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Vietnam and Iraq in Japan: Japanese and American Grassroots Peace Activism

Compiled and introduced by Philip Seaton

> "Many people asked me what happened to me in Vietnam to make my eyes open to the horrors of war. Many things happened. ... But I'd like to share with you one thing that changed my life forever.
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> My Marine company was going through a village, when we were attacked by some [North] Vietnamese soldiers. Many Marines were killed and many were wounded. The rest of us just ran around, trying to find a place of safety. I ran behind a Vietnamese house and ran down into their family bunker. ...
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> Once I got down inside of this bunker, I realized that there was someone there with me. I turned and looked. It was a young Vietnamese girl, maybe 15 or 16 years old. ... She looked at me like I was a monster. She was very afraid of me, but for some reason she would not get up and run away.
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> She was breathing very hard, and she was in great pain. So I crawled over to her and realized she was naked from the waist down. I could not understand what was wrong with her. She kept breathing hard, and she kept making pushing sounds. I looked between her legs and saw the little head of a baby. ..." – Allen Nelson, United States Marines Corps. [1]

I. Introduction

When a second-year undergraduate at Hokkaido University taking my course on World War II History and Memory asked if she could announce to the class a guest lecture she had arranged by an American veteran of the Vietnam War, I was happy to oblige. Hearing first hand the experiences of someone who had actually been to war would be a good opportunity for the students. I added my own endorsement and a couple of weeks later, on 3 December 2007, took my seat in a lecture hall on campus with about 240 other people – including faculty, Hokkaido University students, visitors to the university, and perhaps a dozen of my students.

Allen Nelson's engaging talk covered his reasons for joining the Marines, military training, life in Okinawa before heading to Vietnam, his experiences in the Vietnam War, and his struggles with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) after returning to the US. The talk was translated by journalist and Hokkaido University alumna Kageyama Asako. She also spoke about the US bases issue in Japan and a forthcoming project to interview American Iraq War veterans and their families.

The evening had touched on so many aspects of war and peace activism in contemporary Japan – Vietnam, PTSD, Japan's war responsibility, constitutional revision, US military bases, the Iraq War and Japan's military role. I suggested to my student that we try to write a paper about some of these issues. I asked four members of the organizing committee – Chika, Shimpei, Yasunori and Udai (all students at Hokudai [2]) – to write about the event and their peace activism. They all sent me written accounts, as did Yamamoto Koichi from Nelson's support group in Hokkaido. The project concluded when the organizing committee and I interviewed Nelson on 20 February 2008 on his return to Sapporo.

This paper, therefore, is a collective effort. It provides not only a portrait of Japanese grassroots and student peace activism, but also reveals the complex linkage between diverse topics in Japanese discourses of international conflict.

Philip Seaton, Hokkaido University

II. Allen Nelson's Talk – Adapted from *To End the Misery of War*

Allen Nelson joined the Marines after dropping out of high school. He served one tour of duty in Vietnam from 1966 to 1967. After returning from Vietnam, Nelson battled PTSD and became active in "counter-recruiting" – educating young people in inner city America of the realities behind the attractive offers being made by military recruiters visiting high schools. [3]

His frequent visits to Japan were triggered by the notorious 1995 rape of an elementary school girl in Okinawa by three US soldiers. Since 1996 Nelson has visited over 300 schools and universities in Japan. He talks not only about his experiences in the Vietnam War, but also calls for the removal of all US military bases from Japan, and the retention of Article Nine of the Japanese Constitution. [4] He currently spends about half of his time lecturing in Japan, and the other half at home in New York City.

Before starting his talk at Hokudai, Nelson sang *Amazing Grace.* The talk itself followed closely the text of one of his publications. This section presents an abridged version of Nelson's story through excerpts from his book *To End the Misery of War Forever*.

Allen Nelson sings Amazing Grace*. In the background are Chika and Shimpei.*

Nelson started by describing what drove him to join the Marines.

> "I know that you do have poor areas in Japan, but you do not have the slums and ghettos that exist in America. I was born and raised in the slums and ghettos of Brooklyn, New York in 1947 ... In 1965, I dropped out of high school mainly because of poverty, and joined the United States Marines Corps. I was very happy and proud to be a marine. ... But my mother was very angry, very disappointed and she even sat down and started to cry. ... This is something you should remember – [US soldiers] don't come from the middle or the upper-middle class; they come from working class families, poor families in America ... because they could not find jobs and there were no other opportunities available for them."

About his military training, Nelson stressed the emphasis on learning to kill:

> "[I]n training you do not learn anything about keeping peace; you only learn how to kill. ... There were forty young men in my platoon, all 18-year-olds or 19. My drill instructor would stand in front of us and he would say, "What do you want to do?" And we would yell, "Kill." And he would say, "I can't hear you!" And then we would yell louder, "Kill!" And then he would say, "I still can't hear you." And then we would all scream at the top of our voices, "Kill!" and then we would roar like lions."

After basic training, Nelson was transferred to Okinawa. Using the chalkboard, Nelson demonstrated how the bull's-eye targets during firing practice changed to human-shaped targets when he got to Okinawa. We were asked to raise our hands about where we thought Marines were taught to aim. Those who said the "heart" were told they were "merciful," "because if you shoot someone in the heart, they will die instantly, with no pain or suffering." After explaining that the gut was the target of choice, Nelson added, "This is the type of wound all men in combat fear the most. Soldiers and Marines do not die instantly from this wound. They last many hours, screaming and crying in great pain."

Allen Nelson explains about using bulls'-eye targets in America and human-shaped targets in Okinawa.

Nelson then illustrated why he favors the complete removal of American bases from Japan.

> "[After training, we] would go into town to do three things: to drink, to fight and to look for women. Many times we would get drunk and take taxicabs back to the gate of the camp. We would get out of the cabs, and then refuse to pay the cab drivers. If the cab drivers insisted upon being paid, they would be beaten; some were beaten unconscious. When we visited the women and after they delivered their services, many times we would refuse to pay them also. If the women insisted on being paid, they would get the same treatment as the cab drivers received; they would be beaten. Many people seem surprised at this behavior. But you have to remember that we are Marines and soldiers. We are trained to be violent. When we come to town, we don't leave our violence on military bases. We bring our violence into your towns with us."

His recollections of his 13 months in Vietnam were equally frank.

> "I killed many Vietnamese soldiers and I saw many people die. The first thing that I learned in the jungles of Vietnam is that real war is not what you see in the movies. In real war there is no handsome hero, there is no music playing in the background. There is no honor, and in real war no one saves the women and the children."

Nelson described the indiscriminate nature of the US war:

> "When we attacked the villages in Vietnam, the Vietnamese men would grab their guns to fight us. The women would gather all the children and run into the jungles. After we killed the Vietnamese men, we had to go into the jungles to find where the women and children were hiding. It was always easy to find their hiding places. After three or four days of no water and no rice, the children would be screaming and crying because of the hunger pain. ... After we attacked the villages, ... we had to gather all the dead people together and count them [... to] know how many people [had] escaped. ... We put all the men in one pile, all the women in one pile, and all the children in one pile. ... When we attacked the villages, there were two types of people that were left in the villages, the dead and the dying."

But perhaps the most arresting part of Nelson's description of battle was about the smell:

> "The smell of rotten bodies is so powerful that it will make your food jump from your stomach to your throat. It will make your eyes water, your nose run, and your whole body weak. This is the smell that I will never forget because this is the smell of war. ... If they could make movies that could give you the smell of war, you would never go to the movie theaters to see war movies."

