

ARTICLE

Controversial Exhibitions at Peace Museums in Japan

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Abstract

There are over 100 museums for peace in the world; about half of them are in Japan. Japan has the highest number of museums for peace in the world, but Japanese aggression, before and during World War II, is not addressed at many public peace museums. It is encouraging, however, that Japanese aggression is a prominent feature of exhibitions at private peace museums.

The controversial exhibition, “The Japanese Occupation of the Dutch East Indies Remembered”, toured Japan in 2000 and 2001. It was difficult to hold this exhibition at public peace museums because of pressure from right-wing groups that attacked the exhibition because it frankly described Japanese aggression. The exhibition was held at the Grassroots House in Kochi. Peace education was promoted not only at the community level, but also at Kochi University and an elementary school. The role of private peace museums, such as the Kyoto Museum for World Peace at Ritsumeikan University, is important in promoting peace education.

1. Introduction

There are more than one hundred museums for peace in the world; 50 to 60 are in Japan. Peace museums in Japan were largely came into beings in the 1990s and sought to portray not only the victim side of Japan in World War II, but also Japanese aggression. The trigger for such change was strong criticism against the Japanese government when the Ministry of Education screened out “unsuitable expressions” in high school history textbooks in 1982 and substituted “advance” for “aggression” when describing Japan’s military actions in WW II. This was severely criticized domestically and internationally as a dishonest attempt to rewrite history, especially by China and Korea. Korea responded in the *East Asian Daily*; Chinese criticism followed in the *People’s Daily* in June, 1982. A Japanese cabinet minister responded that the article was “intervention and the Chinese government officially protested against Japan on 26th July.”¹⁾ Textbook screening became a diplomatic issue and the government decided that “it is necessary to consider history related to Asian countries in modern times from a standpoint of international understanding and cooperation.”²⁾ This was the beginning of attempts to accurately deal

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with Japanese aggression in school textbooks.

In the 1990s there was also international pressure on Japan to apologize for acts of aggression during World War II, such as forcing women to serve as sexual slaves for Japanese soldiers, the Nanjing Massacre, forced labour, germ war and so forth. In 1998 a U.N. legal expert “urged Japan to criminally punish those responsible for recruiting war-time sexual slaves and pay compensation to the victims”³⁾ who were forced to work as sexual slaves during World War II. Japan, however, has so far expressed “no intention to make state compensation to individual victims, claiming that the legal matters have already been settled in bilateral agreements,”⁴⁾ although Japan acknowledged enslavement of the numerous Asian women. As a result of such pressure, Japanese aggression began to be addressed not only in textbooks, but also in exhibitions at peace museums that had previously tended to only promote Japan’s status as victim during World War II.

In 1996, on the other hand, nationalists began to attack textbooks that dealt with these issues and began “denying historical actualities such as ‘comfort women’ and the Nanjing ‘Incident’ to glorify World War II.”⁵⁾ Public peace museums that had begun staging exhibits on Japanese aggression also faced attacks by right-wingers in the latter half of the 1990s. First nationalists began attacking the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, a public peace museum, in 1996 claiming that “exhibits on Japanese aggression and invasion would lead to justifying the U.S. atomic bombing.”⁶⁾ The background of their denial of Japan’s aggression is that they wanted to glorify World War II, justifying the war as an attempt to liberate Asian countries from European colonialism. They refuse to admit that one of the consequences of Japan’s aggression was the use of the atomic bombs by the United States. They insist that the reason why the United States dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima was “not to destroy Hiroshima which had developed as the militarily important city, but to test the power of an atomic bomb.”⁷⁾ Undoubtedly Hiroshima had become the primary port for sending soldiers and materials to China during the Sino-Japanese War in 1894. “In 1943 Hiroshima became militarily important: the Army Transport Division, depots for army provisions, clothing and ordnance, Ninoshima Quarantine Station, and the Corps of Engineers training grounds were established.”⁸⁾ Such characteristics of Hiroshima are pointed out at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and it is necessary for nationalists to admit that Hiroshima was used as a staging area for Japanese aggression against Asian countries. The real reason for dropping the atomic bombs on Japan is well-described as “to gain an ascendancy over the USSR and dominate the world after the war,”⁹⁾ in *Miraio Hiraku Rekishi: Higashi Ajia 3-kokuno Kingendaishi* (History for the Future: Modern History of Three Countries in East Asia)¹⁰⁾ edited by Common History Textbook Committee of Japan, China and Korea and published in 2005. This textbook is worthy of mention because it was produced not by government, but by progressive researchers, teachers and citizens in the three countries of the People’s Republic of China, the Republic of Korea and Japan. It took three years to write this common textbook and ten international conferences were held. Japan’s aggression is well dealt with in the textbook and it is an eye-opener for Japanese citizens who have never had a chance to learn of Japanese aggression.

