

2011 ARI Participant Rev. Munetsi Hokonya is awarded his graduation certificate by director Rev. Kenichi Otsu.



Take My Hand

The Newsletter of the Asian Rural Institute



The Mission of ARI is to...

Where do we start?" This was the first question asked when we began to prepare for our year-end evaluation session; three days dedicated to intensively reviewing and reflecting on our training program. Where do we even begin to talk about the events of this year? Even in normal times ARI is a challenging place where people are pushed beyond what they thought were their limits. But this year, in the wake of the magnitude 9.0 earthquake and subsequent nuclear disaster, *challenge* and *beyond limits* have taken on new meaning. Numerous tough decisions had to be made. Seemingly unsolvable problems had to be faced time and again. Exceptional commitment and endurance were demanded from all who joined as part of this community. In short, it truly has been an extraordinary year.

Some of the conversations that took place around here were certainly out of the ordinary; almost surreal. "Is the Koinonia House in imminent danger of collapse, or can we continue to use it for the short term?" "Where do we set up our radioactively contaminated compost until we can experiment with treating it in the new biogas system we are going to build?" "Do we have to cancel the training program this year?"

This last question was one of the first that required an answer, and we had to find this answer amidst a great deal of uncer-

tainty – about the stability of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant 110 km (70 mi) away, about the condition and safety of our campus and facilities, and about our ability to provide meaningful training in these conditions. But even as we were confronted with these massive challenges, there was yet one more equally important challenge that we needed to face – our own mission statement. A mission is not something that is carried out only when convenient. A mission statement exists to guide an organization, to keep us on track especially through difficult times like these. As we began to put our mission statement back to the center, the question started to turn from "CAN we hold the training program?" to "HOW can we hold the training program?" while ensuring the health and safety of the community members and maintaining our high standard of training. Once we reached this point we could start gathering our energy to move forward, to prepare to welcome our new group of participants and to rebuild ARI.

However, it is important to keep in mind that the training of grassroots rural leaders does not constitute the whole of our mission statement. It holds other challenges that have become particularly significant in the aftermath of this nuclear disaster. At the beginning it speaks of building "an environmentally healthy, just and peaceful world." And the last sentence reads, "We present a challenge to ourselves and to the whole world in our approach to food and life." This challenge became significantly compounded the day westward winds started to carry radioactive contaminants from the stricken nuclear reactors.

Fixing the Land

Paing Kui, participant from Myanmar harvesting this year's rice.



In this morning's staff meeting, Osamu Arakawa (farm manager) announced that we would be able to ship in rice husk donated by a neighbor farmer who lives about 90 minutes from ARI. Everyone cheered because rice husk is a vitally important component in the way we practice organic farming. We convert it to charcoal and add it to our "bokashi" compost and animal feed. It is also a key ingredient in our animal pen flooring. However, if you read the situation carefully, you will notice that something is very wrong here. ARI grows rice. This year we had one of our biggest harvests ever at 9 tons. So why don't we use our own rice husk? The dark answer is that it contains radioactive Cesium at a level of 80 Becquerels per kilogram (Bq/kg). This is not a lot. In fact it is considered quite low. But it is enough that we don't want to cycle it into our soil or into our feed.

Not a lot of radiation, but more than we want is generally how our land can be described. We have measured every inch of our campus and the levels of contamination we found are considered to be low. The Japanese government

has determined that farmland in the whole region of Northern Tochigi is safe for agriculture. But our farm is organic. Our standards and our values are much different from that of the government. We are extremely sensitive about our environment and work joyfully with nature as an equal partner. Healthy soil is the basis for healthy food and a healthy community. These things are most precious to us and that is why we are working hard to nurture our violated soil back to health.

