

**CHAPTER 2**  
**Peace Education in Okinawa**

## CHAPTER 2 Peace Education in Okinawa

Each year 400,000 people visit the Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum at Itoman City in the southern portion of Okinawa Main Island. More than half are students on school excursions from the mainland. Also in Itoman is the Himeyuri Peace Memorial Museum where visitors learn about the experiences of schoolgirls conscripted as nurses in what are known as the Himeyuri (star lily) Brigades. In addition to local students, many on school trips from the mainland also visit here.

The main points of these school excursions are that Okinawa is a place with a distinctive history and natural surroundings, and a place for learning the importance of peace. The students visiting Okinawa on school trips visit such facilities for peace studies as the Peace Memorial Museum, and view exhibits on the particulars of Battle of Okinawa and the losses suffered by local residents. They also learn by seeing U.S. military bases from the outside that Okinawa has been made into an “island of bases.”

For many years Hiroshima and Nagasaki have been well known as place for peace studies in Japan. Like Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Okinawa has become a focus for the study of peace because residents have told of their own experiences in the Battle of Okinawa, and because Okinawans continue to appeal to the rest of the nation for relief from the heavy burden imposed by so many U.S. military bases.

In the tragic Battle of Okinawa, more than 200,000 people lost their lives. Far more civilians died than soldiers. Okinawans have described and recorded their experiences during the battle. When the villages and towns where they lived became battlefields, they lost beloved family members, and their home communities were turned into fields of burnt ruins. They tell in their own words of the horrors of war, the preciousness of life, and the deep sorrow of losing family members. And their words have been recorded for transmission to future generations.

People who experienced the battle are invited to schools and local communities in Okinawa for lectures, and for visits to former battle sites where they can help others to experience what life was like in the middle of a war. In homes, too, it is very common for grandparents and parents to tell of their wartime experiences. The Battle of Okinawa, children hear about from their parents, relatives, and close friends become deeply etched in their hearts.

But as the years pass, with the aging of those who lived through the battle, war experiences are spoken of less often in everyday life. In an effort to continue their undiluted transmission, the people of Okinawa are endeavoring to convey them by teaching about peace in schools and local communities.

Following the battle, Okinawa was placed under U.S. military rule for 27 years, from 1945 to 1972. With people forced to live under conditions in which Japanese law did not apply, confronting

problems that arose because American military rule gave first priority to the functioning of the bases was also a major theme of peace education in pre-reversion Okinawa.

Also in Okinawa, the enormous American military presence forces people to think all the more about “war,” the polar opposite of “peace.” It is often said “in Okinawa, you can see the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty.”<sup>55</sup> 75% of all American military facilities in Japan are concentrated in Okinawa which has less than 1 % of the nation’s total land area. Okinawa residents have continued throughout the post-conflict period to appeal for consolidation and reduction of U.S. military bases, but their hopes remain unrealized, and the problems caused by the bases continue to plague their lives to this day.

Pivoting on these major themes, the efforts of Okinawans to send the message of peace have continued as an examination of the many difficulties they have faced in the post-conflict period.

Recently, Okinawans’ appeals for peace have attracted attention, not only in Japan, but also in other countries. The oppressive burden of American military bases in Okinawa has been widely covered in the international media. And the spirit conveyed by the “Cornerstone of Peace,” which affirms the preciousness of human life and encompasses soldiers, civilians, and many nationalities, has evoked sympathetic responses inside and outside Japan. With establishment of the “Okinawa Peace Prize” in 1999, the message of peace from Okinawa is being disseminated even more widely. It used to be a message from the perspective of victimization by “war” and “military bases,” but can now be said to have significance as a more positive appeal for peace from Okinawans to be spread through the world.

This chapter will explore why Okinawans endeavor to transmit a message of peace, what this message means, and how it is conveyed. In addition, it will discuss how this message has changed recently, its significance and history, and its resonance as an issue now and in the future.

## **2-1 The People’s Accounts of the Battle of Okinawa for Future Generations**

A major theme of peace education in Okinawa is the Battle of Okinawa. Why has it continued to be a theme throughout the post-conflict period?

