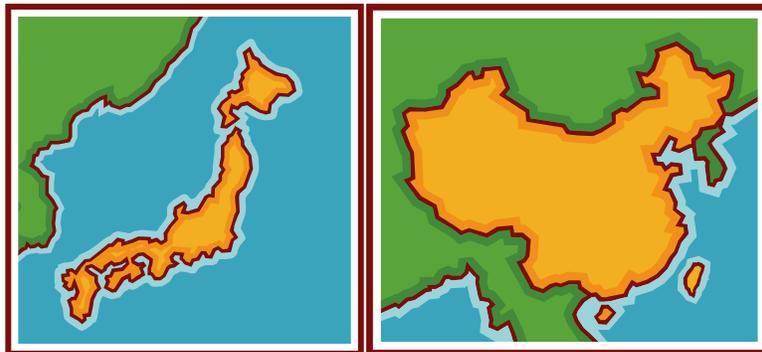
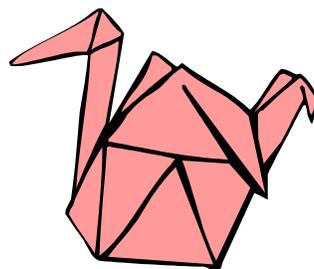


A peace education sabbatical

Letters from Japan and China



April 2, 2006-
June 7, 2006



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www.teachforpeace.org

A Peace Education Sabbatical:

Introduction: From April 1, 2006 through August, 2006, my husband (an artist) and I (an educator) traveled, taught, created peace projects, and gave peace presentations in Japan, China, Canada, and Denmark during my sabbatical from Episcopal Academy. The following blogs are letters from Japan (April), China (May), Canada (July), and Denmark/Norway (August). In addition to accounts of the projects, I include our delight with Japanese Noh theatre and Chinese Bunraku and traditional opera. Our plight as vegetarians in a meat-eating world is detailed as well. Forgive our misperceptions, and enjoy our immersion in these wonderful experiences. I returned to the classroom for the 2006-07 school year, and the last entry is my address to the faculty and staff as the new school year began. -- SGC

#1 *Konichiwa from Kyoto*--April 3, 2006

Summary: Arrival

We made it to the airport in time for a diligent screening job. We think we would all be safer if we were asked to wash our hands carefully instead of going through all the security. Uneventful flights, arrived safely, about 27 hours after departing Philadelphia. Here we are in Kyoto after a wonderful van/taxi ride for two hours with a professor of Japanese/Chinese relations who was just returning to Japan from a year sabbatical at Princeton. He kept asking us how we Americans could elect Bush twice... and gave his perspectives on how Asians see Americans. We were happy that he sees hope in the relationship between China and Japan. We are off to find a vegetarian restaurant called Peace Cafe, so must hurry before it closes.

#2 *Kyoto: Peace Takes a Holiday*—April 7, 2006

Summary: Finding vegetarian food, Chinese and Japanese relations and politics, American politics, automated noodles, Cherry Blossoms, Peace Café on Holiday...

Ohaiyo Gozaimus: Good morning, all,

Food: We are getting over jet lag slowly, and hope this will be a more awake day than yesterday. As vegetarians, much of the first day in travel is spent finding suitable food. Yesterday morning, our first full day in Japan, we wandered around the neighborhood of our very friendly hotel, looking for a coffee shop with a breakfast special. By the time we found one, it was past the time for the special, but we still enjoyed the homey neighborhood coffee shop with two women glad to be our hosts and help us with our five words of Japanese and our sign language ordering. As we settled in to eat scramburu eggo, tosta, and cohee, we had hysterics listening to a parade of the best of the American music scene from the fifties: How incongruous to dine on *Hit the Road, Jack*, *The Little old Lady from Pasadena*, and *Hang Down your Head Tom Dooley* in Kyoto. Interestingly, we returned this morning at an earlier time and found the place packed with Westerners, so maybe that explains the musical selections.

China and Japan: More about the conversation with the professor at a local women's college, just returning from a year's sabbatical in Princeton: His field is China/Japan culture and relations, and it was heartening to hear that he feels hopeful about the future of friendship between the two. Interestingly, in their history, there has never been a time when both China and Japan were simultaneously powerful, as they are today. They have typically been in an up to down relationship, one way or the other. He is curious about the present, new situation of relative power of both countries, and notes that 80% of Japanese people want good relations with China (can't explain what the other 20% are thinking!). He recognizes the animosity of Chinese toward Japanese for past atrocities, esp. Rape of Nanjing and visits by high government officials to war shrines, and hopes that when Koizumi's term is up, new leaders will emerge with more sensitive ways of handling issues between the countries.

American Politics: Our conversation also included his incredulity (and that of his students and other friends) that Americans had elected Bush TWICE! And, the fact that the invasion of Iraq was planned long before 9-11 (his analysis), and other thing many of us think about a lot, but unfortunately some of our fellow citizens seem to ignore. We spoke about the need for peace education, travel, and global awareness in all societies at all levels, and the need for better media literacy (and media period!). It was a stimulating conversation. We wondered what the other van passengers were thinking, as they listened but did not join in.

Automated Noodles: Our first evening, we went looking for Peace—an eatery much praised by guidebooks and hotel clerks cafe for vegetarians, and a long walk from our hotel, near Kyoto University. We got half way there and decided to turn back, opting for a local noodle automat instead. We studied the detailed photos outside the place, found Udon with tofu, and went in to try to figure out how to operate the coin-operated ordering machine. Had a helpful waiter who saw through the process, and enjoyed slurping up our delicious noodles before crashing in the most comfortable beds in the world after about 27 hours of travel.

Cherry Blossoms: Yesterday, Monday, we spent in the Kyoto Imperial Palace grounds, watching Japanese children and adults adoring cherry tree (and other tree) blossoms. It was quite touching and friendly to see crowds gathering about a graceful tree, photographers with cameras on tripods doing close ups of blossoms, people using cell phones to take photos, and us photographing them photographing flowers (or in turn, photoing us!). Foreigners are not the oddity and freak show we/they are in China, so while we are noticed, we are not a source of constant staring, just sort of a humorous or friendly reaction.

Peace Café: So, what does it mean: Peace takes a holiday? We went looking for Peace Café again last night! We walked and walked, even though our feet had just about had it. Finally, **WE FOUND PEACE!** We walked up the three flights to the cafe, and heard someone singing and playing guitar. Oh, a concert, we thought. No, just one guy, alone, in a darkened small, 8-seater cafe. Too bad we didn't learn more Japanese. We might have realized sooner, before he let us look at the delicious menu with Thai curry sets, and veggie this and that, yummy looking meals indeed. We finally decided what we would like to eat, and the delightful young man looked a bit shocked as we went to sit. "SORRY, no one here but me. HOLIDAY!" So, it

seems, the Cannons cannot find peace after all, because Peace has taken a holiday.

In closing: Peace may have taken a holiday, but it can't be forever, can it? We spoke with the van ride professor about the concept of the tipping point. So let's keep working to make the critical mass tip towards peaceful solutions to global problems.

#3 Kyoto-Osaka: There's No Theatre like Noh Theatre... and Bunraku too—April 4-7

Summary: Noh Theatre, Wandering Kyoto, Business Year Begins, Being Tourists, Noh Theatre, Streets of Kyoto, Bunraku Theatre, Dinner at home with a college professor in Osaka, Kids Guernica, school discipline...

NOH THEATRE: This *Who's on first?* phenomenon was the theme for our search for tickets to one of Kyoto's several Noh theatre performances. Our first effort was to attend the Kongo Noh theatre nearest our hotel, and with whose box office agent we had several conversations that went like this: Q: *Do you have any tickets for a Noh performance?* A: *No, there is no performance. I am sorry there are no tickets for Noh performance. Will you call back to see if there is a cancellation?* (We call back) Q: *Has there been a cancellation?* A: *There is Noh performance. There is no performance. There are no tickets. There are Noh tickets. There is no performance,* and so on.

Finally, one of the intrepid hosts at the front desk called another Noh theatre that had Noh tickets. We hopped a bus to pick them up and swallowed hard as the box office clerk started apologizing. *There are Noh tickets, but they are very expensive.* Yes, they were. Why so costly? The performers are the superstars of Noh, not local Kyoto performers but imports from Tokyo. We swallowed hard and got two tickets for tonight's Noh performance at the Kanze Noh Theater. There was no way we would miss the chance to see Noh. We will let you know how the Noh is.

Wandering Kyoto: We spent the rest of Tuesday visiting art museums and wandering around the beautiful streets of Kyoto. Unfortunately the modern art museum was closed for construction, but the municipal museum had an exhibit of local artists from before and after the war, as well as a huge exhibit of Sumi paintings. The cherry blossom show continued outside, with glorious trees and happy Kyoto residents enjoying them. We wandered towards the hills and the famous Nanzen-ji temple and found a traditional noodle restaurant willing to be creative with vegetarian versions of tempura, tofu, and rice. Lovely ambience.

Business Year Begins: The business year starts with the April 1 induction of new members into each company, so the large group of JR employees in suits we had passed on the street on Monday was a group of new inductees in the company headquartered near our hotel. For more on the corporate culture in Japan, read *Confucius Lives Next Door*, by T. R. Reid. School is about to start, also. We have seen kids on the streets during the day, and we guess that will change. For more on school life in Japan, read *Learning to Bow*.

Being tourists: Busses are easy to ride, and people are friendly and willing to help navigate the bus charts, stops, and streets near the bus stops. We continue to be greeted with interest and cheer. We are not sought out, but are helped if we ask for it. A conversation often ensues, either in hopeless sign language or a flood of Japanese or in impeccable English of someone who has spent time in New Zealand or the USA. Our five to ten words of Japanese (headed by the ubiquitous—for us—*sumimasen*—excuse me, I’m sorry…) lead to conversations around maps and guidebooks that usually lead to helpful information.

Tickets to Noh: Sherraid, our artist friend from Yellow Springs, Ohio, has made many connections for us in Japan among artists and educators. We ate breakfast with friends of hers, a young couple recently returned to Japan/Kyoto from several years in Boston. Ted, an American, is studying Japanese, and Yumeko, a native Kyotan, is a translator and also is working for a dance management agency. She is also a Noh enthusiast, and told us about a Noh performance scheduled for Wednesday afternoon. She made a few phone calls to her Noh teacher and managed to get us two tickets for the matinee (originally scheduled to be performed outdoors at a local shrine stage, but moved indoors because of rain). Yumeko recommended the performers because they were from Kyoto, and the Kyoto style was “warm” and involving. What a wonderful and moving experience!

This is no theatre like you’ve seen before.

When have you had to remove your shoes to enter a theatre (and wear a special set of slippers to use the restroom?)! This lovely Noh theatre had young ushers to take the shoes of audience members, and we were also treated to fresh bowls of lush green tea and pastries shaped like cherry blossoms. Next we went to our seats: cushions on tatami mats. Our seats were in the balcony overlooking the sparse Noh stage with the classic design: bridge for entry and exit on the left, cypress wooden stage, and cypress tree painted on the background.

For those who don’t know, Noh theatre is highly stylized, hundreds-of-years old art form, in which male performers (although there are some women and some female companies today) wear masks to present sung and slowly moved ceremonial recreations of iconic stories. There is a chorus of chanting commentators and a set of musicians: drum and flute. The performers belt out gut-wrenching, guttural moaning and keening scripts, as they move in a slow, trance-like pace. This is the tai chi of theatre.

The program included a welcoming song, a short Kyogen comedy about a sake container, and the featured Noh play, “Hutali Skiska” or “Two Characters.” Many audience members brought scripts to follow along. We were fortunate to have a neighbor give us a synopsis: A young woman is picking flowers to bring to the temple on behalf of the local priest when the ghost of her dead sister appears. The ghost asks for the priest to say prayers so that her soul can rest. The young girl returns to the priest to ask for the prayers, but the priest does not believe her. The ghost of the sister (once a famous dancer) possesses the girl, who then performs one of the dances for which the sister was famous. The two characters eventually dance the dance together, and the play ends with them departing over the bridge to the otherworld together. Happy ending? Sad ending? Certainly unclear, and not just to us. But that is one of the beauties of Noh:

it is very moving—like a musical symphony, but not necessarily understandable. The performance was riveting.

Bitai Café: We enjoyed a spectacular vegetarian lunch at a tiny shop recommended by *Lonely Planet* as a haven for Kyoto’s vegetarians (Bitai Café), and slurped up the miso soup, brown rice, vegetables in soup and potato salad. (There is potato salad everywhere.) We spent the rest of the day walking through some of Yumeko’s favorite small streets, and thought of my brother Richard’s love of the scroll shops. We made it to the Sanjo shopping arcade, and finally to the Gion district by dusk, to see the throngs walking around what seemed like Kyoto’s version of Times Square. The geiko and meiko (geishas and trainees in Kyoto dialect) do indeed walk around at this time, and people follow them with cameras like paparazzi. It’s a bit sad and odd. Evidently there are only 80 geiko and 40 meiko, so one wonders what will happen to this obvious tourist draw in years to come. We found an intriguing art museum: Kyoto Modern Art Museum, whose name and mission statement encourage alternative thinking to produce good art. What a novel idea! And we thought the Japanese expression was “the nail that sticks up will get beaten down.” (Read *Confucius Lives Next Door* or *Learning to Bow* for more on this.)

BUNRAKU THEATRE

We are trying to see as much theatre as we can in our tourist phase of the trip, so our next trip was to Osaka. Kadir and I met doing a Bunraku-style puppetry production of Bertolt Brecht’s *Caucasian Chalk Circle* at Antioch College, and if you look at a picture of how the puppets are operated, you can see it would be a logical next step to become life partners. We traveled to Osaka on Wednesday (about a 2-hour excursion hotel door to theatre door, but only @30 minutes from Kyoto to Osaka by train) to see the National Bunraku Theatre of Japan. We are always incredulous at well-funded puppet theatres (as the Europeans have), and I wonder if we would have stayed in puppetry if the U.S. had state-sponsored theaters like this gorgeous one! We kept our shoes on for this performance, but did buy the English translation headphones.

Bunraku puppets are manipulated in plain sight of the audience by three puppeteers who eventually disappear somewhat from the viewer’s awareness. It was interesting but not moving in the way the Noh theatre was. We are happy we saw the productions, and enjoyed the experience, but... there’s no theatre like Noh theatre. We got a kick out of the intermission lunch break in which audience members brought out their beautiful box lunches and chowed down in the theatre or lobby before the program resumed. We were honored to see the naming of a shamisen player who was moving up in rank and dismayed to learn that the ranks of Bunraku puppeteers are also diminishing, with only 4 aspiring trainees having joined the theater this year. Grueling training and Bunraku lifestyle and low pay were given as reasons for the low interest.

Kids Guernica: At a character education conference in Cortland, N.Y. in 2005, I had met a Japanese professor of early childhood education. She invited us to her home for dinner after the performance, as she lives in Osaka. What a treat. She met us at the train station in the suburbs of Osaka and we had a stimulating evening with her family and a colleague of hers, an art professor. Toshi has initiated a peace project in numerous global locations. See if you can find his website: *Kids Guernica* to see images of murals in the same dimensions of Picasso’s Guernica that he and his colleagues have designed with children in various locations around the

world. His idea is that children develop a sense of self, place, and community, and in the murals they can expand the sense of community to include both local and global components. He and Kadir shared art work and we hope to continue a connection with him.

School Discipline: Our friend is very interested in American methods of school discipline, trying to adapt them to Japanese schools. I was trying to steer her to the “catch em being good” methods of the social-cognitive psychologists like Ronald Slaby with whom I had studied at Harvard, but she seemed more interested in ISS (in-school-suspension) and Zero Tolerance policies. She seems to think the Japanese phenomenon of kids refusing to attend school and becoming hermits is due to the fact that parents are having fewer children and spoiling the ones they do have. She says the kids act like parasites on the parents, who allow it to go on. She says kids today are not interested in getting married, and so the birth rate is bound to fall even more. It was hard to get a read on whether she is accurate or not, and the topic is an interesting one to pursue.

The house was an example of how Japan has faced modernity with style and a kind of Ray Bradbury-futurist technology: heated toilet seats with automatic faucets are examples. There was a beautiful, small garden. Yes, the house was small, but very pleasing to enjoy as guests in Osaka’s hillside suburbs! Her son has just spent the last six months cramming for entrance exams to medical school. He was admitted finally to a fine med school and enjoyed about 3 weeks of down time playing video games. We also met the neighbor and her daughter, an English Literature major who had completed college and was applying (along with 3000 others) for a much coveted job as airline host on Japan Airlines. Only 80 women will be hired. Sounded like college entrance competition.

Well, the day is about to begin here, but I wanted to keep you all in touch with our journey. We will write again, maybe from Hiroshima. We travel there tomorrow to prepare for presentations next week.

#4 Kyoto—*Burden of Love and Heart of the Cedar*-- Friday midnight April 7-8, 2006

Summary: More Noh, Imperial Palace, Nanzenji Temple

Burden of Love—More Noh: Our second shot at Noh was no comparison to the first. The big-shot Noh was like so many superstar events, good but not from the depth of the heart. The crowd was the cream of the social crop of Kyoto, with fashion statements of every sort of posh, from traditional and beautiful kimono to modern designer dresses and suits. Compliments galore were dished out by one lady poised strategically to give them to each person she met. It seemed the scene to be seen in. However, no one seemed to know Noh! There was no clapping when performers set foot on the bridge to enter, and no clapping after the emotional drama concluded. No tea, no sweets. Everyone’s shoes were on, and the man next to me constantly looked at his watch. Money can’t buy you everything, we guess. But the story of unrequited love was striking and dramatic, as the rejected lover died of his sadness and returned as an enraged, vengeful ghost. Great hair! The hair was as expressive as any other feature, as it seemed to flex in anger from time to time. Happily, the ghost got over his thirst for revenge, and the girl who jilted him

arrogantly raised her hands to ask forgiveness. That is pretty dramatic a motion for Noh, and the happiest ending we've seen. The "Burden of Love" was lifted, literally and figuratively as it had been represented by a huge stone, as the show ended. Noh is great. NO?

Prior to the Noh, we had an activity called "search the luggage for the lost passport" as it would be needed for our morning tour of a palace. Too bad it was in the last place we looked. We could not imagine it could have been stolen—Japan does not seem to be that kind of place (at least not yet) or where it could be, but unfortunately could imagine the hassle with police, and embassies (including the Chinese to get a new visa for May). Finally we found it, tucked in one of those safe places the mind forgets to remember. We will leave you to guess whose passport it was.

The Imperial Palace compound across from our hotel is open to the public for unscheduled visits during 4 days in April, and we had a great time joining crowds of Japanese visiting these gorgeous grounds. We had reservations to visit the Sento Palace (nearby, and that's why we needed the passports) and thoroughly enjoyed both palaces for the crowds, the cherry blossoms, and the aesthetic of Japanese garden and palatial design. We'd be down with a house like either of these two, especially the ponds. We will tour my brother Richards' favorite palace, Katsura, in May just before we leave Kyoto.

