

KAMIKAZE IMAGES

by

Bill Gordon

Submitted to Wesleyan University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in Liberal Studies.

February 2005

Michael Roy  
Director of Academic Computing  
Wesleyan University

My final project involved the creation of an academic web site to integrate what I have learned in hypertext, writing, and computer fundamentals during my MALS degree program with a concentration in Computerized Communications. This project paper describes the process used to perform research and create a web site on *Kamikaze Images*. This topic combines my interests in Japan-U.S. relations, computer technology, and Japanese language, society, and history. The project builds on my previous studies for an MA in Advanced Japanese Studies from the University of Sheffield.

Section 1 of this paper summarizes the project topic and web site contents. Section 2 presents design considerations for the web site. The next section discusses how I used technology in project research and site design. Section 4 gives highlights of my trip to Japan in order to visit museums and to talk with former kamikaze pilots about their wartime experiences. Section 5 examines the connections between this project's web site and my web site on Japanese-American Friendship Dolls. The final section gives a few closing remarks about this project.

The *Kamikaze Images* web site is at <http://wgordon.web.wesleyan.edu/kamikaze>.

## **1. Project Summary**

American and Japanese images of kamikaze pilots differ greatly. This web site explores diverse portrayals and perceptions of young Japanese men who carried out suicide attacks near the end of World War II. The site's two principal essays, one on American views and the other on Japanese views, analyze the primary images or perceptions about kamikaze pilots and identify the most important sources of these images.

People form images about kamikaze using various means, ranging from well-documented histories to popular movies. I examine in detail the specific forms that create perceptions and opinions about kamikaze, including books, films, museums, Internet, and

writings by kamikaze pilots. My evaluation includes works of popular culture, such as comic books, television programs, fiction, animation, and children's books. The site contains several analytical essays covering topics such as documentaries, web sites, and Japanese films.

The site covers all of Japan's special attack forces, which carried out suicide attacks not only with planes but also with other weapons such as torpedoes, rocket-propelled gliders, and explosive motorboats. The term "kamikaze pilots" has been used in this project paper for convenience to refer to all members of Japan's special attack forces.

The *Kamikaze Images* site has about 150 web pages or the equivalent of about 300 typed pages (assuming 350 words per page). My web site includes a bibliography, several pages for internal navigation, and a links page to Internet sources of information about kamikaze and other special attack forces. I have translated about 70 typed pages of Japanese stories, letters, poems, and speeches for my own site and for the Japanese web site of a former kamikaze pilot. His web site contains much information about his wartime experiences and the stories of men who served with him in the Imperial Japanese Navy. I consider my English translations of thirteen stories in the "Sadness of Bereaved Families" section on his web site (<http://www.warbirds.jp/senri/19english/izoku/izoku.html>) to be an important part of my overall project work.

The critical reviews and essays published on *Kamikaze Images* make an original contribution to the existing literature. Other writers have not specifically addressed or comprehensively explored the issue of sharply contrasting American and Japanese perceptions of kamikaze pilots. Several of my web site topics, such as documentaries and Japanese museum exhibits related to kamikaze pilots, have only a few scattered published reviews. My web site provides the only source for a comprehensive analysis and comparison of individual works. For example, *Kamikaze Images* contains critical reviews of about 30

English-language books published since the 1950s on Japan's kamikaze corps and other special attack forces. In addition, separate critical essays examine the book categories of fiction, personal narratives, and general books.

Many individual English-language web pages on the Internet provide information on kamikaze pilots, but most of these rely heavily on previously published books and do not provide an academic perspective. Also, these web pages rarely provide the Japanese viewpoint of kamikaze attacks. Five large Japanese web sites and numerous other Japanese web pages present information on special attack forces, but *Kamikaze Images* is the first large English-language web site outside Japan to address this topic.

## **2. Site Design**

This section discusses issues related to the design of my web site. I examined several other web sites that present academic topics in history, literature, and anthropology in order to identify effective design characteristics. My first web site on *Friendship Dolls* contained some design errors, such as inconsistent menus, fonts, and page layouts, so I spent much time planning the design for *Kamikaze Images* to ensure I did not repeat these mistakes.

### **A. Organization and Navigation**

This site uses a hierarchical structure to organize its contents. This assists readers to find information classified under specified topics. During site development, I changed the organization several times to better fit the topics addressed by individual pages. I plan to add information to this site beyond December 2004, the deadline for submission of the final project required for my MALS degree. Therefore, I constructed a hierarchy that will allow new pages to fit into existing web site categories.

