

Tomoko Project Proposal



In Memory of Tomoko Watari who died in Inida on March 8, 2007

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About Tomoko Watari

Born July 16, 1966

Died March 8, 2007

Faith History

Attended Sunday School at Aisen Church, and Izumi Aisen Church in Sendai

May 26, 1985 Baptised at Izumi Aisen Church (UCCJ)

April 30, 1995 Transfer of church membership to Hosana Church (UCCJ)

Education

March 1979 Graduated from Shogen Elementary School

March 1982 Graduated from Shogen Junior High School

March 1985 Graduated from Miyagi First Girl's High School

March 1990 Graduated from Tohoku University (Majored in Religion)

April 2006 Enrolled in Open University Master's Program

Occupation

April 1990 – March 1991 St. Dominic High School, part time English teacher

April 1991 – March 1995 Matsushima High School, English Teacher

April 1995 – March 2005 West Sendai High School, English Teacher

March 2007 Leave of Absence due to husband's work

(The family resided in Turku, Finland from April through December, 2005)

April 2007 Scheduled to return to High School English teaching

Family

September 1994 Married to Yoshihiko Watanabe

September 1996 Birth of daughter, Izumi

November 2000 Birth of second daughter, Nanami

Favorite Bible Verse Letter to the Galatians 5:1

Favorite Hymn "O Mighty God, When I Survey in Wonder"

Tomoko was a bright, intelligent and active person. She was not afraid of failure. Her heart transcended national boundaries.

❖ **An Explanation of the Accident**

Tomoko Watari participated as a staff member on the annual South Asia Study Tour sponsored by the Sendai Student-Youth Center (UCCJ). As a university student, Tomoko had been a participant on this study tour. Because of her deep interest in Asia, her language skills, and the fact that she had time before returning to her next work placement, she was asked to accompany the group as a staff member. After giving some thought to the proposal, she had decided to join the tour. The group was composed of the director, Rev. Jeffrey Mensendiek, and seven university students. Tomoko was to assist as a second staff member. They left Japan on February 25 on a three week tour.

The accident occurred a few days after the group had traveled from Kolkata inland to Bilaspur, in Chattisgarh District. The group had been visiting a Christian NGO named DEEP. On that particular day they had visited a few schools, and were on their way back to where they were being housed. A bus tried to pass from behind, and hit the back side of the car in which Tomoko was riding. The car spun around, and was hit again on the passenger seat side. Tomoko was sitting in the passenger seat which was most damaged. Tomoko was taken immediately to the hospital. Despite the treatment in the ICU unit, she breathed her last four hours after the accident, at 7 pm on March 8th.

❖ **About the “Tomoko Project”**

Tomoko died of an unfortunate accident. By joining our hands together to carry on her will, Tomoko will continue to live within us. Through our common commitment, and through the process of involvement we will also find healing. Therefore, considering Tomoko’s will, and her particular passions, we have decided to start the following Project. The unified project will be composed of two separate programs, one carried out in Japan, and one in India.

1) Program in Japan

1) Tomoko had been involved with the Sendai Student Center from when she was a university student. After graduating she continued to show her support by joining in alumni events, and serving as a board member. She was always looking for ways to enliven Student Center activities. In 2006 in particular, she had joined the hymn singing class as a concrete expression of her support for the activities.

The Student Center hosts a meal every Friday night for young people. In memory of Tomoko, we propose to invite special guests 2 to 3 times a year, to offer opportunities for learning and growth. These guests will speak on various subjects; education, society, and global current events. Information about guest speakers will be made available on our website, and such events will be open to any member of the Tomoko Project.

2) Tomoko was a Christian. She had hoped to find new ways to bring together brothers and sisters in Christ. In particular, she felt the need to bring together young people from the various churches to encourage one another in the faith. The Emmaus Center will carry on this vision of hers. For the first two to three years, staff members of the Emmaus Center will visit the local churches in the Tohoku Conference, to learn about the

situation of young people in our churches. Then, in the near future we aim to organize an event to bring together young people from the various churches.

2) Program in India

We received a project proposal for the education and empowerment of young girls in rural India, from Mrs. Nevedita Mohanty. Nevedita is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Prakash who run the NGO, DEEP. The Prakashes had been hosting the group from Japan when the accident happened. Nevedita is now teaching in a university in Mumbai, and had previously spent one year overseas studying at Miyagi Gakuin High School.

The Tomoko Project will aim to continually fund and support the four programs that will be started under the "Tomoko-san Girl's Education Program," (scholarships, awareness building, knowledge building, and volunteer opportunities).

In order to establish mutual responsibility for this project, we will receive periodic reports concerning progress of the programs. Also the representative in Japan will visit India, to make periodic evaluations for the continuing progress of the programs.

According to the program proposal from India, the total annual budget will be 5,075 dollars (600,000 yen). Of this amount, local funding will 1/5 of the total amount (120,000 yen). The Tomoko Project Fund will therefore aim to raise 400,000 to 500,000 yen annually for this purpose.

The Project – both content and funding - will be re-evaluated in three years, at which time we will consider what kind of future commitment we will make together. A commitment to education will mean a commitment over more than a decade. In order to follow through with our commitment we will need to build a common ground of trust, and be flexible to one another as new situations arise.

3) Establishment of Fund

In order to carry out the above programs, a fund will be established, the "Tomoko Project Fund," and an office will be established to maintain these funds. (Please refer to "Tomoko Project Rules and Regulations")

Promoters: Seigo Kudo, Jeffrey Mensendiek, Miho Okoshi, Kagumi Shima, Kenichiro Arita.