

## BULLETIN BOARD

### LET US GROW THE SEEDS FOR PEACE

### THE LIFE OF DR. MASAKO SHOJI, HONORABLE MEMBER OF WORLD OMEP

#### *SUMMARY*

Dr. Masako Shoji, awarded honorable member of World OMEP held at Yokohama, Japan, died in February, 1998. Her tomb is built in the shape of Friedrich Froebel's, sphere, cylinder and cube, together with his loving verse inscribed, "Let us live with our children". She translated the complete works of Friedrich Froebel into Japanese from the original German. She had a first-hand experience of the Atomic Bomb in Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. Since then she has become an earnest advocate of world peace.

#### *RÉSUMÉ*

Le Dr. Masako Shoji, un avocat dédié de l'éducation pour la paix, bien connue pour son oeuvre de la vie, avoir la traduction des oeuvres complètes de Friedrich Froebel de l'original allemand en japonais, est décédée en février 1998. Elle avait connu personnellement la bombe atomique qui a détruit la ville de Hiroshima le 6 août 1945. Sa tombe a été à construite selon le modèle de celle de Friedrich Froebel, avec une sphère, un cylindre et un cube. J'ai décrit comment elle avait été décidée étudier Froebel.

#### *RESUMEN*

La Dra. Masako Shoji dedicada defensora de la educacion por la Paz; Y famosa por la obra de toda una vida. La traduccion al japonés de la obra completa del al escritor alemán Friedrich Froebel, murio en febrero de 1998. Ella vivio de primera mano el ataque de la bomba atómica en Hiroshima, el 6 de agosto de 1945. Su tumba esta erigida en forma de los materiales de enseñanza de Friedrich Froebel. Son una esfera un cilindro y un cubo.,Escribo ella como se determino a estudiar sobre Friedrich Froebel.

The tomb of Dr. Masako Shoji, honorable member of World OMEP, is built in the shape of Friedrich Froebel's, sphere, cylinder and cube, together with his loving verse inscribed, "Lasst uns unsern Kindern leben" (Let us live with our children). She was a well known pedagogist who translated the complete works of Friedrich Froebel into Japanese from the original German, who has also been President of the Japan Society of Research on Early Childhood Care and Education and the Japanese National Committee of OMEP for many years.

I visited her tomb in the cemetery of the Nagaregawa Church in Hiroshima on June, 2003; it stood out among the memorial tombs for unknown victims of the Atomic Bomb in that area. The Cross, charred by the Atomic Bomb, was hanging down in front of the church lectern.

I had known the name of Dr. Shoji since my student days during the Second World War. Professional books on early childhood education were very few at that time, and Dr. Shoji's book on Froebel's Education was one of them. The yellowish old cover of the book remains in my memory even now after more than fifty years; in its preface, she wrote about how she became deeply determined to study Froebel as her life work. As a new arriving young teacher, realizing the insufficiency of her ability to teach children, she met Froebel as her guiding star. The self-activity of children, as Froebel stressed, stems from the propensity of human being to search for the eternal. It seems to me that Dr. Shoji's life itself exemplified that. It was many years later that she completed as many as five volumes of Froebel's works, and was awarded many prizes, domestic and foreign.

Dr. Shoji had a first-hand experience of the Atomic Bomb in Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. On that day, she got up early in the morning and went to the suburb of the city in order to evacuate the books of the school. The unknown new bomb was dropped at noon. While hurrying back to her home, she found the whole city in ruins, almost all people she met burnt to death; she could not tell who they were even in her neighborhood. Since then, she has become an earnest advocate of world peace. She happened to meet a girl who lost her parents because of Atomic Bomb; the girl continued to stay with her until Shoji's death. In 1981, she was requested by the city of Hiroshima to write a booklet on the peace education for parents and children, she wrote in it that "Hiroshima is not merely a geographic name of a city but the symbol of peace; we have to build the fortress of peace in the hearts of people because war has its origin inside the human heart." In 1985, when the Japanese National Committee of OMEP translated "Seeds For Peace-The Role of Preschool Education In International Understanding and Education for Peace" published by UNESCO, Dr. Shoji wrote "Either Democracy, the United Nations, or Scientific Education, the first motivation was respect for humanity and love for mankind, yet men fell into its opposite direction: selfishness, ultimately. Isn't it the biggest issue?"

Dr. Shoji was born as the fourth girl among ten siblings in Taiwan in 1909, where people suffered from racial discrimination under Japanese military occupation. - Most of us did not know her parentage until we learned it in a message of the Rev. Morisawa of Nagaregawa Church at her funeral. - Her father, of noble blood, was a professor of Confucius School in Taiwan. She received a scholarship from the Japanese normal school in Hiroshima and proceeded to further education there. During that period she became a Christian and was baptized in a church; we must note, that some of the members of that church were put in prison, some killed by persecution during the war. She embarked on an academic career and met a Japanese pedagogist, Dr. Arata Osada, famous in the study of Pestalozzi. It was in 1943 that she wrote her first book, cited before, about Friedrich Froebel, the founder of the kindergarten, that became famous later. She was the first Japanese woman who received a Ph.D.

She observed her father's teaching "pay back against foe not by revenge but by good deeds" according to Confucian philosophy, and Christian teaching "Love your enemies, do good to them", through her life.

She was a beautiful woman. Since I first saw her, high on the stage of the National Conference of the Study of Early Childhood Education and Care in 1949, she has been the guiding image for students.

She rarely talked about her painful experiences in Taiwan during the war; it was neither because she forgot it, nor because she hid it, but because she thought it a virtuous conduct, and dared not say it. She bore it with patience, looking at things not seen instead of things seen. The Reverent Morisawa read at her funeral; "she was forced to live as Japanese in the first one third of her life, in the later two thirds, she lived as a Japanese actively in the most distinguished way, of her own accord. She paid back by virtuous deeds, against evil, using Froebel's thought of peace education and with abiding belief in a peaceloving Japan."

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