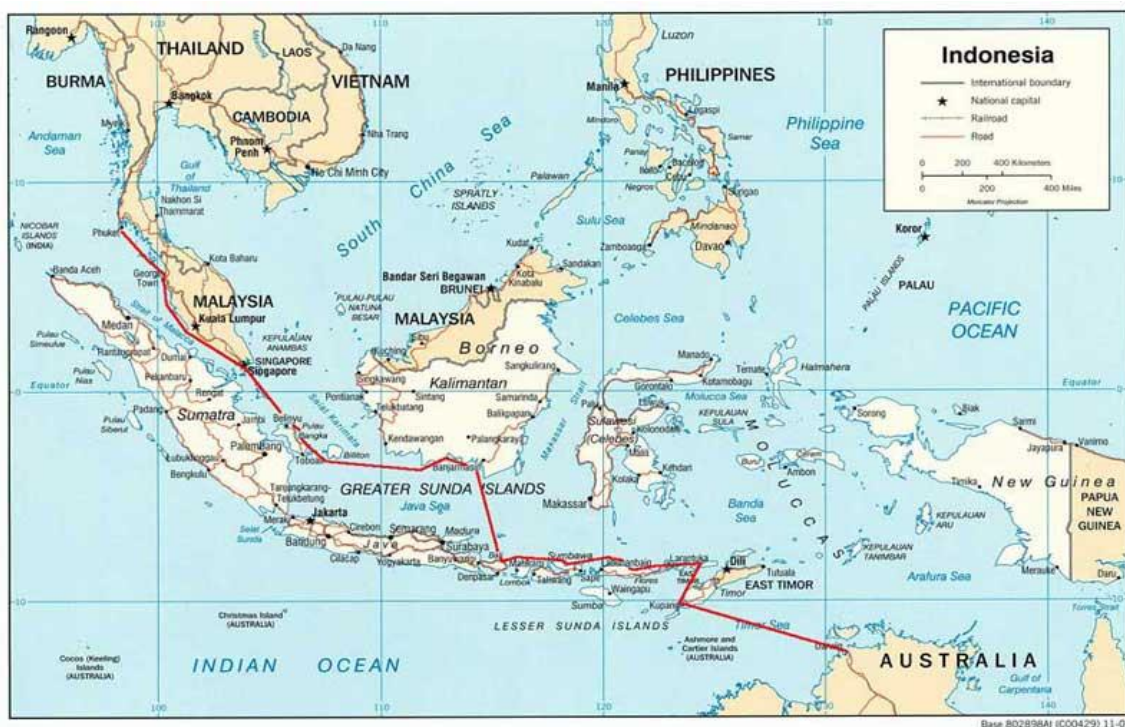


## Together beyond the trauma: Holland, Japan and Indonesia



From Holland we would like to share two voices.

Both stories written by those whose lives are profoundly marked by the second world war.

By talking openly, knowing the history and sharing the pain of others gives the chance to unite people again who were divided once, to create a new, bright future *together*, I believe in this.

We are as nation once faced as aggressor/victim or colonist/inlanders; but we can go beyond this dualism, history and cultural difference. We *must* go, to create a future without injustice and hurting each other.

Where kindness and mutual understanding can reign, based on empathy and openness.

**The first one : <Josine's wartime childhood>** (From [www.focusing.org](http://www.focusing.org))



This is about the moving experience of a Dutch woman; how she overcame her war trauma in a Japanese concentration camp in Indonesia during the Japanese occupation.

Through a bodywork-meditation-therapy called focusing, she met Japanese people who shared her trauma and *together with them* overcame it. A precious witness my believe is possible!

If you are interested in this cross cultural aspect you can click the link to the whole article: <http://goo.gl/EGtyVQ>

Title: CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION: A MODEL FOR A NEW PATTERN OF RELATING

(By Doralee Grindler Katonah, Psy.D., M.Div. Edgardo Riveros, Ph.D. Lucy Bowers Josine van Noord)

Besides this story you can read two more stories: one written by a Chilean with her American host family, another by a Canadian, born in the Netherlands.

## **The second one : <No experience of war....., nevertheless!>**

This is written by a woman from island Ambon, Indonesia.

Although she was born in Holland her life was deeply influenced by the war, especially through wounds and pain of her parents. This consequence for the next generation, the dark side of war was hidden and paid no attention for long by Dutch government and society.

Because one know how it feels not being understood, his/her desire to understand others are strong.

Because one have experienced pain and suffering, his/her wish for the peace and healing for the world is deep from the heart.

This story wants to be heard, this darkness wants to be seen, to go through to the light: to create a bright future.

