

THE GEORGIA-JAPAN STORY – CONTINUING TO BRIDGE FRIENDSHIP

*President Jimmy Carter Peace Bell Project -
Concept & Proposal*



INTRO

Japan and Georgia share a long history of friendship, economic ties, and cultural/educational exchange.

To celebrate this long-lasting connection, the Japan-America Society of Georgia, Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Georgia, Consulate General of Japan in Atlanta, and JETRO Atlanta seek to construct a belltower for the Peace Bell housed at The Carter Center as a symbol of friendship between the people of Japan and Georgia.

Through the project, various Japanese-affiliated organizations in Georgia will partner to showcase not only each group's own unique organizational history but also to highlight the cultural, educational, economic, and social impact Japan has had in Georgia, and Georgia on Japan. By raising more awareness this important bi-lateral relationship, the Japanese community looks forward to leaving a legacy of peace and understanding among people of all backgrounds for future generations to celebrate and enjoy.

OUTLINE

- Design & build a replica Bell Tower for the Peace Bell at The Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia modeled after the Shoro-Do Bell Tower at Shoganji Temple in Miyoshi City where the Peace Bell originated in Japan
- Construct memorial plaque telling history and story of the Peace Bell
- Create commemoration plaque highlighting
 - Japanese Business & Investment in Georgia
 - Japanese Arts & Culture in Georgia
 - Government/Politics/Sister Cities in Georgia
- Invite communities in Georgia with close ties to Japan to develop similar symbols of friendship
- Develop local, regional, and national marketing partnerships to maximize public exposure
- Project public announcement to coincide with the Opening Ceremony of the 2021 Tokyo Summer Olympics on July 23, 2021

SHOGANJI TEMPLE KONU, HIROSHIMA

In 1941, during World War II, an ordinance to collect metals was promulgated throughout Japan, and temple bells were no exception. A large temple bell (Height = 1.50m, diameter = 0.64m, weight = 250kg) from ShogANJI Temple in Konu, Hiroshima was supplied to the Kure Naval Arsenal. However, before the bell could be turned into bullets, the war ended.

According to the records of ShogANJI Temple, the bell was cast in 1820. The chief priest of the temple at that time said, "If you strike this bell, first, the Buddha will come. Second, it will destroy sin and suffering. Third, it will dispel all demons." This temple bell was loved by the villagers and supported their lives as a time signal, a signal for Buddhist rituals, and even as an emergency bell.



THE BELL ENDS UP IN ENGLAND

The story of how the bell came to be in England is unknown, but it resided for a time with an Englishman, James Taylor. His son, Milos Taylor, discovered the bell in 1958 while sorting through the belongings of his father in England. James Taylor had never left England, and his son does not know how his father acquired the bell.

In 1982, Milos moved to East Orange Park, Florida (near Jacksonville) with the bell. In 1985, before returning England, Milos put the bell up for sale. The Japanese Chamber of Commerce in Atlanta and the Consulate General of Japan in Atlanta solicited donations and paid \$3,000, or about 750,000 Japanese yen at the time, to purchase the bell.



THE BELL IS DONATED TO THE CARTER CENTER

On July 24, 1985, Consul General of Japan in Atlanta Tadayuki Nonoyama and Hiromitsu Araki, Chairman of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce presented the bell on behalf of the Japanese community to President and Mrs. Carter to commemorate the construction of The Carter Center and the groundbreaking of the Japanese Garden, and in appreciation for President Carter's work promoting world peace.

Kazuhisa Konoma, Chairman of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Consul General Takayuki Kimura dedicated the Peace Bell in April 1989.



Kazuhisa Konoma, Chairman of Georgia Nihonjin Shokokai (left), and the Honorable Takayuki Kimura, Consul General of Japan, greet President Carter on the occasion of the dedication of the Peace Bell.

When Hajime Akiyama, a member of the Japanese Diet, visited the Carter Center after the bell was donated, he confirmed that the bell was inscribed with "Entsusan Shoganji, Kodomura, Bingo Province."

On September 26, 1987, Mr. Akiyama, together with Noriyuki Oku, former Consul General of Japan in Atlanta, visited Shoganji Temple and met with the temple's priest, Tomoo Terashi, and representatives of the temple's parishioners. They reported that Shoganji's temple bell had been donated to President Carter.

When Shoganji learned that the former temple bell was being stored at the Carter Center as the "Peace Bell," it welcomed the fact that the Carter Center is an organization that pursues peace and agreed to have it remain at The Carter Center.

