

THE STORY OF PEACE KUWANNON STATUE in HIGASHIMURAYMA, TOKYO JAPAN

Wishing to bridge the world peace

Interpreted by NAKAYAMA Satoko and Members of A. Sen Seminar under supervisor of
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25th March 2003 the day of graduation ceremony



illustrated by MITSUE from OHSAKA

The Symbol of The World Peace for half a century since the end of the WW

The Peace-Kiwannon Statue

The original text by KONDO Makoto (owner of a photo shop in HIGASHIMURAYAMA)

(<http://dauber.oniwaso.to/higashimurayama/heiwakannon/heiwakannon.html>)

The original drawings by MACHIDA Yutaka (principal of Kinder-garten)

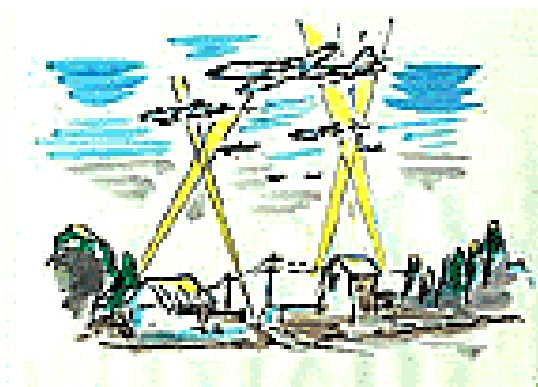
The English version put by NAKAYAMA Satoko and members of A. Sen Seminar

an interpreter's note: From the original text, we could not help but cut off some interesting descriptions about Mr. OMATA's activities for Hansen's disease in this area then.

This manuscript was addressed for the convention of Tokyo branch of Junior Chamber which was held in HIGASHIMURAYAMA village then(which is located in the north eastern outskirts of Tokyo)in Japan on 10th of June 1995, and the illustrations were drawn by a director of HIGASHIMURAYAMA Junior Chamber Mr. MACHIDA Yutak in 1995(principal of Kumegawa Kindergarten now).

In the last days of the Pacific war time, the overwhelming formations of B29 of US air force passed over the sky of the HIGASHIMURAYAMA, day and night. For that area was on the way for the flight formations to get to TOKYO bay back away, after air raids on to the ITABASHI manufacturing site and to the TOKOROZAWA military base. The regular course of their invading into the TOKYO area was the following : approaching from the area of Saipan islands(in the southern Pacific Ocean) to Japan,

looking at Mt. Fuji, then widely turning to the right and getting to TOKOROZAWA, next flying for ITABASHI in the southern direction, and finally bombing onto the city center of TOKYO. HIGASHIMURAYAMA villagers called the formations of B29 the regular flight like 'an air shuttle' because they became accustomed to air raids just as seemingly familiar events for them.



And whenever the air raid warnings were issued, they jumped into their air-defenses and saw the enemy aircrafts off flying far away.

About 3 AM 2nd April 1945 over HIGASHIMURAYAMA, there were some 'air shuttles' as usual to attack the areas mentioned above. The air raids warnings were issued and the villagers were running into their air-defenses, but there was only man, Mr. OMATA, who lived in AKITSU district of HIGASHIMURAYAMA village, dauntlessly standing outside to glare at the enemy crafts.

Severe anti-aircraft fires from the ground took place against the formations of B29. Meanwhile, B29s attacked the ground dropping flare bombs. After the battle that dyed the night sky light red ceased at a moment, the sky blushed with earsplitting noise, suddenly when every person was coming back into each house from air defense. They looked up the sky to see a B29 falling down as a gigantic fire ball. The B29 was poured by anti-aircrafts. It crashed down just in front of the OMATA's mansion. The roofs and windows of houses around here were broken into pieces by the blast. It happened about



3:30 in the morning.

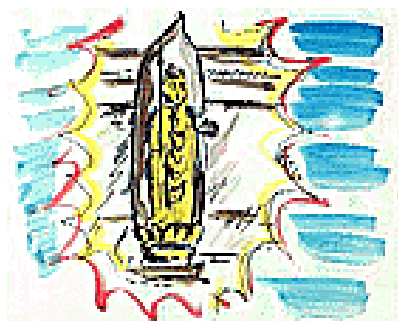
When the reverberation of clashing was calming down and the sky became bright in the morning, the neighbors gathered around the hole with the diameter about 133 feet.

There were found an aircraft of B29 with the eleven crews to be broken into pieces and stuck in the ground all around. Also pieces of crew's dead bodies were get mixed up and stuck into the ground as well. The neighbors gathering cast them a look of hatred. However their utter hatred is thought to have been natural because a lot of their parents, brothers and sisters had been killed by so-called regular flights. But Mr. OMATA soothed them and said peacefully "Once a human attained Buddhahood to become stiff, there should be no distinction between enemy and friend."



He began to dig a grave with his hands and collected each lump of their flesh with chanting the KUWANNON sutra. The neighbors who were just watching Mr.OMATA doing at first started to join him little by little, seeming to be moved deeply. Mr.OMATA and all of the followers at last had the pieces of the crew's dead bodies reunited and cordially burried the bodies below the ground by the next morning. Sometimes what just a man behaves makes so many people deeply moved.

But Mr. OMATA did not get satisfaction from just committing the crews to the earth. Someday, he collaborated his deepening belief in constructing a KUWANNON statue for the 11 crews who died under his nose. He worked so hard sweating to amass money for constructing the statue with his sons. Time flidied like an arrow ruthlessly. He found difficulty with hoarding up for the KUWANNON statue, because he was laid up with



illness due to his advanced age and high-blood pressure.

His friends and acquaintances stood up to make his dream come true. At the time when a wooden prototype of the statue was engraved, he held it tightly his grasp and shedded tears. On a certain day of July 1960, after a month passed by, he breathed his

last. He could not see the KUWANNON statue completed.

27th of November in the same year as Mr. OMATA was dead, the Peace KUWANNON was constructed at very place where the plane of B29 crashed down.

Not only Japanese but also many Americans joined the unveiling ceremony of the peace KUWANNON, and the trumpeters of the military band from US bugled aloud to the sky.



The descendants of Mr.OMATA were invited over Texas which was one of crews' home town, and then they handed back to his bereaved relatives the mementos of the crew's which had been conserved. Not only in Texas, but also in various locations of US, this story of late OMATA was read on newspapers, and there were observed international heart-bonds. Now one of Mr. OMATA's daughter who was internationally married lives in Texas.

The statue of KUWANNON is only a meter tall. It is not very lulu at all because the descendants of Mr. OMATA is thought unaffected too. Consequently, any of people who live in the same town scarcely take a notice of it. But it is true that a few of the bereaved relatives of the crews from US visit the statue still now once every April.

2nd of April 1945, Mr. OMATA may have been glaring at the formations of B29 as an enemy in the night sky without running into his air defense. Was what he was glaring at the formations of B29 themselves? Actually what he was glaring at was nothing less than the WAR itself, wasn't it?

The epitaph reads: To console the war dead souls of them. To make the world be the place where any awful war shall never happen.

亡くなった
あの人達の霊を
慰めるために
そしてふたたび
恐ろしい戦争が
おこらない
平和な世に
するためにも

This is Mr. OMATA's feeling. These days, less and less number of people in Japan, no, even in HIGASHIMURAYAMA, are coming to know the reality. Would you think this Peace KUWANNON as a symbol of the World Peace that is keeping built a heart bridge over Japan and US? So you see, it is in HIGASHIMURAYAMA here that the heart bridge lies.

