

Keynote report

# Creating Future Peace: Inheritance of War Experience

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## 1. The Peace Forum Initiative

Dr. Park Jae kyu, the president of Kyungnam University, felt such a strong empathy for the Okinawans who experienced the Battle of Okinawa, the last major battle of World War II, that he co-founded the joint research project—“Peace Forum”—between the Soka University, Kyungnam University, and the Chinese Culture University. In March 2016, President Park visited Okinawa and became convinced that those who had experienced the terrible war were still carrying its pain, and were hoping that such a tragedy would never be repeated.

After visiting Okinawa, President Park who visited Soka University to receive an honorary doctorate, made the following proposal: “There is the Institute for Far Eastern Studies at Kyungnam University where research into problems in the Far East such as Northeast Asia and the situation in the Korean Peninsula is conducted. The research done here is also well known to those concerned at home and also abroad. Most peace scholars say that a prosperous Northeast Asia including South Korea and Japan is directly related to world peace. The ideas and actions of Dr. Daisaku Ikeda are mutually connected with the activities of our institute. I hope that from this point onward Soka University and Kyungnam University will deepen their relationship even more through long-term academic and educational exchange.” Soka University was established by Dr. Ikeda who expressed the following: “It is the Okinawan people who have suffered the most who should be the happiest.” It is only natural that there was deep empathy from Soka University for the Kyungnam University president’s proposal for peace.

Following this, a mutual understanding was established following the foundational principles of both Soka and Kyungnam universities. The joint research project for realizing peace in Asia was established in collaboration with the Chinese Culture University, which enjoys an academic and educational exchange with the two universities mentioned above.

The project aims for specific results such as the policies and proposals about the matters given below:

- (1) Passing on accurate records and memories of the war to the next generation, to avoid repeating the disaster of war.
- (2) Strengthening the cooperative structures for conflict resolution and peace building in the Northeast Asian region.

One of the common aims of the three universities that co-founded the Peace Forum is training those individuals who are devoted to the happiness of peoples. We believe that the basis of the pursuit of happiness is peace. Although peace, like happiness, can be defined in many ways, we want to stress that we have defined it here as not threatening people with unreasonable violence, alongside “freedom from terror” as it is defined in the Charter of the United Nations. Peace, when defined in this way, may be interchangeable with security.

The fact that everyone has a right to live without the fear of being threatened is self-evident. However, when individuals pursue this right, conflicts and wars often occur, as Hobbes stated long ago, which results in the paradoxical situation when people wishing to preserve peace are often threatened. In Northeast Asia, which is the region where we live, this paradox is a reality, and is causing division and conflict. Above all, in recent years, the conflict between nations is increasing the threat of the use of military force.

On the basis of such a reality, I want to show the viewpoint firstly that we cannot change a geopolitical neighbor, so that we should recognize Asia where we live in as one community inherently. Secondly, we should mutually accept our right to pursue security and prosperity as members of this collective community. We must change ideas that sacrificing others for one’s own survival is unavoidable like as zero-sum game.

When countries clash over ‘security’ that they are pursuing, one country attempts to achieve security for itself by eliminating the concerns of others and conflicts arise, regardless of the fact that common security can only be achieved collaboratively. These conflicts are getting serious and are causing division. Although there is a variety of research on the mechanism that gives rise to the security paradox mentioned above, the idea of securitization proposed by the Copenhagen School of International Relations Research has a great deal of merit.

According to the theory of securitization, a threat to security is understood by constructivism as a problem of intersubjective acknowledgment.<sup>1</sup> This means that in a community such as a

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<sup>1</sup> BUZAN, Barry & HANSEN, Lene, *The Evolution of International Security Studies*, Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp.212-217

nation state the perception of an existential threat arises, and a threat to security is created, when the securitizing actor spreads news of referentobjects assumed by the potential aggressor. The problem here is that the accuracy of the evidence that can be objectively verified as a “threat” tends not to be questioned.

During this securitization process, those who are considered a threat are often reframed as inhuman and are demonized. For example, institutions such as the Japanese government and the mass media criticize the Kim regime of North Korea as being a selfish nation that does not understand the international community. They stress that North Korea must first change. They criticize North Korea as a country that does not accept universal humanitarian values and ethics, and is difficult to understand. There is a tendency to accuse North Korea of being different from us in a negative way. This type of assertion can easily create the impression that something is a threat merely because it is different.

Of course, someone who has different values and a different sense of ethics is not necessarily a “threat.” However, during the process of securitization, it can be said that the perception of “a threat” is created due to this type of inference. Following this, the resistance the “threat” that has thus been created arises, driven by an intention to destroy the enemy that is different from us. However, the tragedy that this leads to is a foregone conclusion.

