

# Seeds of Peace Growing in the World: Visiting the A-bombed Tree “Mother’s Tree”

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## Six people from the U.S. came to Japan

Members of Green Legacy Hiroshima (GLH) (Naka-ku, Hiroshima City), who have collected A-bombed trees that have been burned by the atomic bombing of Hiroshima but continue to live on to future generations, and sent them to about 130 locations in about 40 countries and regions, have taken root and grown into young trees. In early November, six people from the U.S. state of Oregon, one of the recipients, visited Hiroshima City and touched the A-bombed tree, which is the “mother tree.” (Yoji Yamahata)

## Learn from an Arborist

The six are Mike Oxendine, a horticulturist, and Jim Gersbuck [OH WELL, HARD ENOUGH FOR ENGLISH SPEAKERS TO CORRECTLY SPELL MY LAST NAME], a member of the State Forest Service. Seeds and saplings of A-bombed ginkgo biloba, oyster trees, camphor trees, and other trees were sent to the state through GLH, and a total of about 160 second-generation trees are currently growing in parks and other places in the state.



A delegation from Oregon, USA, looking up at A-bombed trees while listening to an explanation by arborist Horiguchi (second from right) (in Naka-ku, Hiroshima City, Nov. 7)

After praying in front of the Cenotaph for the Atomic Bomb Victims on the 7th, the group toured the A-bombed trees under the guidance of GLH co-founder Nasreen Azimi (64), a resident of Hiroshima City. In front of the oyster trees and mukunoki trees near the White Shrine in the city’s Naka Ward, I received an explanation from Riki Horiguchi (78), an arborist who works on conservation.

Oxendine said the oyster tree, which was planted in Oregon about three years ago, is about 4 meters tall and growing much faster than expected. In response to Guardsback’s [GERSBACH’S] question, “Is there any impact of the A-bomb on the growth of second-generation trees?” Mr. Horiguchi replied with a smile, “I don’t know if there is an impact (of the A-bomb exposure), but I think that the trees of the second generation will try to grow stronger and faster because the mother tree has endured the harsh environment.”

While Azissi is concerned about the international situation where conflicts continue, she hopes that the seeds of peace will be sown and take root around the world. “The seeds of the A-bombed trees are a very easy-to-understand message from Hiroshima, and I hope that more people will get involved and that it will lead to a feeling of caring for people and nature,” she said.

# Filmmaking

The documentary film “The Seeds of Peace,” which sheds light on Hideko Tamura, who was exposed to the atomic bomb in Hiroshima when she was 11 years old and lives in Oregon, USA, and is dedicated to planting seeds and saplings of A-bombed trees, is currently being produced in the United States. Director David Hedberg came to Japan for the first time to shoot in Hiroshima, and he said, “In Hiroshima, I want to carefully photograph the A-bombed trees and the people who are trying to pass them on to future generations.”

Tomoko Watanabe, 69, co-founder of GLH, who watched the film in the U.S., said, “I hope that the director himself touches and feels the reality of Hiroshima, where the atomic bombing caused disaster not only to people but also to all living things, and to reflect it in his work.”

## Future Heritage

Since July 2011, GLH has been sending seeds and seedlings both domestically and internationally. Trees are planted in parks, schools, and gardens of public facilities, and Ginkgo biloba is planted in front of the United Nations European Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. In Norway, many seedlings are grown at the University of Oslo Botanical Garden and distributed throughout the country. GLH’s efforts have been selected as part of the Japan Federation of UNESCO Associations’ “Project Future Heritage 2014” (supported by the Yomiuri Shimbun).

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A-bombed trees There are currently about 160 A-bombed trees within a radius of about 2 kilometers from the hypocenter, including transplanted trees, in about 50 locations. There are various species of trees, such as eucalyptus and weeping willow, each with its own lifespan, and some of the trees have declined 78 years after the atomic bombing. There is a growing need to pass it on to the future.

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