The left-hand expanding menu and the bar at the top and bottom of each page provide the site's primary navigation capabilities, but several other features assist readers in finding

information. The top right of each page has a Google search box that allows searches of the site based on key words. The Site Map page lists in hierarchical order all pages on the site. In addition, there are additional categorizations of web pages in individual sections such as "Books" and "Museums." The page on "Recent Changes" allows previous visitors to go directly to new web pages they have not yet viewed.

Many web sites today use a page layout with a standard header, menu on left-hand side, and page content in the remaining space. This layout has several advantages, including standardization of the menu and header for all pages on the site. Most sites with this type of layout have a small logo and name at the top left with a link to the home page, so I adopted the same convention for this site. Many sites use narrow columns for page content, but I decided to use most of the available space on the page to allow photos to fit comfortably with a normal size window.

### **B. Hypertext Considerations**

Hypertext presents information as a collection of pages with links between them. Readers can move between pages in a non-linear fashion based on available links, which provide multiple options for exploration within a network of numerous pages and links. Many people experience disorientation when reading hypertext. Conklin (1987, 38) describes this disorientation problem, "Along with the power of being able to organize information much more complexly comes the problem of having to know (1) where you are in the network and (2) how to get to some other place that you know (or think) exists in the network."

No perfect solution exists for this disorientation problem, but I included several design features in this site to lessen confusion. Each web page has the same header and left-hand menu system, so someone arriving at any page will recognize the *Kamikaze Images* logo at the top left and can click on it at any time to go to the home page. The top and bottom of

each page have a bar to show the page location in relation to the home page. This bar includes links to any higher-level page in the hierarchical path to the home page.

Search engine results or links from other web pages allow readers to start at any page on the web site. As a result, I tried to write the site content in such a way that readers can get necessary information from the first page visited. For example, for a person who wants to read a critical review on a specific film or book, I tried to write the review page in such a way that the person does not need to read other pages on the site. This leads to some repetition of background information not required in a standard linear essay.

The creation of hypertext allows the identification and analysis of relationships between different information. Landow (1997, 125-6) explains its academic value:

One of the presuppositions in hypertext, particularly when applied to education, is that linking materials encourages habits of relational thinking in the reader. Such intrinsic hypermedia emphasis upon interconnectedness (or connectivity) provides a powerful means of teaching sophisticated critical thinking, particularly that which builds upon multicausal analyses and relates different kinds of data.

At the beginning of my research, I found it difficult to make connections due to the complexity of Japan's kamikaze operations. As I learned more about its history and about different types of conceptions people have about kamikaze, I started to identify many relationships between books, films, museums, letters, web sites, and personal interviews.

### **C. Writing Hypertext**

Writing hypertext to create an academic web site differed greatly from composing a traditional linear essay. Hypertext added much more complexity since multiple relationships between pages in the site had to be considered.

Creating pages for the web site seemed like constructing a pyramid. The bottom of the pyramid consists of the lowest-level pages in the hierarchical structure, such as critical reviews of individual books or films. The home page makes up the top level of the pyramid,

and the two critical essays on Japanese and American views of kamikaze pilots also sit near the top of the pyramid. As a result, I did not complete the home page and the two integrative essays until the very end of the project, since these depended on the foundation of sections, subsections, and lowest-level pages. The middle levels of the pyramid consist of various classifications and subclassifications of lower-level pages. For example, six individual book reviews fall into the category of "Personal Narratives," under the higher-level category of "Books." The essay for a section or subsection contained links to supporting pages, and the summary observations and conclusions needed to be consistent with detail pages. Therefore, I found lower-level pages supporting them had to be written first before I could complete an analysis at a higher level, even though from the beginning of the project I wrote many notes and observations to be included in higher-level pages.

Hypertext writing must consider the number, placement, and relevance of links. Too many links in an essay or critical review gives the writing a cluttered look and provides too many opportunities for readers to jump to other pages without ever getting through the original web page. Therefore, this site's lower-level pages (e.g., reviews of individual museums) have few links. These links tend to be placed near the end of the page, so a reader will not jump to another page without finishing the text on the original page. I tried to limit the links to those most relevant to the typical reader. For example, the site has reviews of two books on the suicide mission of the battleship *Yamato*, so each review page has one link to the page on the other book. In contrast, some pages have the principal purpose of internal navigation, so these pages contain numerous links that usually start near the top.

