

Towards Peace and Reconciliation: Case Studies of Peace Museums in Japan and the Philippines

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Introduction:

The protracted violence in Southeast Asia which encompasses political violence, conflict of interest, obstacles to the access to resources, the expression of identities and ideas, criminal violence, violence against women, unjust laws, social disparity, and cultural violence, all of which contribute to direct violence, has led to the following set of questions: How does Southeast Asian society understand violence? How is violence explained and managed? How are the lessons learned of violence extracted and how is violence remembered?

Apart from the academic discourse on violence and peace, I have a strong interest in peace museum in my search of an answer to how violence and peace are explained by the museum.

A peace museum is a public space for communicating with the wider public on history, memory, what are to be remembered and what forgotten.¹ It has the power to decide on what information and objects are to be displayed. Such power enables museums to exhibit, interpret and define the given events.

The complexity and aspect that one must not fail to take into account is that history is not only a historical fact, but is a result of the clustering or reorganizing of facts. This means that historical fact displayed in the museum has gone through the selection process. This process reflects the value prescribed by each museum, what is deemed appropriate to be remembered and forgotten, and what it wants the audiences to value. It is certain that displays in the museum cannot change policy or law within a short time, but I propose that information in the exhibitions displayed in the museum can profoundly impact the perception, attitudes and knowledge of the state's citizens. This is because the museum itself has the power to reconstruct, redefine, and interpret history and events.

In this article, I discuss the political space of memory in six peace museums, namely: (1) the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum (1955),² (2) the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum (1955), (3) the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum (1992), (4) the Kyoto Museum for World Peace (1992), (5) the Himeyuri Peace Museum in Japan (1984),³ and (6) the Iloilo Peace Museum in the Philippines (2009). My aim in doing so is to answer the following questions: (1) How does each peace museum present history? I do not only prioritize the past occurrences as such, but also consider how the museum tells the story and what it directs the audiences to remember; (2) How are the traumatic events used as a political tool? and (3) Can the political messages and peace approaches lead to a new understanding of violence and peace? I strongly hope that the outcomes of these studies will serve as a new body of knowledge in operating peace museums as part of peace studies, and that they will be relevant to contemporary conflict and violence management efforts. However, this research is not a critique of the museums per se, but aims to enhance their efficiency in peace studies and alternative education.

The target areas of the studies are in Japan and the Philippines. I chose to study peace museums in Japan because of the strong museum culture in it, and because of my personal interest in the Japanese peace museums' perspectives on peace and how to tell the stories of World War II, given its role as perpetrator. In the case of the peace museum in the Philippines, I would like to find out what a peace museum established and supported by Japanese tell Filipino society, amidst the people's collective memories as victims of Japanese invasion.

I chose peace museums which exhibit World War II events with the intention to draw conformity uniformity and linkage in term of time and events. The diversity of museums in this study can initially be considered in terms of their ownership

and management. The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum were established by the government and are managed by the municipalities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, respectively. The Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum was established by Revered Oka Masaharu, who works closely and directly with the direct victims and the marginalized population of Japanese society, including Korean forced labor. The Kyoto Museum for World Peace was established by Ritsumeikan University, one of the leading private universities in Japan. The Himeyuri Peace Museum was established by the victims and their families, who organized themselves and formed a foundation called the Himeyuri Alumnae Incorporated Foundation. The Illo Peace Museum in the Philippines was established and supported by Mr. Toshimi Kumai, a former veteran who was dispatched to and stationed in Iloilo City in the Philippines during World War II.

Such diversity reflects the abilities of different segments of society to use museums to create social and political space in communicating the people's experiences, perspectives and aspirations. It is the indicator of the openness of society to such diversity.

The Historical Context of Peace Museums

The first peace museums in Japan were the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum⁴ established in 1955, a decade after the end of World War II. Presently, there are over 55 peace museums in Japan, making Japan the country with the most peace museums in the world⁵. In the Philippines, the Iloilo Peace Museum established in 2009 is the only one of its kind.

In considering the position of Japan during World War II and the Japanese political context from pre-WWII to date, the emergence of the peace museums reflects three interrelated evolutionary approaches: (1) the creation of political space for victims and Japanese citizens, (2) the change in the vision in the international political arena from perpetrator to victim and (3) the change in the vision within Japan.