Fortunately, at this time, we have not experienced the worst case scenario. Although the problem of security is rooted in spreading perceptions of an intersubjective threat, from the standpoint of constructivism, this perception of a “threat” is resolved when de-securitization also becomes a possibility.

This Peace Forum sheds light on how to overcome the security dilemma which arises between groups at various levels and aims to make the collective community that is Asia a more peaceful place.

During the first forum, problems associated with passing on the war experience and military methods of resolving conflict in Northeast Asia were covered. The following thesis will examine the significance of learning lessons from war to overcome division and conflict and to prevent future wars.

## **2. The problems associated with passing on the war experience**

The war that was fought in Okinawa was one of the most unusual wars involving Japan. The Japanese army had suffered one defeat after another at the island bases in the South Pacific at the hands of the American army. The Japanese army fought to the bitter end in Okinawa by dragging the local residents into the war.

Japan had a policy of dying in battle instead of surrendering to the enemy and America responded to this with a ferocious attack of naval gunfire. This American attack called the “Iron Storm” not only killed many Japanese soldiers but also many civilians who were residents of Okinawa. Many Okinawans were also victims of Japanese conscription and spy hunting. People

lost hope after the American invasion and died in large numbers after being cornered. They were not protected by the Japanese army, who they thought were on their side.

After the war was lost, Okinawa came under the control of America. It was not returned to Japan even after the San Francisco Peace Treaty and remained under American rule. America forged ahead, building military bases in Okinawa as bridgeheads to resist the Soviet and Chinese threat during the Cold War. While the people of Okinawa were recovering from the horrors of the end of WWII, there were many who were forced to live painful lives under the American military occupation, due to their loss of livelihood, such as farming, which was a direct result of the expansion of military bases through the use of guns and bulldozers.

In 1950, details of operation *Iron Storm* were published by the Okinawa Times. Back then, while the people of Okinawa were still suffering from the ghastly war, surviving was the most important thing. Therefore, it was not the time for a movement to emerge that would pass on Okinawa's war experiences to future generations.

When Okinawa was returned to Japan in 1972, the movement that chronicled the war in Okinawa began to take its first steps. In 1974, 'The regulations to determine the day of the Okinawa memorial service' was implemented. "Many people from our Prefecture of Okinawa died in World War II. We faced the grim historical fact that our property and cultural assets were lost and we solemnly accepted this. June 23 was decided on as 'memorial day' so that the calamitous war is never be repeated and also to remember those who had fallen in battle. We also hope for lasting peace which is universal".<sup>2</sup> General Mitsuru Ushijima's suicide on June 23 marked the end of Japan's organized resistance. Then, in 1975, the Okinawa Prefectural Peace Museum opened and began holding exhibits related to the war.

It was the youth division of Soka Gakkai that encouraged people to pass on their experiences of the war and publish a collection of people's accounts of surviving the war at this time. These were ground-breaking achievements. "Handing down memories of the calamitous war and keeping a record of them is the next step in transmitting the importance of peace to the next generation." It was this idea that was the basis for editing and publishing the 80-volume collection of testimonials of war experiences and notes, entitled "To generations who do not know war." It covers 3,400 people from every prefecture in Japan. More than 4,000 young people across Japan participated in this endeavour, including those from senior high schools. It took 12 years to complete. The first volume was *The Shattered Okinawa Island*, an edition on Okinawa that was published in 1974.<sup>3</sup>

This first volume was simply a matter of handing down, in interview format, the experiences

<sup>2</sup> Okinawa Prefectural Government:

[http://www.pref.okinawa.lg.jp/reiki/34990101004200000000/34990101004200000000/firm\\_inyo\\_prag6.html](http://www.pref.okinawa.lg.jp/reiki/34990101004200000000/34990101004200000000/firm_inyo_prag6.html)

<sup>3</sup> Soka Gakkai Official Site: <https://www.sokanet.jp/hbk/heiwa.html>

Soka Gakkai Okinawa Youth Division, *Okinawa 1944-1945: Thinking Peace for the Future True Stories from 14 Survivors*, Daisanbunmei-sha, 2016

of those who suffered during the war to young people who know nothing of it.

However, most people who experienced the war were reluctant to talk about it. The experience of the war consisted of the following: memories that could not be expressed in words, suffering and sorrow, anger, and a desire for revenge. Most people had suppressed these powerful emotions in an attempt to return to a normal life, therefore, only those who embodied the anti-war spirit could be referred to as “testimonial providers.” This only happens when survivors accept the suffering and sorrow, resentment and regret, and hope that there will never be anymore victims like them.

What deserves attention here is the fact that the process of the acceptance of war experiences is diverse. There are times when people are compelled to take revenge, overwhelmed by feelings of resentment as victims of the war. There are also times when they rationalise their participation in war activities as “doing our utmost to ensure justice.” This in turn leads to self-esteem. What we call “war experiences” should be recognized as the “memories” of some of those who experienced the war. These are people who have overcome their suffering and believe that war should be rejected.