Nelson described how he suffered from PTSD on his return from Vietnam. His mother had to ask him to leave their house. He became homeless and tried to commit suicide but was saved by a former classmate. She was a teacher and asked Nelson to speak at her school. He refused, but her students wrote him letters. Eventually he agreed to speak.

> "I did not tell them what I did or what I saw in the jungles of Vietnam. I only talked about war in a generalized way. But at the question-and-answer time a little girl raised her hand. She stood up and looked me right in the face, and she asked me this question: "Mr. Nelson, did you kill people?" I was very afraid to answer this question. I thought that if I told the little children that I had killed people, they would be afraid of me. They would think I was a monster or a bad person. When I looked into the children's faces, I knew I needed to be honest with them. I remember just closing my eyes and answering, "Y-e-s." To my amazement, all the children got out of their seats, came up to me, and they started hugging me. This was a very emotional moment. I started crying, the children started crying and the teacher was crying, too. At that moment I realized that I needed to get help with my PTSD, and I wanted to continue to talk to young people about the reality of war and violence. But it was not easy. It took me eighteen years of therapy, of working with my doctor, Doctor Neal Daniel, before I could raise my voice against war and violence."

Now able to speak out, Nelson calls the US "the king of terrorists." The talk was peppered with strong criticisms. On the bases issue in Japan – "Yours is an occupied country. ... The United States military bases are here to control your government." On Hiroshima and Nagasaki – "When I visited the museums, I realized that the education I had received in America was a lot of propaganda and a lot of lies." On American history (referring to the fates of Native Americans and slavery) – "America was founded on terrorist behavior." On the American military – "America always has enough money to build nuclear weapons, enough money to build weapons of mass destruction ... but America never has enough money to build houses for our people, to properly educate our children, and to provide jobs for our citizens."

In 2005, Nelson's speaking activities came full circle when he went back to Vietnam for the first time in 38 years.

> "I was able to speak to a crowd of two thousand Vietnamese people gathered in Danang and I did something that I had long wanted to do: to tell the Vietnamese people of my crimes against them and offer my deepest apology and sympathy. I apologized to them for burning their villages, killing their children and torturing elderly people. ... The first step toward reconciliation is justice. Justice can only be served if nations are honest about the crimes committed in the past. It's not enough to say you're sorry; you have to list each thing the country has done to the other country, each village that was burned and each person that was killed."

Nelson finished his talk with this message: "Peace starts right here in this hall, on your campus, in your homes and with each and every one of you."

Kageyama Asako

Kageyama Asako

Nelson's talk was followed by a short presentation by Kageyama Asako, a Hokkaido University alumna, journalist and peace activist. She introduced a project by documentary filmmaker Fujimoto Yukihisa to interview American soldiers who have returned from Iraq with PTSD. The film, *America – The People of a Country at War*, was in production (planned release date: July 2008) and Kageyama's talk included interviews she has been conducting with US servicemen back from Iraq.

I contacted Kageyama after the meeting and she sent me a copy of Fujimoto's previous documentary film, *Marines Go Home* (2006), which she had narrated. [5] *Marines Go Home* documents local anti-base activism in Yausubetsu (Eastern Hokkaido), Maehyang-ri (South Korea) and Henoko (Okinawa). The section on Yausubetsu features the story of Kawase Hanji, who lives within the SDF firing range but refuses to move, and the annual Yausubetsu Heiwa Bondori (Peace Bon Dancing). The section on Maehyang-ri documents the village's successful campaign to prevent an island just offshore being used for target practice by artillery, aircraft and helicopters. The live-fire range was shut down in August 2005. The section on Henoko showed anti-base activists canoeing out to rigs in Henoko Bay to prevent survey work in preparation for the construction of a new base. In Henoko, anti-base activists have teamed up with environmentalists because the proposed base site is an important habitat for the endangered marine mammal the dugong. The fight to prevent the Henoko project is ongoing in 2008. [6]

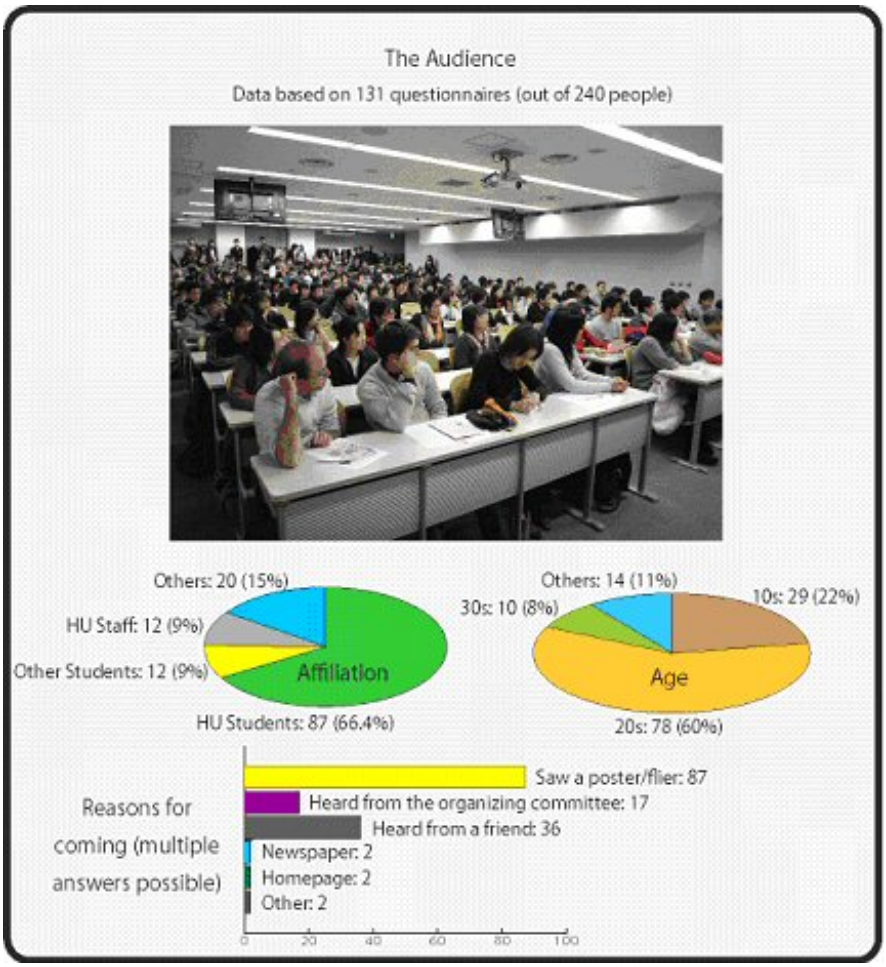
Publicity Poster for Marines Go Home

Locations of Yausubetsu, Henoko and Maehyang-ri

Marines Go Home provides the critical link between the key contributors to this paper: the Japanese SDF's practice range in Yausubetsu. Allen Nelson started coming to Hokkaido after some live-fire drills were transferred to Yausubetsu from Okinawa in 1997 (following protests in Okinawa over live ammunition being fired *over* National Route 104). Yausubetsu is where Yamamoto Koichi got to know Nelson. Years later, following an invitation to Yausubetsu from Yamamoto, head of the organizing committee, Chika, got to know Allen there; while Kageyama was connected to Yausubetsu through her involvement in the filming of *Marines Go Home*.

