

[The following is a translation of an article that originally appeared in the Nikkei/Nion keizai newspaper, page ____ in Japan on August 6, 2007.]

Children's drawings of hope returning home from U.S.

Hope to have an exhibition of pictures and film next year

Child artists looking forward to seeing their drawings and pictures after 60 years

Hiroshima Peace Commemoration Day

Hiroshima Pictures cross the ocean after the war

When Ms. yoshie Hiyoshi was in the fourth grade, she drew a row of cherry blossom trees along with the Honkawa River creating the image in her mind.

At the time of the atomic bombing, one third of the Honkawa Elementary School students, approximately 400 children, became victims. Ms. Hiyoshi, who had not yet entered the school, evacuated from the city and did not suffer from the bombing. In April of 1946, she and her parents visited the urban district which was destroyed with the heat wave and blast. Under the devastation, she spotted a young cherry blossom tree which was planted with the wish for reconstruction. She says "When my teacher handed me the crayons, I looked at the drawing paper believing that the young tree will be in full bloom someday."

Mr. Syunkai Ishida's picture is a scene of a school trip where friends are having fun on a green field. However, he says "There was no such thing as a green field." Mr. Ishida was also evacuated since he had not entered the school. A week later, he was exposed to the residual radiation when he and his mother returned to their home in the city to check the safety of his grandparents. He was not told of this fact until much later. "I must have wanted to escape from the abhorrent memory of the devastation. I drew the picture imagining a peaceful society."

Kids cheering around a big, red carp streamer, a girl dressed up in a formal kimono and a big bow in her hair, a streamline shaped future car.... Some of the students have already passed away and can not tell their story. Ms. Hiyoshi says, "Everyone must have had the same feeling when we drew those pictures with crayons and water colors. Some of the pictures must have the hidden sadness of losing classmates."

According to Ms. Shigeto, those 48 pictures were sent to a church in the US as a token of their gratitude for the gift of crayons and drawing paper. In the early 1950s, the pictures were exhibited at various sites in the US. As the years went by, they were forgotten and left in a storage area of the church. She came across them last summer through a friend. Ms. Shigeto, who is originally from Hiroshima, feels that it is her fate to be involved in the new exhibition project. She says “I hope this will be a chance to think about the importance of peace, as it tends to fade away with time.”