Heart of the Cedar

After the palaces, we took a bus to walk and climb through the grounds of Nanzen-ji monastery for the afternoon, and eschewing paying any admittance fees (hey, we're spending all our money on theatre tix, remember?) we kept climbing up the hill, into the foothills. How wonderful that we did. We found a sweet little temple that was home of a Noh-mask-carving-monk who obviously *got it-life*, that is. We'll end our week in Kyoto by sharing his poetry with you, posted on a plaque as it was next to a tree that he refers to in the poem.

Summer-Saisho-In

The evening bell—solemn and bronze
In the grandfather temple down the hill
sounds dimly here.
Slow beat of the mountain's heart perhaps
Or determined pulse of pine tree (gift of the birds)
growing out of a crotch of the slipping monkey tree
All one, perhaps...
bell, mountain, tree
and steady cicada vibrato
and little white dog
and quiet artist-priest, carver of Noh masks
fashioning a bamboo crutch for the ancient peace tree...
symbol of strength, symbol of concern
All cool under nodding crowns of the vertical forest
all seeking in this place
all finding in this place—

hidden yet open to all
the spirit in the cedar's heart.

(Seisho-in, Small 8th century Buddhist temple in a mountain gorge near Kyoto)

Lots of love and peace from the heart of the cedar (Cedar Heart Pictures has to reference this somehow, Bajir! Visit www.cedarheartpictures.com to see Bajir's current movie project, shot on location in Cambodia.)

#5 Hiroshima-World Friendship Center April 8-11, 2006

Summary: Bullet train, World Friendship Center, A-bomb survivors, Barbara Reynolds, International Conversations, Interview with Michiko Yamoake-san, Hibakusha

Shinakansen: We took the train smoothly from Kyoto to Hiroshima (Shinkansen bullet trains leave on the minute/second they say they will and ride speedily and gently, except when one passes the other with a rocking whoosh!). Old cities make quite a contrast with new ones, and Hiroshima is certainly a new city.

World Friendship Center: We arrived at the World Friendship Center in time for the end of the Riji (board of directors) meeting, and got to say a few words of introduction before a welcoming dinner for us and a former director. We met several A-Bomb survivors, called hibakushas, and made appointments to interview two of them this week.

Here is a description of the WFC founding and mission from their brochure: "WFC is a place where people from many nations meet, share their experiences, and have time to reflect on peace. It was founded in 1965 by Barbara Reynolds, a US Quaker peace activist. The purpose of WFC was stated in 1967 and includes the following words:"

Founded with the conviction that Hiroshima has international significance, the center is based upon the need to build peace from within. World Friendship Center is based upon the belief that an individual can and must do something to create peace, and a faith that there is an ultimate power of truth and love that can help each of us to develop a center of peace within ourselves which will be highly contagious.—Barbara Reynolds

Knowing WFC had been founded by a Quaker, we assumed the volunteer directors would be Quakers too. However, the US volunteers, a retired couple named Don and Pauline Hess (with whom we have been corresponding via email since October!) are from Church of the Brethren, one of three historic peace churches (along with Quakers and Mennonites). Interestingly, Don is a retired military career man, with experience in Vietnam, Korea, the White House and the Pentagon, and is a very interesting choice to be managing such a peace oriented place. He has lots of info to share on any topic, and has been helpful to us in navigating the complex relationships among the various hibakushas as well as other peace people here. Pauline has been

a volunteer trauma care provider for children with the Red Cross. Interesting stories from both of them.

International Conversations: The real stories are coming from the people we meet at breakfast or on the street outside the Peace Memorials and museums, or from the hibakushas themselves. Chatting with Swiss-Germans over breakfast we learned about the marriage penalty for couples in Switzerland: about \$1000 extra in taxes if a couple marries. Thus, this couple had been together for 15 years without marrying. We had a great chat with a German woman who visited the Peace Museum and talked with us about Germany's approach to post-war education on nationalism. "My country would never think to tell other countries how to live after our experience." Too many conversations to sort out just now, but I will work on it.

Michiko Yamoake-san: Today we spent two hours interviewing a hibakusha named Michiko Yamoake-san, who has spent 40 of the last 60 years speaking to school and civic groups about her experience and the evils of war. (It took the first 20 years after the bombing to get medical treatment...she was one of the Hiroshima maidens—and to get over her anger and hatred to the US for dropping the bomb.) She does not hide Japan's militaristic past, and she tells school children about her war time duties as a middle school student in military factory. But she goes on to decry the stupidity of war and the horrors of nuclear weapons. She keeps speaking out, but it is clearly draining, and today she expressed frustration at those who just talk about "peace, peace, peace... I am sick of peace!" Action is what she is looking for, and I'd like to see that too! Too many people we meet all agree that war is bad and that international policies of most of our governments are not acceptable, yet we are all accepting them. People express a helplessness, and we all must get over that and speak out in whatever ways we can. The unseen harvest that our friend Irwin Abrams spoke about in terms of peace education is the harvest we seek, even if it takes a long time. Lecture over.

As you may have guessed, internet connections are harder to come by here, so email will come in spurts. Meanwhile, greetings from Hiroshima, a vibrant, modern city with a peace-protest activism that is refreshing.

#6 Hiroshima Foods--April 12-14, 2006

Summary: Famished vegetarians, Okonomiyake Recipe, Home Cooking and Chinese Food, WFC Classes, Interviews by Chugoku Newspaper Reporters, Fears of War

Dear Friends and Fam: I say fam, because it's the first syllable of famished, which we are often as vegetarians in Hiroshima! This may be the city of peace, but even the Buddhists are major meat eaters! Actually, it is harder to get something without animals of any type lurking somewhere in it or on it here than in China. Here are some of our adventures in eating.

We started out as we always do on trips like this with a note to give to servers in restaurants: "We are vegetarians. We don't eat meat." is how it usually starts. Then, because that does not do the job, we add: "Please don't cook with animal oil or put meat in the sauce or soup." At that

point, we have eliminated all the noodle shops. Very kind restaurateurs have shaken their heads sadly and escorted us to another restaurant themselves. Finally we heard about Okonomiyake. The word is music to my ears.

Okonomiyake: This was our first lifeline, and one we will serve you at home. Okonomiyake is the Hiroshima specialty, a “pancake” of noodles, egg, sprouts, and cabbage, that the locals also enjoy with pork and fish sauce. So, hold the pork (or shrimp, chicken, oysters—a local specialty that my dad would have loved) and hold the fish sauce, and here is the recipe:

1. Cook batter (for crepe-like pancake, available at the Japanese store, we found later) on the hot grill. About the size of a crepe, too.
2. Separately, pile mounds of shredded cabbage (and anything else you like) on the grill and let it steam. Add sprouts to the top of the pile. Then pile it all on top of the crepe.
3. Flip the pile over and keep grilling the veggies.
4. Meanwhile, separately, fry up some cooked noodles (any kind will work, thin Udon are good or thinner egggy ones) in another pile.
5. Then, pile veggies onto the cooked noodles.
6. Separately, fry an egg (break and swish around the yolk, keeping it flat).
7. Flip the whole pile of veggies, noodles and crepe over onto the egg, so the crepe is on one side, and the egg on the other with all the goodies in the center.
8. Serve by flipping it all again, so crepe is down and egg is up.
9. Serve with fish sauce if you eat it, or other sauce if you want. (We use Tonkatsu Sauce, a yummy vegetable and fruit sauce.)
10. PS. It helps if you have 3 cooks, preferably people who get along well, who work on each step in a separate location and move the process along assembly line style. **YUM!**

However, all things have their limit, and after some great Okonomiyake for lunch and dinner, Kadir wanted a change. Anyhow, some people just can’t seem to hold the fish flakes on the noodles or the fish sauce on top, it’s just not Japanese, we guess. AND, it is hard to watch all the other things being grilled... so, on to the next lifeline.

Soup and Salad from the Supermarket: It’s sad to say that one of our best meals in Japan was cooked in a microwave in our guest house from supermarket ingredients, but it is true. We saw all these wonderful foods in the huge supermarket in the neighborhood, and it was a bit like “water, water everywhere but not a drop to drink.” A sweet young man from the produce department said the most beautiful words, “May I help you?” and we were off. He found us vegetarian noodles, packets of tofu, and vegetarian shoyu (Kikkoman! Soy sauce). He even found us the rare vegetarian sushi in the prepared foods section. We got some fresh veggies (the tomatoes and carrots, lettuce, etc, are very tasty) and made a huge salad and a soup of noodles, tofu, and veggies, with some veggie-flake and soy sauce seasoning. **YUM!**

Those of you who are not vegetarian may wonder why we are torturing ourselves, and those of you who are stricter than we are may be wondering how we can eat anything cooked on a grill. Here is the deal: if you are trying not to kill animals, it is hard to eat them, even in soup or flakes. Fish too, we tried. Hard to stomach. We really cannot enjoy it during or after eating. As far as the grill, we say a prayer and eat the food.

Chinese Food in Japan: After corresponding for months we finally met in person one of the foremost peace activists in the city, Steve Leeper, who has been instrumental in helping us make contacts here. He is someone whose name is familiar to everyone, and when they understand you know him, you are immediately accepted and helped with great respect. Anyhow, we went with him and our script translator, and the World Friendship Center translator to lunch at a local Chinese restaurant. It took the three translators to impress on our server the idea of a vegetarian meal for the two of us. We ate a good meal of vegetables and rice and decided to try it again for dinner.

This time, however, we had one of the translators make us an even more elaborate letter about the food: “We are vegetarians, we don’t eat meat, chicken, pork, and fish. Please do not use these items in the soup or sauce. Also, please do not cook in animal fat.” I had the bright idea to copy two pages from the picture dictionary I am bringing to use in China for the teacher trainings next month, and came armed with a two-page spread of animals, poultry, and seafood (in parts and in whole) with big X across the pages. This time we felt hopeful. We entered the restaurant and held up our signs (after courteous *Konichiwas*, of course).

Alas, too much information. Now we had the owner and her two chefs out with us trying to figure out what we could eat. One of the chefs had a bit of English, so he got a customer, and primary school sensei (teacher) to translate. Poor man. His soup sure got cold as he took about 10 minutes to explain it all. Finally, he asides to me, “Well, they are Chinese, you know.” AH, SO!

I dredge up the few Chinese words I can remember and start again, this time in CHINESE! The owner has a cow, or thereabouts, and tells the chef I can speak Chinese. “NO way” is my translation of what he says, so I give him my best Chinese sentence, “*Wo quay shwo idyar Pudongua.*” (I can only speak a little Chinese.) “*Bu yao roh!*, etc.” (I don’t eat meat, etc.) WOW! Now we are in business. We had a terrific stir fry of tofu, Chinese greens, and egg with rice and vegetarian soup! YUM!

Pauline’s terrific breakfasts: Happily, our translator has faxed us a page of five terrific sounding VEGETARIAN and VEGAN restaurants in Hiroshima. We will undoubtedly try some of these before we go. Breakfast is our load-it-up meal, so don’t cry for me, Hiroshima. Pauline serves us huge plates of eggs, English muffins, or pancakes, or granola, and always fruit salad and coffee (too weak for Kadir) and tea for me. Just thought you all would enjoy the difficult part of our travel that for most people would be so delightful.

WFC classes and interviews: We will write more when we have time, but time is indeed at a premium. We were guests at one of the WFC classes here, where we showed the art and discussed peace education. We were interviewed by two amazing reporters, who each took hours with us (we never experienced that before... our local press usually ignores us). So now we are preparing for the two events upcoming Saturday and Sunday, one here at the WFC and the other in a huge hall at the Peace Memorial Museum. Hope people show up!

Fears of more war: Most people here think the US will soon bomb Iran, and some even think it will be with nuclear weapons. We hear about the marches on immigration, and we hope the April 29 march will be HUGE. No nukes! US out of Iraq, etc.

Arigato gozaimus! Matineh! Thank you very much! See you later!

#7-Hiroshima to Toyohashi: Gardening with chopsticks and other small, interesting things about Japan, April 19, 2006

Summary: As visitors we notice things that locals no longer pay attention to. We can't say we understand all of them, but these are things we have found interesting or fun: Cherry Blossom Picnics, Gardening with Chopsticks, Bike Chicken, Heated Toilet Seats and other warm things, The Heated Table, Obento, Okonomiyake-Kansai, Style, Mall Rats and Spiked Sneakers, No more Noh, Trains and Hot Coffee, TV Reality Shows, Toyohashi Hospitality, The Story of Drippy, So much else to tell you...

Cherry Blossom picnics: Cherry blossom viewing is a serious pastime. Can't quite say it rivals baseball, but it may. While we were in Hiroshima, we started to see big, blue tarps under cherry blossom trees, quite early in the morning, or in the evening. Sometimes a young man would be sitting alone under a beautiful tree with his boots on the corners of a huge tarp. It had the feeling of our friend in the U.S. and his big blue tarp, staking his claim to a fireworks viewing location for thirty people. But this is not quite that large. Sure enough, soon a picnic evolved as men and women arrived carrying grills, bottles, and bags. Morning picnics lasted all day. Evening picnics lasted all night. Sunday involved everyone, even the fathers who worked all week and rarely had time to spend with the family. Young couples, young families, and groups of old people could be seen enjoying the trees, food, and good company.

The full moon brought even more people out to picnic. One evening in mid-April, we visited the **Hiroshima Contemporary Art Museum**, perched on a high hill overlooking the city. This gorgeous museum, designed by an architect my brother undoubtedly knows of, has a sculpture garden outside. It also has the most perfectly placed and suited-for-the-setting Henry Moore statue we have ever seen. The two, tall, curved pillars of the statue frame the museum entrance through one perspective, and the cherry trees and view overlooking the city from the other. What a perfect place for young professionals to spread their tarp after a hard day at the office! As I finished a tai chi routine in this beautiful, spacious setting, and Kadir finished a nap, some young women in business suits brought a tarp and various foods and started setting up a picnic under a gorgeous cherry tree. Soon they were joined by more women, then some men in business suits, looking a bit uncomfortable at first. Soon, shoes were off and all were sitting on the tarp, enjoying food and drink. Later in the evening, as we walked home, we saw men and women like the ones we had seen on the hill, carrying huge bags of refuse from the large picnics: a bag of loads of beer cans and Saki bottles to recycle and separate bags of paper trash came away from these picnics. The picnic spots were generally spotless!

Gardening with Chopsticks: The neighborhood around the World Friendship Center is a mix of residential houses and apartments as well as small shops, a lumber company, a garage, lots of restaurants, a Buddhist temple (created out of a parking garage) and several barber shops. (We ignore the “love hotels” on the corner and across the river except to use them as landmarks...At least that is what the Japanese ladies have told our WFC hosts several of these hotels with part-time rates are.). Easter Sunday morning the neighborhood was pretty quiet, except for the many women sweeping their small paths and curbsides or gardening in small flower pots with chopsticks as tools.

Bike Chicken: I have a feeling we’re not in Kansas anymore, however we see Toto everywhere we go. In bike baskets, that is. Walking on the bridges and streets of Kyoto and Hiroshima has been a challenge as the bike riders whisk around on the sidewalks. Night and day they came at you without warning, and it is the rare biker who uses a bell or a light. Often riders have tiny Toto dogs in the baskets, and it’s quite cute to see them. My favorite type of passenger is the tiny tots riding up front in front of moms and dads, holding on to little handles and sitting in a wire basket welded to the bike frame. Sometimes there is a child on back also. These benign bikers would be fine, if it were not for the obscure rules of traffic we are somehow missing. Every encounter with a biker can turn into a deadly game of chicken, and on the numerous bridges of Hiroshima (a city of rivers as you may remember from your WWII geography) one has split seconds to make the right decision to ensure that neither the biker nor you end up in the river or the lane of traffic. Finally, I asked one of our Peace Park guide friends what the rules of engagement were. “Like traffic—always stay on the left!” Well, we have tried it, and single file over bridges is definitely the way to go, but there is still no consistency to the bike chicken. We do a little jig and so far, no crashes.

Heated toilet seats and other nice things: There is no central heating in most Japanese houses, so the artistry of localized heating is quite well developed. One of the most appreciated is the heated toilet seat. As one slips off slippers for wearing in the house (all outdoor shoes come off upon entry to the home and one receives slippers), one slips into the special slippers for the bathroom only. (PS: DO NOT mix these up!) Usually the bathroom is cold in these early spring days, so the warm toilet seat is quite the luxury. Also, the flush of the toilet brings about the other interesting things about Japanese western-style toilets: there is a small faucet that lets the cold water pass from the water pipes into the top toilet tank, with a tiny sink on top of the toilet. Very efficient idea!

Still on the topic of toilets, let’s move into the Eastern style of fixture. The nice thing about Japanese squat-type of toilet is that they have grab bars! Unlike the Chinese toilets that allow you to sink or swim on your own, the Japanese give you a little security bar to hold onto should you need it. Further, there is the electronic flushing sound that allows the user of the toilet to mask the sound of unpleasant bodily functions with the playing of an electronic flushing sound. The first time I entered one of the more modern stalls with the electronic eye to trigger the sound device, I panicked that the toilet was flushing before I could even use it. Now I push the button with glee and make the toilet flushing sound anytime I please. This would be a great water saving device to use with two-year olds as they enter their potty-fascination-period! It is also a great device to suggest for school toilets, especially those like ours at EA’s middle school that are directly outside the classrooms.

Other warm things: We are now in Toyohashi, and I can't tell you much about the city of 70,000 surrounded by sea and mountains yet, but I can tell you about the warming table in front of me as I write this letter. I am staying with a middle school English teacher whose 15-year-old high school son comes home from school after a one-hour bike ride, takes off his school uniform, and flops down in front of the TV to watch baseball, read a manga (comic) novel, and do his homework. Sometimes he cuddles up under the quilt that is draped over the frame of—but under the table top of—the table located in the center of the living room. Last night I found out why.

In the middle of the under-frame of the table is a heating element, and when my host plugs in the table, the under-area of the table provides the most cozy, warm place to sit as one writes or eats or reads around the table. Other warming devices, aside from space heaters and such, are the accordion shaped devices—heating pad-like appliances—that keep one warm under the quilts during the cool evenings.

Obento: honorable lunch boxes: An apology to my two sons. I am very sorry I am not a good Japanese mother. If I had been, you would have had terrific school lunches everyday, instead of the rather unimaginative sandwiches and yogurts you ate (and sometimes packed) for the durations of your school careers. It is like watching an artist create a sculpture to watch Sumiko-san (my hostess) pack the lunchbox for her son Yaze to take to school each morning. There are two trays to this 4"x7" lunchbox, and in the first she usually puts a hefty helping of rice sprinkled with seaweed flakes or other savory seasoning. Then, in the second tray, she packs and arranges delightful and colorful array of plums, egg-omelettes, pork slices, tempura, or whatever other left-over she can fit—each in its own little foil holder (like our cupcake liners, sort of). There is a cover for one tray, then the two trays lock together with another cover, and there is a terrific lunch ready to transport (often inside a Mickey Mouse covered cloth bag with chopsticks inside. It reminds me of the Indian curry holders with the vertically stacking bowls for rice and curries, but the design is a bit more compact.