Nationalists in Nagasaki claimed that a photo of the Nanjing Massacre was not real,

but “the real purpose (of their protest) was to remove an exhibit that focused on Japanese aggression.”¹¹⁾ They also began to attack other public peace museums such as the Osaka International Peace Centre, Kanagawa Plaza for Global Citizenship, Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum, among others. As a result, it became difficult for public peace museums to hold exhibits on Japanese aggression. An example of this was a Dutch travelling exhibit that is discussed below: public peace museums refused to show the exhibit, while it was accepted by their private counterparts.

2. The Dutch Travelling Exhibition and Peace Museums in Japan

An exhibition on “The Japanese Occupation of the Dutch East Indies Remembered” was held in Japan in 2000 and 2001. The Dutch East Indies was formerly a colony of the Netherlands, and is the Republic of Indonesia today; the history of this region has not been taught at school, nor reported by the media in Japan. In 1600 the first Dutch merchantman sailed to Oita, Japan; in 1641 the Dutch were given sole permission, among European nations, to trade with Japan. There were good relations between the Netherlands and Japan well into the 20th century, but it did not continue. In March, 1942 Japan invaded the Dutch East Indies. Many of 300,000 Dutch residents were interned in camps and used as forced labour. The reason for Japan’s invasion was to “get natural resources such as rubber, oil, tin and so forth.”¹²⁾ The native Indonesians had been under Dutch subjugation since the 19th century “when the Netherlands extended its control over the islands by force and formed the Dutch East Indies into a constitutional entity.”¹³⁾ The local population first thought that Japan would liberate them from Dutch rule, but they were placed under Japanese control after the occupation on March 9th in 1942. The illusion of independence and self-rule was replaced by a reality of poverty and forced labour: around 300,000 Japanese servicemen and civilians were stationed in Indonesia according to the exhibition. The native Indonesians, the Dutch, and the invading Japanese all had different memories of World War II.

The following is the account of Natsuko Kanto, a Japanese woman that was sent to the Dutch East Indies as a teacher.

Natsuko Kanto: ‘We never talked about political issues.’

Natsuko Kanto (b. 1922) taught at a girls’ school in Nagasaki. In 1943 she was posted to Makassar [Indonesia] to teach Japanese at a training college for Indonesian girls. Natsuko Kanto has fond memories of the period. *‘I imagined I was going to an uncivilised world. But that was far from the case. The students were eager to learn. They believed that Japan would usher in a new future. A small country like Japan, capable of dominating China and Russia, would certainly be able to gain independence for Indonesia, it was thought. But we never talked about political issues.’* After the surrender, Natsuko Kanto was put to work as a nurse. In May 1946 she returned to Japan. A school photo is her only

memento of the war years. Yet she kept in touch with at least one of her Indonesian students and has visited the country almost every year since.

Here, she recounts a positive memory of Japan's occupation and thinks that Japan would be able to liberate Indonesia from European colonialism. There is no concept of Japanese aggression against China in her memory. The memories of the Dutch, on the other hand, are completely opposite, as the following example shows.

Dolf Winkler: 'You went through hell'

Dolf Winkler (b. 1917) was a prisoner-of-war who worked on the Burma-Siam railway in Thailand. Late in 1943 he was transferred to Japan. He was forced to work in a coal mine near Orio, 100 kilometres from Nagasaki.

'500 metres below ground wearing just a loincloth. A battery on your back (was) all day long for the miner's lamp. With the coal grit and the sweat we were constantly chafing and grazing our backs. Sometimes the battery would leak. When that biting battery acid got into your wounds, you went through hell.'