But this is not an easy task. A particularly worrisome contaminant is Cesium 137, which has a half-life of 29 years. One of our first efforts was to remove the topsoil in some fields. The Cesium is mostly in the upper 5-10 cm (2-4 in), so if we take that off everything should be good. The problem is that this is our best soil. Also, where do we put it? In a more recent project we contracted with a company

to remove the top layer of soil from the area where we keep our seedling greenhouse. They scraped it off, dug down a little deeper and buried it – essentially turning the soil upside down. The remaining soil then needs to be revitalized and for that we need organic matter like rice husk and fallen leaves. These items we have in plenty around here, but they are unusable. We have to import. This is what it means to live with radiation on an organic farm. Everything is turned upside down – literally. Topsoil goes under and "local resources" come from somewhere else. Well, at least we still have our animal manure.

In the summer we embarked on a phyto-remediation project. We have a lot to learn from Chernobyl on this one. Their research and trials found that sunflowers can absorb large amounts of radioactive elements. We planted a small area with sunflowers, but our larger effort was with soy beans. The theory is that Cesium and Potassium have similar chemical properties and since soy absorbs a lot of Potassium, it will naturally absorb Cesium. Also, "clean" soy bean oil can safely be produced even from contaminated plants. So we sowed, grew, and harvested 3 hectares (7.5 acres) of soy. We are still checking on the effect to the soil, but suspect it was minimal. It usually takes



Early April: Former director Dr. Tasaka (right) and ARI farm staff check the soil for radioactive contamination.

a series of plantings before you start seeing a difference. We'll have to keep working on this, but at the very least we will have a good supply of soy bean oil.

Our third project will commence as soon as we can get our biogas system rebuilt, hopefully next summer. This involves processing contaminated bio-matter through our biogas system and using zeolite to filter out heavy metals such as Cesium. If the zeolite works as well as we hope, the biogas liquid and biogas sludge will be clean enough to use as compost and only the contaminated zeolite itself would have to be disposed of as a radioactive material. This would give us a way to process contaminated grass, leaves, and soil that we have been removing little by little. It would also provide us a source of clean organic matter to build up our soil with.

Food Safety, Food Self-Sufficiency

One of the most stressful aspects of living with radiation is wondering how safe your food is. In the case of my own experience, the first time I watched my daughter drink a glass of cold water outside of ARI, I was petrified – though I was probably overreacting. Meat and produce in the supermarket, kids' school lunches, and that glass of water at the restaurant need to pass through a system of government checks. And it looks like the government efforts to conduct these tests are being done in earnest. The problem is that even in earnestness, mistakes can be made (and when they are they hit the headlines) and also the government standard for permissible radiation content is high – 500 Bq/kg for food and 200 Bq/kg for water and milk. Since ARI's food comes from our own land we decided to set our own limit – 37 Bq/kg. This is the standard for food for



To avoid contamination from air and rain, vegetables were grown inside greenhouses.

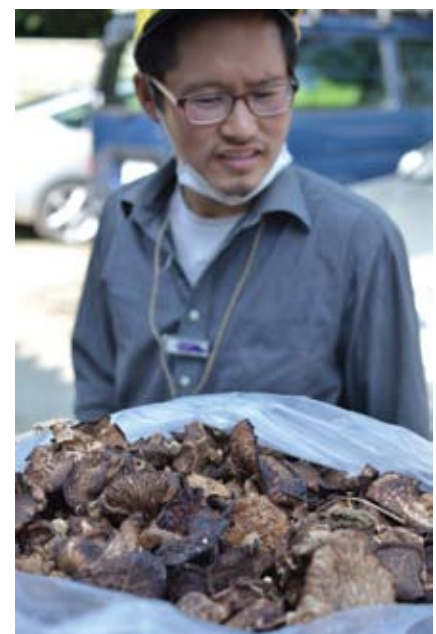
children in Belarus, a country with 25 years of experience with radiation.

Next we needed a way to measure our food. Lab analyses cost \$150 each so we couldn't afford many of those. To our great joy we recently received a sophisticated machine for assessing radiation content as a donation from the National Christian Council in Japan (NCCJ). With this device we would be able to freely measure every vegetable we harvested, every egg we collected. But even with this peace of mind, there is still something disquieting about the fact that a \$40,000 piece of radiation detecting equipment needs to be considered standard gear for an organic farm.

