Nin Sharyn Bebeau, Ambassador for Peace

For me the trip to China was a sacred journey. It was a rare and wonderful opportunity to connect heart to heart with a large number of amazing women. They came in all sizes, shapes and colors; yet beneath the differences was the same desire to be part of creating a world where peace is blossoming.

My son came to China three years ago to study healing with two Chinese masters. He returned home transcendent with tales of a magical, spiritual people. It had long been his habit to meditate at dawn on a mountaintop near our home. In China, he found gardens, parks and ponds in which to greet the dawn. He always said that meditating at that magical time between dark and light made the day sacred. It delighted him that the Chinese gathered in the parks at the break of day to celebrate their lives with Qigong, Tai Chi and dance. Bodhi was ecstatic in Beijing.

Six months later, he died. He swerved to miss a deer and drove off his beloved mountain. I went to Beijing to find Bodhi. Surely our spirits linger in those places where we were once very happy. The first morning of the first day in China, I found him.

We were taken to the Summer Palace. Exquisite gardens, huge fuchsia lotuses lining the shore, graceful bridges and fanciful temples filled our eyes with wonder. This magical place certainly reflected the beauty and grace that marked Bodhi's life. It was built by an Empress, a woman who rose from her position as a lowly concubine to become the beloved of her people. She attracted the Emperor's attention by singing sweet tunes each time he passed. Bodhi was so charmed by the palace, that he gave me a picture someone had taken of him standing in the courtyard contemplating a leaf or a butterfly. I immediately recognized the building where the photo was taken. A magnetic force drew me to stand on the exact spot where he had once stood looking so at peace. Instantly a rush of energy surged up from the stone below and a blast of energy poured down upon me, raking my heart to the core. My whole body was enveloped in a vortex of ecstasy and despair.

A magnetic thread of compassion drew a group my sisters (though we had not yet been introduced) to gather around me. In the circle of their loving hearts, I felt supported and safe.

In the weeks after his death, Bodhi visited me several times. The last time I saw him was in the window between sleep and waking. He put his arms around me and kissed me, saying, "See ma, you can still feel me." I never saw him again, but a short time later, his voice came to me and said, "You will not see and hear me again, for we are going to merge. I will live within you as I did before I was born. Now you must complete the mission we both share. Now you have to be a Bodhi Sattwa."

In those tender days, the only way I could hold my center in the midst of anguishing loss, was to cling to the Hebrew word, “di-ain-nu” as a mantra. Diainnu translates as, “It is enough for us.” To me it means that having had the honor of loving Bodhi is enough for me. Having known love so deep and pure, that neither the challenges of life nor the parting in death could separate us, is enough for me. Diainnu. All my past joys and sorrows are enough for my soul. I now ask nothing more of the Divine, than to be able to serve in improving the quality of life in our world.

And so I went to China to be a peacemaker and to fulfill the mission Bodhi bequeathed me. Before this trip, I understood what I needed to do. In China, I found the passion to do it. In that vortex of energy that was once my beloved child, I awakened to the Bodhi Sattwa in my soul.

Spring Benefit Concert



A Spring Benefit Concert in Upstate New York

A fundraiser for the Sunac Primary School in Guinea Bissau, Africa

By Dorothy P. Hill, WFWP Regional Chairwomen for Upstate New York

Last May the Upstate New York Region of WFWP-USA was pleased to sponsor a Spring Benefit Concert to help a school on the western tip of Africa. Recently built in 2002, the Sunac Primary School is a humanitarian project of WFWP in Guinea Bisseau, which is one of the ten poorest countries in the world. Since only 25% of the children there have the opportunity to receive an education, this project is fulfilling a critical need. The purpose of our concert was to raise funds to help this special school maintain itself and prosper.

Our WFWP region is fortunate to have as a member Seiko Lee, a professional soprano with an extensive resume in recording and performing internationally. When we heard that she had already performed for WFWP in solo benefit concerts in other parts of the world, we knew that she would happily do one for Upstate New York as well. Seiko's vast experience and networking ability allowed her to quickly develop an impressive program and gather other great musicians to perform with her.