#### **D. Colors and Graphics**

When considering the color scheme for this web site, I recognized immediately the need to stay away from any shade of red in order to avoid association with blood or the

Japanese flag. I tried to select neutral colors that will not influence visitors' opinions about kamikaze. This site's color scheme of white and shades of blue comes from an internal web site at my company, but I have found several large commercial and educational web sites with a very similar color scheme.

The placement of photos and other graphics generally follows a consistent pattern throughout the web site. Most pages start with a graphic at the top right of the main contents area. Multiple graphics on a single page generally alternate from right to left as the text goes down the page. Other than the site logo at the top left of each page, I have avoided use of custom graphics. Instead, I try to give an objective presentation of images related to kamikaze, including historical photos, current photos of places and items related to kamikaze, and copies of works being reviewed such as book and video covers.

### **3. Technology Use**

New technological tools, which have become widely available only in the past decade, provided much assistance in performing research and in designing this web site. Although I used some technology with which I had previous familiarity, I also discovered some valuable new tools while working on this project. I discuss in this section some examples of how technology played a part in project research and web site design.

#### **A. Research**

##### *Acquisition of Source Materials*

Since the end of World War II, books and films have played an important role in the formation of people's perceptions of kamikaze pilots. However, many used items have been very difficult to obtain, especially those that first came out several decades ago. Most libraries generally have few books and videos related to a specialized topic such as kamikaze pilots, and a single used book or video store is also unlikely to have many items. Now

readers can locate previously obscure items since many stores make available their stock online. For example, I found Abebooks.com to be extremely helpful in locating out-of-print books. This web site has a database that includes 12,500 booksellers selling 60 million books, so I could locate several valuable references there. Through the search feature at Abebooks.com, I found *Kamikaze* by Yasuo Kuwahara and *Kamikaze Submarine* by Yutaka Yokota, first published in 1957 and 1962, respectively. Both of these books went through several printings, an indication of their popularity and influence in the past, but they have been out-of-print for many years. Through the Internet I also located and purchased old English-language documentaries and used Japanese videos and books.

### ***Message Boards***

Japanese electronic message boards on special attack forces (including kamikaze pilots) have regular postings, which allowed me to gain an understanding of people's current feelings and opinions. These message boards had a spike in activity after the September 11th terrorist attacks in 2001, as many people gave their opinions about the relationship of these suicide attacks with the attacks made by kamikaze pilots in World War II. Japanese message boards on kamikaze have also allowed me to make contact with others to ask questions and to gather information for my web site. Although several active message boards on kamikaze exist in Japan, outside of Japan there are no kamikaze-related message boards and almost no kamikaze-related postings on other message boards.

### ***Online Translation Resources***

Jim Breen's online Japanese-English dictionary server continues to help me immensely in translations of Japanese names and obscure words. I have heavily used this invaluable resource since 1997, and no other hardcopy or online Japanese-English dictionary comes close to it in terms of comprehensiveness and ease of use. Jim Breen, retired professor at

Monash University in Australia, has continued to add words and features to his dictionary server. As part of my work in a Fall 2000 GLSP course on "Web Literacy: Theory and Practice of Reading and Writing Hypertext," I wrote an extended essay on Jim Breen's web site (<http://wgordon.web.wesleyan.edu/papers/breen1.htm>).

Although Jim Breen's online dictionary contains a huge number of words and phrases, it helped little for most Japanese technical terms encountered while translating and researching. Starting this project, I had no knowledge of Imperial Japanese Navy and Army ranks, aircraft, and organization. A few web pages became invaluable resources to ensure correct English translation of Japanese terms used by the military in World War II.

### ***Google News Alerts***

Throughout this project, I utilized a news alert feature initiated by Google in 2003. Google updates its database continually from 4,500 online news sources, and you can receive a daily e-mail for news articles matching the topic you specify. I requested any article that contained the words "kamikaze" and "Japan." Each week I have been receiving links to about five articles, which have been quite helpful in assessing current opinions about kamikaze throughout the world. The most frequent topic has been veterans who experienced kamikaze attacks, but there have also been quite a few articles related to modern-day terrorism.

### **B. Design**

The following three technological tools helped improve site design and decrease maintenance time: JavaScript menu, cascading style sheets, and site search.