Okonomiyake...again: This time, the recipe is Kansai style of Okonomiyake, rather than the Hiroshima style I sent you before. Sumiko is from Osaka area originally, and in that area (Kyoto, Osaka... the Kansai area) Okonomiyake more closely resembles our egg omelet but with ingredients we will all have to go the Japanese store to discover.

Kansai-style Okonomiyake for four people:

1. Mix 4 eggs, 2 cups flour, and @ 200cc water to make batter
2. Grind around ½ of a long mountain potato (Yama-imo)
3. Slice thin cabbage and onion
4. Add around ½ package of potato-jelly (Konnyaku), sort of a starch that glues the batter
5. Add a handful of "Tenkasu" crunchy-starchy stuff used in Tempura.
6. Mix the batter until it resembles a loosely-thick vegetable pancake batter. Indeed, it closely resembles both an omelet and a pancake in texture, and one can easily add any items to the mixture. Serve with Okonomiyake sauce, or any other sauce you like.
7. If all else fails, make potato pancakes or fried Matzoh, and consider this a close second. The resemblance to these two Jewish foods was striking as well! YUM!

Mall Rats and Spiked Sneakers: Back to Hiroshima for this one, as this is the only place we spent any appreciable time in a mall, but mall-shopping is a really good way to get a bead on the younger generation. They are a fashionable bunch in Japan! The *Honduri*, or covered shopping area, was a prominent part of the city from the early 20s and was rebuilt (as was the rest of Hiroshima) after the bombing. It is a thriving place of several streets of restaurants and shops. We've seen artists trying to sell calligraphy wares and street musicians partying with a group of clapping and cheering friends or playing a tiny, homemade, electric guitar and a harmonica plaintively for a few hundred yen a night in contributions from passers by.

Because it has been so cold, we went into some department stores to look for a few things and to kill some time in the rain. Wow! After school or after work, the outfits and hairstyles change. The cell phones remain, but lots of people, both girls and boys, have great spiked hairstyles and unique footwear. We saw lots of styles of boots, sometimes spiked sneakers and Converse-style high-tops you'll never see on a basketball court. There are high heels with ankle wrapping devices that allow a woman to slip off her shoes and still remain fashionable. Friday and Saturday nights are hopping, with ladies dragging their men in suits to shop with them on the floors and floors of ladies wear. At one point I snapped a photo of seven tired guys in suits sitting on the waiting benches waiting for their women to finish poring over the hair barrettes and other paraphernalia of fashion. This is a cultural experience for me as I am not a mall rat at home, but it is fun to see here—for a short time. We even found a “used” clothing shop in the mall—where everything was actually new, and it seemed like a “hip” fashion spot for young folks, surrounded by other Indian and “hippie” clothing shops as it was. Kadir got a wool cap for 100Yen and I got a warm shirt for 100 Yen and we happily wore our bargains home (@85 cents each).

No more Noh: We missed the chance to see Noh theatre performed on a stage over the sea on the island of Miyajima, a short ferry ride from Hiroshima, and we will definitely have to schedule another trip to Japan to see this annual performance. However, every once in awhile we continue to have great non-conversations about Noh, like this one from a school visit. Q. “Do you teach Noh here? A. Noh? Q. Noh theater? A. We have no theater. Q. You mean you do not teach theatre? A. Noh? Q. No. Do you teach theater? A. No theatre.” Still not quite sure what we were really talking about.

Trains and hot coffee: To say the trains run on time is an understatement. They run to the second. Do not have a slow watch—even by the moment—or you will miss your train. We have enjoyed the cans of hot coffee and coffee-with-milk in the ever-present vending machines on train platforms (on neighborhood corners). But, we dare not disembark without checking with the conductor to run 10 feet to the vending machine, lest the train leave the brief stop without us.

TV and reality?: I had read somewhere that Japan was the place where reality shows originated, but I didn't believe it until tonight. My teenage host Yaze has been mesmerized by a show that I can barely figure out. (I guess it helps to be a teenager supposed to be doing homework.) A group of girls is dressed in tuxedos and boys' clothing, and a group of boys is dressed in everything female from airline hostess outfits, full white bridal gowns, or tiny black dresses. The first half of the show was spent in enticing a famous baseball player to pick one of the “females” to receive a kiss from, while the second half seems to have a famous female athlete

selecting a handsome “male”. Then came an interlude with a batch of athletes in minimal uniforms spinning around in a centrifuge then walking a path over a hot bath to a bucket of ice.

Toyohashi Hospitality or The ladies who can stop the Iraq War and solve other world

problems: We have been embraced by the community of friends of our artist friend from Yellow Springs, Sherraid Scott. These women (many of whom took classes in English from Sherri when she taught here at Aichi University) have shown us what it means to be organized and generous, and we are sure they could arrange for just about anything! They have embraced us and our interests and have organized a full schedule of transportation from city to suburb and back, school visits, and preparation for this Sunday’s international peace event in Toyohashi, collaboration between Kadir and the Toyohashi artists. Soon we will meet the visiting Dayton artists in Sherraid’s printmaker’s group, here to have a show in Kyoto. To say I am eating well is an understatement, as Sumiko is putting together what seem like gourmet meals of vegetarian delights for me, from miso soup to tempuras to salads to my new favorite: burdock salad. I am staying in her daughter’s bedroom and Kadir is staying in the artist Yuko’s studio, which has a great apartment above. We will continue to write when we can.

The Story of Drippy: As one of our new friends was driving me home, she was listening to an English speaking actor telling the story of the adventures of Drippy, a tiny water droplet who almost (according to the story) caused World War III. She assures me that this story (in a 12-CD set with a text book to read along with) is a very famous English learning tool in Japan. However, my host never heard of it (I think). She also showed me a CD of Orson Welles telling The Adventures of a Quarter, so I hope to hear that one soon. (Oh, in case you are wondering, Little Drippy is a water droplet who settles inside the master computer in charge of American security. Little Drippy’s presence signals a red alert and ... well, you can guess the rest. There is a happy ending, as Little Drippy is awakened by all the sirens and commotion and leaves the computer to find a better spot.

So much to tell you: We haven’t even scratched the surface of telling you about the fascinating interview with **Yamoake-san**, an A-bomb survivor, or **Steve Leeper’s** peace projects with Mayors for Peace. Nor have we described the two **peace presentations** we did in Hiroshima and the inspiring and **challenging discussions** that followed the first one. We need to tell you about the wonderful work of the **Hiroshima reporters** we talked with for hours, and to share our impressions of the **peace museum and peace park**. These will have to wait, as will a full-on description of the wonderful and full day we spent yesterday in Toyohashi at **Sakaragoake Jr. and Sr. High School**, whose peace education projects and **global outreach** (especially at the middle school level) were inspiring. We met great teachers and spoke about our work in teaching and art to several classes of kids. You will have to wait for a description of the amazing cross-cultural mural-painting project that **Kadir and the Toyohashi artists** completed today on the theme of world peace. We will have to tell you about the meaningful conversations we are having with groups of interested conversation and culture classes. Several times people have said to us: **“We thought all Americans were arrogant and selfish, until we met you. We are so happy to know there are lots of people like you in America!”**

The adventure continues and so does our love for all of you!

GAMBATE! Hang in there and Gambaro! Let’s Go!

#8-Overcoming Apathy, Seeking World Peace: What we wish would happen with our country! Begun in Toyohashi April 22; finished in Kyoto April 30, 2006

Summary: In this installment of letters from Japan, I'll give a taste of the topic on which this trip is based: What is peace and how can we work for it? How can we small people, citizens of many countries around the world, disengage our governments and ourselves from the war making follies promoted by the military industrial government complexes worldwide? We attempt to counter our own government's unilateral war policies with our unilateral peace campaign. In talks and presentations to Japanese citizen groups, high school students, undergraduates and graduate students, we are conveying our own horror and dismay at our country's militaristic policies, as well as our perception of what we ordinary citizens must do to wake up and act for a peaceful alternative to endless war. Q & A end this letter.

What is happening with your country? This is one of the questions we have been asked most often so far during our time in Japan: at breakfast with Australians, Swiss, and Germans. At lunch with Japanese. During discussions and conversations at peace events. People from all over the world simply cannot believe that the unilateral war policies of the Bush administration are still in effect. They have trouble forgiving the American people for electing Bush a second time. And they have clear horror at the war in Iraq and concrete fears about possible US actions in Iran, N. Korea, and elsewhere. In short, America has lost much of the world's good will.

Breakfasts at the World Friendship Center are international affairs. During the first 4 months of 2006, the guests represented 52 countries. Each morning during our week-long stay, we held impromptu bull sessions on international politics and relations. Breakfast was also a time for us to learn about pressing problems in other countries than our own. For example, we didn't know Australia had a water crisis and is starting work on huge desalination projects. Nor did we know that it is more expensive for Swiss to marry than to live together as single people. We've already told you about the \$1000 per month marriage penalty in taxes in Switzerland. Invariably, however, the conversations would swing around to the role of the US in world affairs, with the inevitable, "What is happening with your country?" The question has been repeated at informal lunches, formal classes, and at peace events. We ask it ourselves.

Presentations and events: We have given formal and informal peace presentations at numerous places, and the positive responses to these grassroots effort make them seem so worthwhile. Informal events are at classes and discussion groups, formal presentations include Kadir presenting his movie, *Who's Telling our Story?* (see excerpt from the movie on his website www.jkadicannon.com) and me talking about peace education, one answer to rampant militarism and war making (see my presentation slide show at www.teachforpeace.org titled *The Unseen Harvest*).

World Friendship Center, Hiroshima. Peace Museum Hiroshima. School visits in Toyohashi. Train station art show and peace drama in Toyohashi. Movie and peace education lectures in

Kansai University and Kyoto-Seika University, and casual conversations as well as meetings and class discussions... These are our efforts to promote an awareness of the need for ordinary citizens like ourselves to wake up and take action, even small actions. It seems that here in Japan, like at home, a feeling of apathy and hopeless/helplessness has a hold on the popular mindset.

TSIPP: An event with a distinctly *Sixties* flavor was last Sunday's Toyohashi Station International Peace Project, for which Kadir and Sherraid's numerous artist friends in Toyohashi had been gearing up for a week. In Yuko's studio, a group of local artists and Kadir painted a huge peace mural one day, in a cheerful frenzy of color and cooperation that resembled a quilting bee as much as peace activism. Kadir and friends created a cardboard globe for the mural to emerge from and a simple Pageant-Mime-Kyogen-Commedia play for the group (with local and Dayton volunteers too!) to perform during the peace event on April 23rd. There was a flurry of reporter interviews and last-minute calligraphy and conceptual conversations. Finally, the day dawned...with rain! On with the show: Gambaro!

In the drizzle, Kadir hung his banners, new art creations using his numerous anti-war images, but in lighter travel format (the whole art show fits in a folding chair-sized duffle bag). I hung the peace poetry of my students, in the form of 8x11 cloth "dream flags" along with another line of flags from various Philadelphia-area school kids and teachers, compliments of my friend Jeff Harlan. (See www.dreamflags.org for more on this project.) The area outside the Toyohashi train station, a beautiful plaza overlooking the city, was thought provoking and colorful. We missed the sun and we needed a rock and roll band (or at least the bagpiper who played Amazing Grace later at dinner).

In spite of the rain, the faithful Toyohashi art and host community that evolved thanks to Sherri's wonderful connections and our visit (as well as the great group of Dayton printmakers and their spouses and son), joined in to perform the drama ritual. The summary: *Common People overcome apathy and helplessness and take back the world from Greed and Power.*

The Play: Greed and Power (wearing labels in Japanese and English and grotesque masks) are playing with the world (3' cardboard globe), keeping it under their control. As their play turns to fighting, they create war and the resulting bad things that come with it. Masked actors representing war, pollution, fear, racism, famine, and unemployment keep the children, mothers, fathers, teachers, students, survivors, artists, workers... the People... under a control maintained by apathy/fear/helplessness. However, in this play, there is a happy ending! The common people wake up and decide to work to solve these seemingly insurmountable problems. Each person works on a problem near them (e.g. one of the problem/apathy masks), changing war to peace, pollution to clean environment, fear to confidence, racism to equality, famine to plenty, and unemployment to good jobs. The little people, now aware of their power to act on the world, take the world away from the control of Greed and Power, and a beautiful vision of Peace (the wonderful mural) emerges. Cheers, Hurrahs, back-slapping! The pageant reminded me of so many of Phyllis Cannon's dramatic efforts with kids and other Yellow Springs, Ohio residents in the amphitheatre in YSO years ago, or Bread and Puppet enactments at Peace Demonstrations of the present. Did it do anything for world peace? Well, it made us feel good anyhow, made the

newspapers twice, and the doing of the project created a unique community connecting two countries and continents.

Compliments, comments, and tough questions: My very best favorite (as I used to say when I was a kid) comment after a presentation came this week in the highest form of compliment from a student at Kyoto-Seika University. “You are like Confucius. He also traveled around during a time of war, speaking of peace. I admire what you are doing.” Comments and responses like these make us feel that our small journey for peace is a step toward a global connection between citizens that can make us all feel more powerful and less intimidated and hopeless.

I responded to this splendid and humbling comment with the story of peace activist A. J. Muste, who stood in front of the White House night after night, holding a candle during the Viet Nam War. When asked by a reporter, “Do you really think you can change the government by holding a candle?” Muste replied, “I am not doing this to change the government, I am doing this so the government doesn’t change me.” This is the sort of waking up I think is so wonderful about our trip.

Other favorite/most profound questions or comments from participants in our presentations or lectures OR favorite hand raising responses to questions by a group:

--From a high school student at Sakaragaoke HS: Q. What do you have to say about Okinawa in World War II? (My answer is influenced by Wendell Berry writing in the novel Hannah Coulter): “This is not my area of specialty, but my understanding is that the Okinawan people were a peaceful civilian farming population that got caught between two armies. The slaughter on Okinawa is an example of the huge human costs of war, in this case, one between the government of Japan and the government of the United States. We citizens must work to prohibit our governments from embarking on such war making policies in the future.”

--Hand-raising responses to our questions from a shy group of 100+ college students:
Q. from us: How many of you have thought about these things before? (war, peace, education, global citizenship)

A: (just a few hands raised)

Q from us: How many of you can understand what we’re talking about?

A: (@90% of hands raised)

Q. from us: How many of you feel hopeful after hearing this presentation?

A: (@70% hands raised)

--Question from a graduate student: What is peace anyway?

My answer: “That’s the most important question and one that neither adults nor children can answer. Peace is not pictures of rainbows and butterflies. Peace means families have a safe place to live and enough food to feed themselves and their children. It means good education and good environmental policies. It means social justice. To achieve peace means that we in the developed countries like Japan and the United States may have to give up some things in order to make human life more sustainable and fair for those in the developing world...”

--Comment from a graduate student: I am struck by the concept that animals don't massacre each other.

--Comment from an adult: I am just a humble postal clerk, yet my post office has a huge solar panel on the roof to generate our energy. Why is your country just fighting wars to get oil instead of doing energy conservation? (Our answer: War is good for business. Americans haven't yet seen that ecological investment makes good business sense.)

**Numerous other interactions...helping us build a sense of the world that is much broader than it was only a month ago.
Cheers, Peace, and Encouragement.**

#9 in Kyoto, Reflections on Hiroshima and Peace Education, April 29-30, 2006
Summary: Impressions of Hiroshima, Poem from Hiroshima: *Tread Lightly Please* by Junichi Mizuno, Vernon Cannon's Manhattan Project work and speeches for civilian control of nuclear power, Peace education at Sakaragoake Jr. and Sr. High School and Fujimi Primary School, "Dual citizenship," Theatre gorging, News article from Japan Times on Peace/Patriotism Education in Japan, to China May 3.

Hiroshima is a city with such a profound mood of tragedy underlying the modern surface, that for me as a visitor it was difficult to look at a river without seeing charred and blackened bodies or to walk on a path without feeling ash and bone. Hiroshima is a monument city, one that touches the visitor deeply. It draws people to it, from school groups in uniform to tourists going out of their way for a day-trip to Hiroshima. Residents get over this impression, obviously; it is not even sustained by the short-term visitor who soon enjoys the vibrant city for what it is now. But, having read Hershey's *Hiroshima*, Brown University's *Choices Curriculum on the Atomic Bomb*, and numerous other books before coming, it was hard to avoid looking under the modern surface to the horror of 60 years ago.

A Poem: This poem was recited to us by Michiko Yamane, one of our Hiroshima friends who often translates for hibakushas. A puppeteer and ventriloquist, this dynamic woman is creating dramatic performances based on the hibakushas' experiences for performances after they are no longer alive to tell their own stories.

Tread Lightly Please
by Junichi Mizuno

This whole town by the river,
Where many new buildings now stand,
Was once, long ago,
One big graveyard.

Under this road,
Where many cars now pass,
Was once a little boy
Who crouched on the ground all day.
His heart broken, recalling his mother,
Who died, infested with maggots,
And burnt.

So I ask you,
Who now tread the streets of Hiroshima,
Please, tread lightly,
Walk with care, I beseech you.
For even now,
Many who were badly burnt
Still lie in the hospitals.

Even now, suddenly somewhere,
A strange-looking person with crooked fingers,
Hiding an irregular twitch in the face
With dark black hair,
May be dying, right this minute.

So I ask you,
All who visit the city of Hiroshima,
When you walk the streets here,
Please tread lightly
Walk with care,
I beseech you
Please...

The Peace Park and Peace Museum do an impressive job of teaching people from all over Japan and all over the world about the dangers of nationalism and the horror of nuclear weapons. It was interesting to ponder Kadir's movie title in this context: *Who's Telling our Story?*

For many Americans, the reasons for dropping the atomic bomb are these:

1. To stop the war sooner, thus saving thousands of American lives...the Japanese would never surrender.
2. Hiroshima was a militarized city, thus an appropriate target.

The story is different for many Japanese. As told in the Peace Museum:

1. To impress the Soviets, to show superiority, and end the war before they could become influential in the post-war period.
2. To rationalize the huge expense (2 billion dollars) of the Manhattan Project to the American people.
3. To conduct an experiment of nuclear power on a city...

(Yes, there is recognition that Hiroshima was a military city, this concept is well-developed in earlier exhibits in the museum, but this point is less emphasized in the display on the reasons for the bombing of Hiroshima.)