III. Reaction to Nelson's Talk

As the photo below indicates, Nelson's talk had been "standing room only." According to main organizer Chika, the audience had exceeded expectations. People were asked to fill in a questionnaire about Nelson's talk. Of the about 240 people who attended, 131 returned the questionnaire. The high return rate was indicative of the interest generated by the talk.



The basic findings of the audience questionnaire – their affiliations (most were Hokkaido University students or staff), and their ages (most were students in their 20s). Data compiled by the Organizing Committee.

The questionnaires also asked for people's impressions of the talk. Many people commented that it was good to hear first hand the experiences of someone who had been to war, and that the talk made them think about what they could do as individuals. The organizing committee selected the following comments from the questionnaires.

> "The phrase 'We were trained to be violent' was very striking. It's so sad that people in the military are educated to be completely vicious, and lose things which should be normal for people: dignity, reason and emotion." (Student, 20s)

> "Before I only thought of war as something you see in films. Allen's comment that there's no smell in movies was particularly arresting for me. I can't imagine the smell of war. Most people can't grasp what real war is like. By telling us of his terrible experiences, I think people could understand more about war." (Student, teens)

> "I hadn't thought about Article Nine seriously up until now. But now I realize I have Article Nine to thank for the lack of war in my life up to now. I want to work to preserve our constitution." (Student, teens)

> "Who is bad, what is bad, and why does war happen? We must look inside ourselves for the answers. The worst thing is for us to be indifferent to war. I want to think carefully about what I can do in the future and do something active to promote peace." (Student, 20s)

However, while most comments were positive, some people made criticisms.

> "He could have talked more about the period when he lived on the streets and the war's psychological effects (PTSD). This would have illustrated the devastating effects of war on a soldier's mind, or the absurdity of a society that sends people to war and then forgets about them. I also wanted more detail of life in Camp Hansen. And some parts, about the Japanese constitution or the American 'occupation' of Japan nowadays, while very interesting, did not always fit with the rest of his talk. I understood he wanted to state his political views, but he did not have time to give a comprehensive explanation of such a difficult subject. I don't think he is really specialist on this topic." (French exchange student, 20s)

This French student was skeptical about some of the comments Nelson made about Japan. The accuracy of some of Nelson's comments was debated by the organizing committee.

One contentious statement was that, as in the US, poverty was a key reason why people joined the military (SDF) in Japan. We pressed Nelson on this point during our follow-up interview and he argued that young Japanese joining the military are more likely to be those who have not made it to university, and therefore see the SDF as a secure, well-compensated alternative to other professions for high school graduates. This is not the same situation as the US, but nevertheless treats joining the military primarily as a failure to secure "desirable" civilian occupation. However, given the concurrent trends of, first, an increased resolve among Japan's conservative leadership for an expanded military role for Japan, and second, a widening poverty gap (*kakusa mondai*) and growing social recognition of Japan's "working poor" [7], Nelson's views may turn out to be more prescient about Japan's future than accurate about Japan's present.

On the issue of the "occupation" of Japan by the US, we concluded that this is an interpretation one is much more likely find in communities living with American bases (particularly in Okinawa, where land was requisitioned for bases). Furthermore, this rhetoric is indeed used by the Japanese anti-base movement. In parts of Japan far from bases, there is much less consciousness of being "occupied," but Nelson's point is that Japan is "occupied" because it does not have the ability to insist on the removal of the bases.

The overall response to Nelson's talk was positive, and it served to strengthen a variety of "pacifist" sentiments in a number of the audience. The comments typified the findings of Mari Yamamoto's research into grassroots pacifism in Japan, which suggest that Japanese sentiments of *heiwashugi* are often devoid of strong ideological roots, oscillate between pacifism (a moral objection to all war) and pacificism (placing political limitations on the ability to conduct war), and are best described in English as a well-meaning anti-war stance or "popular pacifism". [8] Nelson's ability to elicit this kind of reaction is testimony to his engaging personality (which was also very evident during our follow-up interview), and his ability to tap the sometimes latent peace sentiment widely shared among many Japanese.

IV. The Organizing Committee – Insights into Student Peace Activism

Following Nelson's talk, the organizing committee met on a number of occasions in my office to prepare this article. This section analyzes their motivations for organizing Nelson's talk and their broader activism. Background to the talk is provided by the following "interview" with principal organizer, Chika. [9] The more we discussed the issues, the more the diverse reasons for all four members' activism emerged.

The organizing committee meets. From left to right – Yasunori, Shimpei, Udai and Chika.

Chika, tell me about why you invited Allen Nelson to speak at Hokudai.

> I first met Allen briefly in early August 2007, just before attending the "2007 World Conference against A & H Bombs." [10] I arrived back in Sapporo from Nagasaki on the evening of 10 August. That same night I met up with Allen again. We were getting a lift from our mutual friend, Yamamoto Koichi, to Yausubetsu (in Betsukai town) in eastern Hokkaido to take part in the Heiwa Bon-odori Taikai (Peace Bon Dancing Festival). This event is held every year (2007 was the 43rd time) and acts as a protest against the SDF firing range there.

Why did you want to go to Yausubetsu?

> I went mainly because my friend Yamamoto Koichi invited me! He is one of the people who support Allen's speaking tours in Japan. The long drive (8 hours) was a good opportunity to get to know Allen.

Photo of Heiwa Bon-odori

What were your first impressions of Allen?

> We got talking about insects. I am afraid of insects. Allen said he was, too, and that he could not bear all the insects in Vietnam. [11] This topic broke the ice. As we talked more I realized he was a kind, intelligent person. He spoke in an engaging way. I simply could not imagine him as someone who had gone to war and killed people. Later, he talked about life after returning from Vietnam – his PTSD, the reasons why young Americans join the military, and about the time his son had come home with recruiting material [discussed below]. When Allen mentioned his son, I looked into his eyes and realized for the first time that he really had been to war. He did not want his son to join the military. This was part of what drove Allen to speak out about his war experiences. Then I started thinking about how easily he could have been killed. The reasons why he had to go to war were also heart breaking. Then, after joining the army his individuality was suppressed. It was difficult to accept that this gifted individual had been turned into just another soldier. For all these reasons, I really wanted other people to hear Allen's story.

How did you go about organizing the lecture?

> I first spoke to Udai and Shimpei, who had also been in Yausubetsu. We formed a committee and contacted the people who organize Allen's schedule in Japan to book a time. Then we went around Hokudai trying to get support for the event from faculty and to collect money. We even got a message of support from the Mayor of Sapporo.

Shimpei (right) with Nelson in Yausubetsu, August 2007.

How did you publicize the event?

> We handed out fliers and put up posters around campus, but I put most effort into word of mouth. It helped that Allen would be speaking in English because I could ask exchange students along, too. We also had to convey why it was important for Allen to be speaking to us. Allen would be talking about his experiences in Vietnam, but we wanted to show that similar things still happen in the world today. So, we also asked our translator, Kageyama Asako, to talk about her current work interviewing soldiers who have returned from Iraq.

Looking back, what were your impressions of the event?

> I think reaction to the talk was very positive. At the moment it is not that easy to tell people around Hokudai that you are active in the peace movement. Some people are not keen to publicize their activities. But after this event, a number of friends made complimentary comments. I want people to feel more at ease about discussing peace issues. If we can create an atmosphere where being active is seen as attractive, more people will get involved.

