



## The New Holocaust Education Center, Japan Remember the Past, Survey the Future

Makoto Otsuka, *Director General*

Shalom.

1995, the first Holocaust Education Center in Japan was established in Fukuyama city, Hiroshima prefecture. It was started from the beginning as an education center for the Japanese people, who had never heard that the Holocaust even occurred. Surpassing our expectations, there were 80,000 visitors in 12 years, and we have really felt till today, that the Holocaust is a theme that moves Japanese people's hearts, transcending race and time. Many educators and children have visited us, and have felt deep emotions which they can't feel in other educational institutions.

Looking back, I have been learning about the Holocaust, using the tragedy of the Holocaust which happened to the Mr. Otto Frank's family, father of Anne Frank, survivor of Auschwitz, as a footing, since my meeting with Mr. Frank in Netanya, Israel, in April, 1971.

I believe that it is very important for the Japanese people to know that 1.5 million Jewish children were recognized as meaningless, cut out of the future by starvation, gun fire, and gas.

Welcoming more than 700 schools, we felt the necessity of building a new center, with a larger exhibition space. Donations from more than 2,000 people were offered centered by members of Beit Shalom, and Jerusalem Stones were presented by the members of Israeli Friends of Beit Shalom (President, Mr. Yitzhak Navon, Former Fifth President of Israel).

Making use of our experience of 12 years, we have put many actual objects in the new center's exhibition, such as a wall of the ghetto of 3.5 meters, and a diorama of Auschwitz, etc. There are also many pictures and artifacts which express the desire of the children of those days, who wished to live.

Mr. and Mrs. Buddy Elias, cousin of Anne Frank, and the president of Anne Frank Fonds, generously

provided us more than 100 artifacts related to Anne Frank and her family. After knowing that we have reproduced the room of Anne in the attic, where she wrote the diary in our center, Mr. Buddy Elias, the only cousin of Anne Frank alive, wrote in his letter as "Anne and Otto would shed with tears with joy".

We are still receiving artifacts from survivors, Holocaust institutes, and artists from more than 60 countries. These artifacts are exhibited in our center and talk strongly to the Japanese children.

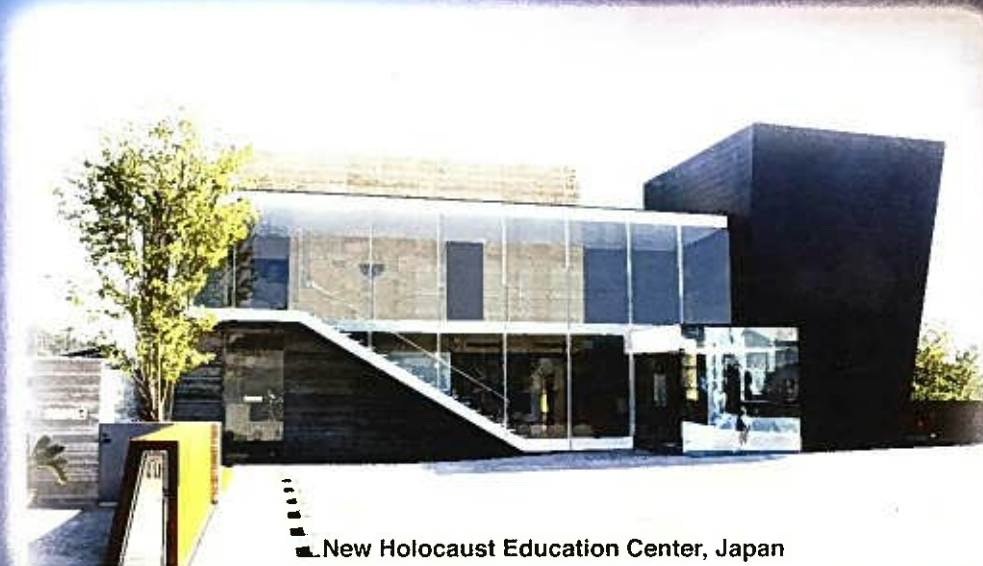
Now, we have entered the second stage. Our dream is to have 12 million Japanese children come visit our center, and to touch the history of the Jewish people and the Holocaust, including the story of the righteous people, and those who resisted to Nazis. We hope that these children will think of what they can do to create peace, and actually act to realize it.