Reporters and Hibakushas (A-bomb survivors) were interested in Kadir's peace work as the son of a Manhattan Project scientist. They often focused on this aspect of Kadir's background, about which we knew frustratingly little. It was gratifying to many of them to have Kadir tell some of the details we do know from our son's interview of Vernon in 1994. We tell about the drive of the scientists to "beat Hitler to the bomb" and their being kept in the dark about the fact that the Germans were not working on it. We have spoken about the fact that many Manhattan Project scientists urged the government to use the bomb as a demonstration to end the war—not on a civilian target. We have also spoken about Vernon's traveling around the country after the war and his speeches to various academic and public groups about the dangers of a nuclear arms race. His words from a speech in the late 40s and early 50s are eerily prescient:

"...There is no defense against the atomic bomb. By that I mean that there is no way of assuring that they can be stopped before they reach a target and that there is no hint of any way by which they may be made to blow up automatically before they have reached their target. As a matter of fact there is no defense against any bomb, whether it is atomic or not. It is merely that the odds are different when we discuss atomic bombs. What I half of them are intercepted, or three-fourths, or by great good fortune 99%. When the hundredth one lands and totally destroys a city of several hundred thousand people—well, that's not a very effective defense.

There is an old argument that for each new offensive weapon a defense has always been found—that the theories that the world could not survive another war were advanced when guns were first made, when airplanes, tanks, poison gases were introduced into warfare—but the words are tricky and the reasoning is wrong. We do not have a 100% effective defense against any of these weapons. Unless one can insure that no atomic bombs, even of the so-called obsolete Hiroshima type, will land in a city, he cannot truthfully say that he knows we can be defended against them. It has been pointed out many times that the United States will be particularly vulnerable to attack in a war in which atomic weapons are used, simply because of the concentration of our people and our industries into small regions liberally sprinkled with large cities.

The only acceptable solution to the problem is in the establishment of an effective international control of atomic energy. Remember that, after all, it is we in this country that must take the leadership in seeing to it that effective world agreements are reached. These agreements must absolutely prevent any nation from being able to use an atomic bomb against any other nation great or small. The responsibility is primarily ours because we created the bombs—we used them—we have the facilities form making more-- and we are taking advantage of those facilities now. In the eyes of a large part of the world we are therefore the biggest eventual threat to their security and to world peace."

Sakaragaoke School and peace education: In Toyohashi, we visited Sakaragaoke High School and Junior High, a private school with a reputation for academic excellence and a well-developed peace education program. The work of the Junior High was heartening and

impressive. They have created a Global Studies “major” or track that is a six-year program, taking students who select this program from junior through senior high school. (Other tracks include university track, music “major”, technical, and regular... sorry, don’t have too many details.)

Of particular note is the study of Korea and the Japanese militarism and war crimes toward this country. Students study in depth events many Japanese text books gloss over. Then they take a field trip to a sister school in Korea and Korean students visit Sakaragoake as well. They have a sister school in Australia and the Philippines. (For fun pictures, but not much English) see their website by Googling Sakaragoake School in Toyohashi Japan. I would love to develop an exchange with them, and I have spoken about it with two teachers who designed the global studies program.

Fujimi Primary School: I also enjoyed a marvelous day with the Japanese equivalent of third graders (one of my favorite grades to teach) at **Fujimi** elementary school in Toyohashi. This school’s motto promotes “Fu: thinking deeply about everything... Ji: having a healthy body... and Mi: making friends with everyone.” The classroom atmosphere was great. You haven’t lived until you have seen small children don aprons, masks, and caps and march off to the kitchen to bring back dishes, cups, bottles of milk, pots of curry, rolls, and chopsticks and proceed to set up and serve lunch to their classmates. (Then at the end of the meal the kids pack it all up and clean up.)

This heartening educational effort is countered by the news we have heard throughout Japan, from Hiroshima to Tokyo, that peace education is being squashed by local and prefecture (“state”) boards of education. Since we have been here a Tokyo teacher was suspended for refusing to rise for the national anthem. Teachers in Hiroshima prefecture have been sent off to the hinterlands in job transfers meant to punish their peace education efforts.

“Dual Citizenship:” I end by including an article from yesterday’s international Herald Tribune on the proposal to include patriotism in Japanese education. It seems to me we have to devise a new kind of dual citizenship: local and global citizenship. We need to teach our children to love their local culture and environment at the same time as we need to encourage them to be active, compassionate, and respectful global citizens. The new law described below seems to strive for this inclusiveness, but knowing how quickly patriotism turns to nationalism turns to militarism makes many educators—like me—suspicious.

Don’t worry... we’re having lots of fun, too! As the slowing pace of emails should indicate, we are busy in a wonderful way. As much as this is a peace oriented trip, we are also enjoying tremendously the Japanese people we have met (and many new American friends from Ohio as well). Since we can’t gorge ourselves on food comfortably, we are gorging ourselves on Japanese Theatre. (Full disclosure: actually... Mayumi Kubota and her Kansai University students prepared a vegetarian feast that I videotaped for cooking lessons. Delicious. Then Setsuko Tsuji from Kyoto-Sieka University –a college with an Antioch/Warren Wilson flavor—treated us to an aesthetic and delicious feast of “temple food” of vegetarian delicacies. WOW! Even I didn’t know you could make so many dishes with tofu.

Theatrically feasting, we have been enjoying hours and hours of **Kyogen** a mime-like set of comic and serious mask performances at several beautiful temples and shrines. Yesterday we saw a **Noh** recital, then the spring **Geisha** dance performance (Broadway quality production-wow!), then spent a glorious evening at **Dai-go-ji** temple for **Kabuki** theatre in an environment that was painfully beautiful. "Built in 874 and designated as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site." The five-story wooden pagoda (oldest wooden building in Kyoto) was lit up, as were selected trees and other small shrines. The Buddha behind the actors was lit by candlelight, and this was the first time I have attended theatre where there has been a rain delay... While an American crowd would have been hooting and hollering, the Japanese donned their plastic raincoats (included with admission) and waited in a peaceful hush. Just an observation... Saw a street demonstration protesting for compensation for Korean comfort women of World War II, so Japanese can certainly yell when they need to. (And Japanese junior high schoolers are just as frisky as any others you've met...)

More to come when we have time. Meanwhile, we enjoy a few more days in Kyoto, then to China on May 3.

Peace Education article from Japan Times 4/29/06:

<http://search.japantimes.co.jp/print/nn20060429a1.html>

Diet handed 'patriotic' education bill

Proposed change of '47 law has foes, including teachers, fearing Big Brother
By AKEMI NAKAMURA and HIROKO NAKATA

Staff writers

The government submitted a bill to the Diet Friday that will revise the Fundamental Law of Education for the first time since its enactment in 1947 to include fostering "patriotism."

Drafted during the Allied Occupation, the present law does not mention patriotism because the word was associated with Japan's wartime totalitarianism and militarism, according to scholars.

Conservative politicians have long sought to emphasize the concept in school curricula, but Japan "has been sensitive about patriotism, mainly due to memories of the (totalitarian) education before and during the war," said Hidenori Fujita, a professor at International Christian University in Tokyo.

"Patriotism" as stipulated in the bill, however, goes beyond the usual definition of love, loyalty and zealous support of a nation, by requiring people to cultivate "an attitude that respects tradition and culture, loves the nation and homeland that have fostered them, while respecting other countries and contributing to international peace and development."

Against a backdrop of problems at public schools, including bullying, truancy and a breakdown in classroom discipline, the ruling bloc has been pushing for a change in the so-called educational constitution for the past six years.

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi told reporters that he hopes all the parties will have a productive discussion to get the bill passed by the end of the current session, scheduled for June 18.

"Times have changed over the past 60 years. That's why we are considering the importance of education again," Koizumi said.

While it remains unclear whether the bill will clear the Diet during the current session due to time constraints, experts say that if the amendments are enacted, they may have a profound affect on the public education system.

Kimiko Nezu, a teacher at Tachikawa No. 2 Junior High School in western Tokyo, said she could easily lose her job under the revised law.

"Refusing to rise to sing the national anthem (at school ceremonies) would be a violation of the law, so teachers like me could be fired," said Nezu, who has ignored instructions from the Tokyo metropolitan board of education requiring all teachers to stand and sing "Kimigayo" at school ceremonies since October 2003.

Nezu and 32 other metro-area public school teachers who refused to rise from their seats at graduation ceremonies in March were slapped with penalties ranging from pay cuts to three-month suspensions by the school board.

"This situation will likely spread to other regions in a few years once the revised law is enacted," she warned.

The Liberal Democratic Party and its coalition partner, New Komeito, agreed on the amendment bill earlier this month after lengthy debate. Its provisions also stress the importance of educating children at home and lifelong education.

Language dealing with religious education remains virtually unchanged in the bill. It stipulates that education must be tolerant toward religion, general religious knowledge and the status of religion in society. It also states that public schools must not teach any religious doctrine.

Still, the article with the new definition of patriotism remains the most contentious part of the bill.

If the bill is passed, other laws on education and academic guidelines for elementary and junior high schools are expected to be revised to incorporate its principles, education ministry officials say.

Although many educators are skeptical of the changes, such opposition is not universal. Seishiro Sugihara, a professor of education at Musashino University in Tokyo, said the legal revisions could improve public education.

"Patriotism has been mentioned in academic guidelines (for elementary and junior high school social studies) but (schools) have not emphasized it very much," he said. "With the revised law, however, (Japan) can nurture patriotism as other countries have done."

Sugihara said developing respect for the country and tradition may help children become more interested in society and increase their sense of right and wrong -- elements he believes schools have neglected.

Sugihara said he is disappointed the proposed changes do not stress the importance of religious education, because general religious knowledge could also help students develop peaceful views on the world.

Such arguments do not sway critics, who fear children may be coerced into patriotic displays and that this could affect how they are evaluated by teachers, said Hiroshi Nishihara, a professor of law at Waseda University.

"(Under the revised law), the state might decide what kinds of attitudes are 'patriotic.' If such a situation arises, it might try to force students to accept its judgments on other issues," he said. "Children would not be allowed to be critical" of the state, he added.

Although Nishihara voiced concern that the new law could revive the militant nationalism of the past, Musashino University's Sugihara called such fears "ridiculous" and said they were the legacy of a mind-set born under the Occupation.

For non-Japanese studying at public schools, the revisions may be difficult to accept.

Lim Young Ki, 29, a third-generation South Korean resident in Japan, said that although he thinks foreigners living here should feel an affinity toward the country, emphasizing patriotism at school may make foreign students uncomfortable.

The Japan Times: Saturday, April 29, 2006
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#10 Kyoto: Busy Japanese Kids article, April 28, 2006

Summary: I didn't write this, but I have observed this. Japanese school kids are on their bikes for an hour each way to school or on subways going to "cram school" at late hours at night. Is there a happy medium for all of us?

*Meanwhile: For Japanese children,
little time to daydream*

<http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/04/28/opinion/edkumiko.php>

International Herald Tribune—Kumiko Nakahara

TOKYO Today is Thursday, so I meet my 7-year-old son after school at the bus stop and nag him to walk home quickly so we can make it to soccer practice on time. At home, Yataro changes into his soccer uniform and switches his school satchel for his sports backpack. I put a piece of candy in his mouth as we walk out the door and grab our bikes for the 15-minute ride to the field. I chastise him for riding zig-zag. "Each loop like that takes up more time!" I shout, tailgating him on the bike path. The day is still young.

After soccer practice, Yataro will go to abacus class for an hour of addition and subtraction drills. After that, homework and piano practice. Friday, swimming and abacus; Saturday, English and judo.

These days I feel like I'm back at my former job running the mad schedule of the president of a large resort. Only now I'm keeping track of my second- grade son's after-school activities.

Along with the rest of Japan's growing number of parents fixated on their child's education, I've been swept up in lesson mania. We want the best opportunities for our kids. We want them to keep up with their peers. And if there's even a glimmer of talent in there, we want to mine it for all its worth.

More than 80 percent of elementary school children take classes outside of the classroom, according to a survey last year by the education and marketing firm Benesse, with the share reaching more than 90 percent for second and third graders. Swimming, music and English rank the highest in popularity. Among Yataro's elite private school classmates, the breadth of lessons include rhythmic gymnastics, pony riding and lego building. A popular book, "How to Guarantee Winning in Children's Lessons," advises parents on the dos and don'ts of navigating through the maze of choices.

All of these classes aren't cheap; one third of families spend more than \$170 per month on classes, according to Benesse. One mother recently asked me what I thought about an English language tutor for her daughter who wanted to charge \$119 per hour. The steep expenditures are a factor behind the population crisis in Japan where women have just 1.29 children in their lifetime, among the lowest fertility rates in the world. In a

2002 government survey, more than 60 percent of respondents said "high costs" prevented them from having as many children as they would like.

I marvel at Yataro's energy level, but I also worry that I'm running him into the ground. Exhaustion from after- school activities was one of the topics at a recent parents' meeting where mothers bemoaned their children being groggy after school and mixing up their various lesson bags. By the time we get home each evening and I coach him on his homework, Yataro's tolerance for sitting at a desk is nearly gone.

Slacking off on school work is not an option: Many of his classmates practice "sakidori" - literally "grasping ahead" - mastering writing and math years ahead of their current grade level, which keeps the class pace intense. When I point out mistakes, Yataro often glares at me, exposing the whites of his eyes, and then throws pencils and erasers around the room. Time for a parent-child therapy session? Unfortunately, no time slots left for that.

Sundays are set aside for downtime and playdates, but is one day enough? I remember when I was his age hanging out with friends outdoors every afternoon, roller skating, playing house and daydreaming on the swing set. If Yataro even lets his mind wander momentarily, someone is always on top of him, whether it's his abacus teacher ordering "concentration!" or soccer parents shouting "What's the matter with that goalie?" as he leans against the goal post watching the clouds drift by.

I know I should lessen his load, but each activity seems indispensable: He loves soccer, and it seems only as a young boy can he be so exhilarated by a sport he isn't the star of; piano opens up the world of music; abacus should cure his slow pace at calculations; swimming is a must at his school; and I want judo to instill a Bushido spirit in him to compensate for the lack of male kinship he suffers from my being a single mother.

"The sooner you get there the sooner you can ... " I was saying to Yataro recently in my routine harassment to get him to abacus class, when I paused to think of yet another enticement to get him to move faster. Instead, he surprised me with a most luxurious thought: "We might have time for a walk outside."