We began putting this machine to work and were pleasantly surprised to find that nearly all of our produce and meat were well under the 37 Bq/kg limit. Water contained no radiation, but we already knew that. We had been keeping careful tabs on it from day one. And rice – our nine tons of white rice – had just 3 Bq/kg. (Remember it was the husk that contained 80 Bq/kg.)

Throughout this year we restricted most of our vegetable growing to only what we could fit inside our greenhouses, leaving the bulk of our land either

unused or covered with soy. Needless to say, our food self-sufficiency rating fell dramatically. We relied heavily on produce shipped in from an organic farmers group called "Aino" (purchased by a donation given us specifically for this purpose). But with the good test results turning up on veggies grown both inside and outside the greenhouses and with our continuing efforts to clean up the soil, we anticipate being able to plant much of our land again next year and bring our self-sufficiency back to where it should be.



Mushrooms absorb radioactive matter easily. These are not edible.

Rebuilding the Campus

Sketch of the new Koinonia and classroom buildings



By the end of this week we need to have everything out of the main building. By the end of the month, there will no longer be a main building. Such is the radical transformation now taking place. Unstable buildings like the main building and the Koinonia Dining Hall need to come down; others need to be repaired. Work has been going on throughout this year and will continue well into next year. Some facilities will be completed and ready for use by the start of the next training program in April but others will still be under construction.

The total price tag for rebuilding is estimated at roughly \$7 million – a figure beyond our imagination. But the response from supporters worldwide, including our own alumni, has also been beyond our imagination. More than 80% of the needed funds have already come in so far in the form of donations both big and small. These funds have given us the financial assurance that we will be able to get back on our feet, but the even greater gift here is the inspiration that comes from you. Very simply, you would not support us so lovingly if you did not believe in what we do. Your faith in the work and mission of ARI is a tremendous encouragement that gives us the strength and energy we need to move forward.

So what does \$7 million buy these days? Well, here is the plan. The offices are moving to the new farm shop. No, we won't be installing desks and computers between the hoes and rice

storage containers. We determined that there is enough room in the building to house the administration in the west end so we began work right away to renovate it into office space. All is ready now, so we have a place to safely relocate. We still need to build an annex to serve as a reception area and shop for selling our products and this is expected to be completed by February. Of course these renovations cost some money, but overall it is much cheaper.

Construction of a new classroom/library building and a new Koinonia Dining Hall is due to begin in January. These will be one story wooden buildings powered by renewable energy systems. ARI has been on a path to bring our buildings in line with our commitment to sustainable living, and the meltdown of reactors in our own back yard has certainly reinforced this. We do not want to depend on a source of energy that can destroy our way of life. We expect to have these two buildings completed within July and until then we will make use of the existing Koinonia House.

The dormitories were not structurally compromised, but needed work. The women's dorm has already been fully repaired and renovated. The men's, however, is presenting us with a dilemma. Full renovation is expensive. Rebuilding is also expensive. Partial renovation is less expensive but short term, so this may not be a good investment. We are still exploring options. A new chapel is in the works as well, and this time it will be a stand alone structure. We are still at the creative stage on this one, gathering people's ideas to come up with a design that fits with the ARI motto, "That we may live together."

The last area that needs attention is the farm. The concrete pigpen, which is connected with our biogas system, was



December: Every hand is needed to move the offices out from the damaged main building...



... into the second floor of the new farm shop. Carpenters along with volunteers joined in to create a practical work environment.

damaged beyond repair. We evacuated our pigs to a temporary greenhouse pigpen, but later found that the woodchip flooring we had made had radiation in it. We had no choice but to bring them back to the concrete pen. Construction of a new pigpen and biogas system will commence in January. This time we plan to build several stalls with fermented flooring; a method highly prized by our participants for the fact that it is cheap to build with locally available resources, easy to manage, and emits almost no odor. We will keep a few stalls with concrete floors,

however, in order to retain manure for the new biogas system.

It is a real blessing to be provided with the resources to rebuild after this catastrophe. Once again we thank you for making this possible. But at the same time, we must always keep in mind that ARI is much more than the buildings we use. They are, of course, essential. But the life of this school – its spirit – is in our community, and in our training and we will never lose sight of this no matter how much the earth shakes.