By reading these notes I hope many people can create a occasion to talk and share the difficult stories in life with your neighbours.

This project is leaded by this creed:

*<When you close your eyes to the past you will remain blind to the present> (R. von Weizäcker 1985)>*

*(Whole speech <http://goo.gl/ZIWs2M> (English texts) <https://goo.gl/9CL4JE> (Video in German original))*

Same for the future

Not to blame each other

But to share the pain of others as mine

to pray for healing, release the soul from trauma

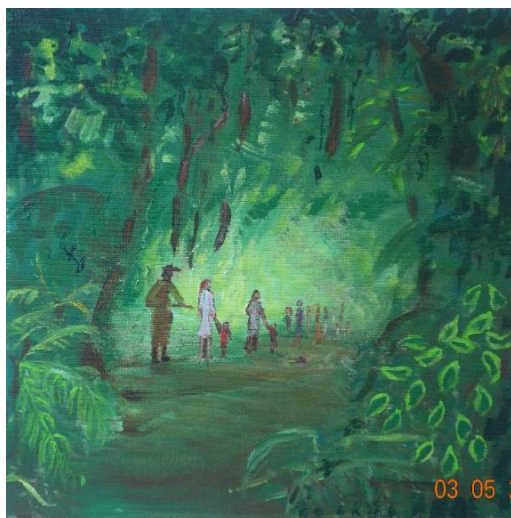
and to create peace and happiness in the future

for our planet

the only one place to be

for everyone

called earth.



## ***JOSINE'S WARTIME CHILDHOOD***

Josine van Noord

Dear (traumatized) people,

After writing about this on the Focusing Discussion list, I was invited to write it as an article for the Folio. Before World War II there was an economic depression in the Netherlands. My father, who was studying to be an engineer at the Technical University, decided to go to Indonesia since it was still a Dutch colony. He spoke Dutch, Indonesian and English so he had no trouble finding a job with the Singer Sewing Company, an American firm.

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour, an American Base on Hawaii in 1941, all the men in our neighbourhood including my father and my mother's brother were deported to Thailand and Burma to work on the Death Railway. It is a 258 mile railway between Bangkok, Thailand and Rangoon Burma (now Myanmar), built by the Japanese army during World War II to support its forces in the Burma campaign.

Forced labour was used in its construction. About 200,000 Asian labourers and 60.000 Allied Prisoners of War (POWs) worked on the railway through the jungle. The living and working conditions were horrific. About 25 % of the POW workers died because of overwork, malnutrition and diseases like cholera, malaria and dysentery. I was practically born in a Japanese prison camp in Indonesia. The women, including myself (1 year old), and my mother were deported to prison camp on Sumatra, where we lived at the time. First we lived near the cities then in the middle of the jungle on a deserted rubber plantation. Many babies died; I think I survived because my mother breast-fed me until I was almost 2 years old. We all had dysentery from the first till the last day of the camp, 3 1/2 years later. The women were also forced to work hard for the Japanese; they had to cut trees or make cotton mattresses with little needles, and they were beaten if they lost a needle. My mother was beaten with a gun by a Korean soldier, because he was ordered to do so by a Japanese officer. My father and my mother's brother stayed in prison camp working for the Japanese on the Death Railway in Burma. We all had many terrible diseases and almost died from hunger.

After the war we were transported from one end of Sumatra to the other, and many Indonesians tried to kill us because they had a freedom war going on. We were protected by Ghurkhas (soldiers from India with white turbans on their heads). It was all very confusing. We ended up in Bangkok where I had the first relaxed year of my life, at 5 years old. Of course we had lost everything from our house with everything in it, including family pictures.

In the bad period after the war we had to go back to Holland without a place to stay of our own. I slept in a room with people I didn't know and my mother, who had started working, slept in a cupboard for 2 years. We didn't even have our own clothes. As soon as we could hire 2 rooms, people that survived would come and visit us, we always ate together and I used to listen to how the traumatized grown-ups would tell each other horrible stories, often in a comic way. Half of my class in basic school in the Netherlands was from Indonesia, but nobody ever paid attention to that, in fact it was best not to talk about it. That was a terrible experience, but since it affected so many people we thought it was normal. The elder generation used to make jokes about the war, but they wouldn't tell us children what had been going on. I survived, but everybody who had lived in Indonesia hated the Japanese, and did not buy Japanese things, etc.

Long ago I heard some Japanese men talking to each other in a restaurant, and all of a sudden I felt so uncomfortable that I had to leave the restaurant.