See the China Letters, next pages...

~~~~~CHINA~~~~~

**#11-Beijing-And now for something completely different...**

***Arrival in China: car horns, traffic jam, delicious dumplings...May 3, 2006***

**I am laughing** as I consider how I can possibly convey the difference between the Japan we left and the China we have entered. Let's start with the dust everywhere. Or should I start with the most delicious meal I have eaten---in China, or anywhere? Or perhaps it should be the fact that I have just been part of a real-life version of the plastic kids' game I have in my classroom: *Traffic Jam*, with red trucks, green cars, buses, and honking taxis at perpendiculars to each other. The only difference between the game and real life is that all the horns were blaring in the version we just experienced. In fact... this is where to begin.

**In Japan, if we heard a car horn**, it was cause for attention. In the month we spent there, I heard three beeps of a horn. I can only imagine the chagrin of each of the three drivers who, for some very meaningful reason, had opted to beep the horn. In China, in three hours, I have heard a year's worth of a cacophony of sound. In the concert we just attended, in a taxi, with five people piled in on laps, the tones and rhythms of the horns made a symphony. The Kyoto Symphony is preparing to accompany Charlie Chaplin's *City Lights* in a special concert in a few weeks. I was sorry to miss it, but why? Our Chinese taxi driver, seen through the rear-view mirror, looked like Charlie Chaplin when he gets that crazed "I'm going to boil my boots and eat them" look in his eye, his hair riled and ruffled, eyebrows akimbo. I got my movie and my symphony too. Not sure who the composer was: Cage, Ives, Copeland...

**Real life Traffic Jam:** Of course, poor Kadir, sitting in the front seat, bore the brunt of the huge, gray dump truck five inches from his door, and the immobile, red dump truck a foot from our front bumper. He may not have even noticed the motionless city bus, sardine-can full of tired commuters hanging by straps, to his right. Did he see the trapped tour bus on our left? I don't know. Perhaps he was pondering the puzzle of the tiny cars blocking the work trucks in a pattern only a geometry teacher could love.

**Aaah, China.** From gloved East, where Japanese police in white gloves guided pedestrians on green carpets past construction in the road, to gloves off Wild West: China, where even a policeman would have given up on the crisis at hand.

Suffice it to say, somehow, the traffic sorted itself out, in six to 8 lanes of dust and dirt road, here on the eastern suburbs of Beijing, out past the sixth ring road. We are staying in a palatial home by any standard, in a gated community, just inches from the dust and debris of a city waiting to be built. Tomorrow we go to Xinglong County to do two days of training for county English teachers.

**Dumplings—Jiaozi:** Over dinner, a delightful and memorable array of the finest vegetarian dumplings we have ever eaten, we had songs, Chinese lessons, and enjoyable conversation with our dear Phelex Foundation hosts, young professionals charged with the task this holiday week of keeping us on schedule, fed, and happy. They are doing a great job. For more on the

fascinating work of the Phelex Foundation, visit [www.phelex.org](http://www.phelex.org) to learn about the sustainable tuition-raising projects they promote at over 40 poor, rural schools all over China. Spoke to our friend in Beijing, John Gordon (Wesleyan '02) today. He sounds great, and we hope to do some programs with his help. Discussing nationalism here is a different ballgame than in Japan. There, many people question and worry about nationalism, based on the tragic history of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Here, nationalism is seen, according to John, as a virtue, a necessity...

Just wanted you to know we've arrived, and the adventure continues... at 4 a.m. tomorrow morning, in fact, so honkifyou'reinChina!

*Si Jien!*

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## ***#12-Xinglong County, China Part 1: Our new best friends in Xinglong County-students and teachers, May 5, 2006***

**Summary: This installment contains the latest from our three-day visit to Xinglong County, train ride through countryside, student classes, and teacher training. "How wonderful it is to greet friends from afar"--Confucius**

**Xinglong County** is about 2 hours by train from Beijing, and is surrounded by beautiful, rugged mountains in Hebei province. It is obvious by the layering of the rocks that this mountain area used to be seabed, but now the valleys and mountains contain mostly rural communities, farms, and factories. One wonders if Beijing can possibly expand this far. Given the rate it is going, anything is possible.

**Our early morning train ride** began at 7:15, and we boarded the crowded train with our Phelex Foundation "guides/mother hens" Feng Wei (aka Derek) and Ms. Tan Hua. We squeezed onto the train along with several thousand Golden Week vacationing families who carried great baskets of food, playing cards, and books to tide them over on their longer trip to Chengde, a famous vacation spot, 4 hours from Beijing. We joined the amused onlookers watching the strength-of-stocking demonstrations energetically conducted by intrepid traveling stocking salesmen, and enjoyed watching the moveable feast. Chinese trains are equipped with boiling water taps, so fresh noodles and hot tea are a staple of these long trips. Soon we were joined by Li Yan (aka Christina) and her boyfriend/fiancée Kevin. Li Yan would be our translator for the presentations.

**The ride was a glorious peek** at life along the rails, outside the cities, in the developing but still rural countryside. Every hillside was terraced, with many orchards along the way. Wives and husbands demonstrated the real meaning of "getting hitched" as the wife directed the plow and the husband pulled it along the long rows of rich brown earth in at least one small farm plot. Farmers worked every small field this spring day the old-fashioned way—by hand, with shovel, hoe, and rake. Happily, the Beijing smog slowly receded, and we began to perceive clearer skies and air. When we arrived in Xinglong County, we were relieved to be able to breathe deeply the fresher air.

**On our arrival the school officials** greeted us with the formal/informal Chinese hospitality I have come to respect and appreciate: flowers, fruits, photos, handshakes, bits of conversations....

Then the whisking off to the next activity at such speed that one hardly has time to gulp down the green tea or fruit drink at one's table. But the fun is really with the students, not the pomp of ceremony.

**It is still a thrill** when a class of tentative, shy, yet curious high school students (ages 16-20) breaks out into applause when their visitor from the USA simply walks into the room. I began this presentation, as I have begun others in Japan and China, by explaining my hope that we small people can make lasting **connections (guanxi)** by learning about each other's cultures and languages. "I have great hope for the lasting friendship between our two countries. Our governments may make policies that promote war, I tell them, yet we must remember the ties of humanity that bind us. I win their hearts by **quoting Confucius: "How wonderful it is to greet friends from afar."** As Li Yan translates this phrase, familiar to every Chinese young and old, they recite it with her and applaud again. It's love at first sight. When I speak my few phrases of Chinese, I seal the deal. What we continue to find is that many Chinese want to like Americans. There is a feeling of exuberant curiosity. There is fear of American policy, but generally affection for American people.

**The first group of students** I taught about American culture was full of lively humanities students, very demonstrative and eager. They asked questions about everything from fast foods to movies, to exams and what teens do on the weekends, to NBA stars to "do you like to sing?" This prompted my renditions of two songs I had hoped to teach them, "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me" and "We shall overcome." Had I lived before singing "*We Shall Overcome*" with a roomful of energetic, lovely-voiced, Chinese high schoolers, hearts full of song and dreams? Can you picture them singing, sitting at desks piled a foot high and two-feet wide with books and papers they must memorize? Can you hear them clapping on the on-beat? They reciprocated my shaky singing efforts and our American song-fest with a full-voiced chorus of a Chinese song that proclaimed "meeting someone is like a song." I have the sheet music in Chinese, and I hope I remember to get a translation.

**Hugs and autographs:** The girl who had started the singing had come up to give me a big hug. This was a bit of a surprise, as I had gotten used to the relative restraint of Japanese and Chinese I had met before. She asked me to write her a note and I did. It is always dangerous to sign a note to one student in a room full of 80, and unfortunately I forgot. In a Japanese elementary school classroom, the little children had written me tiny little notes and wanted my autograph. I hadn't expected a roomful of Chinese young adults to line up to have me sign their notebooks. Westerners are indeed still a good luck charm here, it seems. So, to be fair to all, I signed 'em all. As the Chinese say, "All for one and one for all!" (Or was that the musketeers...)

**Meanwhile, Kadir** had the same rousing response from the art students. During a long bout of technical difficulties with the computer, he showed the banners of his art and discussed them. He commented on the students' art which they had displayed in honor of his visit. Finally, when the computer was working, Kadir presented his movie. It seemed they responded quite favorably to this very new sort of art/movie/poetry presentation. Kadir asked them to discuss what peace is, and after lunch they asked him what he thought it was. They applauded his definition of both physical peace and inner peace, using the well-known story of the people with extended arms (or sometimes long spoons) who fed each other and thrived but starved if they only tried to feed

themselves. Talking about inner peace was a bit of a challenge for the translator, so it is unclear how much was conveyed, other than good vibes.

**Despite the school's obvious lack** of economic bounty, the artwork was better than that of any high school Kadir has seen in the United States. It wasn't innovative, but it was good classical training. The Chinese art teacher enjoyed realistic art, and probably did not find Kadir's art to his liking, but he had a good relationship with the kids, and an obvious talent at teaching. The art students broke into groups and did an activity with masks Kadir had brought. Then he got them making banners, adding to the peace artwork of the Japanese students. If there was ill-feeling toward Japan, it was not discernable. The art students got busy and everything settled to a pleasant murmur of creativity.

**Several of the kids' faces were strikingly eager**, and they seemed eager about peace issues as well as art that was different. When Kadir finally ran out of ideas, the class was supposed to be over, but the kids just lingered, standing around. Finally they all started goofing around and taking pictures with Kadir in good-natured groups of twos and threes.

**The Chinese National Examinations** loom over teacher and student alike. Moving Chinese English teachers into a head-set of using active learning techniques like actual speaking and conversation, games, and listening activities is a challenge, as the pressure to teach to the test is enormous. Thus, the teacher training had quite a different feeling from the pure jubilation of the kids' classes, as many teachers had traveled two and three hours to reach the school, and also had miles to go before they were convinced that anything other than what my friend Pat calls "skills, drill, and kill" will do the trick. A colleague of mine in the summer program from California State University at Fullerton put it well: The Chinese system rewards visual-linguistic intelligence. In the U.S., "No Child Left Behind" purports to make all kids pass. Chinese testing is designed to let some kids rise to the top—the ones with visual-linguistic perception talent.

**Another thorn in the Chinese teacher's side** is class size, with some teachers complaining they might try some of these ideas if they had classes smaller than 40, 50, or 60. Finally, most of the teachers present—over 100 teachers of English—were too shy to speak English in front of the group! In spite of paired talking exercises and my pleas for questions and comments, deathly silences filled the air in the morning when I asked them to speak in front of the group. It took the impassioned post-lunch pep talk of my energetic new colleague and translator, Li Yan, herself an English teacher at China Art Academy in Beijing, to shake them out of their timidity. "How can your students feel brave if you teachers lack courage?" she chided. Gradually, the room warmed and the brave grew in number. By the end, many more teachers had a few new tricks to try, and we had a useful question and answer session about everything from managing large groups or naughty students to using resources other than Internet (which is not only limited by the authorities but limited by availability). The teachers were most interested in my suggestions for using auditory, visual, and kinesthetic techniques to bolster the vast memory requirements of their students' language programs. Again, the very eager teachers gathered for pictures and email exchanges at the end of the day.

**The a-bomb survivor** we interviewed in Hiroshima spoke about the reason she keeps talking to groups of students and teachers, in spite of the seeming impossibility of achieving her goal of

world peace. “If I speak to 100 students, and touch even one, I have hope that that **one** student may do something great and important for peace.” Here’s to that one student, wherever in the world he or she may be!

**In another email, I will write about the parallel three-day program of Chinese hospitality: eating and drinking, a visit to the Phelex Foundation fruit bonsai project, and a visit to the beautiful country side, with our new best friends, the educational authorities of Xinglong County and the Communist Party Officials we shared many a meal with. Also coming soon, are new perspectives on the Chinese view of Japan, the USA, and Taiwan and Tibet.**

*Si Jien!*

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### **#13 Xinglong County, Beijing, Xian-Our New Best Friends: OR-- You Can Talk Politics in China: May 23, 2006**

*(My cousin thought I was being superstitious by skipping number 13 in my series of letters from Japan and China. I simply could not find the time to finish this letter. Finally, I drafted most of it on the train from Beijing to Xian, an overnight train.)*

**Summary: I have already written about the Xinglong County student and teacher trainings (#12 *May Our Countries be Friends Forever*). Here is the parallel three-day program of Chinese hospitality: eating and drinking (beware *ganbei*), a visit to the Phelex Foundation fruit bonsai project, and a visit to the beautiful countryside, with our new best friends, the educational authorities of Xinglong County and the Communist Party Officials we shared many a meal with. Also the Chinese view of Japan, the USA, and Taiwan and Tibet. Finally, political discussions in Beijing, Xian, and a train to Suzhou.**

As part of our trip to Xinglong County outside Beijing, and the student and teacher-trainings there, we enjoyed boundless hospitality (aka a forced march to breakfast, lunch, and dinner feasts). Our dining companions were a group of school principals and Communist Party associates who were as fond of good food and conversation as they were of taking Americans to every restaurant in town. They said it was to spread the honor of serving us to many different people. We felt it was a feather in their caps to bring Americans to their County to do teacher trainings, so they wanted to be seen everywhere with us. Regardless, we were graciously treated like foreign dignitaries wherever we went.

**This trip was set up by the Phelex Foundation**, a philanthropic organization founded by Chinese now living in the US to promote educational opportunities for the disadvantaged in rural China. Their task is a big one as the income gap between rich and poor continues to widen. Phelex proposes sustainable money-raising projects to rural schools, such as tea-growing and fruit bonsai growing and works with schools to enhance work opportunities for students. Until

recently, the funds raised were used for tuition for students in primary schools. Since the government approved free tuition until grade 9, Phelex has shifted its emphasis to high schools, to help students pay their tuitions for school and to help those who may not pass the college entrance exams (about 60% of students do not pass) to have useful training and work opportunities. At the fruit bonsai farm we visited, we watched middle school trainees twist wire around the trunks and branches of young, potted peach trees and firmly shape the branches into pleasing formations under the watchful eye of their teacher. (See more at [www.phelex.org](http://www.phelex.org) )

***Lonely Planet-Beijing says this about Baijiu:*** “To aid digestion and get rapidly sozzled, Chinese men often drink baijiu with lunch and dinner. Despite being loosely translated as wine, the potent potion is in fact a clear spirit fermented from sorghum (a type of millet). Baijiu is used for toasts at banquets; if you invited to ‘ganbei,’ you will be expected to drain your glass. The drink is a searing, eye-watering, strong tippie that will quickly have you sliding off your seat and taking the table cloth with you, so go easy on it...Tang poet Li Bai wrote some of his most lucid material on the stuff, till drowning in the Yangze River on a mind bend. It dates back to the Shang Dynasty (1700-1200 BC), but regular users even have trouble recalling the night before the morning after. At banquets it leaves your teeth smoking and your host gloating. Who said the Chinese can’t drink? The men in Beijing have it for lunch and dinner; sometimes with food.”

**Baijiu—not oil—seems to be fueling China.** The educational authorities in Xinglong County (as did the ones I met in Jiangsu Province last summer) use it liberally to establish a hierarchy of hospitality and manhood. In short, at lunch and dinner they see who can drink whom under the table. It’s all in the wrist, as a ganbei (bottoms up) challenge demands both drinkers drain their wine cups, then flick their wrists forward to show their empty cup to their partner. Perhaps this is how power is jockeyed among all those who hold it, as these events with elaborate seating and toasting reminded us of the accounts of our friend about seating arrangements in Washington, DC parties with Kissinger and friends or the international gatherings of diplomats our friend Jonathan Granoff addresses in the cause of promoting nuclear disarmament.

**For the group of school officers:** principals and associate principals, who were joined by Xinglong County Communist Party officials to wine and dine us for three days of our trainings in this rural district, baijiu was the drug and duel of choice. Thank God we don’t drink—although this fact nearly killed our poor host, the school principal, who literally pleaded with us to drink with him to show our everlasting friendship. “Our love is in our hearts, not the wine cup,” we diplomatically replied in the style of the Chinese poets, and he accepted with chagrin, only to plead again at the next meal.

**Our poor, dear chaperone** from Phelex Foundation, alas, was not so fortunate. A gentle young man, he couldn’t hold his liquor. Thus, he feared he would not hold his own and advance up the social and professional ladder. His colleague, an accomplished drinker, had to take his place among the men, offering ganbei challenge/toasts on behalf of our Phelex Foundation sponsors. “Shh—don’t tell them,” she pleaded, more for her benefit than for hiss. Meanwhile, the poor fellow, feeling obligated to take a sip when toasted, winced, whimpered, and wept, clutching his head in his hands after just one sip. We pleaded privately with him to excuse himself or drink soda, but it was to no avail. “You don’t understand. I must drink with them,” he explained.

**As you might expect**, the consciousness and eruditeness of our hosts gradually declined as a meal progressed. We'd begin one meal swapping quotations from the Tao of Lao Tse—the Chinese were delighted that we knew, “That which is the Tao cannot be named, (“That which is called Tao is not Tao...”)-- and would reply, “Tao fe tao, fe chang tao, ming fe ming, fe chang ming...” We would go on to poetry, opera, literature, politics.

**We'd propose solutions** or they would pose questions about American foreign policy or international affairs. We would express our hope for China's sustainable and ecological development (read more about this in Eric Diamond's *Collapse*) and they would assure us of new policies meant to guarantee this. But by the first or second round of cheerful and sincere toasts to our mutually assured affection, several school directors would have turned beet red and started to sweat, and our dearest host, the principal, would plead again for us to just try one cup and drink with him. A thin, graceful man, he was a professional at drinking!

**In striking contrast** was the highest Party official present at each meal. While his second-in-command colleague (a burly, rough man for whom our affection grew meal by meal, and who took us to meet his farmer parents in the countryside) could eat and drink with seeming invincibility, the highest official present, Mr. Zheng Li, did not need to drink as his place at the top was secure. Thus, he would sip politely and remain a vigorous, curious, dynamic conversation partner. It was only on the rare night that our translator drank with the men that conversation with Mr. Zheng became difficult!

**During our last day together**, after a pleasant hike in the mountains at a newly developed natural area/resort, Mr. Zheng brought out several books he had written and began autographing them for us as we signed his guest book. His inscription to us reads, “You like peace, and I want peace—we are the same. You hate war, and I hate war. We are the same. May our countries be friends forever.”

**In one conversation, Zheng asked** us if we had trouble dining with a Communist; I replied, “No, but do you trouble dining with Americans?” We launched into a frank discussion of the Sinophobia we have observed in Americans of our generation and the growing curiosity of younger generations about China. On more than one occasion, Zheng's associate fondly recalled the help of the Flying Tigers, American forces, against Japan in WWII. “We felt the Americans were our friends then,” he recalled. They also bemoaned Bush's war policies, and hoped for a change in US policy. Of course, we agreed.

**The most interesting conversation** of the three-day intensive was one with our young Phelex Foundation hosts and our dear translator and her fiancée. After our hike in the spectacular and pristine Strange Rock Mountains, we spoke for about an hour without the distraction of the drinkers or the ceremonies. With LiYan, Kevin, FengWei, and Tan Hua, we were given a crash course in the perspectives of young Chinese on Taiwan and Tibet. It is a neatly packaged message, and our friend John Gordon says Chinese are well educated in the perspective in their schooling. As he says, “Nationalism is a virtue in China today.” Here is how the Chinese message goes, as expressed by our young friends:

**China has always been bullied by other countries, they tell us.** Now China is “boxed in” by India, and Japan and South Korea, U.S. allies. Their history with Japan is one of terrifying and unforgettable aggression by the Japanese. In fact, the region we are in was one in which the Japanese wiped out the entire local population in the 1930s-40s. Hatred of Japan and fear of United States motivates these young people to plead with us to understand their point of view, “Taiwan is part of China. We have the same fatherland, same heritage and language. Look at your Civil War. You fought it to keep your country united when one part wanted independence. Look at Canada. Even though Quebec wants independence, the country remains whole. We need Taiwan for a buffer and a protection against aggression by the US and Japan. We plead with you to tell your country to think carefully before it helps Taiwan become independent. You are being manipulated. If there is a war between the US and China,” Kevin earnestly concludes, “it will not be over resources. It will be over Taiwan.” There is similar feeling about Tibet. “It’s part of China. Always has been; always will be,” they assure us.

**Very neatly packaged.** It is as if each one of our four young friends can finish each other’s sentences. But, it is also very complicated. “Everything in China is complicated,” said one expat friend of John’s at an informal expat dinner in Beijing.

**At China Art Academy in Beijing** a few days later, we continue to put the pieces together during political question and answer sessions with graduate students. They ask us pointed questions about US foreign policy and relations between US, China, and Japan. There is a hardness in the voices and faces of some of the questioners at first. Yet, after discussion, they soften and stay to chat. But the critique continues at dinner in Beijing with the China Art Academy principal and vice-principal. There is no drinking with these academics, so the perspectives are a bit more clearly communicated. The principal’s opening salvo is, “If you elect a cowboy president, you’ll get war.” He goes on to discuss the issue of corruption in China, and the fact that corruption has been the downfall of China throughout history. He contends that the Japanese did not defeat the Chinese militarily during the 30s-40s, but that the Chinese lost their spirit. He went on to discuss China as a melting pot with over 50 ethnicities, and that China has always absorbed information and culture from other societies. “Now, as before,” he concludes, “Corruption is our worst problem.”

**With a tour guide in Xian,** we continue to pursue a political picture of China. This twenty-six-year-old is married to a military officer who is stationed in another city. She explains his reasons for enlisting, “He didn’t study hard enough to do well on his examinations, so he enlisted...” The reasons for joining the Chinese military are similar to those of United States enlistees: patriotic feeling, hope for financial reward, or lack of other options. This guide’s mother is actually happy that Bush is fighting in Iraq. “That way, he leaves China alone. If he wasn’t bothering Iraq, he’d be bothering us.”

**Our guide also explains the party line on Mao:** “He was a great man who made mistakes...” We are standing in Xian, the former capital of China, in Shaanxi Province. *Lonely Planet-China* explains, “For more than 2 millennia over a dozen dynasties rose and fell in Shaanxi... Two centuries before Homer penned the Iliad and the Odyssey (and Rome was founded), five centuries prior to the Buddha’s enlightenment, Xian was already a world class city... eastern terminus for the Silk Road.” Our guide freely discusses the rise and fall of Mao and the terrible

mistakes of the Cultural Revolution. “He was beginning to lose power, and his people were trying to find a way to stay in power. A personality cult began, and the Cultural Revolution was a result.” It is fitting that we discuss Mao as a great leader/tyrant in Xian, as the drawing card of this city is the impressive tomb of Emperor Qin Shi Huang, who sacrificed the lives and resources of his countrymen to create the famed terracotta warrior formations of his burial place.