In the 1980s Dolf Winkler went to Japan. He visited places where he had been interned and met one of his former camp guards. Winkler had no hard feelings. The man gave him a pickaxe that had been used by the prisoners-of-war.¹⁴⁾

Winkler, naturally, has a very negative memory of the war because he was forced to work in Thailand and was later sent to Japan to work at the Nihon Tankou Takamatsu Coal Mine. Chinese and Koreans were also used there as forced labour, as well as Allied prisoners of war that had been captured in Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia. They replaced Japanese miners that had been drafted and sent to battlefields and solved a major labour shortage. Dolf Winkler visited there in 1985 because he was still tormented by nightmares about his wartime experiences, and had been urged to visit the site of the labour camp on the advice of his therapist. He also wanted to see Minoru Tamura, a Japanese man who had treated him kindly during the war. There is a tower with a cross on which the names of 869 Dutch prisoners of war are inscribed. It is said that "the Memorial Cross was hurriedly built at the close of the war by coal mine officials who were worried about an allied investigation of war crimes"¹⁵⁾ after the war. Winkler was sad to see that the Memorial Cross had become rundown and neglected. He visited Mizumaki Town again in 1986 and urged that the memorial be refurbished. Hiroshi Kurokawa founded a volunteer group, the Committee to Promote Peace and Culture, with the goal of cleaning and caring for the Memorial Cross and hosting yearly memorial services. This was "the birth of the exchange program between Dolf Winkler and the people of Mizumami."¹⁶⁾ The program began in 1995 between Dutch students and Japanese students. Elementary school students started exchanging e-mail with Dutch children in 1999. Winkler forged "grassroots ties between Mizumaki Town, Fukuoka Prefecture and

his hometown, Noordoostpolder.”¹⁷⁾

The Indonesians had mixed feelings at the beginning because of expectations that the Japanese would liberate them.

Busono: ‘we have to throw both the Dutch and the Japanese out’

Ir Busono was born into a nationalist family. As a boy he had been impressed by the military power of Imperial Japan. But as the years of occupation passed, the negative side of Japanese rule was revealed. In the Busono household the end of the war was eagerly awaited. *‘That was when we first heard the stories of those who had been sent to Burma and to Thailand to work. And of the inhumane conditions. Then something began to stir within us, a sense of: They weren’t as angelic as they seemed to be! And that’s when we realised: Listen, we have to throw both the Dutch and the Japanese out. And we should never allow ourselves to be dependent on foreigners again!’* Busono joined the Indonesian liberation army (TNI). Later he emigrated to the Netherlands.

The Dutch exhibition presented the different memories of the Dutch, the Indonesians and the Japanese in a well-balanced way, but it was difficult to hold this unbiased exhibition at public peace museums in Japan.

3. The Negative Response to the Dutch Exhibition by Public Peace Museums

In 2000 Japan and the Netherlands celebrated the 400th anniversary of their relations with various cultural, scientific, economic and sporting events. The Netherlands Institute for War Documentation¹⁸⁾ created the exhibition to convey wartime experiences and to promote mutual understanding. The exhibition chronicled the experiences of the Dutch, the Japanese and Indonesian people during the Japanese occupation using personal testimony, memories and the juxtaposition of experiences of people from the three different countries. It was first offered to public museums such as the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, Osaka International Peace Centre, Peace Museum of Saitama, but was rejected by all, according to Dr. Erik Somers.¹⁹⁾ It was held in Kyoto (Kyoto Museum for World Peace at Ritsumeikan University), Usuki City in Oita Prefecture, Mizumaki Town in Fukukoka Prefecture, Nagasaki (Nagasaki Peace Institute), Fukuoka (Physicians and Dentists for Prevention of Nuclear War), Tokyo (Tokyo Foreign Language University) and Kochi (Grassroots House). The only local governments that held the exhibition were Mizumaki town and Usuki City. Mizumaki Town in Fukuoka Prefecture, as mentioned before, is where Dutch and British prisoners of war were forced to work during World War II. A Dutch ship drifted ashore in Usuki City in Oita Prefecture four centuries ago. The other peace museums which showed the exhibition are all private. This shows a characteristics of public peace museums: they tend to avoid controversial exhibits. Dr. Erik Somers explained that the reason why the exhibition was refused by

public peace museums is because it described Japanese aggression and that right wingers would attack it. He expressed admiration for the Osaka International Peace Centre, which addresses Japanese aggression, but refused to host the Dutch exhibition because of bad timing: according to the interview with him, nationalists had just held a meeting where they denied that the Nanking Massacre in China had ever taken place.

