

Marking 50,000 Visitors

Makoto Otsuka

Director of the Holocaust Education Center

As of November 2001, the number of visitors to the Holocaust Education Center marked 50,000. The commemorative visitor was a senior high school student who visited HEC with her class to study the Holocaust.



Kumi Yokoyama, the 50,000th visitor to HEC, being presented a flower.

Since the opening of the Center in June 1995, a great number of people have supported its activities and helped us make strides in the passing of the facts about the Holocaust caused by the Nazis Germany to the children of Japan particularly, the loss of 1.5 million children who happened to be born as Jews.

However, it is not just the number of visitors that strikes us but also the great number of reactions from people in Japan to the Center's activities. Many people expressed their interests in the integration of the Holocaust education into their own teaching; others discovered a need for the knowledge of world history in addition to that of their own country, Japan; still others recognized the meaning of the Holocaust as not only a historical incident which occurred 60 years ago, but also something that carries lasting implications to our own lives. All these comments were genuinely beyond our expectations, and it is certainly our great pleasure to find a deeper understanding of and a greater interest among Japanese people in the Center's mission and activities.

Another source of joy comes from the fact that about half of the 50,000 visitors were children. While celebrating on this unexpected record, I am even more eager to make a renewed start on our future endeavors. The following are three practical goals, which, I believe, should help the Center better equipped with enriched materials and improved educational activities for children.

Goal 1: To make model textbooks or manuals for "how to teach the Holocaust." These materials will be so designed that school teachers can use them in their regular classes. They will include Q&A sections, where sample answers to typical questions on the Holocaust, which children constantly ask, will be provided.

Goal 2: To make videotapes for children by recording the collection of testimonies from Holocaust survivors as well as righteous people around the world. These tapes will come with worksheets designed to help children's understanding of the Holocaust.

Goal 3: To nurture the children's volunteer group, Small Hands, and enrich their activities. More assistance will be provided to help the volunteers learn how to take initiatives in the Center's activities.

Once again, all these goals are set to fulfill the mission of the Center as an educational center for children. I sincerely hope that you, the readers of this newsletter, will share with us these goals and continue to support our endeavors to fulfill the Center's mission and future plans.

Small Hands Sends the Rose of Anne Frank back to Basel

The rose commemorating Anne Frank which is named as "The Souvenir of Anne Frank" was sent from Otto Frank, Anne's father in December 1972. Since then it was grafted and has spread all over Japan to schools, churches and so on.

It has been four years since the children of Small Hands started raising the roses, and for these three years, they graft them by themselves. Small Hands had presented the roses to over 80 organizations such as schools and libraries, which have the desire to learn about Anne Frank, the Holocaust, and peace.



Children washing the roots.

Last Summer, a request reached HEC from Mr. Buddy Elias, the President of the Anne Frank Funds in Basel, Switzerland. Mr. Elias asked HEC to send bulbs of the rose because the original rose in Basel had accidentally died out. HEC happily answered the request to send seven bulbs back to Basel.

January 26, 2002, the children of Small Hands gathered and prepared for transportation. They washed the roots, and put them into a box, hoping that it will bloom again in the yard where Otto Frank used to raise the roses. It was sent safely by air this February.

A New Photo Exhibition of "Chiune Sugihara"

The new photo exhibition "Chiune Sugihara - A Man of Courage - Through the voices of the survivors" started traveling in September 2001. In two months it has so far traveled to 10 places such as schools, libraries, and museums, seen by a number of children all over the country.



The new exhibition in HERC, Tokyo.

As it is the first exhibition on Sugihara designed especially for children, school teachers were most interested in bringing this exhibition to their schools. The following are the comments from the teachers:

"The story is simple and well organized for younger students to understand. It is very interesting to see the photographs with the actual words of those people who received visas from Sugihara", "All the photographs of the survivors' children and grandchildren from various countries helped our students understand what Sugihara did."

Two sets of Sugihara exhibitions are fully booked until March 2002, and now a few smaller sets are available so that teachers could easily use in their classrooms.

Visitors to HEC

HEC had welcomed many visitors from both inside and outside Japan. The followings are some impressions of our special guests.

Sept.21,2001— Mr. Gil Haskel

Mr. Gil Haskel was assigned to Tokyo half an year ago as the First Secretary, Head of Press & Information, for Embassy of Israel in Tokyo. He received influence from his father who survived the Holocaust by the Kinder Transport and has strong interest on the Holocaust. He chose our center as the first visiting place in Japan.



Mr. Haskel

The word he mentioned after planting a tree remains strongly in our hearts. "I feel that 6 million victims of the Holocaust, especially the 1.5 million children are sending you appreciation and encouragement."

Oct. 26, 2001 — Prof. Dalia and Prof. Gur Ofer

It was a meaningful event for our center to have welcomed Prof. Dalia and Prof. Gur Ofer from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

She described our center as ; "You would think that you need a large space for a Holocaust museum. Your museum, however, shows us a good example of exhibiting the history of the Holocaust by focusing on the experience of children." Members of the Small Hands explained their activities with photos and materials to the professor. The children sang the song "A Lonely Child"

which was sang during the Holocaust, in Japanese and Yiddish, and also sang a song in Hebrew together.

Nov. 8, 2001 — Dr. John Stoessinger

Dr. Stoessinger is a well known scholar of international politics and now a Professor Emeritus of the University of San Diego. He received a transit visa from Chiune Sugihara at Prague Japanese Consulate and arrived at Shanghai via Japan. When his family was about to be put into a ghetto in Shanghai, his family was saved by a Japanese diplomat, Dr. Ryoichi Manabe. Dr. Manabe also saved Shanghai Symphony Orchestra which was organized by Jewish members.



Dr. Stoessinger

Dr. Stoessinger gave an impressive lecture at our center. He went through our center with deep emotion and answered to the TV interview as, "In my entire life, I have never had a greater experience than this. I didn't expect to see such wonderful children taught about the Holocaust so eloquently and such an extraordinary Holocaust museum, here in Fukuyama"

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Dec. 2, 2001 — Prof. Shmaryahu Hoz, Bar Ilan University

Prof. Hoz is a Professor of Chemistry and is the Advisor to the President of Bar-Ilan University. After offering a prayer at the remembrance room, Prof. Hoz thought highly of our center by mentioning as "I admire that there is such a center in Japan which is a country far away from the site of the Holocaust. This activity here is lighting the world."

Students of Hiroshima holding a Photo Exhibition

A group of six university students of Hiroshima area called "Merkaz (Hebrew word for "Center")" held a photo exhibition about the children of the Holocaust in Hiroshima University school festival last November. They have done an exhibition last year, and it was their second time they took the chance to introduce the fact of the Holocaust to young Japanese people.

This time, they named the exhibition "The Holocaust seen through children's eyes". The main exhibition was a series of photos about the children of the Holocaust which was produced by Tokyo Holocaust Resource Center and HEC. As the two



Members of Merkaz

members of Merkaz attended the "March of Remembrance and Hope" which took place in Poland last May, they inserted photo panels of the camps and ghetto ruins, etc, which they saw with their own eyes. Also displays about Dr. Korzcak and the children's drawings from Terezin Camp was originally made by the students.

During the period of three days, 427 people visited their exhibition, and received deep impressions. Members said that "We felt that the distance between the visitors and us were very

close as we put our original displays. We hope that visitors will share and spread the thoughts of peace by going through the exhibition"

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