

PEACE EDUCATION THROUGH PEACE MUSEUMS

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Summary

There are anti-war museums, peace museums, resistance museums, and art museums for peace, which can be called “museums for peace”. *Peace Museums Worldwide* was published by the United Nations in 1995 and museums for peace can be called “peace museums”. They are different from war museums and military museums in the sense that they criticize war while some war museums glorify war. Peace museums play important roles in peace education and peace making. There are about 100 museums for peace in the world and almost half of them exist in Japan.

There are some differences of exhibitions between Western peace museums and the ones in China, Korea and Japan. Conflict resolution and peace history is emphasized in Western peace museums while history is more emphasized in Asia. Some museums were founded in China and the Republic of Korea because Japan’s aggression was not honestly described in school textbooks in Japan in 1982: “aggression” was changed into “advancement” by the Ministry of Education.

The number of peace museums in Japan is the highest in the world, but the contents of exhibitions are problematic because Japan’s victim side of World War II tends to be exhibited at public peace museums without exhibiting Japan’s aggression except a few public museums like the Osaka International Peace Centre. However, Japan’s aggression is exhibited at private peace museums and citizens are active in peace education and peace making: for example, citizens are active at the Peace, Human Rights and Children Centre / School Textbook Institute in Osaka, the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum in Nagasaki and the Grassroots House in Kochi. The Osaka International Peace Centre is a public peace museum, but the exhibitions on Japan’s aggression could remain in spite of the right wingers’ attacks in the 1990s. This is because citizens were active to exhibit the historical truth (Japan’s aggression) and engage in peacemaking in spite of nationalists’ attacks of the exhibits on Japan’s aggression. Citizens’ active attitude and actions for peace are important factors in peace education through peace museums.

1. Introduction

It is generally said that there are about 100 museums in the world and almost half of them exist in Japan. Why are there so many peace museums in Japan? What are the differences between peace museums in Japan and ones in other countries? What are the roles of peace museums? These questions will be dealt with focusing on peace museums in Japan. First, a concept of war memory will be analyzed because it is different individually, nationally and internationally. Secondly, the definition of a war museum and a peace museum will be made, and exhibits on war will be compared between a war museum and a peace museum. Thirdly, the background of peace museums in Japan will be analyzed in terms of citizens’ action for Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution that renounces war and peace movement.

Peace museums in Japan will be analyzed from an international perspective. Characteristics and problems of peace museums in Japan will be demonstrated in terms of the purpose of establishing a peace museum, the way of establishing peace museums, the contents of exhibitions, the types of activities, and the international network and national network of peace museums.

Finally, the role of peace museums in peace education and peace making will be made clear with an emphasis on citizens' active attitude and action for peace.

2. War Memory, War Museum and Peace Museum

2.1. Introduction

Japan has the highest number of peace museums in the world according to *Peace Museums Worldwide* published by the United Nations in 1998. It is generally said that there are about fifty peace museums in Japan. The most famous peace museum is Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum that was founded in 1955. Nagasaki International Culture Hall which became Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum later was also founded in 1955. Okinawa was the only battlefield in Japan during World War II and some 150,000 (The number of the casualties in Okinawa is based on the investigation by Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum. Hajime Katsube ed. *Heiwaeno Michishirube* (A guide to Peace), Osaka, Osaka International Peace Centre, 1992, p. 25.) people were killed. Okinawa Peace Memorial Museum was founded in 1975. These peace museums were built because people had suffered from the war immensely. They tended to show the horror of war from victim perspectives, but there were no exhibits on Japan's aggression when they were opened.

People started to record their experiences of the U.S. air raids of Japanese cities during World War II in the late 1960s when the U.S.A. bombed North Vietnam. They also worked hard to found peace museums in the 1970s and "one of the results is the Osaka War Memorial Exhibition Room for Peace that became the Osaka International Peace Centre later." (Yamabe, Masahiko. 'Nihonno Heiwa Hakubutsukanno Toutatsutento Kadai' (The Attainment of Japanese Peace Museums and Problems) in *Heiwa Hakubutsukan Sensou Hakubutsukan Guidebook* (Guidebook of Peace Museums and War Museums) edited by Rekishi Kyouikusha Kyougikai (The Association of History Educators), Tokyo, Aoki Shoten, 2004, pp. 268-278.) In Kochi an exhibition on the U.S. air raids on Kochi City started in 1979 and the Grassroots House was founded in 1989.

