



## HEC is Entering a New Era with New Opportunities and Challenges !

*Professor Hannech GUTFREUND, Hebrew University of Jerusalem  
Member of the Board of HEC, Japan*

My first visit to the Holocaust Education Center (HEC) in Fukuyama-city, Hiroshima-pref. took place in April 1997. At that time I served as the President of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and I came to Japan as a guest of the Beit Shalom Association and it's unforgettable founder and leader - the late Father Takeji Otsuki. That first encounter with the HEC was for me a moving revelation and a total surprise. To find such an institution, so far away from Jerusalem and from the bloodstained soil of Europe, without the presence of Jewish communities, was for me almost a miracle. I was particularly moved to find out that the HEC was dedicated to the memory of the million and a half children who perished in the Holocaust. Many members of my family lost their lives in ghettos and crematoria in Poland. Among them were two little girls - ten-year-old Fredzia and five-year-old Dosia - daughters of my father's sister. Their innocent souls rose to heaven through the chimneys of a crematorium in death camp Belzhets in 1943. After the war, my father and his brothers engraved their names, and the names of the mother, aunt and grandmother of the two girls on the tombstone of my grandfather's grave. My grandfather, Hanoch (Henryk) Gutfreund, died before the war and was buried in the Jewish cemetery in his hometown Nowy Targ, south of Cracow. I am named after him.

I visited the HEC again in April 2006 to participate in a Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony. I was deeply impressed by the sincere and sensitive attitude of the participants in that event, as they listened to the remarks of the speakers, to the songs of the choir and to the



The tomb of my grandfather in Nowy Targ, Poland

moving words of the poem: "There are no butterflies here."

The HEC is a testimony to human compassion for the tragedy of others. It is the realization of a vision of the late Father Otsuki. It has become an important component of the spiritual and educational mission of the Beit Shalom community and it demonstrates the goodwill and

sense of purpose of this community. The HEC owes its unique character and quality to the dedication and enthusiasm of its founder and director - Reverend Makoto Otsuka.

My recent visit to the HEC occurred in August 2008, one year after the inauguration of its new home. The transition to the new location also marked a transition to a new phase in the history of the HEC. During the approximately twelve years of existence in a relatively small and modest surrounding, Reverend Makoto Otsuka, his staff and the leaders of the Beit Shalom community have shaped the exhibition, adopted principles of operation and developed a deep understanding of the subject matter. With this experience they could formulate goals and guidelines for the architectural design of the new building. The result of this process is outstanding. Visitors gain the sense of entering a different world. The exhibition halls are full of light, they contain a lot of information, yet, they are not overloaded and visitors have time and space to concentrate on specific exhibits and observe them from different angles and distances. There is a very appealing interplay between the inside and the outside (the Rose Garden). In short, the architect and the exhibition designers have produced a very visitor-friendly atmosphere, an atmosphere appropriate for the informative, educational, spiritual and thought-provoking experience that the HEC intends to provide to its visitors.

It is clear that the HEC in its new location will attract more visitors and more school children than in the past (as is already the case). This requires an expansion of the resources to deal with this situation. It requires additional educational and explanatory materials, of which the new, very informative and beautifully designed, Guide Book is one example. It requires the expansion and training of educational staff and it requires rethinking of how the



Ms. Raaya and Prof. Hannech Gutfreund in front of the Jerusalem Stone wall and the Menorah of HEC

HEC is reaching out to the general public. These topics were discussed at a meeting of the Board of Directors of the HEC at which I participated as a newly appointed member. Having been asked to serve on this Board is for me a great honor. All the participants at that meeting shared the feelings that the HEC is entering a new era with new opportunities and challenges.

In November 2008, I participated in a meeting in Jerusalem of representatives of the HEC with Mr. Avner Shalev, the Director of Yad Vashem and Mrs. Dorit Nowak, the Director of the School for Teaching of the Holocaust at Yad Vashem. The Japanese participants were Mr. Takeo Sato, President of Beit Shalom, Mrs. Mariko Tsujita, who taught for years in the Japanese Departments at the universities of Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv, and Miss Masami Otsuka, who has been admitted to participate in an intensive course on the history of the Holocaust in Yad Vashem. Although, our hosts at Yad Vashem heard about the HEC before, it was the first time that they realized the significance, the nature, and the scope of activities of this

institution. I could sense how impressed they were. The discussion at that meeting focused on how HEC can benefit for its future development, for training of its staff and for producing new educational material, from the vast resources of Yad Vashem.

