

Hello, dear friends in Japan

Eimi Watanabe
(O-okayama
Church)



(continued from the last issue)

The reason for this dilemma is the fact that any development project includes, almost always, options and contradictions. In the case of the project for Kenya I pointed out in the last issue, for example, there was a conflict between the aim of the project to protect forests, which are precious natural resources for the society at large, and the rights of the aboriginal people who have lived there from generation to generation. And behind the case of the power plant project was a hard decision-making between the right to secure the energy for the development of industries and the improvement of citizens' life, and the necessity for protecting nature and stopping further worsening of the global warming. If over-abundant sustainable energy were available, of course, much of this dilemma would be solved. But until then, should we opt for the postponement of developing industries and improving our life? Once getting involved in development projects, you always face such dilemmas and nerve-racking decisions. At the time of concluding a final report of a project, I have experienced sleepless nights often times.

I am scheduled to step down from my duties at the World Bank's Inspection Panel at the end of this coming October. I am happy to go back to Denmark, where my husband lives. I have no hesitance in living in the northern part of Europe, because my grandmother, Siiri Watanabe, was a Finnish woman, and came over to Japan, in the Taishou era, with her husband, Tadao Watanabe, who had finished his theological studies in Finland and was ordained as a Lutheran pastor. My grandmother continued to teach music,

staying in Japan for almost 40 years, including the trying period of World War II. For this reason, there was a kind of Scandinavian atmosphere in our home. Besides, Denmark is, like Finland, is a nation with the Lutheran Church as its state religion. In comparison with my grandmother, therefore, who came all the way to Japan, once for all, via the Trans-Siberian Railway, spending several weeks in the cabin of the train, it is far easier to live overseas nowadays, thanks to the development of transportation and communication.

My loved ones, i.e. my parents, my uncle, my aunt; they have all gone, and my only brother also lives overseas, which means of course, I have no place in Japan to stay in. For me, "my home" is always O-okayama Lutheran Church. Fortunately, I am still a member of this church, despite my long absence. Once or twice in several years, I have a God-given occasion to visit "*O-okayama on my mind.*" I recall, with much gratitude, the pastors and the members of the church, who supported my parents in their old age. I know that every year the members of the church go to the Tama Graveyard, at the time of All Saints' Day, to offer a worship right in front of the churchyard. I am really grateful that they also go to the place in the yard, singing hymns of my parent's liking, where my grandmother and my parents sleep in eternal bliss. And most of all, I would like to tell you this, my friends; it is the happiest moment for me to say "Hello" to my old friends and acquaintances, as I open the door to the church, when God allows me to take part in the fellowship of my mother church. They accept and welcome me, as if nothing had happened in between, and say with a warm smile 'hello', as if I were right there with them yesterday. To name just a few, Ms. Etsuko Seno, Ms. Shigeeko Takeuchi. . . who were baptized and confirmed with me at the same occasion . . . are always glad to start chatting with me, as if nothing has happened for the last 50 years. Eating "Ramen" and chatting with them is the happiest moment during my short stay or stopover in Japan.

Obituary

+ Rev. Ichijuro Shirahige

Oct. 5, 2014 (at 99)

Pastor Shirahige served at Kobe-Higashi, Shimonoseki, Nagoya, Hakata, and Hoya Churches.

+ Rev. Kiyoshi Shirakawa

Jan. 17, 2015 (at 81)

Pastor Shirakawa served at Choshi, Yokoshiba, Matsumoto, Nagano, Sendai, Hikari, Hakozaki, St. Peter's, Karatsu, and Ogi Churches.

Their life-long dedication to church is remembered with gratitude. Please accept our sincere condolences. May the Lord comfort their bereaved families.

NCC World Day of Prayer

On Friday, March 6, women across the globe met in churches to remember and pray for the Bahamas.

The World Day of Prayer was initiated in 1887 by a group of American women to pray for the immigrants and the suppressed. Since then, the first Friday of March is set aside to pray together under a common theme and to spread Christ's love.

Have you ever thought about which country has the first dawn, and where time gaps exist? That is where the prayer is given first. Prayers then continue in another country and then another. This way, a chain of prayers goes around the world! The World Day of Prayer is when our prayers link the world together.

Please Support the Disaster-hit Areas

We have a request concerning the woven sandals. When you order them, please place an order of three pairs or more at a time. The shipping charges, which are now covered by the makers following the price hike, become too great a burden to cover if a single order is for less than three pairs. Thank you for your understanding. As to the material, Men's T-shirts of size L or

larger are needed. They are in short supply and the makers now buy materials.

Woven Sandals >

Size M (23-24cm): 1800yen

Size L (25-26cm): 2000yen



< Hanging Dolls

Set of 1 Row: 2000yen

Set of 3 Rows: 3500yen

(postage collected on delivery)

Prior to the GM in June, orders should be sent to: Setsuko Ishida (JELCW)

Email: ishida.setsuko@blue.plala.or.jp

Fax: 043-275-8402

When you order, please write your Church name, your name, address, zip code, phone number, item, unit, and preferred date of arrival. Group orders through the church are welcome. Note: Hanging doll's shipping charges are to be covered by the purchaser and payment should be made using Japan Post transfer.

PS

Thank you for your support for the past three years. Without it, we could not have continued issuing newsletters to you. Let me say again, "Thank you." I was once told that issuing newsletters is an important job because it links the JELCW members together. The word is always in my mind. (F)