In the 1980s "war exhibitions for peace" were held in Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto and other cities in summer: on August 6th when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, on August 9th when the atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, and also August 15th when Japan was defeated. People began to look for the establishment of peace museums where they can see exhibits not just during the summer but at all seasons. There was also an anti-nuclear movement in which people urged local government to issue a non-nuclear declaration being influenced by a worldwide anti-nuclear movement. They also demanded their local governments build a peace museum.

Thus public peace museums (relatively largely ones) were founded in the 1990s such as Kawasaki Peace Museum (in Kanagawa Prefecture), Kanagawa Plaza for Global Citizenship, Saitama Peace Museum, and Osaka International Peace Centre. Kyoto Museum for World Peace was founded at Ritsumeikan University in 1992. Small and medium-sized public peace museums were also founded such as Suita Peace Centre (in Osaka), Sakai City Peace and Human Rights Museum (in Osaka), Fukuyama City Human Rights & Peace Museum (in Hiroshima), Takamatsu Civic Culture Centre:

Peace Museum (in Kagawa Prefecture), Himeji Historical Peace Centre (in Hyogo Prefecture). Private peace museums which were founded include Shizuoka Peace Centre, the Grassroots House (in Kochi), Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum, and the Peace, Human Rights and Children Centre (in Sakai City, Osaka).

It seems that the contents of public peace museums are problematic because historical truths such as Japan's aggression of other nations are not shown very much at public peace museums. It is because nationalists who want to glorify war tend to attack exhibits on Japan's aggression in World War II. Then how is it possible to exhibit historical truths at peace museums? It seems that historical truths can be exhibited at private peace museums in Japan.

Many peace museums were founded so that war memory would be passed on to the next generation in order to prevent war in the future. How is war memory exhibited at peace museums? Is it different from war memory that is exhibited at war museums? Before researching these questions, the concept of war memory will be made clear first.

Then a definition of a peace museum will be made clear in comparison with a war museum. What is the difference between peace museums and war museums? Yushukan museum at Yasukuni Shrine will be given as an example of a war museum. On the other hand, Kyoto Museum for World Peace will be compared as an example of a private peace museum. A Chinese museum will also be discussed in comparison to the two different types of museums in Japan.

As a symbol of nationalists' concept of history and its realization, National Showa Memorial Museum will be investigated. Why is there no national peace museum? Why did National Showa Memorial Museum fail to become a peace museum? Such questions will be explored.

Lastly, the background of peace museums in Japan will be considered focusing on two movements: one is the grassroots movement to protect the Japanese Constitution and the other is the anti-nuclear movement after World War II. These movements are criticized by nationalists who strongly support war museums. The conclusion will make clear the background of peace museums in Japan as a whole.

2.2. A Concept of War Memory

The question of war memory can be quite complicated because war memory is different individually, nationally and internationally. For example, the war memory of the atomic bomb victims in Hiroshima and Nagasaki is very different from that of American veterans who believe that "lives of not only Americans but also Asians including the Japanese were saved by the atomic bombing."(Fujiwara, Kiichi. *Senso o Kiokusuru* (Remembering War). Tokyo, Kodansha, 2001, p.4.) As a result, the war memory preserved and exhibited at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum is very different from the one at the National Air and Space Museum in Northern Virginia in the United States. The victim side of the atomic bomb survivors is emphasized at Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum while there are no exhibits on the result of the atomic bombing at the National Air and Space Museum in the United States. This shows how war memory

can be different internationally.

Another example of different war memory among nations can be seen in Koreans' criticism of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine on New Year's Day, 2004 in Tokyo. It is a shrine of the Shinto religion that honours almost 2.5 million Japanese soldiers killed in war since 1853 when Matthew Calbraith Perry, the US Admiral, went to Japan to ask her to open a port. Fourteen A-class war criminals who were found guilty at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East such as wartime Prime Minister General Hideki Tojo were enshrined in Yasukuni Shrine in 1978. Prime Minister Koizumi's visit was criticized in an editorial in the *Korean Times* as follows:

The visit was ostensible to pay tribute to Japan's war dead, but the shrine also honors several of Japan's World War II criminals, including World War II-era Prime Minister Hideki Tojo. So, Koizumi cannot simply defend his visit, as he did, by saying that history, tradition and custom must be respected in any country. ('Koizumi's reckless Yasukuni visit angers Asian neighbors', *The Korean Times*, 3rd January 2004.)