Any final thoughts?

> Kageyama said during her talk at the end of the evening, "The government might have declared the war is over, but for those who experienced it the war is never over." I think this is what many people who testify to their war experiences want to convey. Allen's talk illustrated this point very well.

Chika's description of her relationship with Nelson is interesting because it bears all the hallmarks of the complex remembrance of Japanese soldiers and their actions within Japanese collective memory of World War II. Her disbelief that "kind and engaging" Allen could have killed people matches the disbelief that many relatives of Japanese soldiers have felt during the postwar on learning of their relatives' war actions. [12]

The veteran defies easy ideological or emotional categorization for future generations, particularly those imbued with anti-war sentiment: identification with the soldier through a close personal relationship may conflict with abhorrence of his actions; the psychological and physical wounds suffered by the soldiers elicit sympathy but this must be set against the suffering he inflicted on others. Often the only way to reconcile these contradictory feelings is by witnessing a conversion in the soldier from the man he was then (in Vietnam, or the Asia-Pacific War for Japanese soldiers) to the man he is now.

Vietnam veterans constitute an important comparison with Japanese Imperial Army veterans because such ethical dilemmas regarding victim—perpetrator distinctions have become blurred and subjective in their respective countries' collective memories. Another commonality is the need for soldiers to work through their personal traumas in the face of widespread ostracism and criticism at home. John Dower's description of returning Japanese soldiers in 1945 as "despised veterans" bears a strong resemblance to the hostility that many Vietnam veterans faced on their return. [13] With time, some of those soldiers who were able to testify publicly to their actions were embraced by the antiwar movement, such as members of the Winter Soldier movement for Vietnam or the Chinese Returnees Association (Chukiren) in Japan. [14] However, the confessions of atrocities have been rigorously contested by patriotic groups in both countries. [15] All such issues illustrate that the moral, political and legal legacies of American involvement in the Vietnam War clearly raise many themes relevant to the Japanese case, too. [16]

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Chika was refreshingly honest about why she started her activism. Initially she was passive and reacted mainly in response to invitations from others. A university friend first got her involved in A-bomb-related peace activism in 2006 (when she went to the World Conference against A & H Bombs for the first time). Her trip to Yausubetsu in August 2007, when the seeds of Allen Nelson's talk were sown, was also the result of an invitation from a friend. Hers is activism that grew out of social relationships rather than ideological fervor.

While social networks can encourage activism, Chika's comments above also illustrated why students might be reluctant to get involved, or why student activists are sometimes reticent about publicizing their activities. Some members of the organizing committee for Nelson's talk had even asked that their names not be included on the list of organizing committee members. We discussed this issue and concerns about discrimination against "leftwing activists" by employers were raised. The committee members had heard stories of the SDF compiling lists of activists, or of activists who repeatedly failed exams to become *komuin* (civil servants). While it is difficult to verify such hearsay, the recent publicity surrounding punishment of teachers who refuse to

stand for the flag or sing the national anthem at school ceremonies [17] lends plausibility to the belief that potential employers might conduct background checks and screen out "undesirable" employees, particularly in the public sector. For this reason a decision was made not to put students' full names in this paper.

However, for those openly involved in activism the imperative outweighs the risks. For Shimpei there was a clear personal imperative to be involved in activism.

Shimpei, why did you get involved in peace activism?

> It was quite natural for me to think about war from an early age. My parents named me Shimpei: the characters mean "believing in peace." But there are two main reasons my interest in war and peace grew.
>
> First, my family lives near the Atsugi Air Base (in Kanagawa). We have American soldiers living nearby and I have often walked by the fence surrounding the base. Fighter jets fly overhead and the noise is deafening. When I was at school it was often difficult to hear the teacher's voice in class. During the 1991 Gulf War the skies went very quiet, presumably because the fighters were needed in the Gulf. This is when I really sensed that the war had begun. Plus, I saw American soldiers carrying guns within the base perimeter after the September 11 attacks. We could feel the tension in our neighborhood. People who live near bases tend to sense war and peace issues much more in their daily lives.
>
> Second, my grandmother was 8 km from the hypocenter of the Hiroshima bomb on 6 August 1945. While she is not officially categorized as a *hibakusha* (A-bomb victim), throughout her life she has had a number of ailments (vomiting, bloody stools, fever, and fainting in summer), which are thought to be a result of radiation exposure. Furthermore, my aunt suffers from schizophrenia after being born with water on the brain. When my grandfather fell ill my aunt went insane, and I still remember clearly her cries to this day. Many children were born with water on the brain after Chernobyl and it is suspected that depleted uranium shells might also cause such health problems. I suspect my aunt's condition was due to my grandmother's experience of the A-bomb. They say that radiation exposure is not hereditary, but I have always wondered about how genes damaged by radiation are passed on. Given my aunt's disabilities and my mother's frail health, I wonder if I am going to be OK. As a small child I had a weak heart and was often told not to do sports, although these days I push myself hard in my fieldwork as a volcanologist, almost to prove to myself that I am fine!
>
> Consequently, I consider myself to be a third generation *hibakusha*. Inside of me there is what Kenzaburo Oe refers to as *"Hiroshima-teki naru mono"* (characteristically Hiroshima-like person). [18] I interpret this to mean overcoming the fear of death that exists because of the A-bomb experience, the daily fight to be optimistic about the future, and a fervent longing for peace. However, I feel strident activism is inappropriate and my deepest hope is that the A-bomb anniversaries each year can be remembered with quiet dignity. For a long time I did not want to broadcast the fact I was a third generation *hibakusha*. I did not want to be looked at differently from others, or give the impression that I thought my views were somehow special. This was probably part of being a "characteristically Hiroshima-like person." But I now think it is probably more important to speak out given the aging and passing of the war generation.
>
> Consciousness of myself as a third generation *hibakusha* started in elementary school. My older brother (then aged 12) interviewed my grandmother for a summer research project. A few years later, when I was about 11 or 12 years old, I became more interested in war and peace issues. It was around the time of the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II. There were many programs about the war on television. I persuaded my parents to buy the complete manga version of *Barefoot Gen* by Nakazawa Keiji and read it all that summer. [19] The manga treats many war issues other than the A-bombs, from the oppression of antiwar sentiment during the war to work in military factories. As my interest developed, I also read about Japan's aggression against neighboring countries. I have also considered the Japanese government's lack of *hansei* (remorse) for that aggression, which is evident in their efforts to revoke Article Nine (the renunciation of war clause). I interpret Article Nine as a form of remorse for the many people killed during World War II. During war many of the victims are ordinary civilians, so Article Nine is an important way in which the people can restrain the government from going to war.
>
> This is how I became active both to protect the Constitution and oppose war. I was at the forefront of opposition to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. This was for humanitarian reasons, but also because I knew the wars were for the profit of special interest groups and completely without just cause. I am a member of the Save Article Nine movement set up by Kenzaburo Oe and others, which has about 6,000 chapters around the country.