#### ***JavaScript Menu***

When maintaining my *Friendship Dolls* web site, one of my biggest frustrations was the effort required to change the navigation menu. I had embedded the menu in each web page, so a simple menu change required me to modify the code on each page. For my new

site I wanted a consistent menu for each page that could be changed in a minimum amount of time, so I considered using HTML frames. Although frames allow the implementation of a static header and a standard site navigation system with a single HTML file for each, frame-based sites have several disadvantages. Unless one uses appropriate HTML tags, search engines have difficulties indexing a framed site, and site visitors using a search engine may arrive at a single content page rather than the framed version including the header and menu. I decided to search for an alternative to HTML frames.

Rather than start with the technology, I browsed the web to find the type of menu system I would like to use, and then I would determine if it could be modified for my web site. Even though I looked at many menu systems, the one I liked best was a dropdown navigation system used by a site on my own company's intranet. I examined the code and found out JavaScript had been used to create the menu. I did not know how to construct code in JavaScript, but I decided to plunge in to see if I could modify it to suit my needs. After two or three days of work and almost giving up more than once, I figured out how to modify certain variables and change certain sections of the code to get the desired menu system. The original menu system only had one level of dropdown, so it took me a long time to figure out how to change it to allow for multiple dropdowns. Although I read that some users may not be able to run the menu system if JavaScript support has been disabled on their computers, I tested the script on many different machines and browsers without encountering problems.

### *Cascading Style Sheets*

Over time, many individual pages on my *Friendship Dolls* site have an inconsistent style, such as font size and color for headings and regular text. Therefore, I wanted to ensure this new site on *Kamikaze Images* had a consistent style that will allow the style to be changed without having to change the HTML code on every single page. Through the use of

HTML tags applied to portions of text, cascading style sheets allow one file to control the style used on pages throughout the web site. For example, I use the tag H5, which means Header 5, to designate text that I want to be bold, small text in Arial font type with a light blue color (i.e., #006699). I use H5 to designate the titles for content pages on the site, so now each title will remain consistent with other pages. If I wanted to change the H5 size to medium, then I would just change one word in the style sheet file, and all of the H5 headings in the entire site would change from small to medium.

### *Site Search*

Google allows a site search option that can easily be incorporated into web pages by copying the HTML code available at the Google site. The Google ranking system is widely recognized as the best in providing a numbered listing of relevant pages based on user search criteria. However, the HTML code at the Google site only gives a search of an entire site with the same base URL, such as wgordon.web.wesleyan.edu, which means all folders and subfolders with this base URL will be included in the search results. Consequently, pages in both my *Friendship Dolls* and *Kamikaze Images* sites would be included in the search results.

I discussed this problem with my project advisor to see if he had any ideas on how to limit search results to pages on *Kamikaze Images*. He explained that Wesleyan licensed Google software that indexed the Wesleyan site each night, and the code for the search feature at the Wesleyan Davison Art Center could be modified for my site. When I tried this, I found that the indexing did not include personal sites on the Wesleyan servers, so I experimented with changes in the HTML code to see if I could use the Google index directly. I finally got it to work, so this is the search feature used for this site. Although Google does not index sites daily like the Google-licensed software used by Wesleyan, this factor matters little since my site will not change that rapidly. Also, the use of the Google index allows me

to move this site to another URL without any ties to the Wesleyan server embedded in the HTML code of individual pages.

### **C. Simplicity**

I reviewed some other technology options for use on my web site, but I decided to forego them. At the beginning of this project, I read Jakob Nielson's book on *Designing Web Usability* to get ideas on what technology to use and on how to structure the site. Nielson (2000, 97, 160) argues that simplicity should be the goal of page design, since users rarely come to a site to enjoy the design but rather to focus on the content. Also, users want a web site design that allows them to locate quickly the page or information in which they are interested. Keeping Nielson's advice in mind, I tried to keep the design of *Kamikaze Images* simple, so I stayed away from technology that would detract from the main goal of providing relevant content that can be quickly located.

#### ***Animation and Graphics***

A few people recommended animation, graphics, and videos in the design of this site. Although many excellent web sites have been developed using this type of technology, my skills do not lie in this area. Moreover, the vast majority of people have more interest in the content rather than fancy graphics decorating a site. I have tried to include historical photos that illustrate kamikaze images, but I have avoided animation or more complex graphics.