At present, the personal memories of survivors of the Holocaust are receding into history, but the public awareness of the significance of this colossal tragedy is growing, particularly in the western world. Holocaust museums and Holocaust educational institutions play an important role in maintaining the memory and conveying with it a moral message to all mankind. In this context, the Holocaust Education Center in Fukuyama plays a special role. It is defining its educational mission around two simple questions formulated in the introductory pages of the Guide Book - what should everyone do to achieve and maintain peace, and what should every individual do, so that something like this will never happen again. Emphasizing the role of individuals is very appropriate in the land of Chiune Sugihara.

## The Goal of the New Holocaust Education Center, Japan

### Makoto OTSUKA, *Director General*

There appear to be a stronger expectations on the Holocaust Education Center as an enriched learning environment from both inside and outside Japan since the new center was completed two years ago. We have also found that understanding and awareness of the Holocaust have gradually become deeper and more widespread with more than 100,000 visitors having come to the HEC during its 15 years since our center's establishment as the first of its kind in 1995, 50 years after the Second World War ended.

Lately, we could easily find more specialized books on the Holocaust written or translated by Japanese scholars on the shelves in bookstores, which increases opportunities provided to those who want to learn about Judaism, Western European history and survivors' testimony of the Holocaust in Japanese. The principle which guide us as an educational center for young people in Japan attributes to the words that Mrs. Hannah Pick, best friend of Anne Frank who visited at the HEC opening ceremony said, "The Holocaust was a man-made

occurrence." And to meet given expectations, we continue our efforts to approach the historic facts objectively, and to focus on and consequently shed light on 1.5 million little Jewish lives who perished during the Holocaust. Due to Japan's geographical environment and its limited number of the Jewish residents in our country, exhibitions always require wisdom and ingenuity.

Fortunately, despite these circumstances, the new center has created a reproduction of Anne Frank's room in Amsterdam, and exhibits a button-operated diorama of the Auschwitz camp etc. We hope children in Japan can learn some of the history of the Holocaust through these exhibits. One visitor to our center described his impression, "While trembling with fright learning the facts of the Holocaust that I have never known, I was given hope to live by this center's warmth. I would visit again."

Our efforts might be only a drop in the ocean, but as one drop, the HEC hopes to continue taking over the message of Mr. Otto Frank, Anne's father and a Holocaust survivor, "Actually do something to create peace."

## HEC Hits 100,000 Visitors!

August 29th, 2009, the HEC welcomed its 100,000th visitor since its dedication in 1995.

The 100,000th visitor was a 15-year-old junior high school student from Mie prefecture. She visited HEC as a member of a group from her hometown. Being the 100,000th visitor, she said "As I am the same age as Anne Frank when she died, I would like to live for her, also thinking of peace"

HEC presented her a book of "Diary of Anne Frank", a guidebook, and a letter set, etc. The HEC reached 100,000 visitors after 14 years, welcoming many young people from across Japan. The news of the 100,000th visitor was covered by a number of newspapers.



The pupil of the 100,000th visitor  
(August 30, 2009 Chugoku Newspaper)

## Recent Visitors to HEC

The total number of visitors to HEC has now reached to approximately 103,000 at the end of 2009. Among them, about 45,000 are students including preschool children. It has been for twenty-seven months since the new HEC was opened to public in October 2007. The number of visitors to the new HEC has increased 56% compared to the number of visitors to the former HEC.

What the HEC intends to do is to teach Japanese students about the Holocaust and to convey messages from the Holocaust to Japanese people in order never to allow such genocide again. Pupils and students from a number of schools, such as high schools, Junior high schools, elementary schools and preschools come to the HEC from various prefectures in Japan, such as Kanagawa, Gifu, Osaka, Hyogo, Okayama, Hiroshima and Okinawa, etc.

