

Visit to Europe

Makoto Otsuka (Director General) and Akio Yoshida (Deputy Director General) visited The Netherlands, France, and Switzerland, from August 28 to September 8, 2006. Our purpose for the visit was to meet people in each place to prepare for the new exhibition of our new center.

Our first destination was Amsterdam, visiting the Anne Frank House, the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD), and other places to look for artifacts related to the days of the Holocaust.

At the Anne Frank House, we had the privilege to meet Mr. Hans Westra, Director, and discuss our future cooperation plans. Thanks to Mr. Francois Uzan from Paris, we were



Mr. Westra and Ms. da Silva of AFH

welcomed us warmly in the office in the impressive historical building. Explaining about our plan of building the new center for the Japanese children, they kindly offered us the use of photo materials in our new exhibition.

In Paris, we visited the Shoah Memorial. Mr. Jacques Fredj, head of the Shoah Memorial, kindly guided us around the museum. The substantial exhibition with many artifacts impressed us very much. The room with many photos of children victim's faces really touched our hearts.



With Mr. Fredj at Shoah Memorial

In Paris, we also had the

privilege to attend the Shabbat Service at Victoire Synagogue and meet Rabbi Gilles Bernheim and his congregation.

After heading back to Amsterdam, we visited Camp Westerbork Museum. There we met Mr. Guido Abuys, Conservator, and discussed how we could



With Mr. Abuys at Westerbork

Visit to Basel

On September 3rd, we visited Basel, to meet Mr. Buddy and Mrs. Gerti Elias, the only cousin of Anne Frank alive, and also president of the Anne Frank Fonds. They welcomed us warmly, and we enjoyed the reunion since their visit to Japan in June 2005.



Mr. Buddy Elias and his family

Mr. and Mrs. Elias kindly prepared many artifacts related to the Frank family and the Elias family for our new exhibition, knowing that we are

planning to make a special exhibition on Anne and her family. The artifacts which they presented us were boots, a suitcase, stationeries of Otto Frank, and toys, books, sideboards, etc., from their family.



Rose of Anne at the Botanical Garden, Basel

Mr. Elias kindly took us around the city of Basel. We visited the synagogue, Jewish museum, and the Botanical Garden where the Rose of Anne Frank is newly planted.



Otto Frank's grave

We also had the privilege to visit the house where Otto used to live, and to his grave. We were happy that we were able to express our gratitude to him.



Otsuka at Mr. Otto Frank's office

kindly guided around the whole museum, especially the attic where Anne's family hid, by Mr. Barry van Driel of the International Department and Ms. Annemarie Bekker of Communications Department. Entering each room in the attic, especially Anne's room, strongly impressed us, letting us feel how it was like to live in hiding in such a limited space.

We were allowed to enter the room where Otto Frank worked and wrote letters in the Anne Frank House. Being interviewed by Mr. Uzan in this room, enabled Makoto Otsuka to feel close to Mr. Frank, recalling the warm humanity he showed to everyone. We had a meeting with Ms. Terezien da Silva of the Exhibition Department, discussing how we can cooperate with each other to tell the story of Anne Frank to young people.

At NIOD, Mr. Erik Somers and Mr. Peter van der Maas of the Information and Documentation Department



With Mr. Somers and Mr. Maas at NIOD

we felt the sorrow and agony of those people through each of our steps. The railroad track left from those days seemed to cut off their happiness and dreams.

In Amsterdam, we also visited Anne Frank Motessoris School. Mr. Bas Moll, Director, kindly took us around the school, including the room where Anne used to study.

During our stay in Europe, we were able to gather some items of the days of 30's and 40's at antique shops and markets, such as a lamp, a skateboard, children's books, etc. We will use them as a part of the new exhibition, hoping that the Japanese children could feel how the life of the children of those days were like.