The image that comes to mind when I think of ARI is one of respect for life, careful tending of the earth, and wise use of water.” These were the words spoken by Dr. Thomas Kemper, head of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, on our commencement day. This year we sent out 19 new graduates, a number much smaller than usual, but for all of us, including the participants themselves, it was a tremendous achievement. Adverse conditions challenged us greatly, but these same adverse conditions strengthened us too. ARI has always been a place of profound transformation. Normally, we feel it is the staff who are walking the participants through this transformation, comforting when needed, provoking when needed. But this year, in the face of so many uncertainties, we

walked through side by side.

In order to get the training program under way, we held the first three months of it at the Theological Seminary for Rural Mission in Tsurukawa (near Tokyo). At the beginning of May, the participants arrived and settled in. They started classes and started planting their fields with beans, carrots, cabbage, sweet potatoes and all manner of vegetables. They came together quickly and built a tight knit community. On Fridays we held consultation sessions about the situation of the nuclear power plant and the effects of the radiation. As they would be moving to the ARI campus in July, we thought they needed to have a good understanding of these things. But these are sensitive, uncomfortable, and extremely complicated topics. Some-

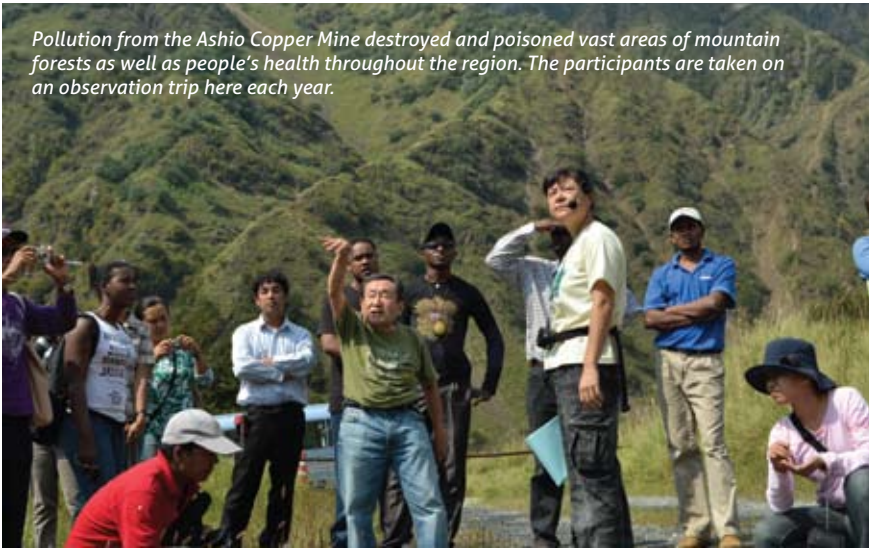
times people got confused or felt it was too far outside their experience. The meetings became tougher and tougher. People got scared. People got upset. Some said it was irrelevant.

Irrelevant? A matter not pertaining to developing countries? Slowly, slowly, this thinking began to change. Fr. Clement from India explained that they have a new reactor in his state, just completed and ready to open. Sam from Indonesia stated that his government is working vigorously to bring nuclear power to his country. Suddenly the lessons of Fukushima began to take on new meaning for them. Gradually others also started listening more carefully when the realization set in that nuclear power and its inherent risks is not only a thing of Japan, but could come to “our place” as well.



The seminary in Tsurukawa offered the participants fields to utilize for their training.

Pollution from the Ashio Copper Mine destroyed and poisoned vast areas of mountain forests as well as people's health throughout the region. The participants are taken on an observation trip here each year.



This awareness went far beyond nuclear power. As part of our program we make it a point to illustrate the effects of rapid, unchecked, industrial development. We take the participants to Ashio Copper Mine, where the pollution was so bad that the forests still do not grow, despite 40 years of efforts to clean up and replant. In the town of Minamata, they met with victims of a severe neurological disorder called “Minamata disease,” which was caused by eating fish from their own bay that had been thickly polluted with mercury from a major chemical company. Nuclear power may seem like a distant image to some participants, but mining and factory pollution hits close to home. This year they not only observed environmental disasters that happened “somewhere else,” but also worked together as part of the ARI community to recover our own damaged land. They could thoroughly experience the vast impact of massive environmental destruction; the human suffering, the loss of precious natural resources, the true costs of cleaning up. This is a message they take home, not only in their notebooks, but in their hearts. While the obstacles to holding the training program this year were many, the benefits were exceptionally valuable.