To attract a broader audience, we selected as our concert venue a local Episcopal Church in the historic town of Rhinebeck. The church is noted as the home parish of the famed millionaire philanthropist, John Jacob Astor, who died on the Titanic. The English Gothic architecture and stained glass throughout the church created a reverent and peaceful ambiance for the concert.

Although putting on a professional-level concert such as this was, quite frankly, a lot of work, we gained a great deal in the process. One hopeful tip we learned while seeking donations for this concert was that many local banks, large corporations, and "big box stores" like Staples and Home Depot are quite willing to donate to worthy causes if only we ask them. When we approached them with our flyer, program and video, they were inspired by our efforts and were willing to donate. Unfortunately, we did not realize this technique until only a few days before the concert. This has opened a new door for us, though, so the next time we sponsor such an event, we will definitely expand our efforts in corporate fundraising.

The musical program offered a great variety for the audience, a mixture of classical, folk, and popular pieces. Chris Alan Deurflinger and Cindy Yokpore, though just college age, both displayed great

depth of talent and experience. Having distinguished himself with a recently recorded CD and a role in the Broadway production of “Les Miserables”, Chris Alan sang and accompanied many of his own original songs such as “Giving Tree” and “Missing You”. Lead singer in the vocal group, “Colors of Love”, Cindy offered soulful renditions of old spirituals and popular favorites such as “Bridge over Troubled Water”. When Chris Alan and Cindy sang together, they were accompanied by yet another talented singer/songwriter, Joshua Cotter, creating a full musical sound.

Before the second half of the program began, WFWP member Clare Yasutake and her husband Cliff showed the audience an informative video about the school in Guinea Bisseau and spoke about their experience there as missionaries. This opened many eyes and hearts to the great suffering in Africa.

After intermission, Seiko, together with her accompanist Rikako Asanuma of the New York Harlem Boys Choir, tenderly sang several classical pieces by Verdi, Puccini, Caccini and Lloyd-Webber. Later, supported by classical guitarist Roy Morgan, she went on to sing some colorfully arranged folk songs in three different languages: Japanese, Russian, and Portuguese. Julie Berman, a violinist from the Woodstock Chamber Orchestra, also accompanied Seiko before offering as a solo Vivaldi’s “Spring” from “The Four Seasons”. When all seven performers joined forces in the finale, “My Tribute: To God Be the Glory” by Andre Crouch, all 200 guests rose to their feet with an inspired applause. Some guests said it was a sublime experience. Others expressed interest in joining the activities of WFWP.

In addition to the uplifting music, the women of the Japanese Kodan organization made delicate gifts of origami for each guest to take home, in appreciation of their support. The cooperation between the Kodan and WFWP members also greatly contributed to the success of the event.

The Benefit Concert Organizing Committee would like to especially thank Mrs. Seiko Lee for her unwavering dedication to this project. Her experience and loving patience were all essential elements of the concert’s success. Many thanks also are offered to our other talented performers who traveled so far and offered so much. Special mention should be made for all the hard work of our local WFWP members who tirelessly passed out flyers, prepared the hall for the concert, and ushered during the concert. Our appreciation also goes to the crew that edited the concert video, which is now available through WFWP-USA Headquarters.

The audience left the concert with hearts full of love, inspiration, and vision of living for the sake of others. Having raised \$1,500 for Sunac School, our WFWP members were humbled by the opportunity to help substantially, and yet, are encouraged to do more. We are committed to expanding this foundation on an annual basis. Let’s not forget Africa!

WFWP Office Intern Corner

Editor's Note:

WFWP, USA initiated the creation of internships in for college students in the Fall 2004 semester, beginning with Gabriella Kirkley and Momoko Yokohata, who supported preparations for the WFWP forum held at the United Nations in March 2005.