A girl, a Third grader in elementary school, came to the HEC with her father from Awaji-shima, Hyogo prefecture. When she was listening to an explanation about Auschwitz-Birkenau, she gradually turned pale. A HEC staff member asked her, "What's the matter with you?" She had no response, but she could not help but burst out crying. The staff member handed her his handkerchief at once. She had a lot of tears in her eyes at the sight of the Jewish people marching to the gas chamber. She said, "They are so pitiful!" (August 12th, 2008)

Even preschool children learn about the Holocaust. It is unnecessary to teach them using many words. In front of the ghetto wall reproduced in the HEC, a staff member asked the preschool children, "A lot of Jewish people were confined in a ghetto surrounded by these brick walls. How do you feel about this?" Simultaneously they replied, "Sad!", "Pitiful!" Being asked one more question, "How would feel if you were also confined in a ghetto?", immediately every child responded, "I don't

want to!", "I would hate to go there!" (October 29, 2009)

When a middle-aged couple looking around panels at the



Preschool children learning about the Holocaust ghetto corner was

asked by a staff member, "Shall I explain for you?" They said, "Oh, yes. Please!" The explanation began from the ghetto corner, and continued. At the corner where the poem "Butterfly" by Pavel Friedmann is placed, the wife of the couple, listening to the staff's explanation, took out a handkerchief from her bag and wiped her tears off her eyes. Her partner said, "We are so moved thanks to your explanation. To tell the truth, I am a principal of a junior high school in Yasugi-city, Shimane prefecture. If you need my help, please get in touch with me." (November 26th, 2009)

Sixth graders in an elementary school from In-no-shima, Hiroshima prefecture, visited the HEC. About 40 of them entered to the Memorial Room of the HEC. Although there were a long bench and some chairs in the room, there was not enough for all of them to sit down. So, 5 to 6 students had to stand. A boy sitting on a chair suddenly stood up, and he gave his seat to a girl standing by him. Then, a lot of students sitting on the bench moved closer to each other to make space on the bench for the others who were standing. Eventually, all of them could sit down on the bench and on the chairs. The staff guide said, "I mentioned that you that if you find a friend in trouble, you should help him or her, because it is important to create peace. However, just now, you taught me that mutual concession is also important to create peace. Thank you." Then an applause naturally arose in the room. (October 23rd, 2009)

## Recent Publications

### *Guidebook of the Holocaust Education Center*

To mark the opening of the HEC, the HEC published 3,000 copies of "The Guidebook of the HEC". It was edited to answer the visitors' questions, so that it will be good for elementary and junior high school children to use it and to learn about the Holocaust before they visit the HEC. The guidebook includes the history of the HEC which started from Dir. Gen. Makoto Otsuka's encounter with Mr. Otto Frank, the descriptions of the documents, and items of the new HEC, and an introduction to the history of the Holocaust.

It has many pages introducing the rescuers during the Holocaust, putting an emphasis on "the chain of good will".

### *Postcards of the new HEC*

The HEC published a set of postcards, including 12 photos of the new HEC. It includes the photo of the whole

view of the new HEC building, the one of Anne Frank's statue, and the one of a typewriter of Mr. Otto Frank given to the HEC by Mr. Buddy Elias, a cousin of Anne Frank. *Newsletter and "Small Hands"*

April, 2008: Newsletter No. 18 "The Holocaust Education Center, Japan -remember the Past, Survey the Future-"

January, 2010: "Small Hands No. 19 including much news of HEC written by the members of the children's volunteer group, "Small Hands".



Postcards of the new HEC

## Lecture and Concert

On July 26th and 27th, 2008, cello concerts were held at HEC by Mr. Hikaru Sato, a cellist in "Orchestre de Paris". It was the first music concert held in the new HEC building.