Why did Japan become so nationalistic? The rise of neo-nationalism in the 1990s is related to a Japanese militarism that aims to protect the interests of Japanese multinational corporations that started to expand overseas in the latter half of the 1980s. Nippon Keidanren (Japan Business Federation) Chairman Hiroshi Okuda [also the chairman of Toyota Motor Corp] commented that “armament was necessary to protect Japanese interests overseas.”²⁰⁾ A nationalistic organization called Japan Conference was established in 1997 and it is explained in its website as follows:

The Japan Conference is a think-tank oriented NGO that has 47 branch offices in each prefecture all over Japan. It is the mission of the Japan Conference to study fundamental issues, such as the Constitution, education, diplomacy and defense, and to propose relevant policies to the Japanese government in cooperation with the Liberal Democratic Party. The chairman is Mr. Miyoshi Toru, the former Chief Justice, and the vice chairmen are Mr. Yamamoto Takuma, the honorary president of Fujitsu and Mr. Ishii Koichiro, the former president of Bridgestone Cycle Co. Ltd. Executive members are from various fields, including academic, economic, educational and religious worlds. “The Diet members’ committee of the Japan Conference”, the sister organization of Japan Conference, is composed of about 230 members from both Houses of Representatives and Councilors. The chairman of the committee is Mr. Hiranuma Takeo, the former Minister of Economics, Trade and Industry. The former chairman was Mr. Aso Taro, the Minister of The Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications.²¹⁾

This shows the connection between the Japan Conference and the ruling party, the Liberal Democratic Party and also the government. It also shows the close relation between the Japan Conference and multi-national companies such as Fujitsu and Bridgestone Cycle Company. The members are active not only in the Diet, but also in all the forty-seven prefectures.

The philosophy and mission of the Japan Conference, as explained on its website,²²⁾ can be summarized as follows: profound respect for the Imperial Family, a desire to revise the Constitution so that Japan could maintain a regular army under the name of “national security”, and their intention of revising the educational system to glorify Japan’s actions in World War II. There is no reflection on Japan’s aggression during the war. They cooperate with the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform, also established in 1997. The ideas of the Society are the same as those of the Japan Conference: one of the aims in establishing the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform is to repudiate any recognition of Japanese aggression during WWII. The Japan Conference and the Society

worked together to stop the Dutch exhibition at public peace museums by using anonymous phone calls and letters, according to Tomoyo Nakao. "As a result, an institution in Tokyo and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum abandoned the Dutch exhibition."²³⁾ However, it is encouraging that the Dutch exhibition was shown at Shiminkaikan (Citizens' Hall) in Nagasaki from 16th to 24th November, 2000 through the efforts of the Nagasaki Peace Institute (NGO). The Dutch exhibition was held jointly with one on atomic bomb victims who were forced laborers, including Chinese workers, Korean workers and POWs. This exhibit revealed that the U.S. government dropped the atomic bomb even though it was known that POWs lived in Nagasaki. 170 to 200 people from the Netherlands, Britain, the United States and Australia were atomic bomb victims.²⁴⁾ It also reported that 19,391 Koreans were atomic bomb victims and that 9,169 of them perished because of their injuries. There were 600 Chinese atomic bomb victims; 26 of them perished. The reason why there were Chinese and Korean atomic bomb victims in Nagasaki is that they were forced to go there and work by the Japanese government and companies. This piece of history, along with the issue of the Korean and Chinese atomic bomb victims, is presented at the private Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum.

It appeared as if citizens and members of city assemblies acted independently in protests against the Dutch exhibition, but "most of such actions were carried out by supporters of the Japan Conference and the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform."²⁵⁾ The Japan Conference and the Society are well organized to suppress exhibitions on Japanese aggression in Japan. When the Tokyo University of Foreign Languages (TUFS) hosted the exhibition, "substantive objections were raised with particular vehemence during a symposium organized by TUFS. Right-wing extremists opposing the exhibition disrupted the meeting in an aggressive way."²⁶⁾ On the other hand, private peace museums welcomed the exhibition. The following is a positive response to the exhibition when it was held in Kochi City. It shows what public peace museums missed by refusing to host the Dutch exhibition.