Connections

In the aftermath of the earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disaster, stories came in from all over eastern Japan of communities coming together. The strain has been tremendous, but the Japanese, especially those in the north, have a reputation for being stoic. People often say, “Shikata ga nai” (it can’t be helped) and rather than mourn for themselves, they will say, “How can I think about my own loss when others have lost more than me,” even when their own loss might include a brother, a mother, or a child.

After March 11, ARI was confronted with a direct question. “Are you a member of this community? If so what can you do for this community?” We were caught off guard. Community is central to our lives and each year we work hard to build this ARI community. But the community we make is within ARI and the networks we have established are with people around the globe. Even within Japan our connections are scattered and far-flung – organic farmers in Yamagata Prefecture, supporters in Tokyo, Osaka, and

even distant Kyushu Island. But what have we done for our own local community? Sadly, the answer is, not as much as we could have. But this question presented us with a wonderful chance.

Of course we are not completely cut off. Right after the earthquake we went around to all the immediate neighbors to check on them and we continued this daily to provide information on scheduled power outages and to deliver eggs and vegetables from our farm. These visits included the Takamis, the Kikuchis, and the Nozakis, retired staff of ARI who live next to the campus. We were also able to provide food to people in nearby evacuation shelters and even deliver meat and vegetables to friends in Fukushima who had been living on instant noodles. Our connections can also be seen through our commuting volunteers. Local folks like Mr. Ito and Mr. Goto came almost daily and even on weekends to lend a hand wherever they could. With half our staff at the seminary and very few on-site volunteers, their assistance was critical.

But the gist of the above question was about long term commitment to the people of THIS Nasu area, because recovering from radioactive contamination can only be done if we – people of this area – are willing to work together for the long term. The question was posed by Dr. Fujimura, a local resident who is a professor, engineer, and inventor. It came early on, at a time when we were still considering if ARI would even be able to remain here or have to relocate. Initial analyses of the soil showed that farming was somehow still possible and that with effort we would be able to recover. Also, though the nuclear power plant was severely damaged, likelihood of another major disaster was determined to be low. [Since that time, primary cooling sys-



ARI staff member Takashi Yamashita (left) discusses radiation measurement plans with Dr. Fujimura (right), key member of the "Toride" project.

tems have been installed at the plant, along with numerous backup and emergency systems. Tanks to store contaminated water have also been built. A large cover has been erected over reactor number one and a similar structure is due to be built over reactor number three.] These were two important factors in our decision, but what about the wider community? Should this not also be taken into consideration? We concluded the answer to be, "Yes." "Yes" we are a part of this community and "yes," we will stay.

We began attending the lectures of Dr. Fujimura. "I am going to talk about radiation in the Nasu area and my assumption of radiation contamination in this area," he explained, "but more importantly I want emphasize that we should unite our hearts and make a positive action toward this problem as one, so that our position can give people courage and hope." We also joined the citizen's movement he formed called *Nasu wo Kibo no Toride ni suru* (Make Nasu the Bastion of Hope). He repeatedly told us not to panic and that we should be a source of accurate information. He inspired us to stand firm and be a hope and light to others. One of the first major achievements of the *Toride* group was to measure radiation levels at 1,700 points in

this region and create a detailed map. Next we began experimenting with ways to clean up radiation. Here at ARI we found that our farm shop floor (which had been exposed during the days of the meltdown) contained radiation, so we tested different

techniques to get it out, such as spreading a coating of glue on the concrete and pulling it up. In the end we found the most effective method was to grind the surface and then vacuum up and dispose of the dust. Based on the detailed measurements taken by *Toride*, Dr. Fujimura was able to develop a formula to predict the amount of radiation that residents would be exposed to in the next year. With this information we were able to determine that it would be possible to conduct our 2012 training program in its entirety on the ARI campus.