The creation of political space for the victims and Japanese citizens, plus the change of the perception in the international political arena that Japan was not only the invader but was also adversely affected, is apparent in the establishment of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum (1995), the Nagasaki International Cultural Hall, which later became the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum (1955) and the Okinawa Peace Memorial Museum (1975). Hiroshima and Nagasaki were destroyed by nuclear weapons, while Okinawa was the only battlefield in Japan during World War II. The tragedy of people in the three cities led to the construction of museums in public spaces to express the cruelty of war, as evinced in the experiences of direct victims. At the initial stage, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum promoted the exhibition on the evils of war from the perception of Japan's victims, without mentioning at all the Japanese invasion of other countries and the damage caused (Yamane 2009, 1). However the direct experiences of nuclear victims have become an important lesson and one of the clearest argument of the anti-nuclear and peace advocacy campaigns for which both museums are the world's leading advocates.

The social movement activities against war and those of the peace advocacy have become lively during the decades of international political sensitivity, mainly between 1960-1980. The anti-communism policy of the US, which had encompassed the whole of Asia, sparked a question among academicians, activists, and students across Japan on the relationship between the Japanese and American governments, given how Japanese support extended to the American government during the Vietnam War⁶ and the US dependent state policy.

At the same time that the US troop's air invasion of Northern Vietnam was being studied, academicians and students researched on and mounted exhibits on the US air invasion of many Japanese cities during World War II. In 1970, Osaka organized the Osaka War Memorial Exhibition, which displayed the air invasion and devastation of Osaka city during World War II.

This exhibition paved the way for the establishment of the Osaka International Peace Center. The exhibition on the air invasion of Kochi City was held in Kochi City in 1979, followed ten years later by the same organizers' establishing Grassroots House, which also runs a museum for peace. In the summer of 1980, the exhibition on war was organized with the aim to call for peace. The effort had expanded to three major cities, namely, Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka. The exhibition was organized in accordance with significant days in political history, such as August 6, to commemorate the day when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima; August 9, which recalls the atomic bomb attack on Nagasaki; and August 15, the anniversary of the surrender of Japan. The short duration of the exhibition prompted an appeal to establish a permanent exhibition at the peace museum for Japanese citizens to view all year round. There was also an appeal to build more peace museums (Yamane 2009, 1).

However, the mushroom-like growth pace of peace museums in Japan took over a decade to happen, post the war for peace exhibition in 1980: many public peace museums emerged between 1990 and 1992. These museums included the Kawasaki Peace Museum, the Kanagawa Plaza for Global Citizenship, the Saitama Peace Museum, the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum, the Kyoto Museum for World Peace, the Suita Peace Center, the Osaka International Peace Center, the Sakai City Peace and Human Rights Center, the Fukuyama City Human Rights & Peace Museum, the Takamatsu Civic Culture Center: Peace Museum, the Himeji Historical Peace Center, the Shizuoka Peace Center, the Grassroots House and The Peace, Human Rights and Children Center (Yamane 2009, 2). The exhibitions in the peace museums during this period did not only emphasize the experiences of the Japanese victims, but also expanded to urge the Japanese government and army to be responsible for the crimes committed during World War II. They also revealed another side of the Japanese army's history, giving information on casualties in other countries invaded by the Japanese army.

The important phenomena in 1990s that must not be forgotten were the movements of the Chinese

and Korean governments urging the Japanese government in 1992 to revise the history textbook for high school students as the textbook contained with contents that justify the actions of the Empire of Japan during World War II. In 1990 other strong movements from several countries sought to hold the Japanese government responsible for the Nanjing Massacre and the materialization of comfort women during World War II. This movement led to questions of truth pertaining to World War II, the military system at that time, and the silence of Japanese society regarding a decade of violence, which was the fruit of the Japanese army invasion.

Implementation such as an amendment of the school curriculum and additional research to verify truth, plus the number of peace museums have grown significantly. The amendment of school curriculum in 1990s did not only reflect the influence of the international movement, but also the response to its demands by the Japanese government, educational institutions and civil society.

At the same time, the creation of peace museums within this same period did not only reflect participation in socio-political learning by different segments, but also the need for space to allow their voices to be heard, their desire to discover truth, their sense of responsibility and the premium they put on uncovering knowledge. Finally, changes in this period indicated a political culture which has space for diverse experiences and memories, and promotes freedom to acquire knowledge and wisdom.