#### ***Message Board***

I like the idea of a message board where site visitors can write their opinions and questions. This allows interaction between visitors and the webmaster, and it also allows the free flow of ideas between anyone in the world interested in the web site topic. However, the message board for my first web site on *Friendship Dolls* drifted to topics not directly related to the site's primary purpose, and at times inappropriate advertising would be posted. As a

result, I decided to discontinue that message board. Most postings on a message board on one Japanese site (*Kamikaze*) are relevant to my web site's topic, so I decided to direct people to this message board rather than try to establish my own. This Japanese site encourages postings in both Japanese and English, but about 90% are written in Japanese. The small number of English postings may discourage people who do not read Japanese, but I prefer to support this existing message board rather than establish a competing one.

### *Style Sheets for Documentation*

When I started this project, I envisioned that visitors would not want to get bogged down with citations and notes, so I tried to find a way to use cascading style sheets and HTML tags to create two versions of the same page, one with documentation and the other without. Readers could use a link to go between two versions of the same page. I found that such an approach would be very complex, since I had to deal with how to eliminate the non-documented version spaces where there were notes or citations in the other version. I decided then to create two separate files of each page, one with documentation and one without. However, this made the site design overly complex. Also, search engines would index two versions of each page, which would be very confusing to someone seeking information. In most cases, the amount of documentation required on one web page was limited, so I concluded that one documented version of each page would be the best approach.

## **4. Japan Trip**

As part of my research for *Kamikaze Images*, I visited Japan for two months in 2004. The primary purposes of this trip were to view artifacts at museums, to visit former air bases, and to talk with former kamikaze pilots and others about their wartime experiences. These activities greatly assisted my exploration of Japanese portrayals and perceptions of the men who participated in suicide attacks.

My trip itinerary included visits to 11 museums with exhibits related to special attack forces that carried out suicide attacks. I also went to several former air bases with monuments related to the kamikaze corps, such as Oita, Kushira, and Miyazaki. I had the opportunity to meet about 40 people who served in the former Japanese Imperial Navy or who were family members of kamikaze pilots who died in the war. Most of the former Navy pilots had joined kamikaze squadrons, and four had flown on suicide missions to Okinawa but returned due to engine problems, weather, or plane damage after attacks by American planes. Near the end of the war the Navy and Army designated many entire units as special attack corps intended to carry out suicide attacks. Many men had trained in kamikaze units, but they did not attempt actual attacks because the military lacked sufficient usable planes and the end of the war occurred soon after the men had been assigned to kamikaze units. Although most of Japan's special attack forces consisted of pilots who tried to crash planes into Allied ships, I also met one man in an ohka (rocket-powered glider bomb) squadron and another man who trained as a fukuryu (frogman in shallow water to destroy the enemy's landing craft with explosives attached to top of bamboo pole).

Senri Nagasue, a former kamikaze pilot who has one of the largest Japanese web sites about kamikaze, arranged for me to meet many people on my trip through Japan. Most of these people are his Navy classmates or others he has met in performing research for the four books he has written on kamikaze special attack corps. Several people took me to out-of-the-way monuments and small exhibitions that I did not have on my original itinerary. Many men, in addition to telling me about their wartime experiences, provided me with articles, books, photos, and other material that provided invaluable resources for my web site.

During my trip to Japan, the places I visited and people I met allowed me to make many interesting connections between information found in books, films, museums, Internet,

and other sources. For example, I discovered many links to Shinichi Ishimaru, a professional baseball ace pitcher who joined the Navy and died as a kamikaze pilot at the age of 22 in May 1945. During the first half of my two-month stay in Japan, I attended Japanese classes at the Okayama Institute of Languages. The mother of the family in whose home I stayed was from Saga Prefecture, Shinichi Ishimaru's home prefecture, and she had been a volunteer in the production of the film *Ningen no Tsubasa* (Wings of a Man) about Ishimaru's life. She let me watch this touching 1995 film, and I wrote a review of the movie for my web site. When I visited the Special Attack Corps War Dead Memorial Tower in Kanoya City, I saw Ishimaru's name on a plaque with the names of 908 kamikaze corps members who lost their lives after departing from Kanoya Air Base. During my talk with a former ohka squadron member, he mentioned to me that he met Ishimaru at Kanoya Air Base in 1945 and gave me a copy of a newspaper article he had written about the film. I visited the Yasukuni Jinja Yushukan near the end of my trip, and I saw Ishimaru's photo among the several thousand photos of war dead displayed at the museum. On the Internet, I read that Ishimaru's name is engraved on a monument, located outside the Tokyo Giants' stadium, which honors professional baseball players who lost their lives in the war. Finally, through the Internet I obtained a book about Ishimaru's life, which includes several historical photos.