Unlike Chika, whose activism developed through social networks at university, Shimpei's activism is rooted deeply in his family history. His testimony indicates the fine line that many Japanese people feel they have to tread when drawing the lessons from World War II. A sense of victimhood may be strongly and justifiably felt, but overt self-righteousness can quickly draw skeptical or even critical reactions from others. Shimpei counters this by considering Japanese aggression as well as Japanese victimhood, hence his overt criticisms of the Japanese government's treatment of war responsibility issues and concern about constitutional revision. Consequently, while Japanese "victim mentality" concerning World War II is often criticized internationally, Shimpei's testimony indicates why much activism on aspects of Japanese victimhood, particularly the A-bombs, goes hand in hand with opposition to Japanese militarism, past or present: peace messages from Hiroshima and Nagasaki have little international currency if they omit Japanese aggression and are couched in the nationalistic language of unique Japanese victimhood.

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The other two members of the organizing committee, Udai and Yasunori, are both active in the Save Article Nine movement.

Udai, how did you become involved in activism?

> There are two main reasons. First I have felt strongly since I was a child that I do not want to die or kill others in war. When I was small I saw the kamikaze film *Summer of the Moonlight Sonata* [20] and an exhibition about Auschwitz. I also heard from my parents about how peace seemed to be collapsing. As a result of all these things I developed a child's "fear of death" and "yearning for life," which ultimately grew into my strong desire for peace. As an adult I have thought more about death and have lost the fear of knowing that I will die one day, but I have retained my antipathy towards war.
>
> The second is that having come to university, joined the Save Article Nine society and become active in campaigning for the abolition of nuclear weapons, I have found a lifestyle and *raison d'etre* in my activism. During the dark days of the Asia-Pacific War there were brave people who risked their lives to oppose Japan's aggression; and during the twentieth century there were tireless campaigns to make aggressive warfare illegal. I have learned much from these people in history and want to join them now with hope for the future. It is possible that as Japan becomes increasingly embroiled in wars through its ties to America I could be drafted or otherwise caught up in a war. Opposing war at that stage is too

> late. I must do what I can now and work with other like-minded people to build a peaceful society.

Yasunori, what about you?

> Article Nine was born out of the sad experiences of the last war. It expresses the resolution not to go to war through making Japan unable to go to war. If you remove the constitutional restraint, you also remove the resolution. I hope Japan will never again go to war with its neighbors. We must cherish the renunciation of war clause. Now is the time to think how the spirit of Article Nine can promote world peace. Is it possible to promote peace by revoking Article Nine? Is there no way that we can spread this kind of constitution?
>
> For these reasons I became active in the Save Article Nine movement. Many people died in the last war and I think their hopes and wishes are encapsulated in Article Nine. History is the aggregate of all people's lives and is shaped by all people, famous or unknown. I want to be an active force in the unfolding of history, and preserving Article Nine is one way of doing that.

The four members of the organizing committee expressed a variety of personal, social and ideological reasons for their involvement in peace activism. But what is striking about all their motivations is the complex interlinkage between various war, peace and social issues, from the A-bombs to Japanese war responsibility, from the bases issue to constitutional revision. This is representative of Japanese "popular pacifism" throughout the postwar. For example, Mari Yamamoto has highlighted how peace activism by union activists in the postwar was frequently linked into campaigns on socio-economic issues [21], while the Henoko base issue brings together contemporary peace activism with environmentalism. The committee members' testimony also illustrates how memories of the Asia-Pacific War and issues stemming from Japanese war responsibility are central to understanding all war and peace discourses in contemporary Japan. The moral templates used in remembering World War II heavily inform judgments about other conflicts, such as the Vietnam War and the Gulf Wars.

V. Allen Nelson Returns to Sapporo

The organizing committee and I decided to ask Nelson for a follow-up interview. We contacted Yamamoto Koichi, the Christian minister in Sapporo who had been the go-between for Chika and Nelson. He told us a little more about the organizational background to Nelson's speaking activities.

> I first met Allen in the autumn of 1998. Allen participated in a research group I was involved with that was investigating SDF bases. Since then he has always stayed with us in Sapporo, perhaps because smoking is permitted in our house! There isn't a formal organization that supports Allen's speaking tours. There are various people dotted around the country who manage his time and put him up, but we have never got together to discuss strategy or anything like that. We are simply a group of people united in our desire to see American bases removed from Japan and to prevent remilitarization of Japan.
>
> Nelson started coming to Hokkaido because of the relocation of Marine Corps' live fire exercises to Yausubetsu in Eastern Hokkaido from Okinawa in 1997. People moved to the Yausubetsu area after World War II to open up the land for food production at a time when Japan had serious food shortages. But, an area originally developed to sustain life was converted into a place where the taking of life was practiced. I could not just stand by and do nothing: after their training in Hokkaido, the marines are sent to conflicts around the globe.
>
> I am a minister. It is my responsibility to prevent the taking of life. I feel a deep responsibility for what has happened in Iraq and Afghanistan, or wherever the marines that have trained in Hokkaido are sent. I am 55 years old and want younger generations to learn not to take life. But I do not want to sit young people down and preach to them. It is better to give them the chance to learn for themselves what is important. This is why I asked Chika and others to come along to Yausubetsu, which is where she got to know Allen.

We did not have to wait long for another chance to meet Nelson. Koichi phoned to let me know we could meet Nelson on 20 February 2008.

Then, just as we were preparing for the interview, an incident occurred that brought back many memories of 1995 and the original trigger for Nelson's visits to Japan. A marine was arrested on 11 February, accused of the rape of a schoolgirl in Okinawa. The marine was subsequently released without charge when the victim declined to press charges (although it was clear a sexual assault had occurred). [22] Public and media anger was palpable and the incident precipitated many comparisons with the 1995 case. The media spotlight turned once again to the behavior of US servicemen, with cases of trespassing, drunkenness, counterfeiting and the alleged rape of a Filipino woman all making the news within a few short weeks. [23]

Against this backdrop, the organizing committee and I interviewed Allen Nelson. He started by explaining how he became involved in "counter-recruiting" in Camden, New Jersey, a violent and impoverished inner-city area.

"I certainly didn't come out of Vietnam as a peace activist," he began. "I didn't want to have anything to do with it [remembrance of the war]. I had a lot of mental issues. The medical institutions said we were 'cry babies' and that the World War II guys did not come back complaining."

It would be many years later, when his son came back from high school one day with a bundle of army recruitment materials, that Nelson's life turned.

> The recruiter had come to the school. As a parent I freaked out. I was so upset that I went to the school to talk to the principal. Why is my son coming home with army recruiting material before financial aid forms for university? The principal explained how the army offers opportunities to kids. OK, but where are the alternative talkers? I said I would like to give a talk, too. Next time the recruiters came, I gave a talk, too. Afterwards, some of the kids asked me to go down to the recruiting office with them.

From this starting point, Nelson's activities snowballed. He eventually set up an office in Camden. He does not try to stop people from joining the military, realizing that for many the military is a way out of poverty and inner-city gang violence. Instead he tries to educate people on what signing up means, to help young people who want to go to college with their basic reading, writing and mathematics skills, and to provide support after people come out of the military.

The interview touched on many other issues. [24]

On his counter-recruiting work:

Surprisingly the recruiters like me! Most of those recruiters have never done nothin'! I was 18 when I went to Vietnam and 19 when I came out, but I had four and a half rows of combat ribbons, which is unheard of someone that young. So when I would walk across base and these first or second lieutenants had one or two ribbons (laughs), they would see me and harass me something horrible! "Come here. Did you earn this?"

Recruiters like me. I can talk their language. After we do a presentation we go down to the lunchroom and they say, "Thanks, we can't tell them what you tell them." But recruiters are like salesmen who know the car isn't gonna work but have gotta make money (laughs). They know it's a piece of junk but they have a quota. I'm just as honest with the children as I can be. I never have a problem with recruiters.