4. The Positive Response to the Dutch Exhibition by Private Peace Museums

The exhibition of "The Japanese Occupation of the Dutch East Indies Remembered" was held at Kochi Liberty and People's Rights Museum from July 3rd to 8th, 2001 in Kochi City in south-western Japan. The organizer of the exhibition was Mr. Shigeo Nishimori, the former director of Grassroots House, a small private peace museum in Kochi City. Grassroots House is often asked to send lecturers to schools and universities to promote peace education. While the exhibition was held, Dr. Erik Somers was invited to give a lecture on the Japanese occupation of the Dutch East Indies at a Peace Studies course called "Peace and Disarmament" at Kochi University on July 5th. The purpose of the exhibition was to foster mutual understanding among the Dutch, the Indonesians and the Japanese through sharing memories of World War II. Not only university students, but also children, learned about the importance of mutual understanding as Dr. Somers was

also invited to talk about peace and human rights at Gomen Noda Elementary School in Nankoku City on July 7th. The children's impressions are included in this paper because it is an excellent example of education for peace and mutual understanding in relation to the children's developmental stage, an important consideration in peace education in schools and peace museums. The response by students and children shows the value of the Dutch exhibition.

4. 1. Students' Impressions of the Dutch Exhibition

A course entitled "Peace and Disarmament" was started at Kochi University by several lecturers, including the author, in 1987. Approximately 150 students in the Department of Humanity, Science, Education and Agriculture take the course once a week from April to July. The theme of the course in 2001 was "Asia and Japan" and focused on relations with China and Korea. Mr. Shigeo Nishimori, then director of the Grassroots House, gave lectures on the past, present and future relationship between Japan and China. Many students were shocked to learn of Japanese aggression against China, as this is not covered well at high school. Since 1991, several peace trips were organized by Grassroots House to investigate what Japanese soldiers from Kochi did to the Chinese during World War II. As a result, booklets were published and have been used as teaching materials. The students were impressed to know of private Japanese support, at a grassroots level, for Chinese lawsuits against Japan for an apology and compensation for damages incurred during the war. Mr. Kensaku Umebara, the president of the Association for Recording U.S. Air Raids and Damage in Kochi, gave lectures from the victim's perspective that included U.S. air-raids on Kochi and also spoke on Japanese aggression towards Korea during the war. There were five other lecturers, including the author and Dr. Erik Somers, the only non-Japanese lecturer.

Students learned about the history of the Japanese occupation of the Dutch East Indies for the first time. They listened to his lecture and also watched the testimony of three nationals (Indonesians, Dutch and Japanese) recorded on a CD-ROM. The audio-visual aids helped those who could not visit the exhibition better understand the history. Students were asked at the end of the class to write down their impressions and their opinions on how a mutual understanding among nations could lead to a better future. None of the students knew anything about the Japanese occupation of the Dutch East Indies. Many of them were shocked to know of the actual events. A student wrote, "I had only known of good relations between Japan and the Netherlands, so I was shocked to learn about the bad relations during the war." Another student wrote, "It is regrettable that some Dutch have bad feelings toward the Japanese. I think that more exchanges and mutual understanding are necessary."

There are two reasons for their ignorance of Japanese modern history, especially Japan's aggression towards other countries during the war. One is that history is not a compulsory subject at high school. Even if students choose to study it, Japanese aggression during WWII is often not covered at high school because "the general history tends to be taught without referring to World War II".²⁷⁾ Furthermore, memorization is

emphasized more than understanding history. The other reason is that the Japanese occupation of the Dutch East Indies had not been reported in the media until the Dutch exhibition became a controversial issue in Japan. A student pointed this out, remarking that, "The situation with Korea has been reported on in the media, but there is no information on what happened with the Netherlands and Indonesia during the war. I think that this should get more attention from the media in Japan."

The lecture made students think about Japan's actions in the past and also what should be done today and in the future. A student criticized the Japanese government because Japan has still not apologized to victims of Japanese aggression nor compensated them for terrible damages incurred by them during the war. He also insisted that a true and accurate account of the past should be taught at school.

I think that Japan should solve problems pertinent to the war. Nothing has been solved although over fifty years have passed since the end of the war. I think this is because Japan's action has been ambiguous. What is necessary is that the Japanese should know what Japan did in the past. The Japanese have not understood the past clearly. This is because the Japanese have not been taught the realities of the past in the educational system. If we are educated well and understand the past, I think that we will start trying to solve the problems. I think that the Japanese government will try to solve the problem if citizens start doing so.

Another student thought that the exhibition was very significant in that it gave people knowledge and awareness of events in the past that have shaped the present situation in Japan, a process which would lead to peace. All in all, students' impressions of the lecture were very positive as the following comments illustrate.