**As we view the impressive** and awe-inspiring tomb, we ponder the story it is trying to tell. On the one hand, the accomplishment of the craftsmen is amazing. Over 720,000 people worked on these sculptures and installation for 39 years. Imagine the labor, creativity, and accomplishment. Also imagine the disease, humiliation, and misery. Unfortunately, most of these artisans and workers were killed during the process or buried alive when the emperor was buried. The warrior statues don’t convey the story of the small people, rather they speak to us of arrogance, empire, and hubris.

**Qin is considered the first emperor** of China, and fans of the movies *Hero* and *Assassin* can make some comparisons to the two movies’ portrayals of him. As portrayed in *Hero*, Qin is a man with a vision, out to unite China, making war to make peace. (Hmm.) He unified thought, unified the country, and unified writing. *Assassin* portrays him more as an ordinary man.

**But history tells us that Qin** was ruthless and cruel. He murdered all the scholars of six nations by burying them alive in a pit. He burned books and started building his tomb at the age of 13. He had 700,000 craftsmen build over 60,000 terracotta warriors to protect him in the afterlife, and then had them all buried alive with him in 210 BC, when he died “unexpectedly” at the age of 50.

**We share these perspectives** with our train-compartment partner for the 14-hour train ride from Xian to Suzhou. He is a Chinese-born American, currently living and working for the Federal Government in Washington, DC. Born in Nantong, near our destination, he taught English in Xian for several years before being sent to grow rice during the Cultural Revolution. He left China when the revolution ended, and on this trip has had reunions with old friends from 40 years ago. The question he was asked most by old friends during this trip is the familiar one for us, “Why did you elect Bush twice?” He feels this is the same question (and has the same answer) as “Why did you have a Cultural Revolution?” It’s mob mentality, and very dangerous behavior. Further, in crises you need leaders, and in crises leaders can become dictators.

**Mr. Yao recommends reading** an article by the former Chinese ambassador to France about the *Weak Nation Syndrome* and China. China’s perspective is that it has been bullied by other nations in the past: Japan, Western Powers, etc. The author (a social historian crushed by Mao in the Cultural Revolution) contends, it’s alright to build your country up so you’re strong, but it’s dangerous to assume ill will from other countries just because they mistreated you before. That kind of victim-hood leads to dangerous policies. (Certain countries come to mind.)

**The gap between rich and poor** is the critical issue for China, Mr. Yao believes, and the lack of safety nets in this formerly Communist country is striking. Our young friends worry about health insurance, for example, and these are the well-off of Beijing’s growing elite. Yet, people seem to have faith in the central government to tackle the issue of equity, but—as with most

modernized countries—the rich are getting richer (mainly on shaky real estate ventures and IPO stock offerings) and the poor are getting poorer. In the same way the supposed and disastrous Great Leap Forward was based on falsified accounts of grain harvests, today's growth is based on borrowed money and insecure policies. The more we observe China on this trip, the more we see it as a 4% developed country and 96% developing country. The contrast is even more striking having come to China from Japan, where cleanliness and culture hide societal problems more effectively.

**In China, the progress and problems** flow by like the Venice-like canals of beautiful Suzhou. At first glance, all seems serenely flowing forward. On second glance, one can't help but wonder what lurks below the surface. Si jien!

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**#14-Beijing: What I love and hate about Beijing** May 17, 2006, as we prepare to leave the city for a trip to Xian and Suzhou

**Our #13 letter about our best friends in the educational and government circles of Xinglong County, was written later than this one, after we had left Beijing. Here, for your amusement are some of the finer points (like dust and sand) of life in the big city of Beijing. I have loved the wonderful contacts with John and Catherine and our new friends at China Art Academy, Phelex Foundation, etc., but I have also loved these things---**

**Crane operator 15 stories up** wails on his gear shift with a sledge hammer while a car sized chunk of concrete dangles from the crane over traffic at 20 stories up. I see this from a taxi window. No one on the ground is aware of what's going on overhead. That's Beijing.

**Free Internet Café in Daishanzi** with great wireless connection and English language art bookshop in the exciting Daishanzi art district. This area was built by East Germans for a top-secret government electronic project that fizzled. Now it is the hot gallery area in which the gallery spaces are a bit concentration campish but huge. The café is great, and so are the 12 outlets around me. Unfortunately none of them accept any configuration of my laptop plug. So, I run out of battery and settle down to eat waxy cheesecake. But, I am not complaining, just reporting.

**Beautiful breakfast muffin makers** in our neighborhood who will likely lose their beauty standing on their feet from dawn to dusty dusk rolling dough and filling it with chopped greens and garlic at one booth, or fried eggs at another. Too shy to have their pictures taken with me, we sneak by with the movie camera on the way to record morning tai chi exercisers at the park. We remember them all from our trip in 2004 and wonder if they will be in this neighborhood until Beijing authorities order some kind of renovation.

**Beijing roses, flowers of all sorts,** newly planted trees, hoses watering them with well-like bunds dug around the trunks in this, the worst draught year in seven for Beijing. I carry lots of

small pieces of Beijing with me forever—in my lungs, as a typhoon on the coast adds to the windstorm of dust and atmospheric mayhem of what purports to be breathable air in Beijing in spring.

**Plantings have an Alice in Wonderland/Looking Glass Feeling**, as I know Greening Beijing is a new National Policy. Feels a bit like painting the flowers red for the croquet game of the Politburo. Also, mysteriously, large, healthy trees are being trimmed, dug up, and bundled... uprooted by crane and trucked from our neighborhood, probably to be planted in more touristic areas.

**Chinese red and yellow** (and orange, violet, purple, pink) make a glorious display of roses, and we wonder what they would look like if the sky was a color like blue instead of dust-cloud gray.

**Four mothers** are gathered on a busy street corner, holding their infants, nursing them in the dust storm. This is a day when even LA would have closed the outdoors, but here these mothers are... do Beijing babies have greater lung capacity if exposed to concrete dust at an early age?

**We love the Beijing subway.** As our son, Bajir, and cousin Noah can attest, we are hopeless subway riders, awed by the choices, the electronic ticketing, the routes in green, orange, black, etc. Here in Beijing, it's a piece of cake! There are but two choices: Line 1 goes straight, Line 2 is a city-wide loop. Heck, after Japan, this is something we can do no sweat... BUT....

**Taxi drivers are a love-hate relationship.** We sometimes love the careening, I dare you, chicken, roller coaster type of driving that is a thrill-seekers dream come true. Actually, we can't believe this city will be able to accommodate the Olympic visitors without a complete breakdown of transportation. As our taxi careened around a slow-moving car and turned a three-lane highway into four, I was comforted to see that we would be crashing in front of the blood bank.

**We love the language**, we just wish we knew it and could pronounce it. In our favorite taxi ride of our stay here, we asked the driver to take us to the subway station at Dongzhimen Dajie... we said station every way we could: dixiatie or ditie zhan... but with the darned Chinese tonal system, we could not get it right. French, Tamil, our other languages of travel--it was all spilling out... Finally, we spotted the station: Cette! Idde-tan! Finally: *CHIGA!* We got on the train, exhausted, and Kadir tried to ask a question, introducing it with the excuse me word we get such mileage from: *duibuqi* (du-bu-chee). Unfortunately, for a dyslexic artist that came out like this: *Dubuffet*, and we collapsed in hysteria. Promise me, if you plan to come to Beijing for the Olympics in 2008, you will start learning Chinese now.

**China Art Academy:** We pulled in front of the academy to give a presentation and were puzzled to see a crowd of soldiers in camouflage. *What's going on?* I asked our translator. *Oh, the soldiers are helping us plant flowers*—My favorite moment in Beijing. That's just what soldiers should be doing.

**Cheers from Beijing.** We leave the dust behind, we hope, and go to Xian for a few days before heading south to Suzhou.

## **#14A-Beijing: What I love even about Beijing—finally, the park: May 24, 2006**

**Summary:** *As I finished writing the long list of people and things I love about Beijing (letter #14), I walked into the hazy sunlight and blinked away the dust. We had a few hours until our train to Xian, so we “hung out” for awhile in the neighborhood park we have come to call our own. This place is a microcosm of life as it could be, with a place for everyone from cradle to grave. Imagine small-town Narberth’s Candy Cane park on a summer evening with music and you come close.*

*I have told some of you about the tai chi group that meets daily in this park at around 7 am. The leader brings a boom box and about 20-30 middle aged-and-up men and women do warm-ups and tai chi movements in beautiful and sometimes clumsy formation. Oh, that I should be able to swoop so low and lunge so gracefully at 75! As I follow some of the movements, people smile. After the group finishes a woman eagerly corrects my form.*

*This is the first time we have spent a long time here in the afternoon, and it is a movie that begs to be made or a play that begs to be staged. It could be done in the genre of Gorky’s *The Lower Depths*, but it is several rungs up the social ladder from that depressing view of humanity. This park is good for the soul. Here is the treatment.*

### **A Screenplay**

**The park is in a neighborhood** on the north-western district of Beijing, inside the third-ring road of this rapidly expanding city. There are garden apartment-style residences to one side of the park, and a major thoroughfare to the other side, choked with buses, taxis, cars, and bikes. There are trees, bricks, grass, and pavement in the park. The trees are important, as they provide a coolness that is tangible.

**There is a brick pathway** encircling the park in a winding sort of way, curving and straight, with benches to the outside edge and grass, trees, and several flat, bricked areas for tai chi and badminton on the inside edge. Everything is worn and dusty. On the far edge of the park is a row of bright, new, metal and plastic exercise toys for adults: step-masters, chin-up bars, yellow wheels for upper arm strength, benches for sit-ups, and swings for feet and fast-leg-swinging exercises. Scattered around the park are small, stone tables for cards and chess, with crates or stumps for players and kibitzers. For every four players, there are 15 observers, all men. There is a new, blue ping-pong table in the middle of the park, between the exercise area and the tai chi area. Men and women are playing there in singles and pairs all day. Some are better than others.

**The scene opens** with a Western couple sitting on a park bench. They are middle-aged and resting their feet before a long trip. All the other characters are Chinese, residents of the local community. Across from the couple sleeps a garbage man on his back, atop his tricycle-trash-collecting cart. It is empty of trash, and he sleeps soundly through all of the following, sometimes turning on his side, occasionally awakening to smoke a cigarette. To the left of the trash man is a young, slender couple intertwined and making out. They make out throughout the scene. It is three p.m.

**Walking around the park** are a woman and her daughter, making small talk and greeting friends and neighbors. They are out for exercise, so they walk at a healthy pace, circling the park three times during the scene, before stopping to watch the ping pong players. Old men and women—couples and singles—are walking with canes or slowly. Occasionally a woman or man pushes her or his mate in a wheelchair. On the far end of the park, the elders of the community exercise on the bright blue and yellow metal gadgets. Around the park, corn vendors sell overpriced cow corn on the cob, a shoe-maker offers his services, and people buy fresh vegetables from numerous vendors. Working people walk through the park throughout the scene, wearing office slacks, dress shirts without ties for men, or dresses or slacks for women. They walk quickly, carrying newspapers, computer bags, or bags of vegetables. Some pass through on bikes.

**Children, newly freed** from their schoolrooms scamper on the inside of the park or ride through on bicycles. Three boys tease a girl by playing keep-away with their badminton racquets and birdie. She whines to a woman who chides them. They all run away. Toddlers awaken from their naps in hot apartments, and young mothers and fathers begin to walk their babies on the flat, brick plateau.

**Enter a thin, elderly, tall man in a straw hat.** He has a lovely smile. He carries a blue folding chair and three thin, cloth bags. In each bag is an erhu, the Chinese two-stringed violin. He has three sizes, for different kinds of music. He begins to play.

**He plays a wandering Chinese melody** with an energetic beat. The Western man taps his foot, smiles, and nods his head. The Western woman smiles happily. This is her favorite instrument in the world. The Chinese erhu player nods and smiles back. The garbage man sleeps, the young couple makes out, the ladies walk, the ping-pong players play, and the gamblers gamble.

**But, the babies notice,** and soon, one baby after another begins to dance to the music of the magical erhu. Tapping and giggling, they drool and pull their parents nearer. The erhu player does not see them—they are behind him. The Westerners see the babies and laugh—trying to point them out to the erhu player. An elderly woman joins the Westerners on the bench. They say hello, ni hao. The lady laughs.

**A well-dressed man and woman in their sixties** stop to listen to the erhu player. They seem to know each other, and soon, the erhu man gives up his seat and instrument to the newcomer. Unfortunately, the new man is unable to tune the instrument well, so everything he plays has a mournful, off-key sound. The babies still dance, some on their feet, and some in their mothers' or fathers' arms. Trying another erhu, the new man starts playing *Jingle Bells* for the Westerners. It is a hot day, a dusty day. There is no snow in Beijing, only dust. They all laugh and smile. The erhu man retrieves his erhu and chair and plays more tunes. Everyone is happy. The garbage man awakens, puts on his jacket, and rides away. The Western couple leaves the park to catch their train.

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*# 15-Suzhou: Venice of China, KunQu Opera Heaven May 25, 2006*

**Summary: Suzhou, a canal city with lovely gardens, and Kun Qu, the oldest form of traditional Chinese Opera...For more on Suzhou, with links to pictures and descriptions of gardens, click this link.**

<http://www.travelchinaguide.com/cityguides/suzhou.htm>

**Suzhou:** “In heaven there is paradise, on earth there is Suzhou and Hangzhou,” the tourist books say the Chinese say. This is not up there with Guilin and Yangshuo’s breathtaking dreamscape of mountains, but it is a relaxing alternative to the big cities we have been visiting. Called “Venice of the East,” it is criss-crossed with canals. Our friend John likened it to Kyoto. As Kyoto was spared most of the ravages of WWII, Suzhou seems to have been spared the ravages of the Cultural Revolution. The city is dotted with private gardens, imaginative recreations of nature with rock, water, trees, and pavilions. Some of the canals are still lined with the intimate housing and small shops of a bygone era. (While some are being gentrified, by Shanghai or local elite for weekend retreats or real estate speculation.) Harvard scholars have written a paper on *the municipal strategy of integration with the global economy through strategic city planning that in the end promoted rapid economic development, preserved most of the "old" city while building two new industrial districts, and substantially improved housing conditions for residents*. They note that the GDP of Suzhou is fifth in China. However, what has taken our fancy is the dynamic and beautiful **Museum of Opera and Theatre**, where we have been spending most of our afternoons.

**To find the theater** we had to wind through a maze-like series of canal streets and bridges, homes and shops integrated into a richly textured fabric of life that made us wonder at the price of modernity. We know some of the homes still lack indoor plumbing, but think this must be a problem that could be solved without ripping apart the whole maze and starting over, with shoddy materials and less inclination to create a community as whole as this one feels. The absence of cars on these narrow lanes is a delight. When we finally find the museum, a richly painted and ornately carved classical Chinese building, we are astounded at the casual way in which we can enter to view costumes and rehearsals.

**Imagine SiuLum Martial Arts Studio’s Tai Chi master Dr. Sun** slapping your shoulders down or back, hitting your hand and shouting to correct your form. That is KunQu Opera training for two young male performers learning a martial routine to the left of the entrance courtyard. On the right, in stark contrast, two young female dancer/singer/actors dance, sing, and act under the gentle tutelage of an older woman. In the next open courtyard, in the shadow of a looming outdoor stage, dance a student and her teacher. Sword and prop practice are going on in another open courtyard to the side, and yet farther in, next to an artificial hill with a pagoda on top, an incredibly graceful male teacher (probably a player of female parts in the opera) teaches a young male and female student how to walk and circle gracefully while opening and closing their fans.

**But the sound of traditional Chinese opera** instruments clangs, dongs, and draws us inside to a glorious exhibition room and stage. On stage rehearse a young maiden with ultra long sleeves characteristic of Chinese dance and opera, and an older man with a long, fake beard and blue jeans. They rehearse a scene over and over.

**We have died and gone to KunQu heaven, no?** This is like and unlike every rehearsal you have ever attended or been part of. Three and sometimes four directors chide, encourage, mentor, and browbeat the actors and musicians into compliance with KunQu's demanding obedience to form, timing, and precision. One directs the musicians while he "Guanguanguanguandongdongdongs the music to set the pace gutturally before the young musicians join in on their pipes, gongs, flutes, drums, chimes, cymbals, and erhus. A young actress follows an older mentor as she tai-chi shuffles (toe-heel, toe-heel in a diagonal that makes them look like they are floating) across the stage. The young actress flips her over-long white sleeves over her pink robe as the cymbals clash once.

**There is nothing to catch the attention like the KunQu gong** (or the Peking Opera gong, for that matter), a mix of snare drum, cooking pot, and fire engine used to punctuate movement and song (and perhaps to keep bad spirits away and the audience awake?). Kadir marvels at the seamless integration of movement, music, drama, language, and song in this dynamic form of theatre. This opera form moves smoothly among pathos, dramatic tension, dialogue, and Brechtian moments of song expressing the content of the story. It is a far cry from the clumsy shifting of Western musicals from dialogue to song. KunQu actors and musicians have to practice as one unit. Indeed, they must become one unit.

**We meet an American film director/screenwriter** who lives in Shanghai, and who earned his MFA at University of Hawaii's Asian Theatre program. He studied a Balinese form for a year and Beijing Opera for another, and is here to see what making a movie about the KunQu renaissance might look like. He tells us that KunQu, the original Chinese opera, was nearly dead between 1920 and 1980. When China came out of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, people realized most of the KunQu actors were dying off. Some already had. Some operas had to be reconstructed from records and memory, while others were put into production by those who knew them. Peking Opera, a more common and well-known form, offers performers more freedom to improvise, he told us. The orchestra's job is to follow the performer. However, KunQu is much more constrained. Performers are driven by the text and the music. The orchestra dictates where the actor will be and what he or she will do at a given moment. Thus, the young actors and actresses we see laboring with their mentors are devoting themselves to a demanding and precise form. It feels like a labor of love.

**The dual track of peace pursuits and theatrical ones** has been joyous. Kadir's art will certainly be affected, and a new dramatic event is absolutely a must. He has been pursuing contacts in Japan and China for a three-nation art/drama exchange/symposium on the topic of war and peace. In Japan, he worked with an energetic artist with whom he enacted a peace event in Toyohashi. He spoke with a Butoh dancer in Kyoto about her participation, and she is eager. She will be in Yellow Springs, Ohio during the winter, and Kadir will try to begin some work with her then. In China, he made a great connection with an American friend of John Gordon's. She is currently working with Beijing Modern Dance Company both as a liaison for international travel and as choreographer. She is also working on a dramatization in Chinese of the speeches of Martin Luther King! She wants to join the project also. Finally, while investigating the Daishanzi Contemporary Art District of Beijing, Kadir met an artist who was exhibiting his work. Without language, they made an initial connection on the basis of his art. Then, by the

good graces of helpful translators in nearby shops and on cell phones, Kadir interested this artist in the international exchange as well. In Shanghai, we will stay with the mother of one of Bajir's acting mates. She will help us continue to make connections with the contemporary artists in Shanghai, and she is also setting up 3-4 peace presentations for us to give to the students at her international school.