But you don't ever encourage kids to go into the army do you?

I don't encourage them, but I have to be real. Some of the kids I work with are extremely poor. We have some communities in Brooklyn, Camden, Delaware, Chicago, LA, San Francisco where these are your options. When you are a little kid playing at elementary school the drug guys don't bother you, but by the time you get to high school you had better either belong to the gang or get the hell out of that community. There's a lot of pressure on these kids and I don't encourage them to go, but I do understand why they try and escape. We have an ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps [25]) program for junior high, senior high school and university where the kids join the program, get a uniform and once or twice a week they drill and march. Once a month they go to a boot camp or on a naval ship. It's really a program to recruit kids, even though they say it's not. We've been trying for a long time – me and the Central Committee of Conscientious Objectors [26] – to get these programs out of our school systems. But the parents support them because it's better to see their kids on a military program than to be on a street corner selling drugs. We don't have any money to go and say, look here's an alternative. All we got is lip-service. The military has got the dough. The parents are very supportive of such programs and this is the difficulty of getting recruiters out of schools.

On why he comes to Japan:

It was 1995. I came home from work one day and I heard on the news: "Okinawan girl raped by three US Marines." I thought I had misheard something. I thought the bases had closed after the Vietnam War. I saw no reason for them to remain open. With the rape of the girl it just hit me: "What's goin' on?" I knew the Okinawan people were suffering. I was an abuser. I have seen it. Even though I never beat Okinawan people I saw guys who did and I did nothing to stop it. I knew the sort of violence that was going on.

I spoke to some of my friends who are peace activists. A Japanese guy married to an American woman I knew through the Quakers had started a group called Remove the Troops from Okinawa. That's how I got involved with coming to Japan. Then I got a letter from an anti-base group in Okinawa. They did a big press thing – a marine is coming back to Okinawa and he's going to help close the bases. I got off the plane and there was a bunch of media people. I had to come up to speed on what was really going on in Okinawa. I did a series of lectures that first week and after I got home I started getting requests from mainland Japanese people.

So that's how I got involved and started coming to Japan. Every time I came over, after I got back I said, "Right that's it, no more," but then another call came saying, "Can you come back?" All of a sudden it's been twelve years.

How do you divide your time?

It's about 50-50. I spend six months a year in Japan. My wife has a list of chores for me when I am back. Things never break while I'm at home (laughs). So I have 2-3 weeks off and then I get back into schools [in the US] and talk to the kids.

On overcoming PTSD:

Being honest is the bottom line. I feel we can't move on if we can't reconcile. You can't reconcile if you're not honest. People who read my book probably think I went into therapy to get help with PTSD and that I was so honest. Well I was not. I made him [Dr Neal Daniel] work. I wasn't giving up nothin'! I could see him pulling his hair out. "Why don't you just be honest? It's part of the healing process," he would say. But I couldn't. How do you say, "I killed kids"? How do you say that? So when Daniel asked those kinds of questions, "How did you feel when you killed kids?" I would say, "I didn't kill kids". "Are you sure?" "No I didn't." I was in denial, total denial.

It took him a long time to break me down mentally. We had two types of therapy: one-on-one and big group therapy [with other Vietnam veterans suffering from PTSD]. After each hour-long individual session he would say to me, "Why did you kill the people?" I would say "I was at war", "they were trying to kill me", anything that I could think of that would allow me not to take responsibility for my behavior. Because the reality is that your captain is not standing over your shoulder saying, "Oh, there's a person. Shoot that person." You are making these decisions on your own. You have to take responsibility for what you have done and this is what my doctor was trying to make me understand.

After about 13 or 14 years of therapy we started the session with, "Why did you kill people?" It was such a hard thing, like me pulling my own teeth. The reality was that I killed people because I wanted to. Now, why I wanted to, that's another issue, but I wanted to. It was a very, very painful realization. But, it was as if something unlocked inside of my head. And that was when I was able to talk about this stuff. I realized I had a responsibility – to my friends who had died and the Vietnamese people who had died – to tell their stories. They're dead. They can't talk about it.

I'm lucky that I've been able to find my voice. I had a wife who was very supportive and a very understanding son who encouraged me. It was very difficult for my family because they couldn't walk around at night. They could not go to the bathroom until the sun came up because when the sun went down I snapped right back on patrol in Vietnam. It wasn't like I was sleeping, but a twilight – let me put it that way. I thought our life was normal and that everyone got up and checked under the bed or checked in the closet for people who would take your family. My wife kept telling me it was not. "Don't you understand?" she would ask. "No, I wanna protect everybody."

The clincher came on one of those "sit down and you're still sweating" days in Brooklyn, New York. That night we were laying in bed with the window open and it started to thunderstorm. With the booming I flashed right back to Vietnam – artillery fire and lightning flashes. I was in the jungle and I see this guy coming through the bushes toward me. I shoot him but he keeps coming, so I jumped off the bed and knocked the person to the floor. I grabbed a lamp – I think I have a rock but actually it's a lamp – and I'm getting ready to smash it. All of sudden my five-year-old son is pulling at me saying, "Dad, Dad!" And it's my wife on the floor. She's terrified. She got up and then I became terrified of her because

she was really angry (laughs). She said, "That's it, you're going to therapy. We're not gonna be like this any longer." That's when I was actually able to start the therapy.

That first type of therapy didn't work very well for me because it was drug therapy. They give you all sorts of mood drugs – for when you wake up, go to sleep. After three years of this I said to myself, "I don't wanna take this for the rest of my life." So when we moved to the South Jersey area I got in touch with the VA (Veterans' Association) and they made an appointment for me to see Dr Neal Daniel, the foremost expert on PTSD. I went to his office and the first thing he asked me was, "How many hours a night do you sleep?" When he said that I thought, "Oh my God, I have found someone who can help me." He never gave me drugs. He gave me cassette tapes of natural sounds: the ocean breaking on the beach, gentle rain in the forest, birds singing. I would listen to that before I went to sleep. It helped me to relax and get to sleep.

That was the turning point. Once he was able to help me to help myself, that's when I realized I wanted to tell the truth about this stuff.

On the government's treatment of veterans:

Some German students were staying with me and they referred to soldiers as "beer." When the bottle is full, like when a soldier is in uniform, it is valuable and treated with care. When the beer is gone the bottle is trash: it gets in the way or has to be thrown away. When soldiers leave the army, they are discarded, too. This really made sense to me. ...

Anything that happens to you in the military, except your arms and legs getting blown off, you have to prove it's military related. If you're poor before you went into the military, and you're poor when you get out, where are you gonna get a specialist to document your claim? What if you want compensation because you can't sleep at night or you have mental stress? We had a lot of young people commit suicide after they came back from Vietnam. We're seeing the same suicide patterns in the guys coming home from Afghanistan and Iraq. The government is scratching their head and saying, "Why are all these guys committing suicide?" But these are the same guys who have never even been to Iraq. They have no idea what it's like to be in an environment like that.

It's not about being in a situation where you have to go on patrol. It's about being in an environment where you can blink your eye and a bomb will go off and you're gone. There's no tomorrow. What you have is now. When you are living under that kind of tension, you come home and it's still on top of you. I thought about committing suicide when I came home from Vietnam. I was so disappointed when I came home. When I was in the jungle, all I could think about was being home, seeing my mom, my sisters. And then when I got home it was not at all like that. The only reason I didn't commit suicide was because I didn't know how to, and I couldn't do that to my mother and sisters.