The background of such a criticism is that Koreans suffered from Japan's colonial and military rule from 1910 to 1945. Their war memory is completely different from that of Koizumi who admires Japanese rulers during World War II. The Korean Government on March 4, 2004 warned Japan that "Japan needs to face the fact that Japanese words and actions based on distorted perception of history destroy the development of the relation between Korea and Japan." ('Kankoku Yasukunino Daitai Shisetsu Youkyu (Korea Demanded an Alternative Facility to Yasukuni Shrine)', *Kochi Shinbun* (Newspaper), 5th March, 2004.) The Korean government suggested that Japan build an alternative facility to Yasukuni Shrine and revise Japanese history textbooks after researching history together. There was no report on the Japanese government's reaction except the comment of Yasuo Fukuda, Chief Cabinet Secretary, that "I'd like to think of it considering public opinion. It is not timely to build the new facility." ('Shiteki Sanpai Rikai Motomeru (Private Worship Should be Admitted)', *Kochi Shinbun* (Newspaper), 8th April, 2004.) As for history textbooks, Korean and Japanese historians exchange opinions at NGO level, but not at an official level.

Korea is not the only country that criticized Koizumi's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine. Since Koizumi visited the controversial shrine for the second time in April, 2002, China has rejected Koizumi's wish to make a state visit to Beijing. Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs Li Zhaoxing severely criticized Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine saying "He should learn a lesson from history" ('Shushouno Yasukuni Sanpai Yurusuna (I will not allow Prime Minister's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine)', *Kochi Newspaper*, 7th March, 2004.) and made clear on 7th March, 2004 that there would be no plan for a state visit to China by Prime Minister Koizumi and there would be no plan of a state visit to Japan by a Chinese leader. This shows how war memory can affect the contemporary international situation.

Prime Minister Koizumi's war memory and his visit to Yasukuni shrine are controversial not only internationally but also nationally. 631 people filed a lawsuit at Osaka District Court in August, 2001 against Koizumi because his visit is against the

Constitutional separation of religion and state (Article 20 says, “Freedom of religion is guaranteed to all. No religious organization shall receive any privileges from the State, nor exercise any political authority. No person shall be compelled to take part in any religious act, celebration, rite or practice. The State and its organs shall refrain from religious education or any other religious activity.”) . Hiroshi Muraoka, a chief justice of the court, gave a ruling on 27th February, 2004 that Koizumi’s visit to the Yasukuni Shrine was not private but public. However, he didn’t make clear whether the visit was against the Constitution or not. There are seven similar lawsuits pending in Tokyo, Chiba, Ehime, Fukuoka, and Okinawa District Court and this was the first judgment. A spokesman for the Yasukuni Shrine mentioned that “it was an appropriate judgement.” (‘Shushouno Yasukuni Sanpaiwa Kouteki (Prime Minister’s visit of Yasukuni Shrine is “Public”), *Kochi Shinbun* (Newspaper), 28th February, 2004.) Koizumi insisted that this was a personal visit, but it was denied by the judgement, which is important. However, the judgment did not go so far as to decide that Koizumi’s visit to the Yasukuni Shrine was against the Constitution, probably because of fears of nationalists’ attacks.

On the other hand, the Fukuoka District Court ruled on 7th April, 2004, that Koizumi’s visit to the Yasukuni Shrine on 13th August, 2001 was contrary to the Japanese Constitution. It was ruled that Koizumi made the visit in his official capacity as prime minister and it should be regarded as religious activity conducted by the state, and therefore it was a violation of the Constitution. This was the first ruling to make clear that the visits to the shrine are unconstitutional. However, Koizumi said, “I can’t accept the ruling. I don’t understand why (my visit was) unconstitutional...I’ll visit it again.”(‘Yasukuni visit ruled illegal’, *The Daily Yomiuri*, 8th April, 2004.) His attitude shows that he had not reflected critically on his war memory and concept of history. It should be noted that Yushukan, Japan’s oldest national war museum founded in 1882 (Yasukuni-jinja Yushukan, ed. *Yushukan*. Tokyo, Yushukan, 2002, p. 1), exists in the precinct of Yasukuni Shrine and is also very controversial.

How is war memory exhibited at a war museum and a peace museum? War memory at a war museum is different from the one at a peace museum. Why is it different and how is it different? Since the purpose of many war museums is to glorify war in Japan, war memory is used to glorify war and admire aggressors as heroes. On the other hand, as the purpose of a peace museum is to criticize war, war memory is used for its purpose. War memory at the Yushukan (war museum) and the Kyoto Museum for World Peace (peace museum) will be compared to make this point clear.