This past summer, we also had several interns and volunteers – Esther Teo, Grace Lee and Tamami Kawamura – working on developing promotional materials, helping with the administration of the recent trip to Beijing, China, and assisting during the women's program in China to make sure everything went smoothly.

We look forward to expanding this in the next academic year and beyond. We see this as a special opportunity to bring the next generation into WFWP.

This month's close-up: Jia Wen (Esther) Teo

Esther Teo has been part of the Bridgeport community for 4 years. Before that, she lived in Singapore. What she loves most about the Bridgeport community is its vibrant spirit and the many opportunities for community service and involvement it offers.

When Esther found out about the summer internship at the Bridgeport WFWP office, she jumped at the opportunity. She has gained many insights to this organization that accomplishes so much on the national level and the world level. Esther started her internship in mid-June, and was immediately involved in preparations for the Sixth Annual WFWPI Leaders Workshop in Moscow. She got her first taste of how hectic it is at the office. However, no matter how much work there was to do in the office, she always felt welcomed as a sister by Jennifer Ang and cared for as a daughter by Mrs. Alexa Ward. Esther ended up playing a very active role as an intern, as she helped prepare for the Goodwill Exchange for Peace in China, with an impressive amount of both diligence and cheerfulness.

For the Fall, Esther will be attending the University of Bridgeport. She will major in Biology and minor in Music. Clubs that she plans to participate in are Service for Peace, CARP and the Scribe. Esther is looking forward to the Fall, and she hopes to continue her involvement with WFWP throughout her college career.

Fun Facts about Esther

She is Chinese

She has been playing the piano for 10 years

She has 2 brothers and 1 sister

She favorite painters are impressionist masters Van Gogh and Claude Monet

She loves to listen to Big Band Jazz and Jazz piano.

Through the Eyes of a Visitor: Reflection upon visiting the New Hope Technical Institute in Rwanda

By Miki Saito, a volunteer in Rwanda

Two years have passed since I visited Rwanda, and this is the first time I have sat down to write a reflection on my experiences there. Honestly, I did not have much to write about at the time. Looking back, I suppose I should have written a “deep” or meaningful reflection. I wanted to, but I could not. I could not because I was not able to fully understand the situation while I was there. I was just a visitor. Later on, reflecting on my past experiences in Rwanda and through doing research about the situation in that country, I was able to more deeply appreciate those experiences and to begin to understand the reality of Rwanda’s circumstances.

My decision to go to Rwanda was initially a purely impulsive one. Although I was determined to go, I did not have a clear sense of purpose in going. I felt strongly urged, perhaps by God. At the time, I was in a bored and restless state of mind. I was unsatisfied with certain aspects of my life at that point. Despite my short visitation there, Rwanda has stayed with me until this day. As silly as it may sound, my visit to Africa saved me. During the time I spent in Rwanda, I was challenged to think beyond myself, and my view on life expanded beyond my previous state of self-absorption, superficiality and materialism.

I stayed at the Women’s Federation for World Peace center, teaching at The New Hope Technical Institute, a vocational school built by WFWP volunteers, and the WFWP-sponsored orphanage. I gave lessons to the students in basic conversational English for about 40 days.

Sometimes I question whether I really went to make a difference, and if so, how much of a difference I could make. Perhaps at first, my reasons for going there were a little more selfish, considering my state of mind. Still, knowing what I know now, I feel responsible or accountable to act to help others in a worse situation than myself in whatever way possible. I will be leaving for Rwanda in two weeks, and I expect that this visit will be yet another learning experience for me. I feel that the history of genocide that claimed the lives of over 800 million Rwandans, within three to four months, was partly due to the indifference of the international community, and, in some part, each one of us as individuals, as members of that community. In my own life, I believe that for now the only difference I can make is to continue to develop my understanding of the situation in Rwanda and do my best to increase awareness in others around me. I believe that, for now, I am laying the foundation for better things to happen in that part of the world in the future. This time, it is a relief to go to Rwanda not as a first-time visitor, but as a returnee, for I will be welcomed.