Although I learned much from hearing the wartime experiences of former kamikaze pilots, I also gained insights to Japan's special attack forces by talking with other people. For example, I visited the former Kokubu No. 2 Air Base with Kiyoshi Iwamoto, who wrote a book that includes a detailed history of the base, the last letters of several kamikaze pilots, and reflections on kamikaze operations by several local residents. Iwamoto served in the Japanese Navy during the war, but he never was part of the kamikaze corps. During my visit I learned that Iwamoto has written three other books, including a book of poetry. He wrote

the following poem (my translation to English) inscribed on the plaque at the Special Attack Corps Monument, located on a hill that looks down upon the former Kokubu No. 2 Air Base.

Repose of Souls

Riders of the white clouds  
Come back to us  
Cherry blossom breeze  
Scent of chrysanthemums  
Giving your blessing  
Your hometown now filled  
With peace

Another interesting talk was with Yuko Shirako, a woman whose mother's fiancé sortied from Miyakonojo Air Base in Miyazaki Prefecture and died in a kamikaze attack off Okinawa. Her mother has never said anything to her father about this part of her life, but in her later years she has shared with her daughter many of the details of her engagement and her fiancé's death. However, even today she has never shown anyone the last letter her fiancé wrote to her prior to his departure toward Okinawa. Shirako showed me the sweater of her mother's former fiancé, and she said that she sometimes wears it. She has done much research to try to piece together the full story of her mother's former fiancé, and this web site has one page that tells her story based on the results of that research.

In Kagoshima City, I spent a couple of days with Shoji Jikuya, a former *Zero* pilot who flew a kamikaze mission to Okinawa. He managed to return to mainland Japan when his plane was damaged after a skirmish with American planes. He commented that many men joined the kamikaze corps before the end of the war, but only a few had real battle experience with the enemy and managed to return.

The topic most discussed with former Imperial Japanese Navy airmen was modern-day terrorism. A *Los Angeles Times* reporter planned to talk with some of the same people I did about the relationship of kamikaze attacks to modern-day suicide bombings, so several

former kamikaze pilots eagerly wanted to tell me their views on this issue. They strongly and unanimously disagreed with the insinuation that kamikaze attacks during World War II were the same as today's terrorist suicide bombings. When some Japanese and foreign media in 2001 linked kamikazes with the terrorists who steered planes into the World Trade Towers and Pentagon, these former Navy pilots became especially angry. They argued, reasonably in my opinion, that the two were completely different. The terrorists attacked innocent civilians using hijacked civilian aircraft. In contrast, the Japanese kamikaze attacks took place against military targets during war.

The former kamikaze pilots who I met during my trip seemed little different than other Japanese people. They seemed very happy to live now in a peaceful Japan, but they also all had pride in their military service. Other than one man who wanted to emphasize to me that the kamikaze corps had true samurai spirit, nobody displayed militaristic and nationalistic opinions. In fact, I met several men who played leadership roles in friendship associations with other countries such as Taiwan, Philippines, and Australia. Since the militaristic wartime government prohibited the study and use of English, many of the men I met missed the opportunity to study English in high school. During my visit no one could speak English, and also nobody had ever visited the mainland U.S. Although many men had served in the kamikaze corps, the men generally showed a much closer bond over many decades with their classmates in the Yokaren (Naval Flight Training Program) rather than fellow pilots in the kamikaze corps.

### **5. Parallels to *Friendship Dolls***

I developed my first web site as a project for the GLSP course on "Reading and Writing Hypertext" in 2000. This site covers the history of Friendship Dolls exchanged between Japan and the U.S. in 1927 and recent years (<http://wgordon.web.wesleyan.edu/dolls>). The

topics of my two web sites, *Kamikaze Images* and *Friendship Dolls*, may seem far apart. Actually, the process used to create these two web sites turned out to have many parallels, and the two topics have many similarities from a research perspective. This section examines connections between the two web sites.