From December 1st *Toride* started a "Becquerel Center" where residents can bring items, such as vegetables they grew or soil from their gardens, to be tested. Since ARI also has the proper equipment for this, we plan to do the same starting from January. In this way we can share this precious gift from the NCCJ with our neighbors, helping to alle-

viate their anxiety by giving them access to accurate information. Yes, we are a part of this community and only by working together can we get through this crisis.

The Next Beginning

This year is now coming to a close. Our new graduates have departed and the campus feels still. The circle of people at radio exercise is small. The morning air is cold but the sun shines brightly. This is something that has never changed, even during the most difficult times this year. The sun continued to rise each day and God's abundant blessings never ceased. Next spring 30 new participants are going to join us. Together with them we will form a new community and conduct a new training program. It is for this purpose that ARI exists and it is for this purpose that we are working so hard to rebuild – to renew. There is still a lot to do before we welcome them, but thinking of their arrival fills us with anticipation and excitement. No matter what challenges we are faced with, we will forever be grateful for the opportunity to carry out the mission of ARI.

by Steven Cutting



A concerned citizen raises a question at an ARI-organized radiation lecture for the local Nasu community.



Accepting each other's differences

by Lidia Hotmaida Naibaho
HTC Coordinator

The Harvest Thanksgiving Celebration (HTC) is a routine event at the Asian Rural Institute, in which all the members of the community are involved. This is a time and place to give thanks for all the grace that is given by the Creator to the whole community of ARI through the soil, water, air and nature. This grace never runs out. Even though there are many problems and trials that ARI has faced, including the disaster in Japan on March 11, it is important for us to reflect upon God's grace. Especially, we have been able to carry out our ongoing rebuilding process, implement the training program, and successfully hold HTC.

The theme of HTC this year was: "Coloring the world with love, care, harmony in difference." Difference! The world we live in is filled

with people with various differences: different colors, countries, tribes, languages, religions, and so on. Each person brings their own color – different colors from others. Discussions of differences can be endless and can sometimes even be a cause of separation and war. Living in difference is not something easy, but it is also not impossible. At ARI we live in difference, but those differences make ARI more beautiful, because everyone is trying to understand and appreciate the culture of the other. At HTC we embrace our differences and demonstrate them through a variety of cultural performances, done by all the participants from Asian, African and Pacific countries in the form of dancing, singing, and sharing of our native dishes. The world will be more beautiful when all people understand that differences create a beautiful rainbow. When you color the world with love, care, and harmony, you'll find a rainbow each and every day.



Participant Voice



“Limitations live only in our minds.”

Syamsul “Sam” Asinar
Konsorsium Pembaruan Agraria
Indonesia

I grew up in Brabumulih, a small town in South Sumatra. My family are farmers, so I learned about agriculture from my early childhood. At my university I studied agriculture, but I became more and more interested in environmental issues. I joined an environmental NGO called WALHI (Indonesian Forum for the Environment). At the same time I served as chairman in the IMPALM Foundation and as a paralegal or community organizer for Indonesian Legal Aid. We helped farmers solve environmental problems. There have been many cases of land grabbing by multinational companies. They mainly use the land for production of palm oil, timber plantations, and mining. With my NGO we tried to stop these things because they pollute the land and destroy the soil. From that point my main interests were agrarian injustice and globalization.

After graduating, I tried to start a small farm project in my home village. I did not have enough funding, so the project failed and I had to stop farming for the time being. After that, I supported a Muslim school for former delinquents. Their aim was to teach the students different skills to earn money. I stopped working there after one year because the religious

context of the school was bothering me. It was during this time that I realized all the target groups of NGOs and other programs had been adults. Therefore I decided to focus more on younger people. I started working with a comic book publisher and scripted science comics for younger audiences. After I had earned some money, I restarted the farm project, but this time in West Java, and I am continuing until today.

One of the reasons I came to ARI was because of a particular book written by Masanobu Fukuoka called *One Straw Revolution*. This book inspired me to focus on natural farming. I am very grateful that while I was in Japan I could listen to a lecture by one of his followers, Shimpei Murakami. Additionally, I discovered that there was a lot more for me to learn at ARI, by living with the other participants and listening to the stories of graduates.