Mr. Hikaru Sato met Mr. Otto Frank, Anne Frank's father in 1971. He had a strong desire to hold a concert in the new HEC building in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. Gathering approx. 100 people each, the concerts were dedicated to the memory of the victims of the Holocaust, and for the hope for peace, according to Mr. Sato's wish. The program included with the following pieces; -- "Suites for Violoncello Solo No. 2, 3" (Bach), "Litanei" (Schubert), "Prayer" (Bloch), "Air on G-string" (Bach), "Sicilienne" (Paradis), "Song of the Birds"(arr. Casals), "Love's Greeting" (Elgar)

Mr. Sato also played the following Jewish pieces in commemoration of the victims; -- "Eli Eli," "Ani Maamin," "Ledor Vador," "Ano Avdo."

On November 2nd, 2008, Mr. Kunio Yanagida, a



Mr. Hikaru Sato

well-known nonfiction writer, held a lecture in the HEC. Mr. Yanagida translated the picture book "Erika's Story" by Ruth Vander Zee, to Japanese, which has been well read in Japan.

Visiting the HEC for the first time in July, 2008 to appreciate the cello concert by Mr. Hikaru Sato, Mr. Yanagida wanted to support the HEC by holding a lecture for children.

Making use of the opportunity to visit Hiroshima for another lecture, he organized a plan to visit the HEC, and kindly proposed to hold a lecture meeting, introducing children's picture books about the Holocaust and peace.

He introduced the picture books which he had translated, such as "Erika's Story" (Original text by Ruth Vander Zee, Illustrations by Roberto Innocenti), "Yakouba" (Original text and illustration by Thierry Dedieu) including his experience of meeting the authors of the picture books.

The audience enjoyed the thoughtful and interesting lecture of Mr. Yanagida, as well as his wish for peace.



Mr. Kunio Yanagida

## Volunteers Supporting HEC

The Holocaust Education Center is now supported by 30 volunteers who help clean, guide visitors, keep an eye on exhibited items, and sending newsletters, etc.

Members of the children's volunteer group, "Small Hands," also take part in volunteer activities such as publishing newspapers, grafting Anne Frank's Rose, and also giving guided tours to children visitors.

The HEC entered its 3rd year in the new center since September 2007, and it has been welcoming more visitors ever before. Because the staff members were unable to guide so many visitors, the center started to hold guide training seminars for volunteers in September 2008. Each seminar is held every month, and about 20 volunteers have already started to do the guiding. The volunteer guides have been received with fine reports from visitors. We hope that 50 guide volunteers will be guiding visitors in the near future. Staff members, volunteers, and Small Hands members --- all work together to make the HEC better.



The volunteers explaining the exhibitions

## Visitors from Abroad to HEC

Aside from Japanese people, visitors from abroad, both Jewish and non-Jewish, have visited the HEC. They are from Israel, United States, France, Germany, South Africa, Canada, Austria, Lithuania, Korea, the Great Britain and so on.

All of them commonly say, "It is amazing to us that the HEC is located in Fukuyama, neither in Tokyo nor in Osaka, and it is very, very far from Europe. It is also very impressive, and moving for us to visit the HEC. We respect all the staff members of the HEC, who teach the Holocaust to Japanese people and children in order to prevent human beings from causing another Holocaust."

Rabbi Marvin Tokayer (New York), a grandson of Holocaust victims, who has supported the HEC for many years, visited our center for the first time on May 24th, 2009. He could not stop his tears in the memorial room.

Prof. Sarah (Rector) and Prof. Guy G. Stroumsa of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem visited HEC on December 22nd, 2009. Being a son of the Holocaust survivors of Auschwitz and Belgen-Bersen camps, Prof. Guy Stroumsa commented with tears, "I have never been to a place where people are praying in front of a child victim's shoe. I am very moved".

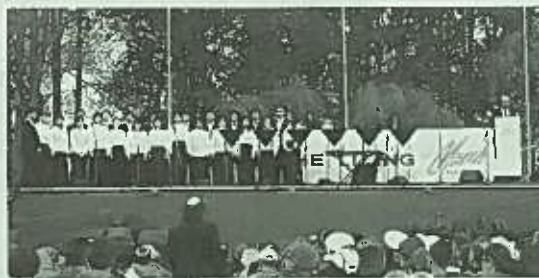


Rabbi Marvin Tokayer lighting the candle

## Attending the Holocaust Memorial Ceremony in Auschwitz, 2008

Deputy Director General Akio Yoshida and 27 people from Japan participated in the Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Memorial) Ceremony which was held on May 1st, 2008. In the ceremony, the Japanese members sang Yiddish and Hebrew songs such as "Eli Eli", "Zhamele", and "Ani Maamin".