The previous lectures were mainly about Japan's relation to China and Korea. Dr. Somers' lecture was very interesting because it had broader content. I think that we should remember mistakes in the past, and it is necessary to promote international exchanges with other countries in Asia and the world.

I think that such a lecture and the exhibition are very worthy and hope that he will give us more lectures in the future.

Thus, students learned Japan's history from a Dutch viewpoint. Some students went to see the exhibition; this helped give them a better understanding of the situation. Eriko Sakagami expressed these impressions when I interviewed her:

I went to see the exhibition because I wanted to know more about the history of Indonesia. I studied history when I was a high school student, but I didn't learn much about the history of Indonesia. I think that the exhibition was well-balanced because I could learn about the history of Indonesia from three

viewpoints: the Netherlands, Indonesia and Japan. Personal accounts, such as diary entries and testimonies, were very good because I could feel what individuals felt during the war.

Most of the students' impressions were very positive, but one student wrote, "I am fed up with hearing about the bad side of Japan. The best way to form a friendship with other nations is to forget about the past." On the other hand, other students responded that "Such an idea is dangerous because we may make the same mistakes again in the future if we forget about the past." Another student wrote, "I learned only about the bad side of Japan during the war in this course, so I can understand why a new history textbook was made: to hide the bad side of Japan." Such reactions show that there are students who have been influenced by nationalistic moves regarding school textbooks, exhibitions and comics²⁸⁾ that glorify Japanese aggression against other countries in World War II. Such impressions show that Dr. Somers' lecture and the exhibition triggered controversy among students and made them think about the position and the role of Japan in the past, the present and the future.

An article on the lecture appeared in *The Asahi Shinbun*, a national newspaper, on August 3rd²⁹⁾. It quoted Dr. Somers as stating that, "It is not possible to talk about history only from one side. It is important to know each other's memories and this would lead to mutual understanding." The importance of a peace museum was emphasized as a place to convey memories of war and the significance of peace to the future generation. This article made readers think of the past and the number of visitors to Grassroots House increased after it appeared.

Not only the students of Kochi University, but also the children of Gomen Noda elementary school in Nankoku City, were greatly influenced by the lecture, as is discussed in the next section.

4. 2. Children's Impressions of the Dutch Culture

While the exhibition was held in Kochi City, Dr. Somers was invited to talk about peace and human rights at Gomen Noda elementary school. 161 children welcomed him by singing a song about Orizuru (folded-paper cranes) and presented him with a garland of a thousand Orizuru that they had folded. The origami cranes are a symbol of peace and it is said that sick people will recover if they fold one thousand cranes. Pupils from the 4th to 6th grades listened to his talk while 1st to 3rd graders watched a picture-story show about U.S. air-raids on Kochi. With the children's age in mind, Dr. Somers did not talk about the history during World War II, but used slides to talk about Dutch children's life. The pupils later reported that they were fascinated by the photos of Dutch children that Dr. Somers took at his son's school. They learned the importance of respecting different cultures and of mutual understanding. A boy from the 5th grade wrote, "I think it is great that children with different colour hair and eyes go to the same school. I wonder if we can get along well like that in Japan." A six grader girl wrote that:

There were many differences of life between the Dutch children and us. But the Dutch children seemed to enjoy the break time and the physical education class just like us. I was very glad to know that the thousand paper cranes that we had folded will be decorating the school where Dr. Somers' son goes to.³⁰⁾

This girl realized that children are the same even if they have different cultures. A girl from the fifth grade wrote, "I felt that nobody in any country wants to have war, and that many people can make efforts to work for peace. I hope that this world will be peaceful without war." Considering the children's age, it was a model example of peace education because many children felt an affinity for the Netherlands and the Dutch children. Some children wrote that they felt like studying Dutch and going to the Netherlands in the future. It is desirable for children to have international exchanges, as in the case of Mizumaki Town, and to understand each other if we are to build a peaceful future.

The exhibition of "The Japanese Occupation of the Dutch East Indies Remembered" made citizens and university students think of the past and what they should do in the present and future to achieve a peaceful society. It was also illuminating for children to realize that children in the Netherlands and Japan are the same despite cultural differences, knowledge which will lead to mutual understanding in the future.³¹⁾ It should be noted that public peace museums opted out of opportunities for such positive experiences by refusing to hold the Dutch exhibition. On the other hand, Grassroots House, a private peace museum, supported the exhibition and played an important role in peace education at Kochi University and a local elementary school.