But I survived with ups and downs. The finishing touch was regression therapy with Marta Stapert that took me back to prison camp. She encouraged me to also start Focusing. But I was still very uncomfortable when I had my first serious encounter with a Japanese lady in a workshop led by Ann

Weiser Cornell. After avoiding her for 2 days, I saw how nice she was and felt ashamed. So I invited her home and she came, but I didn't want to tell her about my past so as not to embarrass her.

Then I went to the International in Ireland and was put in a home group with two Japanese ladies. They were younger than I, and I liked them very much, but felt so stressed about my past that I decided to shut up.

In the second meeting of my home group, I still didn't want to talk about it. But the feeling that this was somehow unfair to them became so strong during the session, that when we were about to stand up because it was finished, I stood up and said, "There is something I have to tell you". And I told them about the whole situation and ended up crying because they were so sweet. Then they stood up, put their arms around me and we cried together. I cried about the craziness of the world and all the wars going on, now and in the past. Afterwards I felt so happy, like I was floating.

After lunch one of the Japanese ladies came to me and asked me if I would focus with her. I felt very honoured that she chose me. While Focusing with me, something very sad for her came up. I stuck to the process, but somehow it felt that she was releasing me, and I did the same for her. The wonderful experience of sharing this awareness, and the feeling that nothing really matters except being kind to people who want to be kind to you, has been with me up to now. It did cost me an old friend who is still traumatized about prison camp and doesn't want to let go of it. She treated me as if I couldn't help being so ignorant, instead of understanding the hard work it took.

At the Focusing International Conference in Costa Rica in 2004, I had a short Focusing session with a Japanese man and during the session I opened one eye and saw his face quite close to me, and I thought of my poor old mother who passed away and wished she could have seen me. I feel grateful to the Japanese Focusers because through their attitude, they made it possible for me to get rid of a burdensome past, a trauma that has been with me for a long time, and a trauma that took a lot of energy.

Through focusing I learned that there is no Truth. Everybody has his/her own truth, I learned that 'the Truth' is not important. What you do with your own truth is important, also for the Japanese people. The bomb on Hiroshima that saved our lives because we were dying, destroyed the lives of the grandparents of the young Japanese that I met. It took me awhile to realize how very kind and polite the Japanese were that I met through Focusing. I discovered they had a 'tough sort of kindness', that I recognized once I let go of my old ideas. I have pictures of myself at the last conference in Holland with 2 young Japanese psychologists. I see in these pictures what I feel: confidence. Confidence that it is OK, that it doesn't matter where the good-willed people come from. What matters is that they are there, right in front of you.

## ***No experience of war... nevertheless!***

Jacomien Tahapary

My name is Jacomien Tahapary. I am a Moluccan woman, born and raised in the Netherlands. I have not experienced war, but I would like to tell my story.

The Japanese occupation of the Dutch East Indies was the first attack since long time on the Dutch rule there. It was the beginning of the end of Dutch colonial rule in Indonesia. The changes that took place then, made the Indonesian revolution possible, which previously had been unthinkable. Because the Netherlands itself was occupied the home country had no opportunities to defend the colony against the Japanese Imperial Army, so that in less than three months after the first attack on Borneo, the Dutch armed forces were defeated, which ended 347 (1602-1949) year of Dutch colonial presence in Indonesia. At the time of the surrender of Japan in August 1945 most of Indonesia was still occupied by Japan and many people had to work as forced labourer.

In 1945 by Sukarno and Hatta proclaimed the Republic of Indonesia. This was only in 1949, after the so called police actions, recognized by the Dutch.

In the 1950s, all Dutch people and supporters had to leave the country. My father (Molukker) then served at the Royal Dutch-Indies Army (KNIL).

The Moluccans serving in the military were shipped to the Netherlands, with the promise that they could return to the Moluccas after three months.

This voyage I made on the safest place in the world possible, in my mother's womb.

My mother was three months pregnant when she left Tan Jung Priok, Jakarta – Indonesia on 24 March 1951 and arrived April 25, 1951 in Rotterdam. I was born on 28 September.

My earliest memories are that we very often moved. We were housed (I didn't know at that time) in former concentration camps. My father was not allowed to work. They were given spending money (Hfl 1,50 per person a day and a child even less) meals you could pick up at the kitchen. My parents told me that there was a lot of malnutrition and infant mortality because they could not endure the food. Also the climate, the lack of communication, lack of clothing contributed to this.

As my father once again 'tricky', he was imprisoned and the rest of the family was housed elsewhere so that the situation not escalated.

Very vague I remember the visits that we brought to the prison where my father was imprisoned.

My father came here as Royal Dutch East Indies army (KNIL) soldier and went from the boat as a citizen.

After three months he got his resignation letter in Dutch, which he could not read, he spoke Malay.

This made the men in the beginning often protested and their petitions.

It was a fight that they could not win.