Hearing the words of Rabbi Israel Lau: "This must be a dream! A Japanese choir singing the Ani Maamin in front of the gate of death: This must be a dream!" The Japanese members were also very moved with being part of such an important ceremony in Auschwitz.



The members from Japan singing the Hebrew songs

## Special Event on the 80th Anniversary of Anne Frank's Birth

On June 13, the day after Anne Frank's 80th birthday, a special event about Anne Frank was held at the Holocaust Education Center. It was arranged by a volunteer group "Marronnier (Horse Chestnut)" whose members read picture books on the Holocaust to visitors. On that day they introduced "Life of Anne Frank" with illustrated cards, introduced books on the Holocaust, played Anne

Frank's tale with puppets, and sang a song of peace with gestures together with the audience. About 60 people participated in the event. A 10 year-old girl who took part in the events said, "This event gave me a chance to learn about Anne Frank. I want to know more about her and the Holocaust."

## Seminar of Opening to the Public

The 12th public seminar was held in HEC, under the theme "The Children who lived the days of the Holocaust," as part of the three-lectures series running from September to November, 2009. The series gathered 20 to 40 participants for each seminar.

The first lecture was given on September 26th by Rev. Makoto Otsuka, Director General of HEC, with the title "From the Establishment of the HEC, to the Attainment of the 100,000th Visitor." He introduced how the HEC came about, beginning with his personal history and especially the emotional meeting with Mr. Otto Frank, father of Anne Frank in 1971.

The second lecture was held on October 24th, welcoming Rev. Michiko Otsuki, who also met Mr. Otto Frank in 1971, and was the first person to receive the rose of Anne Frank from Mr. Frank in 1972. She introduced

her personal background as the daughter of Rev. Takeji Otsuki, the founder of the HEC, and her understandings of Anne Frank's life through the deep correspondence with Mr. Otto Frank, and the message towards peace, which she received from Mr. Frank. She also introduced her new book "Souvenir of Anne Frank," which includes the letters she exchanged with Mr. Frank.

The third lecture was held on November 14th, welcoming Prof. Reiko Nitta of Hiroshima University, Graduate School of Letters, Humanities, Language and Literature, who specializes in Jewish American Literature after the Second World War. She introduced a number of writings by Jewish American authors, which have survived the Holocaust. Through the words of the writers, the participants could learn about the deep wounds which the survivors suffered.

## The Arrival of a Seedling of the Horse Chestnut Tree from Amsterdam

A seedling of chestnut tree that Anne Frank saw from the Secret Annex in Amsterdam came to the Holocaust Education Center on March 27 in the 80th anniversary of Anne Frank's birth. The chestnut tree sometimes appears in the Diary of Anne Frank. On February 23, 1944, she wrote as follows: "I go to the attic almost every morning to get the stale air out of my lungs. This morning when I went there, Peter was busy cleaning up. He finished quickly and came over to where I was sitting on my favorite spot on the floor. The two of us looked out at the blue sky, the bare chestnut tree glistening with dew, the sea gulls and other birds glinting with silver as they swooped through the air, and we were so moved and entranced that we couldn't speak." (Otto Frank and Mirjam Pressler eds. The Diary of a Young Girl)

Mr. Buddy Elias, cousin of Anne Frank, sent us a message on this special occasion.

*"Dear friends,*

*With the greatest of joy have I been informed that a seedling of Anne Frank's chestnut tree will be planted in Japan. What wonderful news.*

*There are no more beautiful gardens in the world than Japanese gardens and I am sure these seedlings will grow to become beautiful trees for beautiful Japanese children to sit under them and send out messages of peace to the world in the ideals of Anne Frank. Thank you and all my very best wishes to all of you! Buddy Elias, Cousin of Anne Frank"*

We hope that the seedling of chestnut tree will easily get used to Japanese climate and will be planted in front of the Holocaust Education Center in a few years.