THE ORIGINS OF THE BELL ARE DISCOVERED



THE CARTER CENTER PRESERVES THE BELL

In October 1987, Councilor Hajime Akiyama and former Consul General Oku visited Atlanta and discussed Shoganji Temple's desire to carefully preserve the bell at The Carter Center to "help build goodwill between the two countries" with the leadership of The Carter Center, the Japanese Chamber of Commerce, the Japan America Society of Georgia, and the Consulate General of Japan.

In March 1989, the bell was displayed at the entrance of the Carter Presidential Library and the Carter Center as the "Hiroshima Bell, Symbol of Peace" with an explanatory note. It has attracted the attention of not only the American people but also visitors from all over the world.



PRESIDENT CARTER VISITS KONU

On November 8-9, 1989, Councilor Hajime Akiyama, former Consul General of Japan in Atlanta Noriyuki Oku, political journalist Reiko Tamura, and editorial writer Richard Matthews of the Atlanta Journal visit Konu-cho.

On November 11, 1989, Mayor of Konu sends a letter to former President Carter:

I was very impressed to hear that the bell of Shoganji Temple, which has a long history in Konu Town, is on display at the entrance of the Carter Presidential Library and The Carter Center as a testament to the friendship between the United States and Japan. We are proud to have established ties with the 39th President of the United States, Mr. Jimmy Carter, and the Carter Center through this bell, and we would like to take this opportunity to further develop this relationship based on the cooperation of the citizens of the town for the future.

- (1) *We would like to receive two handwritten messages from you as we would like to set up a monument in the center of town and at Shoganji Temple to commemorate the friendship between Japan and the U.S. and world peace.*
- (2) *We would like you to visit Konu Town when you visit Japan.*



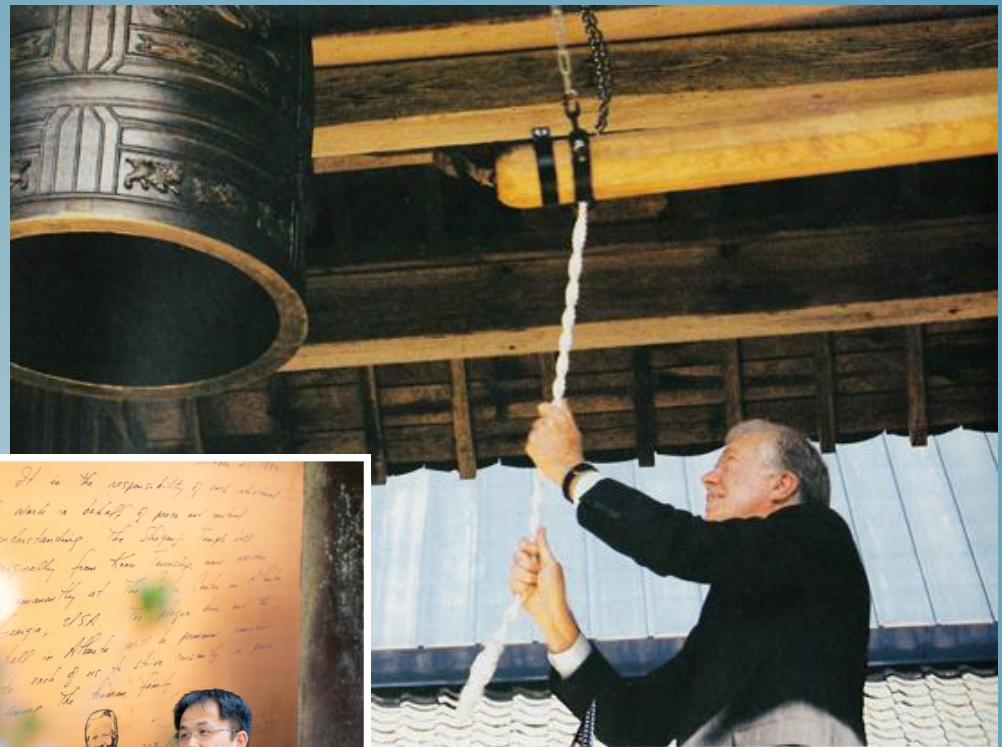
PRESIDENT CARTER VISITS KONU

On December 11, 1989, a letter from President Jimmy Carter to the Mayor of Konu arrives, stating,

“The bell is a valuable symbol of peace and friendship between the United States and Japan. I am also honored to hear that you would like to receive a message for the monument. I look forward to visiting Konu Town and Shoganji Temple during my visit to Japan.”