What the Six Museums Speak Of?

One of the discussions that arose from spending a prodigious amount of time at the research area in peace museums was this: "Who are the audiences? The audiences are the temporary visitors, but are these audiences the readers of victims' experiences? Up to what level can the audiences understand the experiences of the victims? No matter how much effort they put into it, the audiences can never replicate the experiences of the victims because those experiences were personal".

Time is another factor for accessing the experience. As time moves on, the major events which had impact on the lives of people all over the world, such as World War II, become but a chapter in history books. The link between the experience of war and today's experience is very thin. The challenges facing the peace museum include recalling history and making the stories come alive, linking the past with the present, and enriching the visit to peace museums. The latter goes beyond listening to the experiences of the victims, as it encompasses creating new experiences for the audiences by stimulating their thinking processes and leading them to analyze present and future events through the past.

The storytellers and the tone of the storytelling are important factors in developing the imaginary frame of the audiences. If the storytellers were the victims who told their bitter experiences in a sad tone, surely the audiences would be emotional, feel dejected and sympathetic. This heart moving atmosphere is evident in the museums built in the war destroyed cities, e.g., the Hiroshima Memorial Peace Museum, the Himeyuri Peace Museum in Okinawa, and the Nagasaki Okinawa and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum in Nagasaki, as well as the Iloilo Peace Museum. However the emerging challenge would be this: if the audiences were overwhelmed with emotion, would their logical abilities diminish?

At the same time, the dryness of the storytelling based on academic information as presented at the peace museum in the Kyoto Museum for World Peace and the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum, which provides information on the events, could lead to boredom and alienation due to the lack of an affinitive feeling.

The Himeyuri Peace Museum is a museum that presents a balance between emotion and rationale, when compared with the five other museums. The Himeyuri Peace Museum recounts the experiences of female students in two girls' schools on Onawa Island,⁷ where 240 students were forced to serve as nurse assistants at the Okinawa Army Hospital in Haeburu during the war. The difficulties of being nurse assistants who had to work hard in the dark caves day and night did not take the lives of the young girls, until the last moment at battle. Rather,

in the belief that an honorable death is better than being caught alive by the enemy, many of the girls decided to commit suicide. At the same time, bombs and bullets from the fighting killed some of them. While audiences are depressed by the fate of these young girls, the museum gradually leads the audiences to the question of the imperial system and Japanese army, both of which generated the structural violence that caused massive devastation on Okinawa Island.

The lives lost were not only of the girl students. The museum also displays information and images of civilians killed on Okinawa Island, soldiers stationed on Okinawa Island, and soldiers from mainland Japan, among them American soldiers. These figures reflect the truth of the war situation, where victims and perpetrators equally and unavoidably experience loss and pain.

Demise at a young age is part of the story told by the Hiroshima Memorial Peace Museum, the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum and the Kyoto Museum for World Peace. The objects displayed in them include a lunch box, shoes, a student's uniform, a cloth bag, a three wheel bicycle. These museums represent tens of thousands of children killed in their localities. At the Kyoto Museum for World Peace, one of the sections propels audiences to ponder upon the dark future of students who had to abandon their classrooms for the battlefield during the war.

The Hiroshima Memorial Peace Museum and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum can be approached from the three perspectives provided by general management: the first is that of the city before the nuclear tragedy, the second is of the city during the tragedy and the third is of the city during its rehabilitation. Sorrow and loss seem to be the main emotions both museums purposely move audiences to feel. These two museums send across a clear message of the great tragedy caused by the atomic bomb. The image of the clock whose hands indicate the hour and minute that the atomic bomb began to explode has been magnified and put on the museum's wall. This image reminds everyone that the time of the tragic event should never be forgotten.

Information-wise, the Kyoto Museum for World Peace has been doing well in disseminating comprehensive data. It presents Japanese political history events in order, from the prewar days on to the war and post-war periods. The academic position of the museum can be clearly seen. The museum discusses the military and education systems during the war. It also exhibits memorabilia of the anti-war movements, from both the academic and civil society spheres.