The arrived seedling of chestnut tree. (March 28, 2009, Yomiuri Newspaper)

## Dedalo Minosse International Prize for Commissioning a Building

The Holocaust Education Center Japan, the client, and Mr. Keisuke Maeda, the architect, were awarded the Dedalo Minosse International Prize on May 30, 2008. Dedalo Minosse, which is celebrating ten years since its foundation, has already become one of the most important architectural awards in the world. The prize, which takes place in Vicenza, Italy, is promoted by ALA-Assoarchitetti, the association for professional architects and is supported by the President of Italian Republic and many different Italian ministries. The news of the HEC's receiving the prize was covered by the local news media in Japan.



Dir. Gen. Otsuka and Mr. Maeda with the Dedalo Minosse International Prize

## Shigeki Murata's Two More Pieces of Japanese Artwork



Mr. Shigeki Murata

Shigeki Murata, a Japanese artist who had drawn 16 pieces of artwork on the Holocaust in the past, drew two more pieces and donated them to the Holocaust Education Center in 2008.

He drew piece of a barbed wire and a light in "Night and Fog", which shows the tranquility in a camp just before dawn and the start of the work day again.

In the other, "Zyklon B," he drew a wall of a gas chamber. He made his own bathroom sealed with a lot of moisture to become moldy and then imagined the Zyklon B-dirty wall.

Some pieces of his artwork are exhibited in the hall of the center and appeal to the heart of the visitors.



"Night and Fog"

## Japanese Newspapers Report on the HEC

The *Nikkei*, a Japanese newspaper focusing on business and the economy, introduced the HEC, Japan on Jun. 27, 2008. It depicted the encounter of Rev. Makoto Otsuka with Mr. Otto Frank, the father of Anne Frank, which became an inspiration to establish the HEC.

*"Rev. Otsuka wrote letters to individuals and institutes asking for Holocaust items and received a uniform used in a camp, a box that people's ashes are put and a passport with J stamp. Mr. Buddy Elias, cousin of Anne Frank, President of Anne Frank Fonds, sent the typewriter that Mr. Otto Frank used to compile the Diary of Anne Frank to the center:*

*The items exhibited are treasures given by kind people that the center wants to show especially to children who*

*will build a new future."*

The *Asahi Shimbun*, Japan's most authoritative newspaper, introduced the HEC, which celebrated its 1st anniversary of the opening of the new center.

*"The HEC started to train guide volunteers. It held a guide training seminar on 14 and 15 of Sept. 2008 and about 30 volunteers learned about the Holocaust and guiding.*

*The center newly published a guidebook. It briefly explains about the background of the Holocaust, shows how the Holocaust took place and introduces the Righteous among the Nations like Chiune Sugihara and Oskar Schindler."*

## The New Temporal Exhibition of Terezin Ghetto

Since the new building of the Holocaust Education Center was built in Sep. 2007, the exhibition about "Chiune Sugihara -A Righteous among the Nations-" has been exhibited in the temporal exhibition room. The courageous act of the Japanese diplomat who issued 2,139 transit visas and saved about 6,000 Jewish people has given light to Japanese children and has inspired them to promote peace.

The HEC will start a new exhibition "Hope in the Darkness ~Children in the Terezin Ghetto" in place of the temporal exhibition on "Chiune Sugihara." It will be an exhibition focusing on children in the Terezin Ghetto. The exhibition will include explanations on the Terezin Ghetto, children's artwork and poetries, bills in the Terezin Ghetto, and a miniature of the ghetto. Each piece of the children's work will be a proof that the child actually lived in the ghetto.

In preparing the exhibition, we were impressed that hope was given to children in the darkness of the Ghetto. Adults opened classroom and helped children make drawings and poetries in secret. They risked their lives to get their children items to make their artwork.

We hope that visitors will remember the children in the Terezin Ghetto, and think of the hope that they had in the darkness of the Ghetto.



Diorama of the Terezin Ghetto

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### NEWSLETTER

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