The following people must also be taken into consideration: people who are not able to overcome their war experiences, those who do not want to recall what happened, those who are overwhelmed by resentment, and those who think about the war as past glory. However, in this thesis we want to think about how sharing war experiences may help to prevent such a war from breaking out again.

### **3. Handing down war experiences as a form of peace education**

Talking about pre-war imperialist policies in a positive light became commonplace in the post-1980s era in Japan. The so-called history textbook problem arose in the 1980s. In the 1990s, a theory that strongly criticized any rejection of the war activities of the military regime era as being masochistic was published in some national newspapers. Also, there was a strong protest movement conducted by right-wing groups and politicians against an exhibit portraying the Japanese military’s invasion of China, held at the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, which was re-opened in 1996 and displayed at Osaka International Peace Center “Peace Osaka”. There was a problem about changes to the content of the exhibit which was held at the Okinawa Prefectural Peace Museum just before it opened in 1999.

There are people committed to a revisionist view of history, who uphold the ideology that even the testimonies of those who experienced the war in Japan should be rejected. This is causing fresh division and antagonism in Japan. In view of such a situation, accurately recording historical facts and the memories of those who have experienced the war has become increasingly important. Okinawa is also promoting the archiving of these testimonials in writing and video.

It goes without saying that it is important to preserve these primary resources. However,

what is more important is transmitting the memories of those who experienced the war as well as their anti-war message and sharing these resources with many people who have never experienced war. One method of doing this is allowing those who have not experienced the war to trade places with those who have experienced the war. They can then act as guides who talk about exhibits and war relics.

Currently in Okinawa, museums such as the Prefectural Peace Museum and the Himeyuri Peace Museum are training such guides. The aim of training guides at the Prefectural Peace Museum is expressed as follows:

At the end of March 1945, a ferocious attack was launched against Okinawa. The “Iron Storm” which lasted three months changed the shape of the mountains on the islands. Much cultural heritage was destroyed and more than 200,000 people lost their lives. Handing down accurate records of the historical lessons of the war in Okinawa to the next generation is important. In order to secure talented people to play an important role in peace education support activities in schools and in the region, “Okinawa Peace Museum Volunteers” will be trained.<sup>4</sup>

Okinawa is actively involved in peace education even at the administrative level. In 1993, “the guide to peace education” was formulated. The essence of peace education was expressed in the following way: “Based on the historical characteristics of Okinawa, we want to nurture peace values”.

In an attitude survey administered in 2012 by Toshifumi Murakami of Kyoto University of Education to the primary and junior high school students in Okinawa, more than 90% responded that they had heard of the war in Okinawa. The researcher concluded that this was because the memories of those who had experienced the war had reached a wide audience. Most respondents

The ratio of Agent of the Inheritance of the Battle of Okinawa for the secondary school student in Okinawa in 2012

Agent			ratio
Relatives	great-grand parents	9.6%	75.0%
	grandparents	50.1%	
	parents	15.3%	
people who experienced war.			66.0%
TV			70.2%
Books			37.3%
Internet			22.0%
others			3.7%

[Sample Number of the Survey]School=22 / Pupils=1,487(male:763, female:724)

MURAKAMI(2012)

4 TONOIKE, Satoshi, ‘Study about inheritance of telling war experience (1)—efforts of Okinawa as a case study—’ in *Bulletin of the Center for Educational Research and Practice, Faculty of Education and Human Studies, Akita University*, No.36, 1994, p.30

(70.2%) reported the source of their information about the war was TV. In addition, 66% of respondents also learned about it from those who had experienced the war directly, and 59.8% from their teachers.<sup>5</sup>

Also, 59.7% of students had heard accounts of war experiences from their great grandparents or grandparents. 15.3% had found out from a parent whom they believed had heard about it from their grandparents. 75% of students had found out about the war in Okinawa from their family. This represents a greater percentage than those who had found out about it from TV. It can be inferred that, to a great extent, students found out about the war from their families. Additionally, if they did not have a family member who had experienced the war, they had missed a vital source of information about the war.