On the SDF in Iraq:

When the troops were first in Iraq there were some stories in the press by the wives of the Japanese soldiers. Then the government shut them up. After some of my talks, women would wait for me backstage. The woman who made the biggest impact on me whispered to me through the interpreter, "When the phone rings I cannot answer. I let it ring and ring. My friends get worried and come to my house. They knock on my door and I won't answer it because I think it's the military telling me my husband is dead. My children are crying, 'Where's papa, when's he coming home?'"

This is the kind of pressure the family has been taking. It's not just the soldiers that have PTSD. Then the guy comes home and he's completely different, too. I saw a documentary about the SDF in Iraq. The Japanese soldiers had rifles but no ammunition and the Australian troops were protecting them. The Iraqis were really happy that the Japanese were there and had brought materials to build a water purification plant. There was a big banner welcoming the Japanese soldiers. But the Japanese contingent did very little because the government was so scared somebody would get killed. ... Put yourself in their place. None of their commanders have tasted battle. These guys were frightened to death. They could hear the bombing off in the distance but could not get involved. If someone is coming to shoot at you, you have to go and ask someone for ammunition, 'cause they're not handing it out (laughs). There were really strict rules about engagement. That intensity of being there but knowing that you can't fight back, I can understand why they came back and felt the way they did. [27]

If you were president, what would you do to reconcile with Vietnam?

The first thing I would do is give as much money as possible for the Agent Orange victims. That chemical is still very strong in their environment. America refuses to recognize that it is responsible. Vietnamese people brought a lawsuit in New York for compensation, but they threw it out. [28] We are never going to have peace like that. I would give money to the kids, get research going [on the side effects of Agent Orange], try to clean up the environment and take responsibility, not only in Vietnam but Cambodia.

The second thing I would do is apologize. I would ask sincerely for them to forgive us for attacking their country when Ho Chi Minh was voted president legally. But the Americans didn't want him because he was a communist. So we set up a puppet government in the South and used it as a launch pad for overthrowing Ho Chi Minh. We have to apologize for the attack. They never did anything to us.

I would open up real exchange: cultural and educational. When I went to Vietnam I couldn't even spell it, and I guarantee that most of the boys that went to Afghanistan could not find it on the map before they went there. This kind of ignorance comes from our schooling. If I knew the history of Vietnam before signing up, I never would have gone there. These people have been fighting for over 200 years. The Chinese tried to take their land, the Japanese, the French, and then the Americans. How are you going to win? The most important thing we learned is that you are not winning on their home court. If you are fighting to protect your home, people will fight. But when it's over there ... This is why we are not going to win this war in Iraq. We should thank the Vietnamese people for this lesson, but people have a short memory.

Here is another story from Vietnam. Around the perimeter of the base there was a wire to warn us of people approaching. We were sitting in our bunker and heard this rattling. We sent up an illumination flare and there was this Vietnamese guy wrapped up in the wire. The whole sector opened up on him. You know what he did: he spat at us. I said to myself, "We ain't gonna win this." This is his country. You don't mind dying in your own country. It's your land, your culture. You will fight so hard for that. I don't know any American prepared to fight that hard for Vietnam. That's what we should learn from Vietnam, and that's why we're not gonna win in Iraq.

So, if I were president I would help those suffering from Agent Orange. I went to Vietnam recently. It was for a conference about Agent Orange. We went on the Peace Boat [29] and took a collection for the mums with disabled kids.

> We split up the money and put it in envelopes. I gave it to the first mom. Y'know, arms are supposed to be attached to the shoulder, not come out from your back. The tears just rolled down my face. This is just a little child. ...

After Allen Nelson recounted seeing some of the victims of Agent Orange, he went quiet. After a long interview in which he had been passionate and often warmly humorous, this was obviously something that troubled him deeply.

Reflections

Peace activism in Japan, just like Nelson's own wide-ranging views, defies simple categorization because peace discourses overlap with so many other war responsibility, social, political and environmental issues. These various issues cannot be separated out and treated in isolation without losing context and understanding of the views and opinions of activists.

The seven key figures – Allen Nelson, Kageyama Asako, Yamamoto Koichi and the four students Chika, Shimpei, Udai and Yasunori – were drawn together by their protests at the SDF's Yausubetsu firing range and Nelson's talk at Hokkaido University, but beyond this their interests are extremely diverse: education and counter-recruiting in New Jersey (Nelson), the documentation of Korean forced labor in Hokkaido during World War II (Kageyama), philosophical principles based on Christian faith to prevent killing (Yamamoto), interviews with *hibakusha* (Chika), the bases issue and being a third-generation *hibakusha* (Shimpei), and activism to save Article Nine (Udai and Yasunori).

Furthermore, their activism is not limited merely to concerns of war and peace: Shimpei's testimony touches on issues of health and disability stemming from exposure to radiation; Nelson's testimony treats issues of poverty as important within military recruitment; Udai discusses how peace activism relates to student lifestyle; the decision to use the students' first names only illustrates the possible link between activism and employment prospects; and the protests against the Henoko base in Okinawa depicted in *Marines Go Home* (narrated by Kageyama) shows the overlap between environmental issues and peace activism.

These observations mirror the findings of Mari Yamamoto in her study of grassroots peace activism: Japanese "popular pacifism" defies simple ideological or political characterization and is as diverse as the eclectic priorities of those who become involved. Peace activism has gone through various phases in the postwar: the first phase in the 1950s and 1960s focused on antinuclear pacifism and opposition to the US-Japan Security Treaty (AMPO); the second phase encompasses the anti-Vietnam War movement and the accompanying awakening of interest in Japanese aggression against neighboring countries during the Asia-Pacific War; and the third phase has linked anti-US base activism to opposition to Japan's growing military involvement abroad since the 1990s and the threat to Article Nine. [30] The portrait of Japan's grassroots activism presented in this paper brings together all of these themes as well as issues such as the links between peace and environmental activism. This shows how the themes of peace activism are not simply replacing each other over time but generating ever more complex interlinkages among issues.

The issues promoted by the activists whose voices are presented here raise many new questions. For example, would the removal of American bases from Japan lead to the strengthening of the Japanese military, and therefore undermine the practicality of Article Nine? Is a peace constitution really practical in a world of multiple wars and international conflicts? The discussion suggests that peace movements must not limit themselves to war and peace issues. Peace cannot be achieved while social injustice, environmental degradation and the flaunting of international law go unchecked. Inequitable trading systems and the exploitation of the world's poor will always provoke violent resistance; whether it is in the two "oil wars" against Iraq in 1991 and 2003 or the predicted "water wars" of the future (as populations in areas desertified by global warming battle each other for access to limited water supply), peace cannot be achieved without renewable energy and sustainable environmental policies; and as long as the world's most powerful nations play by their own "rules" but insist on the rule of "international law" for others, those resisting the powerful will see little point in acting within the law.

The activists mentioned in this paper face significant obstacles in the pursuit of their goals, and some objectives may be unrealizable in their lifetimes. But, this paper has focused on the deep-rooted motivations underlying their peace activism, and why, despite the obstacles, they actively embrace the message that ended Allen Nelson's talk at Hokkaido University: "Peace begins with each and every one of you".