One of the interesting aspects of this museum is the review of the past of its founder, Ritsumeikan University. There are those who believe that the review from the perpetrator's perspective shows the sincerity of Ritsumeikan University in joining the army at that time. It defended the palace of the emperor and deployed its students to serve in the war. This participation eventually proved to be the greatest loss in the history of the university since its establishment.⁸

The Kyoto Museum for World Peace also exhibits the people and events which are sensitive to Japanese society: the comfort women, the Nanjing Massacre and the construction of death railways by the prisoners of war.

There are a few peace museums that display politically sensitive issues. This endeavor stems from the courage of the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum, a small private peace museum in a two-storey house. The museum is full of pictures and rarely available information that cannot be found elsewhere, such as images of the Nanjing massacre, comfort women, and Unit 731, where experiments on biochemical weapons using human beings were conducted for the Imperial Army's Biological Warfare Program.

One of the conflicts of the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum is its location in Nagasaki. The experience of the city, which led to the establishment of diverse public memories' spaces such as the monument, park, or museums to commemorate the miseries and losses of the war victims, counterbalances the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum, by directly urging the Japanese army to be responsible for what they have committed.

The Iloilo Peace Museum was established in 2009. Though small, it recalls the mass suicide of Filipino civilians, women, and children, including 50 Japanese soldiers, in the deep forest after their declaration of surrender. It also tells the story of Toshimi Kumai, the former Japanese soldier who established the museum. He was dispatched to Iloilo during World War II and learned about the mass suicide in 1972. After the discovery of the suicide venue, a small monument was built on the spot for the departed souls.

However, storytelling alone could not possibly transform the wounds of violence into the collective memory. The creation of value, emotion, and feeling is the most important factor in transforming the abstract stories into a new experience.

At the Hiroshima Memorial Peace Museum and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, audiences can experience what took place over 60 years ago. The atmosphere created allows them to feel sorrow, bitterness and pain together with the victims and their families. The dark ambiance and the objects displayed represent the losses. Although the museum leads audiences to a more hopeful mood at the end, one of the worst tragedies against humanity has made them feel small and powerless in the struggle to put an end to the manufacture and use of nuclear weapons.

In contrast, the Kyoto Museum for World Peace and the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum have ventured into a more critical mode in the quest for answers. The approach of both museums is to display information that cannot be read elsewhere, rather than objects which influence feelings and emotion. The Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum creates a learning environment by providing books, educational materials, tables and chairs beside the exhibition board.

The past and new experiences exhibited indicate the interactions between museums and audiences, which somehow present the power of museums to influence audiences to believe and conform to the selected displays. They also reflect the power which controls the feelings of the audiences. However, audiences also have the power to interpret the

exhibitions by themselves or the power to refuse or ignore the influence conveyed by the information provided. Nonetheless, the power of the audience does not come automatically; it depends on their ability, stemming not only from their knowledge, but also from the education they have obtained. It also draws from the freedom they enjoy in their respective societies, where enthusiasm over promoting ideas and knowledge acquisition is evident.

Observation and Question: Can Peace Museums make Peace a Reality?

A question worth considering might be this: can peace museums make peace a reality? This is not easy to answer for one generation merely, because conflict is a common and natural aspect of mankind. The compromise and peaceful settlement of conflict are more challenging than warfare. Therefore, in answering this question, one needs to understand peace as not only a goal but also a process.

In effect, while the ultimate goal of a peace museum is peace, the peace museum itself is a process. In this sense, peace museums work to provide peace education. However, in the transformation of collective memories of bitter tragedies into the learning process, exhibitions comprising only sentences and objects cannot enhance the learning process. In driving the peace process, other major components of the museum are required. These include activities, management, fundraising and good relations with the community where the museum is located.

The following considerations are the results of my observations and visits to peace museums. They indicate how much peace museums can contribute to the peace process.

Violence

After spending three quarters of an hour to one and a half hours⁹ in a museum, what can audiences with diverse backgrounds learn? The backgrounds of the audiences can be divided into three categories: (1) the audiences who superficially observe the museum – they read only some of the headings of exhibits; (2) audiences who choose to read only

topics that interest them; and (3) audiences interested in every detail at hand. Given the aforementioned, the challenge facing the museum is how to organize the exhibitions so as to benefit all three categories of audiences. While too little information can lead to a better understanding of ideas or beliefs without a rational base, too much information can be overwhelming and can lead to the refusal to learn.