The Holocaust Education Center's managing system has been enriched, and we have asked people who are well known internationally to support us. We sincerely ask for your support so that our center will grow daily, and proceed as an education center to promote peace.

"They shall beat their swords into plowshares,  
And their spears into pruning hooks  
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
Neither shall they learn war anymore." (Isiah 2:4)



Mr. Y. Navon  
5th President of Israel



New Holocaust Education Center, Japan

# The New Holocaust Education Center, Japan



Photo by K. Nomura

## Remembrance Room

A shoe of a child perished in a Gas Chamber is placed as a symbol of 1.5 million Jewish children killed during the Holocaust. On the wall are the names of 6 extermination camps and photographs of the shtetl of Eishyshok (presented by Prof. Yaffa Eliach).



Photo by K. Nomura

## Main Exhibition

Photographs and items of those days will introduce you to the Holocaust. The exhibition includes a replica of a wall of a Ghetto which stands 3.5 meters high with 5 real Ghetto bricks and a diorama of Auschwitz.



Photo by K. Nomura

## Anne Frank's Room

The room is a replica of Anne Frank's Room in the Secret Annex in Holland, where Anne's family hid themselves from the danger of the Nazis. Anne Frank's exhibition has the facsimile of the Diary of Anne Frank (by Anne Frank House) and items of Frank family including the typewriter of Mr. Otto Frank. Anne Frank's father (presented by Mr. Buddy Elias).



## Beads Art Object of 1.5 Million Lives

The number of the beads used in the object is 1.5 million, the same as the number of the children killed during the Holocaust. Different glittering beads remind us of different sparkling individual children.



Photo by K. Nomura

## Stained Glass of Butterflies and Poem by Pavel Friedman

You will see the poem of "Butterfly" by Pavel Friedman and the stained glass of butterflies fly freely in the sky.



## Children's Room

There are children's books on the Holocaust and letters from the children who visited the HEC before. Children can learn about the Holocaust and do their activities in the room.



## Garden of Anne Frank's Rose and Bronze Statue

Bronze statue of Anne Frank will welcome you. Around the terrace "Souvenir d'Anne Frank (Anne Frank's Rose)" and Olive are planted.



Mr. Buddy Elias  
(Cousin of Anne Frank,  
President of Anne Frank Forum)



## Hall and Gallery

This hall is used for lectures, videos and presentations. On the wall are Mr. Murata's Japanese drawings with the theme of the Holocaust.

# Ribbon Cutting of the New Holocaust Education Center

On September 30, a ribbon cutting ceremony celebrating the completion of the new building of the Holocaust Education Center was held with the attendance of special guests. Mr. Nissim Ben-Shitrit, Israeli Ambassador to Japan, Mr. Gabriel Bach, a deputy public prosecutor at "Eichmann Trial" (Jerusalem) and a former justice of Israeli Supreme Court, Mr. Ben Steinberg, a conductor in Canada who lost his grandparents in the Holocaust, Mr. Aharon Tamir, Vice President of the March of the Living International, and many other guests took place in the ceremony.



*Ribbon Cutting*



*Mr. & Mrs. Ben-Shitrit (left)*

The Director General Makoto Otsuka said, "We'd like to make a new step from now on", and 12 representatives, such as Mr. Bach, Mr. Steinberg, Jewish children living in Japan and members of 'Small Hands', a children's volunteer group of the HEC, cut the ribbon. They saw the new exhibition guided by the Director General Rev. Makoto Otsuka.

## Opening Ceremony

In the afternoon an opening ceremony was held at Kannabe Culture Center, and about 700 people attended the commemorative event.

Mr. Bach gave a lecture. He introduced the testimony of a boy who miraculously survived even though he was put in a gas chamber, and explained how 200 children were sent to a gas chamber at a time.

