

Japan-Netherlands Peace Exchange Program Took Place in 2008



The first group at the Golden Pavilion Temple in Kyoto



The second group at the Cross Monument in Mizumaki



The second group at the Peace Memorial Park of Nagasaki

This year, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan invited nineteen Dutch victims of World War II in the former Dutch Indies (Indonesia) to Japan as part of the Japan-Netherlands Peace Exchange Program.

The program aims to help Dutch victims of war overcome and cope with their wartime experiences and to promote a spirit of reconciliation with Japan and the Japanese people. In addition, the program aims to further promote peace and friendship between the Netherlands and Japan.

Two groups of participants visited Japan. The first group comprised descendants of Indonesian-Dutch mothers and Japanese fathers born during and after WWII. The second group included Dutch nationals interned in prison camps during the Japanese occupation of the former Dutch Indies between 1942-1945.

The trip to Japan lasted ten days and participants visited several cities, including Mizumaki, Nagasaki, Osaka, Kyoto and Tokyo. In Mizumaki, they paid a visit to the Cross Monument, which commemorates the death of 871 Dutch prisoners of war who passed away in Japan. The participants also visited the Peace Memorial Park of Nagasaki (Atomic Bomb Memorial Museum). Visits to historical sites and local schools also took place during the trip. In addition, the participants of the second group visited Peace Osaka Museum and took part in a lecture and discussion with Japanese university students in Tokyo.

The Exchange Program has taken place annually since 1996, with a total of 450 participants during that time. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan will continue the program in 2009.