One of my biggest learnings was how to make square compost. Before, I could not manage it even though I tried many different ways. I was frustrated, but now it is not a problem for me. I think a farmer is

an artist on his farm and square compost is one of his artworks. When I come back to Indonesia, I want to become a rich farmer. The reason is because I am a “poor farmer” right now. But this is not everything. My dream is to make agrarian reform with my NGO. We have to redistribute the land that was taken by the companies. While the farmers do not have enough land, the companies leave their lands unused and abused. People are always thinking about their limitations, their place in the system. It prevents them from acting. One of ARI’s graduates, Mr. Chatterjee, said in his lesson that “Limitations live only in our minds.” I think he is right.

by Franz Himmighofen



Sam at the soy bean harvest community event

Graduates at Work

1 | Laos Ms. Houmphan Sengchanthong, 2009 Graduate

We have many activities, but I will describe only two ARI-related ones:

Bokashi: In my community about 10 people started the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) and home gardening last year. This year the number of implementers has increased to 70. I had an interview with a farmer who said that for many years he applied chemical fertilizers to his rice field. Two years ago he tried bokashi for one plot. He was so satisfied with the result in the first year that now he plans to apply bokashi to all his fields. Now he could really understand about the difference between organic and chemical fertilizers.

Local seed bank: I really want to run this activity because not just in Japan, but also in many countries people have to buy seeds from companies and in some countries they have to buy more than 90% of their seeds. Nowadays in Laos, and in my community as well, many kinds of local



seeds have disappeared. Many hybrids have come and replaced the original seeds. This year we collected rice seeds and vegetable seeds from many places and then distributed them to the farmers. The farmers then have to return seeds to the bank after harvesting.



2 | Indonesia Rev. Hugo Nababan, 2009 Graduate

From February I am working in a new community. My community now is so different from before – many things have changed. The farmers just plant oil palm trees everywhere, creating a lack of trees that bear fruit. Therefore, food has become very expensive, widening the gap between rich and poor. On top of that, the price for land is increasing, forcing many people to work on other people's land. They do not have fields or own a house. I observed the situation and found a solution to this problem. The most important thing is to establish a community like the ARI community. We should live the way Jesus taught his disciples – that everyone must share

with each other. In July we created an organization called Credo Union Modification that works by the credit union method. Through this organization we hope to create a more balanced community where one can borrow money to buy a field and own a home. Now our members are 45 people. This organization is more than a credit union because it is not only for saving and borrowing money, but also for teaching members how to do organic farming and sharing knowledge. This organization is called CUM Maraleale. Maraleale means "close friend." A close friend is always loving, sharing, caring and trustworthy. We hope this organization will be like that. To build life like this in my community is very difficult but I hope that slowly, slowly (bochi, bochi) we will improve, so that people will care more for each other and the gap between rich and poor decreases.

Dutch Friends Celebrate 40 Years with ARI

Eimert and Eve van Herwijnen began their connection with Tom Takami and the training of rural leaders long before there even was an ARI.

The van Herwijnen lived in Japan (1962-1967) on assignment with Shell. In 1966, when Dr. Takami was leading the Southeast Asia Course (SEAC) at the Rural Theological Seminary in Tsurukawa, he spoke about his vision to the Women's Guild of the Chapel Center of the U.S. Navy near Tokyo. Eve and other members of the guild who met Dr. Takami later visited Tsurukawa and the SEAC.

"After we returned from Japan in 1967," recalled Eimert, "we had become aware of aspects of the uneven distribution of resources and wealth in the world. We both got involved in development education and development aid. Eve was ahead of me, because I was torn between my work at Shell and the need for structures to change. We realized that the process of raising awareness was going to be slow. Sending money for projects could help enable people, but ARI's key concept of investing in leadership attracted us much more. We could be 'remote participants' in long term development."