On October 21, 1990, President Carter visits Konu-cho with Amy. (He was on a trip to Japan to give a lecture at the World Conference of Religions for Peace held in Kyoto the day before.)

His visit consisted of the unveiling of a monument featuring President Carter's handwritten message at Shoganji Temple and his expectations for world peace and mutual exchange through the "Bell of Friendship"「友愛の鐘」(In 1990 the people of Konu made a replica of the bell and gave the original back to the Carter Center).



EXCHANGE BETWEEN AMERICUS AND KONU

In 1991, Konu (now Miyoshi City) and Americus, Georgia began mutual visits and established a sister city relationship. Visits from Miyoshi City continue every year to this day.

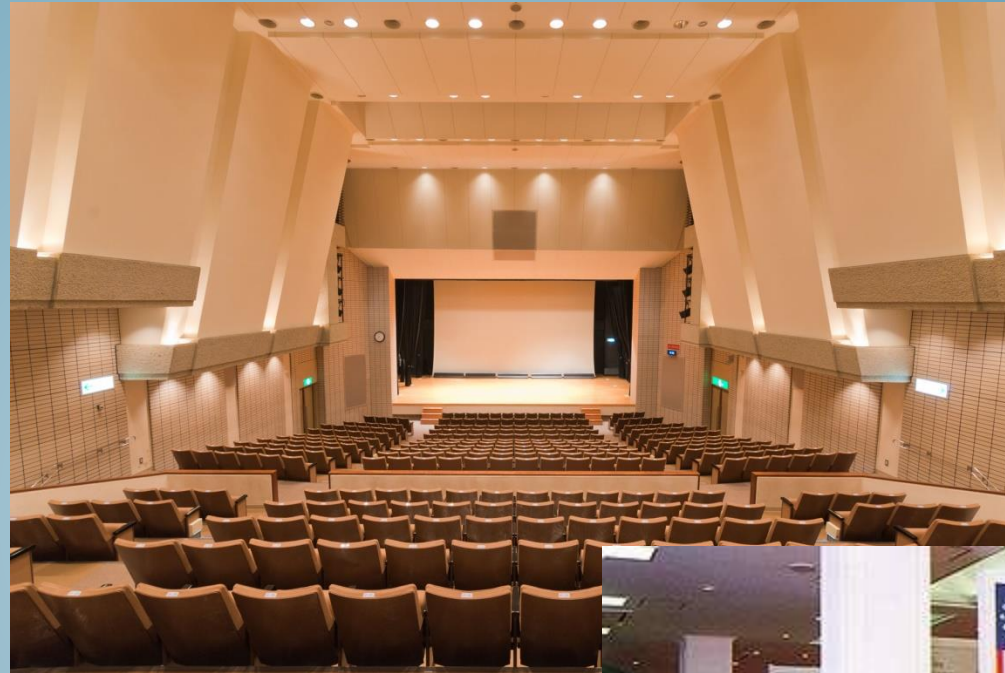
President Carter has always taken time to meet the students from Konu and teach them Sunday school in his hometown. And, in return, the people of Konu have hosted delegations from Americus.



JIMMY CARTER CIVIC CENTER IN KONU

In 1994, Miyoshi City built the Jimmy Carter Civic Center as a base for civic activities. It includes a gallery called the Peace Learning Center that tells the story of President Carter's life, his presidency, and the work of the Carter Center in Atlanta. On July 7, 1994, President and Mrs. Carter attended the completion ceremony for the Jimmy Carter Civic Center in Kōnu.

Today, Kōnu's main street is named Carter Avenue. There is a Carter Station on that same street. If you follow Carter Avenue out of town and turn right, you enter Carter Hills, pass the Carter Baseball Stadium and finally come to the Civic Center and four houses built to look like they came from Plains, Georgia. Two of the houses are for visitors to stay in, one holds an art collection, and the last is a restaurant called Amin. Many of Kōnu's farmers took to growing "Carter Peanuts," and there is a Carter Peanut Festival each year in November. The peanuts sent by former President and Mrs. Carter are now a souvenir of Miyoshi City.



THE LEGACY OF THE PEACE BELL LIVES ON

The bell of Shoganji Temple has completed its long journey, and at first glance, it seems to have found a safe haven, but the bell's journey is still continuing.

When the Japanese community of Atlanta donated the bell, the Japanese wanted it to be installed on the bell tower so that its sound could be heard in the city of Atlanta. The bell has been carefully preserved, but it is not yet displayed in such a way that its sound can be heard.