He introduced another testimony. A Jewish engineer, who lost his wife and children, said that he could never forget his 3 year-old daughter, wearing a red coat, walked toward a gas chamber. Mr. Bach had just bought his daughter a red coat, so he lost his words. He also shared his experience with the audience.

Mr. Bach emphasized the importance of teaching the facts of the Holocaust not to repeat the tragedy again and appreciated the activities of the HEC.



*Mr. Gabriel Bach*



*Commemorative Concert*



*Mr. Ben Steinberg*

The lecture was followed by a concert conducted by Mr. Ben Steinberg with the theme of peace. A local chorus group sang 'Oseh Shalom (Make Peace)', 'V'ha-Eir Eincinu (Deepen our Insight)', and other songs accompanied by cello, flute, and piano.

At the end, the Director General appealed to the audience, "The new Holocaust Education Center is an education center, open to children in Japan and from abroad. Let's take hand in hand, and go forward to create peace."

One member of the audience, who came with her daughter, said, "I was moved because I felt all the people's hope for peace. I want to tell this feeling to my children."



*Small Hands and the Choir*

# Children studying in the New Holocaust Education Center

As it is the first time for most of the Japanese children to study about the Holocaust, it is our main aim to have the children get to know how and when the Holocaust took place, and who was involved in it through an introduction and panels and artifact exhibition.

When we receive the reservation for a visit from a school, we ask the teachers to visit our center in advance if possible, and prepare for the visit. We ask them to show the students some visual materials before their visit, and raise



Students presenting paper cranes

questions and impressions.

We can welcome the students more effectively, as they themselves will have a strong interest to the Holocaust and our center.

Thanks to the many artifacts sent from many survivors, families, and institutes of the world, the children are able to touch the remains of the Holocaust very closely.

The special exhibition on Anne Frank and Otto Frank speaks very strongly to the Japanese young people. A reproduction of Anne's room in the attic, takes the visitors to the days when Anne wrote the diary and stories while in hiding.

The exhibition on Chiune Sugihara, the Japanese diplomat who rescued more than 6,000 Jewish refugees by issuing over 2,000 Japanese transit visas, gives a good example of how we should act in such hard, disastrous situation.

Some high school children visit our center with a certain purpose, and research and interview us.

One group of students from a near by Junior High School visited our center and asked questions such as: "Why was this center established here?", "How many staff members are working here?", "What kind of feelings do staff members have when they are working here?"



Nursery school children

Each student edited a page of report, and introduced them to the school.

The students wrote their impressions as the following:

-- "I realized how cruel it is to discriminate others. I will try hard to abolish discrimination around me."

-- "I realized how peace is important. I will tell the importance of peace to the next generation."

-- "I imagined how hard it was for Anne Frank to live in such a small room without making sounds."

-- "We should not repeat such mistake again."

We are happy that the new center is accomplishing its aim as an education center to the young people in Japan.



Students in Anne's room

## New Administrative Members of the New Holocaust Education Center, Japan

### Member of the Board:

Rev. Masaru Otsuki, Chairperson

Rev. Takeo Sato (President of Beit Shalom, Japan)

Prof. Hanoeh Gutfreund (Former President of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Dr. Yasushi Sakai (Former President of the Doshisha Women's College of Liberal Arts)

Mr. Tetsu Akiyama (Former Managing Director of the Mainichi Newspapers)

Rev. Kyoji Tsujita (Representative of Beit Shalom Japan in Israel)

Rev. Makoto Otsuka, Director General

Dr. Hisao Oka (Professor of the Okayama University)

Mr. Akio Yoshida, Deputy Director General

### Advisory Board Members

Dr. Menahem Ben-Sasson (MK of Israel, Former Rector of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Dr. Yaffa Eliach (President of the Shtetl Foundation)

Mr. Simcha Stein (Director of the Beit HaLochamei Haghetaot)

Dr. Michael Berenbaum (Head of the Berenbaum Group)

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(In Memory of 1.5 Million Jewish Children)

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