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### **#16 Suzhou, Venice of the East, the gardens, June 4, 2006**

**Summary: A bit more about the gardens. Also, GDP of Suzhou is 2<sup>nd</sup> in China as of this writing, we were told during our stay!**

**Gardens like Kyoto** do indeed grace the city of **Suzhou**. We have wandered around the back streets and canal streets in a state of complete enjoyment (only broken by the bleat of the incessant car horn). Women wash mops and rugs in the canal. Laundry hangs from every railing, rack, and clothesline. The city sanitation crews paddle their picturesque boats and use long strainers to remove debris from the canals in every canal (and there are many). So, along with the occasional tourist boat paddling along, you see lots of clean-up crews in blue jackets and caps of all colors. They may not feel scenic, and their job is probably hot and grimy (at times smelly, and probably cold and wet sometimes, too), but it has dawned on me that being a canal cleaner in Suzhou could be a good retirement option for Kadir and me.

**Suzhou has a garden for every mood.** Our best discovery was the Surging Waves Garden (Canglang), which we visited at about 4:30 our first afternoon in Suzhou. We stumbled into the garden and the attached Suzhou Art Museum for a short glimpse of a local artist's show. Then we had a long and lovely time to enjoy the garden at our leisure. The garden is full of surprises: windows looking out through other windows, onto a grove of bamboo or a special pine. I read the couplets by poet Su Shunqin inscribed on plaques and columns in Elegant Bamboo Pavilion: "Autumn darkens the reddish woods. The sunlight goes through the bamboo elegantly." I go to Enlightenment Hall to read, "He who turns a blind eye and a deaf ear to what is evil will be enlightened." Here are more surprises:

**Look down through a rock mound** and see a circle, under which is a cave, with a stone table and stone stools. Go down to the cave and enjoy a moment of cool solitude. Wind around the stone path and find a lovely pond surrounded by more rock "mountains," with nooks, and places to sit under big trees in an intimate setting. Get to know the goldfish, enjoy the reflections, and wait for the guard to make you and the other 5 visitors leave this peaceful and imaginative haven (after ignoring the siren that signals the end of visiting hours).

**The Humble Administrator's Garden** (so named because the poor, humble administrator only wanted to retire and "humbly grow my crops and sell them") is a masterpiece of artistic landscaping as well. Unfortunately, we enjoy this serene place with a few thousand noisy, unreflective friends, in groups of 10 to 25, with yellow, or blue, or orange hats, following tour guides with yellow, or blue, or orange flags. The groups would not be bad if not for the crackling noise of the tour guide's portable sound systems. We might be enjoying the sound of an informal pipa concert (kind of an upright viola-banjo; the picking style is much like that of Appalachian bluegrass), and along will come a tour group with blasting narration. Or a woman in long robes will be playing a plaintive tune on a harplike guqin (origin of Koto), and the

loudspeakers blast through the music. Kind of ruins the ambiance. I managed to scramble up some rocks to a high vantage point, and finally the whole crawling scene became very funny. Even more fun was meeting the local couple, in their fifties or so, who were chasing each other and playing hide and seek among the rock piles and caves in their hometown garden. Our chance meeting was a highlight of the day!

**Speaking of couples, there is a Couples Garden**, listed in the Lonely Planet guide as less frequented by tour groups. Alas, less was more. Kadir became a center of attention as he napped on one of the benches in a pavilion at mid-day. There followed a spate of photo-taking requests with our new friend/strangers who wanted pictures with Americans. Finally, we escaped onto the canal via small, wooden boat, with a good-natured boat man who sang us a couple of songs before dropping us on the other shore!

**We are inspired to turn our entire back yard** into a beautiful garden retreat. At a small museum in one of the gardens, we learn some principals of Chinese gardens. A favorite maxim: “Sp sparse as to let a horse walk, so dense as not to let breeze in.” The Chinese call their gardens “crystallized poetry” and “three-dimensional painting.” For the flower lovers among you, here are some Chinese connotations for flowers:

Peony: glorious and noble

Lotus: purity growing from mud

Orchid: leisure in tranquility

Bamboo: upright without vulgarity

Chrysanthemum: Sustain frost for integrity

Pomegranate: 100 seeds=sons

Magnolia: full of gold and jade

Pine and cypress: antiquity and longevity

Willow: charming and graceful

Camellia: natural, unrestrained

Red bean: missing and expressing feeling

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### ***#17-Rugao Normal College: Warmly Welcome Mr. and Mrs. Cannon June 4, 2006***

**Summary: Block-long welcome banner, hospitality ‘til it hurts:**

*I wrote last summer about Rugao and the Rugao Normal College, when I taught here for two weeks. This trip will be shorter, just four nights, but the days and nights are packed.*

**Our uber-hospitable host**, Cynthia, a member of the Foreign Languages Faculty, meets us in Suzhou and we catch up on family, school politics and personnel changes, and rapidly changing China during the 3-hour ride in a minivan to Rugao. We are delighted to see the city-block-long red banner proclaiming in Chinese and English: *Warmly Welcome Mr. Cannon, Artist, and Mrs. Cannon Teacher*. Home, sweet home.

**We meet a tableful of vice-presidents** and school directors (all of whom I remember but have trouble keeping straight until Cynthia and I make a “family tree” of all the positions at the school). Our opening ceremonial dinner is sans the new president, who, I have been warned, is not the gentlemanly and efficient Mr. Lu of the past summer. The new president is a bit of a mystery to the staff, and is still getting his sea legs, administratively.

**The restaurant is trying courageously** to follow Cynthia’s admonition to serve us vegetarian food, but things are going comically awry. Instead of the plain food with which we would be very happy: steamed rice, Chinese greens, eggplant, spicy tofu... the chef seems to have an American bridge party in mind as he whips up plates of potato chips and tea sandwiches (unfortunately forgetting to make them meatless). I bring out our ragged and torn menu of Chinese dishes (prepared by Catherine Gordon 2 years ago for her wedding guests!) and the list goes back to the kitchen. Viola! OR, be careful what you wish for: as dish after dish of vegetarian delights come to the table.

**Cynthia pleads with us** to stop by to chat with her 16-year-olds in their English class (they’ve been doing ‘self-study’ while we’ve been dining) and they break into applause as we enter the room. We still find this enthusiasm so delightful. The students are shy, so we keep talking nonsense, until we start asking them to nominate brave classmates to ask questions. Everyone knows who the talkers are, and we soon have a fun set of speakers. I really must brush up on my American popular music, because this is what they want to know about!

**The schedule has been juggled** so much during the last week (and indeed during the nine months of negotiations via email with Cynthia), that we are never sure when we really will make our presentations. Going with the flow is the order of events. At 6:30 a.m., we see a stream of thousands of school kids heading off to a city-wide sports competition. We enjoy a simple breakfast of noodles in the Buddhist temple next door (causing quite a stir among the local tea and noodle slurpers). Cynthia has hoped we could see a bit of the sports event but we have to check equipment in the lecture hall, so we miss it. Then of course, it is time for lunch, so the forced-food march is back on.

**I give the first talk**, kind of a mix of *American Culture and Dynamic Ways to Teach and Learn English*. The audience of High School Seniors and College 2 students: (ages 18-20) offers a deafening round of applause before we say a word. However, that’s all that is deafening. The typical Chinese shyness to speak out takes over, and we have to pry conversation and public speaking out of them. The most useful technique is paired conversation, and I must circulate to make sure they’re speaking English. A few brave students share their thoughts aloud.

**Kadir’s anti-war movie** and my peace education talk, given for the College 1 and 2 students (19-20 year –olds) elicit a much different response for our second presentation. Many guest teachers from local schools are in attendance as well.

**Kadir asks for feedback** on the movie, and a brave and wonderful local school teacher speaks up, loud and clear, “I have never seen anything like this. This art is like a fresh breeze blowing through my mind. These ideas are so new to me. These are things I have not thought about before... He went on to respond to my ideas on teaching for peace. “We teachers are so

overworked, we don't have time to appreciate life and yet we are supposed to love our students. We really must take time to think about these important things, we must lessen the stress in our lives." A woman student follows with her comments about the anti-war aspects of the movie. Then another male teacher from another school launches a diatribe against Bush. ("What kind of country attacks a smaller country? What is happening to America?") The audience, while nodding energetically and sympathetically to his position, is a bit worried about offending us. We agree with some of his points and I work them into the peace education part of the presentation, taking special care to question the nationalism-education endemic to most countries' education systems and that is so detrimental to peace-promotion. Again, we find that giving "I" messages, "This is happening in my country, I don't know if it is happening in yours..." is a way to introduce some of the ideas.

**Our final presentation is lots of fun**, basically an active sharing of *Great Moments in English Literature*, with samplings from Shakespeare, Dickinson, Whitman, Hughes, and King. To the delight of the students, we open with a comparison of Chinese traditional KunQu opera (the melodramatic *Peony Pavilion*) and *Hamlet*, using DVD of a melodramatic Olivier poised on a cliff. At one point, one of the professors of Western Literature tries to hijack the lecture and make one of his own, but I get the floor back so we can do some of the active learning things that are so different for Chinese teaching and learning. This is why they've brought us here, after all. We get the entire-class miming Shakespeare's *Seven Stages of Man*, led by Kadir. I give the social background and read King's entire *I have a Dream Speech* as they follow along appreciating the beauty of the language and the drama of the social change it demands. We sing *We Shall Overcome*. It is an amazing session.

We close with samplings from great American poets and another surprise from the Chinese: Poetry of Yang Wan-Li 1127-1206 (Sung Dynasty China) from *Heaven My Blanket, Earth My Pillow*. Here is Yang Wan-Li's introduction to a collection of poems by Liu Ying-shih

Now what is poetry?

If you say it is simply a matter of words,

I will say a good poet gets rid of words.

If you say it is simply a matter of meaning,

I will say a good poet gets rid of meaning.

"But," you ask, "without words and without meaning,

where is the poetry?"

To this I reply: "Get rid of words and get rid of meaning,

and there is still poetry."

**Knowing our love of Chinese music**, Cynthia has arranged for all the music classes to welcome us to their rehearsals one evening. We enter a room resounding with a chorus singing the praises of the revolution then walk upstairs to the orchestra playing the accompaniment to the singers. They will soon put the pieces together for a competition. We are treated to a tour of the Chinese orchestra, from pipa to erhu to gong to flute, and Cynthia tricks Kadir into playing his flute for the assembled students. They cheer.

**Other members of the Foreign Language Department**, Anna and Ding, take us sightseeing to the famous bonsai growers of Rugao (evidently Rugao is known nationally, perhaps worldwide, for growing intricate potted trees and landscapes). We go next to the rapidly developing Longevity Park, Rugao's homage to its statistically significant proportion of centuagenarians. Rugao is branding itself as Longevity City, and the towering copper Longevity God, with birds flying about his head, is a striking symbol. Anna and Ding learn we have been puppeteers, and they phone their friends in the Rugao Puppet Theatre. (It is endearing that Ding keeps calling them puppies.) We make a date to meet one of the puppeteers at the beautiful city garden and take photos with him of his beautifully designed rod puppet. The next day we go to see the company's show, performed to a rural kindergarten with hundreds of tiny tots. (The kids live in school for the week, so their parents can work, and they go home on the weekend). It is the same kind of tacky, pre-recorded, noisy fare that passes for puppetry in the USA for kids these days. The messages were nationalistic morality lessons: be useful for your country... etc.

**We are disappointed in the show**, but we have enjoyed the adventure of traveling in a careening school automobile down an unpaved, rutted road, horn blaring, dodging pavers, bicycles, and dump trucks, as we take the road-that-is-not-yet-a-road to the school in a town outside Rugao. We wonder at the speed of road building and ponder the fate of the local farmers. We rush back to give a short presentation to a school affiliated with Rugao Normal College, and the students share their dreams and questions and the teachers ponder how to do the active learning projects I espouse with their classes of 60 and their examination demands. These full days are a blur.

**The president of the college** makes his first appearance at our farewell dinner, and he is a good schmoozer. Most of the male directors seem to enjoy drinking to us to show their respect, then following up by drinking to everyone else in sight. The women toast with yogurt drinks or juice (and some of the men toast with water), and the rounds and rounds of foods keep coming, until the platters are piled atop each other in a high babble of delight. They have done a great job of feeding us, and we have not done a great job of restraining ourselves. Death by hospitality.

**The morning ceremony marking our departure** includes a heartfelt speech by the president, and his awarding of certificates to us, inviting us to be Guest Professors at Rugao Normal College. "You bring new ideas to our school," he tells us. "We must have contact with people from all over the world. Then our school will become better and better, and people will know that our college is one that seeks out new ideas." As we drive to Shanghai, Cynthia and I envision an exchange between our schools in which she and her two well-traveled colleagues, Anna and Ding (they've been to Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, Korea, and U.K. among them) visit Episcopal and other area schools to give presentations about Chinese culture. The enthusiasm for global exchange, and especially meaningful contact between American and Chinese educators is heartwarming and sincerely desired.

**It would be fun to return to Rugao**, especially now that we know there is a tai-chi park around the corner from the school, and one for ball-room and line dancing just a short walk down the street. We can't seem to talk much about politics or religion with Cynthia, Anna, or Ding, but we enjoy sharing our experiences with family, work, and childrearing with these fun-loving and diligent women. (We'll have to bypass them and learn Chinese and talk to the professors of

politics on our own!) A new vegetarian restaurant serves delicious and healthy foods, and the Taiwanese owner is hoping to expand her Buddhist influenced fare to dinner hours in a few weeks. She's an idealist and seems like the type of person we'd like to get to know on a future trip!

**We leave the longevity-inducing calmness** of Rugao and the Chinese culture of Rugao Normal College and enter the bustle of Shanghai and modernity of Concordia International School Shanghai, moving across decades, centuries, and continents... a next letter will describe the culture shock of landing in this global-expat bubble in this, our last week in China.

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### ***#18-Shanghai: The Shanghai Bubble, June 8, 2006***

**Summary: Expat teachers, students, and community in Pudong, Shanghai, Presentations at CISS (Concordia International School Shanghai, Transcripts-summaries of great q&a sessions with CISS students and teachers...**

**We can only imagine** what our friend Cynthia from Rugao thought of the Concordia International School Shanghai when she entered. Knowing she has visited numerous schools in the UK makes me think she has some context for the place, and she has also seen my presentations about my classes at Episcopal. However, it still must have been a shock to see the gleaming new building with loud, multi-national students of every hue streaming up and down the open staircase and gathering on the second floor balcony or first floor lobby as school dismissed. Band students were wrapping up a boisterous rehearsal, computer students were building and testing robots, middle school students were creating room-sized displays of rain-forests and deserts, and art students excused themselves past us to ask their teacher for snacks. I thought of my colleagues at EA with candy drawers and after-school visitors. Suddenly, I was back in the West.

**I wondered at the scene** through Cynthia's eyes, and it must have seemed so chaotic, noisy, and perhaps disrespectful? We wandered the halls together, as I explained how familiar this energy and environment felt to me. Our host, Kate, had after-school obligations, so we used the Rugao school van to transport our luggage and ourselves the few blocks to her apartment. Here was another clash of culture. In Rugao, or any other Chinese school or home visit, we would have been offered tea and a chance to relax. Here, in the Shanghai Bubble of the West, it was go-go-go, as our host had to return to school to set up an art show. Awkwardly, foregoing all the weeks of hospitality our Asian hosts had taught us, we said goodbye to Cynthia and parted company with the slightly slower paced China she represents. Sans tea or relaxation, she and our driver Paul set off on their five-hour return trip to Rugao.

**But the trip takes more than five hours.** It takes decades. It takes continents. The boisterous building of Concordia International School Shanghai is noisy because of the American curriculum taught there and the American-style teaching methods employed. While the students

hail from more countries than some of us have visited in a lifetime (and I am talking about each student's life of expat living), they form a uniquely Westernized culture of modernity. The school was founded seven years ago and has strong connection to the Lutheran Church. Most of the school directors are Lutheran, but the faculty is a diverse mix of conservative Lutherans and closet liberals, mostly from the United States. The large (ten-member) Mandarin Faculty hails from China, for the most part. All I know about Lutherans I have learned from Garrison Keillor, and one faculty member tells us Keillor has been pretty much ex-communicated for his less-than-favorable (but howlingly funny) portrayal. We gather the school has a strong religious component in the Lower School, and that religious influence gradually fades through Middle School. In Upper School, the students seem to get a rigorous AP-laced American curriculum with small classes, devoted and energetic teachers, and peers who give them multi-national and multi-cultural perspectives.

**We are still trying to process the mystery, miracle, and mania that is Shanghai.** Our perspective into this modern and ancient city is through the expat bubble of the independent school teachers and global corporate and professional expats from countries too numerous to name. The residential portions of the ultra-modern Pudong District of Shanghai are farmland turned high-rise gated-community, strip-mall playground—built and still building since Pudong's inception in the early 1990s. While old and new continue to co-exist in Shanghai, and most people know about the foreign concessions in its history, this is a new kind of foreign concession, one that provides a bubble of modernity, like a Lower Merion in the midst of Camden, NJ. We rather enjoyed some of the sections of old Shanghai we wandered through neighborhoods that seemed to promote a smoother transition between rich and poor, old and new. The shady streets of the French Concession were pleasant and varied, supporting public parks humming with neighborliness as well as posh shops for professionals. The contrasts in Pudong were more raw and jarring.

**Consider: the doorman at CISS** earns 200 RMB per month. (This is about \$24.) A meal for three at the local Italian restaurant costs 400 RMB. (This is about \$48.) The taxi drivers make about \$2000 RMB per month, yet they shuttle passengers to and from Pudong to Shanghai who routinely pay 100 RMB per day for taxi fare, without fretting. It is hard to describe how alien we feel: we are no longer in China where we did not fit in, but were amused and enlivened, and we are in the corporate elite culture in which we also do not fit in, but are somehow disturbed and dismayed. This bi-economy exists everywhere, of course, but it is so blatant here, where even humble expat teachers live like kings and queens in high-rise, gated apartment complexes with nannies and drivers. As we have done so often during this trip, we go with the flow but continue to ponder. Fortunately, the students at the school made this part of the trip quite memorable.

**Our presentations to this group** of students were invigorating and unique for this trip. Indeed, this was the perfect way to bring East and West together. It was also a way for me to explore the idea of global citizenship I have been espousing in other presentations. In one class, for example, four Taiwanese seniors and juniors spoke about their varying backgrounds. *“I am Taiwanese, but I have lived in the US, Canada, and China. I guess I relate to being American...”* *“I was born in Taiwan, and I have lived in the US, and everyone says my English sucks...”* *“I am just Taiwanese. That’s all. I think we should be independent. Most of the young people want that. Who knows what will happen when we get a new president?...”* *“Yeah,*

*I was born in the US, but my parents are from Taiwan, and I have lived there and here. Nobody believes me if I say I am American.”*