5. Conclusion

Peace museums and textbooks began to address Japanese aggression during WWII in the 1990s. However, public and private peace museums reacted to this trend in different ways because of the right wingers' attacks against exhibits that publicized or drew attention to Japanese aggression. The example of the Dutch travelling exhibition provoked different responses from public peace museums and their private counterparts: public peace museums refused to show the Dutch exhibition while some private ones accepted it. The case of the Grassroots House shows the important roles that private peace museums play in peace education and in building mutual understanding at a university, elementary school and the community levels. Public peace museums chose not to participate in this process by refusing to hold the exhibition.

Last but not least, the Kyoto Museum for World Peace at Ritsumeikan University, according to the questionnaire that the author administered in 2001, is highly respected and valued, not only in Japan, but throughout the world. It has, and continues to play, very important roles in Japan and abroad by publishing *Muse: Newsletter of the Japanese Network of Museums for Peace*, both in Japanese and English. Visitors to the peace museum will appreciate the well-balanced exhibitions more and more after the renewal of

the museum in 2005. It goes without saying that Professor Ikuro Anzai, the director, has been playing a very important role nationally and internationally. It is hoped that Kyoto Museum for World Peace will continue to play the role of a model peace museum in the future.

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Note

- 1) "Kyoukasho Kentei: 10 nenmae 'Shinshutsu' Hyouki Houdoude Gaikou Mondai" (Textbook Screening: Report of a Description of "Advancement" became a Diplomatic Issue ten years ago.) *Asahi Shinbun* (Newspaper), 20 July 1992.
- 2) "Kinrin shokoku joukou" (regulations regarding neighbouring countries) in *Wikipedia* (encyclopaedia) <http://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/>
- 3) "U.N. Legal Expert Demands Japan Redress 'Comfort Women,' Punish Perpetrators" *The People's Korea*. 1998. http://210.145.168.243/pk/055th_issue/98081201.htm
- 4) *ibid.*
- 5) Kodomoto Kyoukasho Zenkoku Net 21 (National Net 21 of Children and Textbooks). Ed. *Kyoukasho Kougekino Uso-o Kiru (Exploding Lies in Attacking Textbooks)*, 2000, p.4.
- 6) Yamabe, Masahiko. "Nihonno Heiwa Hakubutsukanwa Ajia Taihieyou Sensouo Ikani Tenjishiteiruka" (How World War II in Asia and the Pacific Ocean is Presented in Japanese Peace Museums) in *Ritsumeikan Heiwa Kenkyu*(Peace Research), a journal of the Kyoto Museum for World Peace No. 6, 25 March, 2005, p. 6.
- 7) The Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform criticised a textbook published by Tokyo Shoseki because Hiroshima was described as the "military capital" [militarily the most important city] which led to the atomic bombing. The society insists that such a description of Hiroshima leads to the justification of the atomic bombing. http://www.tsukurukai.com/02_about_us/02_maso_01.html#
- 8) Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. (2000) *Hiroshimao Sekaini: The Spirit of Hiroshima*, Hiroshima: Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, p. 14.
- 9) Common History Textbook Committee of Japan, China and Korea ed. (2005) *Miraio Hiraku Rekishi: Higashi Ajia 3-kokuno Kingenndaishi* (History for the Future: Modern History of Three Countries in East Asia), Tokyo: Koubunken. P. 156.
- 10) *ibid.*
- 11) Yamabe, *op.cit.*, 2005, p. 6.
- 12) Nakao, Tomoyo. (2004) "Sensouno Kioku" (Memory of War), in Utsumi, Aiko & Yamawaki, Keizou (eds) *Rekishino Kabeo Koete* (Beyond the Wall of History), Tokyo: Houritsu Bunkasha, p. 72.
- 13) Somers, Erik ed. A leaflet on the exhibition entitled "Japanese- Dutch-Indonesians: The Japanese Occupation of the Dutch East Indies Remembered", Amsterdam, Netherlands Institute for War Documentation, 2000.
- 14) *ibid.*
- 15) Nakao, Tomoyo. "Taiwa wa Tsuzuku: Oranda Sensouten o Megutte"(The Dialogue continues