The Ratio of Agent of the Inheritance of the WWII for the Junior High School students

AGENT \ PLACE	TOKYO	KYOTO	HIROSHIMA	NAHA	TOTAL	TOTAL in 2006
TV	82.4%	74.7%	76.5%	77.2%	77.9%	55.0%
Teachers	46.6%	61.4%	58.6%	59.8%	56.0%	77.0%
Grandparents and/or Great-grandparents	37.4%	33.4%	33.2%	42.9%	36.5%	37.8%
Internet	34.4%	37.0%	31.6%	41.7%	35.9%	-
Hibakusya	10.6%	21.4%	58.3%	26.4%	28.4%	21.4%
Newspapers	19.8%	23.7%	24.8%	31.9%	24.5%	25.9%
Parents	26.3%	18.8%	20.2%	16.9%	21.0%	18.6%
Other people experienced war than Hibakusya	13.6%	10.7%	17.9%	32.7%	17.9%	17.7%
Hiroshima Peace Note	1.6%	3.6%	40.1%	0.8%	11.5%	-
Others	8.1%	5.2%	3.6%	5.9%	5.8%	6.9%
TOTAL	280.8%	289.9%	364.8%	336.2%	315.4%	260.3%
the number of answerers	369	308	307	254	1,238	1,439

MURAKAMI(2016)

Murakami also administered “peace attitude” surveys to junior high school students in the four cities of Tokyo, Kyoto, Hiroshima, and Naha. During the 2016 survey, the students were asked about their sources of information about World War II. Most students responded that they had gained information from the TV. Teachers occupied the second spot. Compared to the survey that was administered 10 years ago, the primary and secondary sources of information had changed places. However, there was no great change in the percentage of students who had found out from their great grandparents or grandparents. When making comparisons between the four cities, Okinawa was about 10 points above the other cities. Also, in the case of Okinawa, it was clear that there was an increase in the percentage of students who had heard from people who

<sup>5</sup> MURAKAMI, Toshifumi, ‘A Study on Peace Education in Okinawa : By the Survey of the Primary and Junior High School Students’ in *Hiroshima Peace Science*, No.34, 2012, pp. 33-59

had experienced the war, similar to the case of the atomic bomb victims of Hiroshima.<sup>6</sup>

The junior high school students who had an opportunity to talk to those who had experienced the war represented about 40% of the total. This situation should be evaluated as positive in terms of passing experiences of the war on to the next generation. However, there is a problem with the advanced age of those who had experienced the war. The 2016 survey administered by Murakami contained the following question: “Those who had a good recollection of the war were over eighty years of age. What do you think about the difficulties this caused when hearing about war experiences directly?”

Students Understanding of people who experienced war.

Those who had a good recollection of the war were over eighty years of age. What do you think about the difficulties this caused when hearing about war experiences directly?

	TOKYO	KYOTO	HIROSHIMA	NAHA	TOTAL
I am afraid that war will happen again.	32.9%	33.3%	25.8%	42.0%	33.0%
It is better to pass down war experiences.	26.9%	29.0%	34.4%	26.8%	29.3%
It is unavoidable that war experiences decrease.	11.6%	14.1%	14.0%	10.4%	12.6%
It is good that peace has been continued in Japan after WWII	12.4%	7.7%	12.4%	12.1%	11.2%
I think of nothing in particular	12.4%	11.4%	10.4%	6.1%	10.4%
The inheritance of war experiences is not necessary	2.0%	3.4%	1.3%	2.2%	2.2%
Others	1.7%	1.0%	1.7%	0.4%	1.3%
TOTAL	99.9%	99.9%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
the number of answerers	346	297	299	231	1,173

MURAKAMI(2016)

There were problems with the choices provided. However, most students responded that the risk of another war will increase when all those who had experienced the war have died. Most students responded that war experiences should be handed down. This was the case in Hiroshima too. The number of students who selected the same option was not dramatically lower in Okinawa. However, of the four cities, this option was chosen by a smaller percentage of students in Okinawa.

According to the surveys administered by Murakami, we can surmise that handing down war experiences which convey the misery of the war and the longing for peace is something that has been happening regularly. There is a need for a new kind of passing on that embodies the anti-war and peace creation spirit that is widespread and common to all, even after those who have experienced the war pass away.

<sup>6</sup> MURAKAMI, Toshifumi, ‘The Influence that Wartime Experience Gave to Peace Awareness: Chronological Analysis of the Attitude Surveys of Junior High School Students on War and Peace’ in *Hiroshima Peace Science*, No.38, 2016, pp.15-39



For example, teacher training in peace education is being conducted. One example is the training conducted at the Faculty of Education at the University of the Ryukyus, on how to teach people about the war in Okinawa. Moreover, it is important to train guides and successors who can explain things after learning about the war experience independently. The Peace Museum mentioned above and numerous citizen's groups are involved in this effort.

The Soka Gakkai Peace Committee reported to this symposium that young people are expected to trade places with those who have experienced the war, after hearing directly about their war experiences. It is also expected that they will talk about why “war should be rejected” and become individuals who are aware of the war experience, and talk about why “such a war should never be fought again.”

A mere record of the facts related to the war is not a sufficient driving force for peace creation. We would like to stress that it is necessary to instil an awareness of the war experience that will ensure such a war is never fought again. This must be done by raising people's awareness of the destruction and slaughter brought about by the war, and of its being a plain folly that destroys people's spirits.

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