### **A. Japan-U.S. Relations**

The historical events of both topics involved many people in the United States and Japan, and each topic continues to generate interest in both countries. In 1927, over 5 million Americans and Japanese participated in a project to exchange dolls as a gesture of friendship and peace. From October 1944 to August 1945, about 6,000 special attack corps members died in suicide attacks (Shirai 2002, 22). The Japanese military leaders and press widely publicized the patriotism of these young men who sacrificed their lives. Numerous crewmen on American ships witnessed kamikaze planes as they tried to make suicide crash dives.

The subject of kamikaze pilots continues to generate interest, primarily in Japan but also to a lesser extent in the U.S. Two recent extremely popular Japanese movies, *Hotaru* (Firefly) in 2001 and *Gekkou no Natsu* (Summer of the Moonlight Sonata) in 1993, have kamikaze pilots as their main characters. The Chiran Peace Museum for Kamikaze Pilots in Kagoshima Prefecture has over 500 million visitors each year. In the U.S., the topic of Japanese kamikaze has recently generated interest as people hear about suicide bombings in Iraq, Israel, and other countries. Many Americans thought back to World War II kamikaze attacks when planes crashed into the World Trade Towers on September 11, 2001.

### **B. Research Methods**

The methods used to perform research and gather information for the two web sites had several similarities. Since sources related to these two subjects are spread throughout Japan, the development of both web sites involved trips through Japan to gather information and to

meet people knowledgeable on the subjects. For the *Friendship Dolls* site, I went to about 25 elementary schools and kindergartens to obtain information. I also visited several museums with Friendship Doll exhibits and met with members of organizations in individual prefectures that support Friendship Doll activities. For the *Kamikaze Images* site, I visited 11 Japanese museums to view exhibits, obtain books, and talk with museum directors and workers. I also met with several former members of the kamikaze corps.

American museums also supplied valuable resources for the two web sites. Several curators at museums with Japanese Friendship Dolls supplied me with photos, articles, and other information. As part of the research for this project on *Kamikaze Images*, I first stepped on board an aircraft carrier when I visited the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum in New York City. This ship's immense size and sturdy construction let me understand firsthand how the *Intrepid* survived five hits by kamikaze planes.

Many people in Japan, including journalists, museum workers, veterans, teachers, and authors, have given me a remarkable amount of resource material for my web sites on *Kamikaze Images* and *Friendship Dolls*. My research also involved searching the Internet and establishing contacts with creators of Japanese web sites and web pages on the two subjects. This collaboration with Japanese authorities on kamikaze and Friendship Dolls has provided me many insights that could not be obtained just by reading.

### **C. Translation**

Both web sites rely heavily on information published in Japanese, including books and web pages. I estimate about 20 to 50 times more information exists in Japanese than in English related to both kamikaze pilots and Friendship Dolls. Although several books have been published in English on kamikaze, many stories and details on this subject remain unavailable to English readers. In addition to this web site's main objective to explore the

different Japanese and American perceptions of kamikaze pilots, I have also tried to translate stories and information not published previously in English.

## **6. Closing Remarks**

Many people provided materials, suggestions, and other invaluable assistance for the creation of the web site on *Kamikaze Images*. Michael Roy, Director of Academic Computing Services at Wesleyan University, and Ellen Schattschneider, Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Director of Graduate Studies at Brandeis University, provided many useful suggestions during my research and my design of the web site. Senri Nagasue, former kamikaze pilot and author of several books on the kamikaze corps, provided much assistance in arranging interviews during my stay in Japan. He has been an inspiration to keep up with changing information technology, since in his seventies he learned HTML and created a large web site. The "Acknowledgments" page on my web site recognizes by name the numerous other people who provided assistance or gave permission for use of materials.

Although this paper covers the research and creation of the *Kamikaze Images* web site for the final project required for completion of my MALS degree, I feel in some ways that it is the beginning. I still have dozens of ideas for new web pages based on resources obtained during my research and interviews conducted during my Japan visit. I hope to continue to add to the web site long after my degree completion.

## Sources Cited

Conklin, E. Jeffrey. 1987. Hypertext: An Introduction and Survey. *IEEE Computer* 20: 17-41.

Landow, George P. 1997. *Hypertext 2.0: The Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Nielsen, Jakob. 2000. *Designing Web Usability*. Indianapolis, IN: New Riders Publishing.

Shirai, Atsushi. 2002. Tokkoutai to wa nan datta no ka (What were the special attack forces?). In *Ima tokkoutai no shi o kangaeru* (Thinking now about death of special attack force members), Iwanami Booklet No. 572, edited by Atsushi Shirai. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.