- over the Dutch War Exhibition) in *Sekai (World)*, August, 2001, p.225.
- 16) Mizumaki Town ed., *Memorial Book Celebrating the 400th Anniversary of Exchanges between Japan and the Netherlands*. Mizumaki. Matsumoto, 2000.
 - 17) Nagai, Asami. "Making peace with the past" in *The Daily Yomiuri*. 29 July, 2000.
 - 18) "The Institute was established shortly after the liberation of the Netherlands on 8 May 1945. Since its foundation it has housed the archives of the Dutch resistance, as well as legal and underground newspapers and pamphlets, posters and photographs, books and articles" according to the website of Guide européen des archives - The Netherlands: <http://www.memorial-cdjc.org/fr/guide/netherlands.htm>
 - 19) Dr. Erik Somers works for the Information and Documentation Department of the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation. The interview with him was held in Amsterdam on 28th February, 2003. He went to Japan in 1996 and had interviewed twenty-five former soldiers and made the exhibition.
 - 20) Takao Saito, a lawyer, stated that a quarter of all the output of Japanese companies was from multi-national companies in the latter half of the 1990s and the number of foreign workers was over three million. This is about the number of unemployed Japanese. <http://www.kyodo-center.jp/shirou/kouen/kouen01.htm>
 - 21) The website of the Japan Council: <http://www.nipponkaigi.org/reidai02/About%20Us/Profile.htm>
 - 22) The agenda of the Japan Conference is explained in its website: <http://www.nipponkaigi.org/reidai02/The%20Course%20of%20Action.htm>
 - 23) Nakao, op.cit., 2004, p. 77.
 - 24) Executive Committee for the Exhibition on the War between the Netherlands and Japan and the Atomic Bombing. *Nichiran Sensou Genbaku-ten* (The Exhibition on the War between the Netherlands and Japan and the Atomic Bombing)., Nagasaki: a handmade booklet, p. 26. The author visited Nagasaki on 18th November, 2000 and saw the Dutch exhibition as well as the exhibit on the atomic bombing of non-Japanese workers.
 - 25) Nakao, op.cit., 2004, p. 81.
 - 26) Somers, Erik and Rijpma, Stance. *Dutchmen Japanese Indonesians: A remarkable exhibition*, Amsterdam, Netherlands Institute for War Documentation, 2002. p. 3.
 - 27) Kentaro Kojima, a high school teacher of history in Tokyo, emailed the author on 24th September, 2005 that history textbooks began to deal with Japanese aggression from the end of the 1980s to the first half of the 1990s, but there weren't enough descriptions on Japanese aggression to teach.
 - 28) Yoshinori Kobayashi, a cartoonist, started publishing a comic called "*Gomanism Sengen (Declaration)*" (goman means arrogance in Japanese) in 1992 and *Shin Gomanism Sengen Special* became a best-seller in 1998: over 700,000 copies were sold. He glorifies World War II, insisting that Japan liberated other Asian countries and tries to "educate" young people using his comic. He denies the existence of the Nanjing Massacre quoting an article in *the Asahi Shinbun* (Newspaper) published on 25th December, 1937 which showed a photo of Chinese children playing with Japanese soldiers in Nanjing - see page 409 of his comic, *Shin (New) Gomanism Special: War Theory 2* published on 15th November, 2001 by Gentousha, Tokyo. He ignores the control of the media by the government during World War II and denies the existence of the Nanjing Massacre. He also denies on page 296 that Asian women were forced to work as sex slaves, criticizing that this sex slave issue is dealt with in school textbooks. His influence can not be ignored because a lot of young people read his comics.
 - 29) "Sensou Kataritsugu Heiwa Hakubutsukan" (Peace Museums that Convey the Nature of

War to the Next Generation) in *Asahi Shinbun* (Newspaper). 3 August 2001.

- 30) When Dr. Erik Somers was invited to talk at Gomen Noda Elementary School, the author was his interpreter. Mr. Yoshihiko Nirekane, a teacher of the elementary school, sent her the children's impressions of Dr. Erik Somers' lecture.
- 31) A section of the Dutch exhibition was published in "Vrede en Wederzijds Begrip"(Peace and Mutual Understanding) in *Netherlanders Japanners Indonesiers* (Netherlanders, Japanese and Indonesians) edited by Erik Somers, Netherlands Institute for War Documentation: Amsterdam, 2002, pp. 123-126.