My parents have lived their whole life being home-sick and brought up with this feelings

In the camp we lived according to the Moluccan traditions and Malay was spoken, because it was thought, we could be sent back at any time to the Moluccas.

When you reached school age you got your one sentence ready: 'Teacher, may I go to the bathroom', the rest of your Dutch language you had to learn in the school yard.

It was a "carefree youth with a lot of aggression" but you didn't know any better.

We lived always far from the 'civilized world'. In some camps was 24-hour police surveillance.

I can remember that we went to school with police guidance.

In 1961, an opportunity to go back to Indonesia with a kind of financial aid. Some of the people went back to a country where they were seen as traitors. In hindsight, this was a very well intentioned, but bad plan. My mother refused for this reason. This also gave the necessary frustrations within our family.

We were left behind as the only family in the camp. I didn't understand.

That moment I was 10 years old. In 1962 we moved to Wormerveer. No longer in a camp but in a residential area. For us it was like a party. Walk to school, in a real house like the Dutch people.

When I was 18 I went to a nursing school. You came in the hospital as intern. It was the most unfortunate moment that you can imagine. I will never forget it.

On August 31, 1970 the Indonesian Embassy in the Hague was forcefully occupied by 33 Moluccan youth.

When the Moluccans were transferred to Netherlands, they came in a situation that they had not been able to think of.

Unemployed and bored they continued dreaming of a State of their own, the RMS, is of paramount importance.

In August 1970, the Dutch Government invited Prime Minister Suharto to the Netherlands. That was like a slap in the face of the Moluccans because: "the Dutch Government invited the dictator that less than four years ago had given the command to shoot our leader Chris Soumokil", said one of the occupiers there later on.

Talking was in the eyes of these young Moluccans no longer of any use, so they decided to take action and occupied the Embassy of Indonesia in Wassenaar.

I was by my fellow students not accepted, some patients refused my care and seen by my Moluccan girlfriends like a traitor.

I did not know anything, during my work I was taken away by two police men in uniform to be to be interrogated because I would be ' illegal ' in the Netherlands. I was interrogated for two hours by two officers. That was not pleasant.

In the end I had to make an ID and always carry that with me just in case.

By these incidents, I began to interest me in our history and investigate, I went to my father to inform me about our history and I discovered that life was different from what I expected.

Tuesday morning December 2, 1975, at 10:07 the local train Groningen-Zwolle came to a stop by the emergency brake amidst the meadows. Seven South-Moluccan youngsters from Bovensmilde had hijacked the train in their pursuit of a free Republic of the South Moluccas. In the end there were three victims: the driver and two passengers were shot by the hijackers. After 12 days, the hijackers surrendered.

The second hijacking near De Punt began on Monday, May 23, 1977 at nine o'clock in the morning. The intercity train Assen-Groningen was stopped near the village De Punt in the province of Drenthe, by nine armed South-Moluccans from 17 to 27 years. After almost 19 days, the hijacking ended through a shelling by the special assistance unit (BBE) armed forces, followed by a storming by the BBE Marines, supported by the Royal Air Force. This action took two hostages and six hijackers life.

For me, being Moluccan, life was hell. I didn't get work, and also find housing was a problem.

Strange things happened. Patients who do not want to be helped by me. People left when I entered a shop, because they didn't want to be in one room with me.

An example: I went with some Dutch girl friends to a birthday party in Utrecht. I carried the present, a large tobacco plant. The train was halted somewhere outside the station and we had to get out. I had to lie down on the ground and the plant was completely taken apart ... Very humiliating!!

Attending the news about the tsunami in Thailand in 2004 on television something happened in my head. It was as like short-circuit. I could not remember anything for days.

It was very scary. I had all kinds of physical and psychological symptoms.

Someone introduced me to the group 1940/45. Basically I had refused this because it was intended for people who had experienced the war. But because I was also very anxious and my eczema became excessive so I went there.

During the intake was PTSD found and more than a year I had various therapies one day a week. It was pretty harsh to discover how much I had tucked away.

In retrospect this was a great gift to myself. There were many more years of therapies with breaks. At last, I am now finally who I am.

I am a child of two completely different worlds. As a child, I lived unknowingly with the pain and homesickness of my parents. On my way to adulthood I came to understanding with that.

When both my parents were deceased we (sister and brother) have my parents escorted to their beloved homeland. There we had them buried in the family grave.

Finally they could let go of their pain and sorrow.

From that moment on I could feel free: I am who I am!

There is plenty of love on this world.

Understanding and communication is what is still missing in many places.

I want to do my part to help with this..

That the reason this story has to be told!

July 2015.

Jacomien Tahapary.