**These four were joined** by a couple of students of Indian heritage. One girl complained about being asked where she was from during her 14 years in Akron, Ohio. *“I say I am American, and everyone says, ‘But what are you, really?’ So finally I just say I am Indian. I guess I am that too. But now I am living here, so what am I now?”* Another boy, born in Delhi, complained that his father would only let him apply to colleges in Singapore. *“He doesn’t want me going to college in the US; it’s too wild there. I’m afraid to go to Singapore; they’re so strict.”* *“Don’t worry,”* pipes up an American boy from California, who will enter LaSalle College in Philly this fall. *“I’ve lived in Singapore. They’re not so strict. Just be smart.”* A Chinese girl talks about her experience living in Indonesia. *“My parents would never let me out. I had to be escorted everywhere with a driver. And they were always afraid I would be kidnapped. Here I can go everywhere on my own or with friends. It’s great.”*

**I introduced our presentations** to three different classes of AP English, World History, or American History, explaining Kadir’s art evolution from abstract narrative to political and my interest in teaching to promote a long-term culture of peace. As he has done before, Kadir asks them to give feedback and ask questions. What a difference in the responses! These young global citizens have a broad set of perspectives and are not shy to express themselves. It was so fascinating to me that I took notes, and I share them with you in the hopes you will be as energized by these young minds as we were. In some cases I have included Kadir’s responses, for as you will see even in these terribly brief summaries, he has developed a vigorous way of encouraging and responding to feedback and honest dialogue. (T=teacher, S=Student, numbers refer to order of speaking, and some speakers repeated themselves. A=Kadir’s response.)

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### **TRANSCRIPT: CISS SESSION 1**

T1: I was teaching in Saudi Arabia at the time of the September 11 attacks. People would come up to me on the street or at school and express their outrage, sympathy, and support. Upon seeing the US response, Saudi sympathy evaporated. I continue to wonder, how can people who call themselves Christian support war?

T2: Are you afraid of provoking violence with your own work?

A: These images are not exploitative. This reflects my heart’s images and responses to what I see around me.

T3: Are there times when war is necessary?

A: There is a fine line between defense and aggression.

T1: How were you received in Japan and China?

A: The cultures differ, but modernity is the same. We observed a Japanese surge of nationalism that is a worry to many who remember the past aggressions. We see this in the US also. I wonder if it is surging in China, too.

S1: Can I have a copy of the DVD. Dude, it’s awesome.

S2: I liked how the camera pans to details and zones in the picture. It gives depth and helps me understand what you are trying to say.

S3: You are illustrating something we all choose to ignore—even though we know it’s going on.

A: I like stories about one person making a difference, making the paradigm shift. Noam Chomsky writes about there being two world powers in the world today: The United States and Public Opinion. I want us all to wake up.

S3: I like how you show that war is an atrocity for both civilian and soldier.

T4: Here is a question for the students: Explain Kadir’s use of the fable *The Land of Bubble*.

What is a *Bubblin*?

S4: The Bubblins...it’s like America...the bubble burst.

S5: They are brainwashed in their bubble.

S6: Everyone can see in, but they don’t look out.

S7: It’s a silly word, but it shows a contrast to the American world view.

T4: What is a Neocon?

A: A group in Washington, DC who has taken over the direction of the government and implemented such policies as pre-emptive strike diplomacy.

T1: From what I see in the papers I read about American public opinion, it seems the pendulum is swinging. They’re having “buyer’s remorse.”

T4: (Head of the High School) I hope you will make this movie available to high school history teachers. Make a lesson plan and help students understand concepts like what is propaganda and what is not. For instance, is this propaganda? What is a Neo-con? What happened in Jenin? Give background information so teachers could use this movie to spark discussion. It can provide us with a lens to look at war, and political and economic reasons for war. I strongly encourage you to do that.

## **TRANSCRIPT-CISS SESSION 2:**

T1 (Same who asked about war before, and a researcher of the Jewish Holocaust. (Adamantly) War is necessary sometimes...

S1 (from Brazil) Are you from the States? I can’t believe it. Most Americans don’t see that they live in a bubble.

T1: How to Stop a Taliban without war?

A: International cooperation and rule of law is a place to start. If the United States had taken the money it is spending on prosecuting these wars and built clinics, schools, etc., these efforts would have made the US a hero in the world, rather than the villain many see it as today. These are the type of long-term solutions I think we need to pursue.

S1: (Brazil) War is human nature. Look at school—it's competition. Sports—it's competition. Everything we do is competition. It's all human nature.

S2 (India) But like he says in the movie: Violence begets violence.

(At this point I join in also:) In a longer presentation we give, I talk about the importance of changing the educational emphasis in our schools. Historian Howard Zinn says all schools in all countries overtly and covertly teach nationalism. We have to change our way of instruction to promote what you all have achieved by virtue of your life experiences: a new kind of global citizen. As you study war and peace issues, follow the money. See who profits from these old ways of thinking.

K: When we interviewed the A-bomb survivors, Hibakushas, in Japan, they were desperate to tell their stories. They're getting old now, and they see people still thinking that war and even the use of nuclear weapons is okay. They plead with us to stop using war, to make different choices. We have to change the way we think.

**TRANSCRIPT- CISS SESSION 3** (This presentation was to a group of freshmen, who were more energetic than the seniors and juniors who preceded them, in spite of the fact that their final exam would follow this class!)

S1: The reasons we fight... the look you give us is so interesting...

S2: I never thought of all this before...

S3: The developed nations and the United States are all in the Bubble...

S4: Your poem (Kadir's live narration) touched me...

S5: I just finished a research project and made a presentation on violence and the war on terror. I found pictures of signs at demonstrations saying 'War is terrorism.' It was nice to listen to people who are not afraid to say their opinions out loud...

S6: 'War is necessary to make peace.' That's something people say in the US, right?

A: You need to look at these comments and figure out who does war benefit...

S7: Is violence a basic instinct?

A: Yes, but choice exists and many examples exist of peaceful change. However, not a lot of this appears in the history books.

S8: Do you have suggestions for not using war?

A: International law... Cooperation... Respect... These are long term solutions.

S9: There were many religious references in the movie. Are you a Christian?

A: I have studied Christianity and Judaism and Islam, and I like to study Sufism and Buddhism, and Taoism, and Hinduism. The core of the teaching of all religions is to be peaceful...

S10: The fighting in Afghanistan is coming back around to turn against the United States...

S11: The Roman gods were all warring gods in those stories...

A: These are stories we tell ourselves... Turn these old stories into stories of inner struggle. They are not a road map for how people and countries should behave to each other...

T1 (The Holocaust researcher) But how to prevent a Holocaust?

A: There are many holocausts. It is dangerous if one group thinks that its holocaust is worse than that of others. It also is dangerous if a group who has experienced a holocaust then has a victim mentality and perpetrates the same kinds of violence and oppression—causing other holocausts....

T1: But how can we prevent them?

(I give a recap of my answer in the last class, but add my interest and study of Quakerism. The Quakers are always asked, ‘What would you do if someone in your family was being attacked? Would you fight?’ A wonderful Quaker speaker from Friends Center for National Legislation, Bridgette, answers this way, ‘We Quakers want to make policies such that we never get in that situation. Globally, we can promote non-violent solutions to international problems. We need to start early and systematically, looking at social justice, humanitarian, and diplomatic issues and root causes...’

S12: Are humans naturally violent? Is this your point of view?

A: We must not choose this route anymore.

S13 (India) But is war ever justified?

(I see that the class must end, and the teacher is getting ready to give the exam to her class imminently.) I try to tie up some of the loose ends and give them a wake-up-call-pep-talk in one minute:

**Closing Message:** Your teacher has asked about the Holocaust, and others have wondered if war is human nature or if it is ever justified. I ask us to look at history and learn from the steps that precede such Holocausts as the one in Nazi Germany, or Cambodia, or Rwanda, or Bosnia, and other places around the world. To allow such tragedies to occur, the citizens of a country have to fall asleep. They need to be pre-occupied with the pressures of daily life so that they let such horrors happen step by step. If we can wake up as local and global citizens, if we can take preventative steps early—we can avoid the need for war to solve these problems. We urge you, global citizens that you are, to be awake, even as you fulfill your pressing responsibilities in school and at home. (I tell again the story of A.J. Muste, standing in front of the White House with his candle.) Don’t let the world change you. Change the world.

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***#20-In the Air over Asia, June 8, 2006***

**Summary: Random thoughts about China, Japan, and this amazing trip: Pimsleur Mandarin, Lady Yang, Hairdressers, Taiwan, Environment, Overworked Teachers, Politics, Purpose, Jane Addams on “Cosmic Citizenship” ... on the plane ride home**

**I can now speak enough Chinese** to ask a question and not understand the answer. It goes something like this. Thanks to the time I have been here and the months I spent listening to the Pimsleur Mandarin CDs, I say in Chinese, *excuse me, may I ask...* (and add one of the 5 W questions). Then, someone responds and I must say in Chinese, *I don't speak Chinese\**. This makes them even more insistent that I can, until I say in Chinese, *I don't understand*. They look chagrined, grin, then try some more Chinese. At which point I play my Chinese language ace card. I ask in Chinese, *Can you speak English?* Laughter, head-shaking, two or three words of English and Chinese. That works every time and we go back to sign language. As everywhere, people really appreciate the effort. One of my best applause lines in presentations about the importance of learning and speaking English (or at least trying) is to say, “*Wo bu quay shwo Putonghua.\**” Even if the only two phrases you ever learn in a language are *excuse me* and *thank you*, you're in business.

**Lady Yang:** for the modern Chinese woman who is plumper than fashion model toothpicks, Lady Yang of the Tang Dynasty, favorite concubine of the emperor, and tragic heroine, is more than a role model of intelligence, political savvy, and grace. *She was plump*, our Xian tour guide tells us, *so we Chinese women like her very much*. NYC playgoers may remember the multimedia play *Cathay*, in which Lady Yang's story was portrayed. Politics and court intrigue caused her to commit suicide for the sake of ensuring the safety and continuity of the emperor's reign. She is an icon, especially in Xian, but all over China we see her statue. In Shanghai's Temple of the City God area, there is a beautiful and famous teahouse. Lady Yang's statue graces the lovely lotus pond surrounding the teahouse. I ask our friend to take a picture of Kadir and me with Lady Yang in the background. The 9-corner bridge on which we are standing is crowded with tourists from Asia and beyond. “Make sure you get the plump lady in the shot,” I request. Of course I mean Lady Yang, but an American lady thinks I am talking about her. Oops.

**Hairdressers** are open on every street into the late night. I considered coming home with spiky brownish red hair like so many Japanese and Chinese boys and girls have. I have decided that most Asian teenaged boys have better hair than I do, and I have watched enough shampoo commercials to wish that I had long, silky black hair like many Asian girls. At least in Rugao, Longevity Town, gray hair was in. Still it was both cute and disconcerting when a sweet little tot called me NiNi (Granny). “*This is our custom. It's how we show respect,*” assures my dyed-brown-haired colleague from the college. I don't believe her until he calls her NiNi also.

**How Taiwan issue** will be resolved: Our enlightening train conversation with the Chinese-born American touched on Taiwan. His take is based on pragmatism: He figures economic development in China and increasing joint ventures between China and Taiwan will lead to a peaceful, economically based solution. The Taiwanese rightly question, “Why should a rich country want to join a poor one?” As China catches up monetarily, this question will become mute, he muses. We want to learn more about this issue--and Tibet.

**The environment in China continues to astound and confound us.** In contrast, we were impressed that the Japanese have managed to reach a high level of development with many accommodations to promote environmental sustainability. We have much to learn from them. As a woman said at a presentation in Hiroshima, “I am just a humble postal clerk. Yet, our post

office has a huge solar panel on the roof. Why do you Americans fight wars for oil instead of developing environmental solutions like these?" The Chinese cities are choking, as are the inhabitants. Our friend Dave, a poet, writer, and gem industry journalist, says it better than I can: *Last night I attended a dinner given by a Chinese conglomerate of pearl growers who are building what will be the world's largest export/import pearl trading center. They showed an ominous shot of their city's new emerging skyline, shrouded in industrial haze, as seen from a nearby pristine pearl farm. The Chinese will bite off the Great Mother's hand that feeds them in no time at all. It is sad to see death-wish capitalism sanctified as life-affirming progress so quickly and, I fear, so irreversibly. Cherish the cryogenic pockets of cultural sleep left in China and continue to pray without ceasing.* (Again, I invite you to read Jared Diamond's *Collapse* for more on the environmental consequences of China's development.)

**Teachers are overworked:** At Rugao Normal College, a delightful young teacher came up to thank us for the presentation on literature. "I leave my house when the stars are out, and I come home when the stars are out. We have no time to live. We have so much work." Poetry aside, it is telling that the most important profession in the world (my opinion) is the least valued everywhere.

**More from Rugao: on talking politics** in a community that is not used to talking politics, especially with foreigners: I have already told you about the dear male teacher who spoke for a roomful of shy, young women and men after our presentation on war and peace. "War destroys the human soul," he cried. Then he went on to exhort his fellows to remember that "Peace is the purpose of life." I also mentioned another man who spoke, but I have just found my notes on his comments: "Bush makes us question our ideas of right and wrong," is how he began. "How can a powerful country attack a smaller one?" Another teacher asked, "What would your government do if they saw this movie?" (Probably ignore it, we replied. Although Kadir has offered to show the film to a group of military brass friends of our contact in Hiroshima. That would be intriguing!) Finally, a woman teacher added, "Your question who's telling our story makes me question myself. I realize that we human beings must be responsible for our actions."

**What is the purpose of a trip like this?** It has been so wonderful to be purposeful! In fact, Bajir had to counsel me out of a funk during a down time of simple tourism. As we flew over Japan on this flight home, I thought of the dear new friends in the cities below whom we ate with, worked with, debated with, made art with, cooked with, and shared humanity with. We had the privilege of getting an inside look into people's families, schools, and art, and we were given the opportunity to do what we think is urgent: speak about creating a culture of peace to replace the global culture of war. Whether we have been emissaries, we cannot say. At least we feel sure that in several cities and small towns in Japan and China we have friends who will welcome us back and whom we will welcome to our homes. We have teachers and artists with whom to continue to work from afar for now, and perhaps together in one place or the other in the future. And, like A.J. Muste, Yamoake-san, and countless others, we have spoken up and spoken out, and even if we have reached one person, we feel great. Did I tell you about the Japanese college student who wrote us to say, "I was shocked by your movie. I was moved by your words. I have thought about what I can do. I can take photographs about peace. This is what I will do for peace. Thank you."

**I have been inspired by these words from Nobel Peace Prize winner Jane Addams from 1907, “Newer Ideals of Peace.”** (Those of you who enjoy a spiritual perspective will enjoy Addams’s references. For those of you who are not spiritually inclined, persevere through her religious analogies to the heart of the message.

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These are excerpts. Read the entire selection in *The Power of Nonviolence: Writings by Advocates of Peace* (Beacon Press):

*“It is quite possible that we have committed the time-honored folly of looking for a sudden change in men’s attitude toward war, even as the poor alchemists wasted their lives in searching for a magic fluid and did nothing to discover the great laws governing chemical changes and reactions, the knowledge of which would have developed untold wealth beyond their crude dreams of transmuted gold.*

*The final moral reaction may at last come, accompanied by deep remorse, too tardy to reclaim all the human life which has been spent and the treasure which has been wasted, or it may come with a great sense of joy that all voluntary destruction of human life, all the deliberate wasting of the fruits of labor, have become a thing of the past, and that whatever the future contains for us, it will at least be free of war. We may at last comprehend the truth of that which Ruskin has stated so many times, that we worship the soldier not because he goes forth to slay, but to be slain...*

*To join in this determined effort is to break through national bonds and to unlock the latent fellowship between man and man. Those emotions which stir the spirit to deeds of self-surrender and to high enthusiasm, are among the world’s most precious assets. That this emotion has so often become associated with war by no means proves that it cannot be used for other ends. There is something active and tangible in this new internationalism, although it is difficult to make it clear, and in our striving for a new word with which to express this new and important sentiment, we are driven to the rather absurd phrase of ‘cosmic patriotism.’ Whatever it may be called, it may yet be strong enough to move masses of men out of their narrow national considerations and cautions into new reaches of human effort and affection. Religion has long ago taught that only as the individual can establish a sense of union with a power for righteousness not himself can he experience peace; and it may be possible that the nations will be called to a similar experience.*

*The International Peace Conference held in Boston in 1904 was opened by a huge meeting in which men of influence and modern thought from four continents gave reasons for their belief in the passing of war. But none was so modern, so fundamental and so trenchant as the address which was read from the prophet Isaiah. He founded the cause of peace upon the cause of righteousness, not only as expressed in political relations, but also in industrial relations. He contended that peace could be secured only as men abstained from the gains of oppression and responded to the cause of the poor; that swords would finally be beaten into plowshares and pruning hooks, not because men resolved to be peaceful, but because all the metal of the earth would be turned to its proper use when the poor and their children should be abundantly fed. It was as if the ancient prophet foresaw that under an enlightened industrialism peace would no longer be an absence of war, but the unfolding of world-wide processes making for the nurture*

*of human life. He predicted the moment which has come to us now that peace is no longer an abstract dogma but has become a rising tide of moral enthusiasm slowly engulfing all pride of conquest and making war impossible.”*

**One hundred years after her comments, how wonderful it would be to make Addams’s words real in our world. Peace be with all of you who have taken this wonderful journey with us. Thanks to you for your encouragement in words, food, flowers, introductions, and countless other ways of helping and cheering us on. We will give presentations in Canada and Denmark later this summer. And the daily journey continues for all of us, with all of our efforts as friends, family, colleagues, and as those who work in whatever ways we can, for a just, sustainable, and peaceful world.**

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### ***#20-Merion, PA, U.S.A.: Comments by Sue Cannon to Episcopal Academy Faculty and Staff 2006-07 Opening Meeting—August 30, 2006***

I brought back a cloth that contains messages of peace in numerous languages from kids and adults from every continent in the world, but that doesn’t tell the whole story of my sabbatical year. We did so much traveling that I can still wake up and play *where am I today?* before opening my eyes.

During this incredible year I taught students and teachers in China and Japan and made presentations on peace education in Canada, Denmark, and the United States! In addition to international study, travel, and teaching, I wrote and created Internet resources for students, teachers, and parents to help them pursue peace and global education projects. You can view some of these at [www.teachforpeace.org](http://www.teachforpeace.org).

All over the world, I met dedicated teachers like you who are working to promote a peaceful future for their students. I remember especially one Chinese teacher who bemoaned the stress and long hours of teaching the students he so loved, “I leave my home while the stars are out, and I come home when the stars are out.”

Also, all over the world—and here at home—I encountered a rising nationalism that threatens to thwart the international cooperation and peaceful interactions we all desire. And in each country we visited, there was concern about the direction of our country. The question we were asked most often was, “What’s happening to your country?” This fearful question was in sharp contrast to the stories told with thanks by a Chinese official about America’s help in 1945. In Japan, a group of women told us, “We thought all Americans were greedy and selfish until we met you.”

During this year, I explored the field of peace education. I spoke at length with Tom Lickona, authority on character education, and he agrees with me that peace education is the next logical step in the character education process. So, what is peace education, and how does it differ from plain, old-fashioned good teaching? Teaching for peace takes a leap of imagination.

Peace education aims to change an existing paradigm—a culture of acceptance of war as a method of solving international problems—to a new paradigm—one in which human rights, social justice, sustainable development, and creative diplomacy are promoted as effective paths to national and international security. Peace education helps children see themselves as integral parts of one human family and as capable actors for positive social change on a local and global stage. It is a long-term

process, yielding a harvest that is often unseen. Seen or unseen, we must sow the seeds today for a harvest of peace.

**We do this by teaching our students to think, care, and act.** Helping our students think critically—especially in the face of constant media bombardment—will provide them with what scholar Noam Chomsky calls “**intellectual self defense.**” We teach them to care about their classmates, and to know them on a deep rather than superficial level. But we also teach them to be citizens of the world: embracing what Nobel Peace Prize winner Jane Addams called in 1906—lacking a better term--“**cosmic patriotism.**” But it’s not enough for our students to think and care, we must also teach them to act positively, honorably, and effectively to **create the change they wish to see in the world**—locally and globally.

We do much of this already. But we can do much of it better.

**So, I don’t know whether to be singing: *The party’s over...* or *We’ve only just begun.* Either way, I am glad to be back here with you and eager to begin working for that unseen harvest our teaching will sow.**

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