The Nagasaki Atomic Memorial Museum and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum work hard at providing information, thereby resulting in too much information. At the same time, the facts they provide do not include the events which serve as the most important factors in propelling Japan into making the decision to start the war. It is certain that there can never be a reason to justify the use of the atomic bomb against Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but obscure information on the real causes of the war and the aim to subdue negative feelings deprive audiences of the ability to understand the position of Japan in the international political arena at that time. Most importantly, the information displayed is based on the perspective of Japan rather than those of other external societies. This undermines the ability of audiences to comprehend the root causes of the war. Finally, the Hiroshima and Nagasaki tragedies have become political tools to cover up the responsibility of the Japanese army and government to the Japanese people.

Both museums prioritize the anti-nuclear campaign which links perfectly with the World War II tragedy and violence, and the current nuclear power station incident. However, the museums do not give adequate importance to current conflicts in East Asia, Southeast Asia and other regions.

The Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum and the Iloilo Peace Museum do not touch upon the actual root causes of the war. Especially significant is the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum. When the audiences view the images and receive information on the extreme violence committed by the Japanese army, e.g., the case of the Nanjing Massacre, comfort women, or the experimental unit of 731 which carried out the human biological experiment, what would their reactions be? Despite their fright upon getting the

new information, this can be a good beginning to find out why a military man as father, brother or husband in their country could commit cruelty in other countries. Such fright and fear can also cause anger and hatred, which undermine the eagerness to discover the real reasons. The museums still fail to provide information on the justification process behind the violence. These limitations reduce the roles of peace museums to the level of historical museums.

On the other hand, the Himeyuri Peace Museum and the Kyoto Museum for World Peace have been doing well in this aspect. Both museums direct audiences to view structural and cultural violence as having more dimensions than physical violence. These museums have a clear stance in their critique of the military system and the ultra-imperialism which led to the damage from war that cannot be over-estimated. As mentioned earlier, the Himeyuri Peace Museum has appropriately divided the emotional pre-occupational elements including the storytelling of the victims and links with the causes of the losses, while the Kyoto Museum for World Peace employs storytelling from the perpetrator's perspective and illustrative narrations by scholars as an approach to explain the root cause of violence. This approach also provides a rationale for analyzing what the violence and peace is to the audiences.

Peace Education

The peace museums' understanding of peace is very important, serving as the major component of peace museums themselves. This is because the definition of peace does not only lead to education for peace, but also determines the direction, boundary, and content of the activities, as well as cooperation with different stakeholders. One of the challenges of museums in exhibiting war-related issues is defining peace. Peace does not merely mean the absence of war or conflict; peace links with equality, justice, human rights, freedom, and the liberty of everyone. A correct understanding of peace can result in a sustainable peace process.

However, definitions of peace given by the exhibitions displayed in the four museums, namely, the Hiroshima Memorial Peace Museum, the Nagasaki Atomic

Bomb Museum, the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum, and the Iloilo Peace Museum are largely still abstract and confined to physical violence. In contrast, the Kyoto Museum for World Peace and the Himeyuri Peace Museum have shifted the societal perspective from the physical dimension to structural and cultural violence. The approaches of these two museums reflect their activities and movement for peace in different forms. These surfaces in protests against the American army's stationing in Okinawa and the support for Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, which prohibits the state from engaging in warfare.

Memory Studies

On the one hand, the emblematic memory represents the struggle over a space in collective memories or, on the other, the creation of memory, which is more valuable. While different people may have experienced the same incident, each may have a different memory and experience of it, depending on one's personal perspective, background, education, impact, or self-esteem. Another problem is that people in society differ in terms of their feelings about traumatic events of history. While one group believes that society can only move on when people abandon this history, another group upholds that remembrance of the past is the only way to move the society forward (Satha-Anand 2010, 13). Thus, peace museums should have a space for collective memory and the memories of other groups. They should attempt to build awareness that learning the history of violence is imperative for determining a peaceful future.

However, the reality is that peace museums are not only institutions but are also individually-oriented entities. They represent people of different groups such as the victims of nuclear weapons, veterans, students and Korean laborers. All need space to communicate and remind society of their fate, or to call for justice and responsibility.