According to Eimert, "Two years later (1969) we were planning a party for our so called 'copper wedding anniversary,' (12 ½ years) and Eve suggested to ask for gifts for the SEAC instead of copper ashtrays and the like." In 1971, Dr. Takami, who was attending a World Council of Churches meeting in Europe, visited their home and spoke about his life, the SEAC, and his vision for a future program to those who attended the anniversary party. For Eimert and Eve "it marked the start of our

involvement with Tom and his work, first at Tsurukawa and later at ARI in Nishinasuno."

The two of them have always been deeply conscientious about sharing the vision of Dr. Takami. The SEAC and then later ARI published brief newsletters. "We received the newsletters," Eimert explained, "and Eve translated a summary, which we sent to people who had indicated their interest in the leadership training. Eve was active in a women's group for development education, a combination of representatives from both Protestant and Roman Catholic women's groups. Eve did many speaking assignments about ARI for women's groups. I had joined a committee in our national church organization for development education. Eve and I spoke in many of our churches together. Through this we built a database of addresses of people and diaconal committees."

Over time they built up a database of over 400 people who received their translated summaries of the newsletters. Before computers, this involved addressing all the envelopes by hand. For the 40 years they carried out this labor of love, they bore all the expenses of publishing and posting as part of their contribution to ARI. Eimert recollected that "the many positive responses from recipients of our newsletters and from audiences in our churches motivated us to carry on. Actually, we never considered stopping until this summer."



Although they never asked for donations, Eimert and Eve received and passed on a great deal of financial support to ARI over the years. They continued to visit ARI when possible and kept in close touch with a number of ARI graduates. After 40 years of translating, publishing, mailing, collecting and transferring funds, all in service for ARI, Eimert and Eve decided they needed to scale back their efforts to better match their circumstances. It is with great sadness that the ARI community learned of the passing of Eve on August 31, 2011.

In closing, Eimert reflected that, "as years went by and we learned more and more about the work ARI is doing and its impact, we felt we made the right choice." We celebrate Eimert and Eve's close connection with ARI and give heartfelt thanks for their deep and personal investment in this relationship.

by J.B. Hoover

News & Announcements

Flying Delta? You Can Help ARI... for Free!



If you have traveled on Delta Airlines since March 2011 or have booked a flight on Delta for the future, you can help out ARI. All you have to do is send AFARI your ticket # (it should begin with the numbers 006). AFARI can get a mileage credit for this AND you will still receive all of your Frequent Fliers miles as usual. This is a bonus for AFARI on top of the miles you collect.

You may send your ticket number:

by email john.b.hoover@gmail.com
by post 1121A N 94th St., Seattle, WA 98103
or call them in 206-349-2807

We have tested the system and it works. If we get enough miles, we can book flights for participants going to ARI and save significant money. All it takes is your ticket number!!



This QR-code leads you directly to the ARI Facebook page!

American Friends of the Asian Rural Institute

Rural Leaders Training Center - Japan

c/o J. B. Hoover
1121A N94th St.
Seattle, WA 98103

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

PRSR STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
SO. MD 207
Permit#1368

Find us on Facebook!

Did you know ARI has an official account on Facebook?

You can find us by searching for "Asian Rural Institute" and following the blue picture below. If you "like" us we will provide you with the latest information, photos and links directly from our campus!

We also have a Japanese account under "学校法人アジア学院" with event and sales information for those residing in Japan! Let's get connected and share!



How to donate to ARI

US citizens may make tax deductible gifts to ARI through AFARI.

Make out your check to the American Friends of ARI and send it to:

American Friends of ARI (AFARI)
c/o Steve Gerdes - Treasurer
11920 Burt St., Suite 145
Omaha, NE 68154-1598

or donate online through AFARI at <http://friends-ari.org/>

Canadian citizens can make a tax deductible donation to the United Church of Canada to support ARI. Cheques payable to The United Church of Canada should be sent to:

United Church of Canada
Partners in Mission Unit
3250 Bloor St. W.
Etobicoke, ON M8X 2Y4
Attn: Pat Elson (Please designate "ARI" on the cheque)

German Citizens may make a tax deductible contributions through the European Friends of ARI (a newly registered organization).

See website: www.efari.org