Furthermore, war memory is exhibited differently among peace museums: war memory at public peace museums is exhibited differently from the one at private peace museums. Why is there such a difference? What is problematic in Japanese peace museums is that Japan’s aggression is not exhibited at many public peace museums. Why is it difficult to exhibit historical truth at a public peace museum? What is possible to exhibit historical truth?

Before answering these questions, the definition of a war museum and a peace museum will be made clear first.

2.3. The Definition of a War Museum and a Peace Museum

The definition of a war museum and a peace museum is not easy because a war museum sometimes plays a role of a peace museum. For example, the Imperial War Museum in London has a name of “War Museum”, but it has a section of oral history where visitors can listen to stories of pacifists using cassette tapes. Though the definition can not be done simply, many war museums tend to glorify war by exhibiting weapons, soldiers’ uniforms and so forth while a peace museum tends to criticize war and make visitors think of peace and act for peace. Johan Galtung refers to war museums as “museums telling the story of war, or of one particular war. Some of them glorify (war), directly or indirectly; and many inspire action supporting the next war.”(Galtung, Johan. ‘The Theory of Peace and the Practice of Peace Museums’. The 3rd International Conference of Peace Museums, Osaka and Kyoto, Japan, 6th – 10th November 1998. *Exhibiting Peace* edited by the Organizing Committee of the Third International Conference of Peace Museums. Kyoto, Kyoto Museum for World Peace, 1999, p. 8.)

Galtung defines a peace museum as follows:

A peace museum informs us about peace and how to get there...The museums that call themselves peace museums today are, however, mainly anti-war museums; there is very little about peace and very little about how to get there; except for one approach: war abolition, war negation.(Galtung, Johan. ‘The Theory of Peace and the Practice of Peace Museums’. The 3rd International Conference of Peace Museums, Osaka and Kyoto, Japan, 6th – 10th November 1998. *Exhibiting Peace* edited by the Organizing Committee of the Third International Conference of Peace Museums. Kyoto, Kyoto Museum for World Peace, 1999, p. 12.)

His definition of peace museums shows one of the characteristics of Japanese peace museums: many peace museums in Japan seem to be anti-war museums. Toshifumi Murakami distinguishes as regards peace museums between “an anti-war museum” and “pro-peace museum.”(Murakami, T. ‘The Influences of War Remembrance on Education: A Comparison of Peace Museums and Military Museums.’ The 4th International Conference of Peace Museums, Ostend, Belgium, 5th – 9th May, 2003.) According to his definition of “anti-war museum”, it is “a peace museum aiming to inform the fear of war and to form anti-war attitude” while a pro-peace museum is “a peace museum aiming to form the attitude and skill for making a peaceful society and peaceful international relations”. Such a distinction would not be easy to make, but it would be useful to categorize peace museums in general. For example, many public peace museums in Japan put an emphasis on the atomic bombing in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and also the U.S. air raids on various cities. However, there is no training of skills for conflict resolution which can be seen in “pro-peace museums” such as the Caen Memorial (This was pointed out by Dr. Peter van den Dungen on 10th May, 2004.) in France.

Whatever the museum’s name is, the content of the exhibits and their intended aim, decide whether it is a peace museum or not. The following comparison of exhibits on war between a war museum and a peace museum will make clear the differences between a war museum and a peace museum.

2.4. A Comparison of Exhibits on War between a War Museum and a Peace

Museum

What are differences of exhibits on war between a war museum and a peace museum? War memory in the Yushukan museum in the Yasukuni Shrine glorifies war without any exhibitions on people's sufferings in other countries. On the other hand, Japan's aggression of other countries is exhibited critically at Kyoto Museum for World Peace at Ritsumeikan University.

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comprehensive study of peace education through peace museums in the world.]

Biographical Sketch

Kazuyo Yamane received the BA degree from Doshisha Women's College in Kyoto, Japan, the MA degree from the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington, U.S.A, and the PhD from the University of Bradford, Bradford, England. She has been a part-time lecturer at Kochi University in Japan. She has been editing *Muse: Newsletter of the Japanese Citizens' Network of Museums for Peace* since 1998. She is a member of the Advisory Committee of the International Network of Museums for Peace since 2005. Her interests include peace research, peace education through peace museums, peace movement and creating a culture of peace.