Therefore, every peace museum has the right to exhibit its memories to serve its objectives. The selection of memories does not establish the status of peace museums. This poses a challenge to the approach in the organization of exhibits and

the dissemination of knowledge on peace and violence. As mentioned above, the space which the museum offers allows for the review, analysis, dispute, and critique of these issues, as well as reflection on whether political culture has a space for diverse memories. To be simplistic, can every segment of society have space for everyone and every memory?

When they consider the representativeness and the voices of the atomic bomb victims, the Hiroshima Memorial Peace Museum and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum play crucial roles in the historical memory space of Japanese history. Both stimulate or condition Japanese society and the international community to realize that when thinking of World War II, the severity of the atomic bomb and damage to the victims must be remembered.

Similarly, the Himeyuri Peace Museum represents 240 girl students and families in communicating with the audiences to remember the bitterness of the war and the rigid governance which dominated the brain and heart of the subordinates. The Iloilo Peace Museum operates on behalf of Japanese citizens and soldiers in Iloilo City, and informs Japanese society of the fate of Japanese citizens and soldiers in the foreign land. The Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum represents the victims of violence of every kind, perpetrated by the Japanese soldiers. The Kyoto Museum for World Peace positions itself as an international museum that displays diverse memories, such as those of victims from Japan, Korea, China, and Southeast Asia, and even of Japanese soldiers.

Audience Space

Although participatory learning is the most effective approach, the limitation of space, the use of sound and management undermine the ability of most of the peace museums to create the space for interaction between audience and the museums. The communication between audiences and museums has to take place in other forms.

Seminars on violence and peace related topics are popular activities of peace museums. It can be observed that the seminar calendars of the

Hiroshima Memorial Peace Museum, the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, and the Kyoto Museum for World Peace are very full throughout the year. However, the limitation of these seminars is the incompatibility between the time of the activities and the visits of the audiences to the museums. This gap undermines opportunities and deprives audiences of the chance to participate if they want to clarification or to express their disagreement.

In addition, the temporary exhibition is part of the communication with audiences. Each year, curators of these three museums plan the exhibitions ahead by studying the situation of the moment and the interest of prospective visitors at that time.

Printed materials are among the activities which keep the museums alive, but one must not forget that Japan has a strong reading culture. All five peace museums have their own printed materials such as research works, displayed objects, book collections, newsletters, magazines, and books for children.

Academic Freedom

Exhibitions on the invasion and malfeasances of the Japanese army at the Kyoto Museum for World Peace, the Himeyuri Peace Museum, and the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum, which are privately run, reflect the freedom of expression of Japanese society. The exhibition at the Iloilo Peace Museum shows the sense of responsibility taken by a Japanese veteran for the losses suffered by Japanese citizens, which cannot be seen in Japanese museums, especially those run by the state. At the same time, the exhibitions in the Hiroshima Memorial Peace Museum and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, which are state run, aim at portraying the damage caused to the Japanese, without mentioning devastations in other countries that were invaded by Japan. This is a form of self-censorship among the museums. The case does not reflect the state's control over the collective memory, but indicates the peace museum's option as an independent institution, which is significantly dependent on the owners and funders.

Cooperation between Peace Museums

There are two peace museum networks in Japan, namely the Japanese Network of Museums for Peace and the Citizens' Network of Museums for Peace. The differences between these two museums are that the Citizens' Network of Museums for Peace consists of members that are local and self-managed private peace museums. However, most members are also members of the Network of Museum for Peace.

The activities of both museums aim at strengthening the operation of peace museums, especially the small ones and at exchanging information or the co-organization of activities on common topics. Both networks hold a network seminar once a year, publish a newsletter and hold a meeting between each round.

Learning Space and Management

The Himeyuri Peace Museum, the Hiroshima Memorial Peace Museum, and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum are not only venues of peace education but are also managed as tourism spots. The transformation of a tragic space into a tourism spot sounds not only odd but also sad. Entertainment and tragedy do not seem compatible but it is undeniable that, in reality, tourism development in Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Okinawa is based on the invitation to visitors to "experience" the losses.

Nonetheless, the management of the museum does not promote suffering for sale. The museums operate soundly and enjoy widespread appreciation that has turned them into venues of effective learning rather than being merely tourist destinations.

The three museums are ready in every aspect, including human resources. They have full-time curator¹⁰ volunteers, most of whom are victims or their families. Well organized and prepared are the information center, the research department, the maintenance of facilities such as transportation, earphones, leaflets in different languages and facilities for disabled people including resource materials for the blind.