Postscript

This paper began with a quotation from Allen Nelson's testimony that described his part in the birth of a baby in the midst of the death and destruction of the Vietnam War. After the young woman gave birth, she ran out of the bunker and into the jungle. Nelson never saw her again and never learned what happened to her or the baby.

As final preparations were being made for the publication of this article, another US serviceman was arrested, this time in Yokohama, in connection with the fatal stabbing of a taxi driver. According to *The Japan Times*, "Police suspect he had trouble with Takahashi [the slain driver] over the ¥17,000 fare." [31] Some things have not changed since the Vietnam War, it seems.

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Notes

[1] Allen Nelson (2006) *To End the Misery of War Forever: No Reconciliation, No Peace*, Kyoto: Kamogawa Shuppan, p. 19-20.

[2] A collective decision was made to use only students' first names in this paper.

[3] Allen Nelson, interview conducted by Philip Seaton and the organizing committee, 20 February 2008. Nelson's story is also documented in manga form: Saeguchi Yoshihiro (2005) *Neruson-san, anata wa hito wo koroshimashita ka?* ("Mr. Nelson, Did you kill the people?" (sic.)), Tokyo: Kodansha.

[4] Nelson, *To End the Misery of War Forever*, p. 1.

[5] The *Marines Go Home* Page is: here.

[6] In January 2008, environmentalists won a partial victory when "U.S. District Judge Marilyn Hall Patel ruled Thursday [24 January 2008] that the U.S. military violated federal law when it failed to evaluate the air station's potential effects on the Okinawa dugong, a 455-kg mammal related to the manatee and the extinct Stellar's sea cow." *The Japan Times*, "New base must consider effects on dugong", 26 January 2008, accessed online.

[7] Kawazoe Makoto and Yuasa Makoto, "Action Against Poverty: Japan's Working Poor Under Attack", *Japan Focus*.

[8] Yamamoto, Mari (2004) *Grassroots Pacifism in Post-war Japan: the Rebirth of a Nation*, Oxon: Sheffield Centre for Japanese Studies/Routledge Curzon, pp. 8-11.

[9] More accurately speaking, the "interview" with Chika is an abridged version of her written submissions supplemented by her comments during meetings. The same is true of the other three "interviews".

[10] Chika went with 8 other young adults from Hokkaido on a 4-day tour (6-10 August) to Nagasaki. On 6 August they visited the Nagasaki Peace Park. On 7-9 August they attended the World Conference. About 6800 people attended the opening ceremony, including over 100 non-Japanese from 23 countries. Speakers included the Mayor of Nagasaki and *hibakusha*. The conference's official page is http://www10.plala.or.jp/antiatom/en/WC/e07wc/index.html (Accessed 7 March 2008).

[11] Nelson's dislike of insects also features in the manga version of his story: Saeguchi, *Mr. Nelson did you kill the people?*, p. 24.

[12] Seaton, Philip (2007) *Japan's Contested War Memories: the "memory rifts" in historical consciousness of World War II*, London: Routledge, especially Chapter 9.

[13] Dower, John (1999) *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*, New York: Norton, pp. 58-61.

[14] The Chinese Returnees Association (Chukiren) homepage; The Winter Soldier Investigation

[15] The site wintersoldier.com is "dedicated to the American veterans of the Vietnam War, who served with courage and honor" and disputes confessions of atrocities; in Japan's case, nationalists such as manga artist Kobayashi Yoshinori have attacked the confessions of Chukiren members and other soldiers. Kobayashi simply dismisses then as "brainwashed": Kobayashi Yoshinori (1998) *Sensoron*, Tokyo: Gentosha, pp. 183-94.

[16] My own work on Japan, especially *Japan's Contested War Memories*, covers many of the themes in research on Vietnam, for example, McMahon, Robert J. (2002) "Contested Memory: The Vietnam War and American Society, 1975-2001", *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Spring 2002), pp. 159-184. See also Laura Hein and Mark Selden (eds) (2000) *Censoring History: Citizenship and memory in Japan, Germany and the United States*, New York: M.E. Sharpe for discussion of Japan and the US in comparative perspective.

[17] See for example John Spiri, "Sitting out but standing tall: Tokyo Teachers Fight an Uphill Battle Against Nationalism and Coercion", *Japan Focus.*

[18] The phrase in Oe's Japanese original that Shimpei refers to has been translated as the "truly human character of the people of Hiroshima" in Oe, Kenzaburo (1995, translated by David L. Swain and Toshi Yonezawa) *Hiroshima Notes*, New York: Grove Press, p. 17. My translation "characteristically Hiroshima-like person" is based on how Shimpei explained his interpretation of this phrase to me.

[19] On *Barefoot Gen*, see Nakazawa Keiji interviewed by Asai Motofumi, "Barefoot Gen, the Atomic Bomb and I: The Hiroshima Legacy," *Japan Focus*.

[20] The Japanese film *Gekko no Natsu* (1993) is based on an actual incident. Two music students who have become kamikaze pilots visit a school to play Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata* on their final night before flying their missions. Fast forward to the 1980s and the schoolteacher who let the pilots play during the war years is campaigning to prevent the old piano being thrown out. She embarks on a journey to find out what happened to the pilots and discovers one of the pilots survived. The film is rich in themes of survivor guilt and the futility of war. The actual piano is now displayed at the entrance to the Peace Museum for Kamikaze Pilots in Chiran, Kyushu.

[21] Yamamoto, *Grassroots Pacifism in Post-war Japan*, p. 206.

[22] See Johnson, Chalmers "The 'Rape' of Okinawa," *Japan Focus*.

[23] *The Japan Times* (20 February 2008), "Another marine is held by U.S., this time for alleged counterfeiting", accessed online; (5 March 2008), "Arrest soldier for rape, Filipinos say", accessed online.

[24] Another published transcript of an interview with Allen Nelson is "A Vietnam War Veteran Talks About the Realty (sic.) of War: An Interview with Allen Nelson", *Nanzan Review of American Studies* (2004) Volume 26, pp. 43-56. Available online (Accessed 13 March 2008)

[25] The program is explained on this site (accessed 11 March 2008).

[26] Homepage. An article about Nelson is available here (Accessed 13 March 2008).

[27] This point had been made to me in an interview with another veteran, Mitsuyama Yoshitake, a Japanese veteran of the Battle of Okinawa. Following our interview (26 September 2007), Mitsuyama sent me a copy of an article from *Hokkaido Shimbun* which described how the seven suicides among SDF troops who had returned from Iraq constituted a rate three times the standard suicide rate among SDF personnel). *Hokkaido Shimbun*, "Iraku haken, jieikan no jisatsu 7-ken ni", 26 January 2007 (morning edition).

[28] "On March 10, 2005 Judge Jack Weinstein of Brooklyn Federal Court dismissed the lawsuit filed by the Vietnamese Victims of Agent Orange against the chemical companies that produced the defoliants/herbicides that they knew were tainted with high level (sic.) of dioxin. Judge Weinstein in his 233 page decision ruled that the use of these chemicals during the war, although they were toxic, did not fit the definition of 'chemical warfare' and therefore did not violate international law." Online (Accessed 29 February 2008).

[29] Link available here.

[30] Yamamoto, Mari "Japan's Grassroots Pacifism", *Japan Focus*.

[31] *The Japan Times* (4 April 2008), "Police arrest U.S. sailor in cabby slaying", accessed online.