The Kyoto Museum for World Peace and the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum have clearly positioned themselves as learning centers. There are not many tourists at either museum. Most of the audience is made up of students and people who have a genuine interest in the issues. The Kyoto Museum for World Peace is outstanding in terms of a strong academic environment when compared with other private museums, which are small and operate at the community level. However, that status is not only a result of the university as an initiator but also springs from its serious activities, like its membership in the International Network of Peace Museum's Annual Academic Magazine, a high quality magazine, and its leadership in many seminars on peace including peace studies courses for outsiders.

Another outstanding aspect of the Japanese peace museums is a volunteer system which lessens management costs and builds the self-esteem of senior citizen or student volunteers. In this sense, the museums contribute significantly to fostering civic participation as well.

Comparing them with the Iloilo Peace Museum in the Philippines, the latter's weak management has many negative consequences, such as the invisibility of the museum even within the community where it is located. The museum does not interact with the community or the local educational institutions. One of its limitations is its audience targeting strategy which is inappropriate, considering its location. Since its main target audiences are the Japanese who visit Iloilo, this focus deprives the museum of the opportunity to cater to other potential visitors to whom it could impart knowledge or who could be agents of change.

It is unfortunate that while it is a repository of the collective memory of the people of Iloilo of the Japanese military invasion and the losses of the Filipinos caused by war, this peace museum does not even serve as a voice of Japanese citizens who dwell in Iloilo City, who were themselves victims of the war. This has become an obstacle to the diversity of collective memories in Iloilo city and to

arriving at a better understanding of the war from a holistic perspective.

The Strength of the Museum Culture in the Country

The success in terms of the active existence of peace museums in Japan is the result of the country's having a strong museum culture. One can clearly observe that in Japan, visits to museums are common among the Japanese. Museums are the place where everyone can equally acquire knowledge. Visiting a museum is not a special occasion. The museums also receive strong support from the state and its civilians. As for private peace museums in Japan, one must not forget that they are heavily dependent on donations from their members.

The Japanese education system is another key aspect which sustains the culture of museums in Japan. Schools in Japan organize regular exposure visits and, often, museums are included in the bulletin. A Japanese child will have to visit a peace museum at least once in her life. The Himeyuri Peace Museum, the Hiroshima Memorial Peace Museum, and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, including the Kyoto Museum for World Peace are the primary target museums in the schools' schedule. Visits to the museum are part of the curriculum of some schools.

Moreover, the diversity of museums in term of types and founders has to be taken into account. This diversity reflects the strong museum culture, e.g., the co-existence of a military museum and a peace museum, a state-run history museum and a local history museum managed by the local people, a classic art museum and a contemporary art museum, a religion museum and a gender diversity museum, etc. Such variety reflects the access of people from different backgrounds to the socio-political spaces and levels of democracy, human rights and peace in society.

Along with the socio-political space in every segment of society is the ability to question and critique society. A society without critiques or questioning indicates its weakness when basic human rights and democratic principles are absent. A critique culture

on culture and history in Southeast Asia deserves critical analysis. Crucial is questioning political history and political violence including collective memories, which are managed by the state and can be seen in the history textbooks, monuments and museums. The critique or questioning not only gives lessons to the new generations, but also generates sparks the quest for justice for the victims, by questioning the state on its justice system. Society should be empowered to protect the rights of the victims.

In considering the museum culture in Southeast Asia, the people's perspectives of the museum are the most interesting aspect. It is clear that museums are categorized as extra-curricular activities. The alienating aspects of museums come in the form of the large luxurious buildings estranged from the local context. The quiet and serious environment inside and the knowledge offered do not often link with nor are they relevant to the visitors, in general. In many cases, museums are categorized as tourist destinations, which imply indicate its status as a venue for visitors who are educated and have financial capacities and time.¹¹ This alienation and perception undermine the access of the local people to the museum which, in the long run, results in a weak museum culture

Conclusion

The origin of museums is the transference of value, experiences and memories through public learning spaces. It is undeniable that the peace museums' space is one form of socio-political space that victims, perpetrators, and stakeholders can rightfully utilize in the search for justice, human rights, sharing, questioning, constructing memories, or reviving memories. The most important question is whether the ultimate goals of the peace museum are peace and the peace process. How should peace museums, for instance, address the experiences and memories of World War II to develop understanding and knowledge on violence and peace?

Based on knowledge acquired from this research, history is one of the root causes of conflict. History can also be instrumentalized for peace if it

encompasses facts from different angles and offers socio-political spaces collectively, to critique and share diverse versions of history based on the reality that acquainting oneself with a memory associated with many people is diversity. The success of peace museums which exhibit diverse histories, memories, or experiences cannot be possible without a socio-political space which embraces everyone.

One of the key factors behind the success of peace museums in Japan that deserves to be mentioned is the clear example of the Himeyuri Peace Museum, the Kyoto Museum for World Peace and the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum. It is clear that Japan has the space for diverse memories and space for critiques. These spaces are guaranteed by Article 19 of the Japanese Constitution: Freedom of thought and conscience shall not be violated and Article and Article 21: Freedom of assembly and association as well as speech, press and all other forms of expression are guaranteed. No censorship shall be maintained, nor shall the secrecy of any means of communication be violated. This means that the state recognizes and respects the fact that Japanese citizens are diverse in term of backgrounds, experiences and memories. There is more than one set of history and truth.

However, due to the many limitations of peace museums as mentioned earlier and as gleaned by looking back at the socio-political conditions of Southeast Asia where each country is now experiencing protracted conflicts, including the eruption of unrest in Eastern Asia, I would like to offer peace museums and all stakeholders the following recommendations to make peace museums supportive of a possible peace process:

- Museums can play a role in empowering the visitor's capacity to read and interpret the hidden messages. Each museum should be enabled to provide space for critical thinking.
- Museums can play a role as social and political space rather than by becoming a political tool; they can provide various kinds of knowledge to empower people to analyze,

criticize, and reconstruct the structure of violence and evolve ways to achieve sustainable peace.

- The museums' visitors can be encouraged to exercise their rights to investigate, criticize, analyze, or disagree with official versions of history.
- The visitors can be influenced to face their traumatic experiences of past violence directly and openly, with the objective of moving forward into the future, which is not to forget or distort the past, but to remember it and question it.
- Museums should enjoy academic freedom in presenting and exhibiting information and evidence. This is not only to elevate a museum to the level of educational institution, but to promote the development of knowledge in collaboration with educational and social institutions

In parallel with effective peace museums, there should be an effort to develop an education system which encourages the student to research and nurture his or her ability to critique something based on academic rationale. This kind of education system will enhance the capacity of society to support peace museums where society can review and verify exhibitions, as well as provide recommendations for the further development of peace museums.

Societal capacity to support peace museums will come from the empowerment of peace museums by way of changing the perception that museums are not a place merely for the educated people, the middle class, or tourists who have time and financial capability. Rather, museums are public space that everyone can access. Visits to the museums should be based on equal spirit and awareness of knowledge acquisition, as well as the entertainment of people in society. Respect for knowledge in the museum should take precedence over the museum itself. This is how power is truly given to the audiences.

The promotion of freedom of expression is very important. Peace museums will lack efficiency if this human rights principle is missing. The promotion of freedom of discussion is not only a way to open up the space; it also promotes the culture of recognition of differences and diversity which will lead to peaceful agreement when conflicts arise.

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NOTES:

¹ The documents in most of the academic discourses are mostly found in the academic and research institutes.

² In the bracket is the year the museum was established.

³ The Himeyuri Peace Museum was established in 1984 and launched in June 1989.

⁴ The initial name of the museum was Nagasaki International Cultural Hall.

⁵ According to Peace Museum Worldwide, which was published by the United Nations in 1998.

⁶ The American army used Okinawa as a base for deploying troops and weapons to Vietnam.

⁷ The Okinawa Women's School and First Women's Prefectural High School

⁸ The participation in the warfare which brought about the great loss of Ritsumeikan University led to the “The Ritsumeikan Charter” which declared as its objective its support for democracy and peace.

⁹ Based on the interview and sharing with a curator, aside from studying the museum manual, the time museum assumes that the duration audiences can concentrate on the exhibitions is between 45 minutes and 1.5 hours.

¹⁰ There are five curators at Hiroshima Memorial Peace Museum

¹¹ Based on the interpretation of tourists and visitors who are not the local.

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