### (1) The Battle of Okinawa as described by close relatives

Education that teaches the preciousness of peace and life in this place that experienced the devastating Battle of Okinawa began spontaneously after the war. The place for the “actual practice”

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<sup>55</sup> The U.S. Japan Security Treaty.(officially the “United States-Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security). Signed in 1960. It revised and succeeded the former Security Treaty that had been concluded in 1951 together with the San Francisco Peace Treaty. After reversion to Japan, U.S. military bases in Okinawa became facilities provided under this treaty.

of “peace education” just after the battle was not in schools, but in homes and local communities. And since the practitioners were ordinary people, this wasn’t thought of as “education” in the formal sense. Rather, “teaching peace” in Okinawa started with the gradual revelation from deep in their hearts of their own actual experiences for transmission to the next generation.

It became common for parents and grandparents to tell of their war experiences at home. These speakers were probably not talking about their experiences with the lofty sense that they were teaching “peace education” or the “preciousness of life.” And their listeners probably did not have the strained feeling that they were being “educated.” Yet the horrors of war, such as the lingering terror of the battlefield where shells fly, were deeply etched in the listeners’ memories.

(2) Recording and publishing begin of experiences from the Battle of Okinawa.

Okinawans’ spontaneous telling of their own experiences played an important role in “peace education,” but people with a talent for writing also began putting them in print. Written accounts of the battle just after it ended were ordinarily those of generals, soldiers, and leaders of the victorious nation, with almost nothing collected from or about civilians.

In “Accounts of the Battle of Okinawa”<sup>56</sup> on war reminiscences and literature, author Nakahodo Masanori divides writings on the battle broadly into four post-conflict periods. First Period: Pioneering works recording it were published between 1945 and 1949. Second Period: First-person accounts written by Okinawans who actually experienced it were published between 1950 and 1960. Third Period: Writers living on the mainland who had not experienced the battle wrote about it from the late 1960s to the early 1970s. Fourth Period: Accounts of the battle as experienced by people who were noncombatants have been collected and written since the late 1970s until the present.<sup>57</sup> The works examined below became pioneering accounts of the battle experience.

Writings from the first period focused on Japanese soldiers’ criticism of the military with almost no discussion of noncombatants or civilians.

It wasn’t until the second period began in 1950 that the first account appeared of the battle written by an Okinawan. Although Okinawans gave spoken accounts just after the war in their homes and villages, it took several years before they thought about putting them in print. This was a time when people were finally able to start making a living amidst the ruins, and were beginning to recover at last from the collapse and confusion in the wake of the lost war. It could be said that, after reclaiming their livelihoods, people who experienced the war gained the desire to express themselves about it in writing.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Nakahodo.(1982).

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.p. 45.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.p. 46.

The first book written by Okinawans about the Battle of Okinawa emphasizing the civilians' point of view was *Typhoon of Steel*<sup>59</sup> “published in 1950. The preface clearly stated its publisher’s motivation. Although somewhat lengthy, these excerpts from the preface are worthy of quotation.

This is an overall description of the Battle of Okinawa from the viewpoint of civilians, starting with the U.S. military’s landing and ending with the annihilation of Japan’s Okinawa Defense Army. Collecting materials as accurately as possible from the experiences of survivors, we have put them in writing to present this newly recorded account of the war for our readers. The purpose of this account is not to examine the movements of military strategy. We seek throughout to focus as closely as possible on the circumstances of civilians, how they suffered in this war and what it wreaked on them.

Such experiences have not occurred on the battlefields, and thus have not been written about in standard accounts of war . . . With no place to escape, tens of thousands of civilians fled this way and that in aimless desperation only to become victims of shelling or to die of starvation in this extreme human tragedy. They rushed from cave to cave and from tomb to tomb with only the belongings they could carry in a wandering journey toward death. Or, they crowded into caves where hundreds of men, women, children, and elderly were trying to survive in the gloomy darkness. . . . Those who barely managed to escape death hardly looked human after the horrors of extreme stress, malnutrition, and life day after day within the eerie confines of family tombs. They had subsisted through exhaustion that drained all their bodily strength, and amidst filth and pitch darkness. Although told they should die, they had shuddered in terror of death and persisted in the final human struggle to stay alive. Driven to the point of death, they each had differing experiences. Here are their true accounts. Of course, we became the victims of Japanese imperialism’s war of aggression, but we wish to speak of something deeper here. In seeking “human understanding and friendship that transcends nation and race,” we appeal for lasting peace.<sup>60</sup>

This rather long quotation on civilians in the Battle of Okinawa is presented here because it includes several important themes of peace education, as taught later in the schools, which drew on materials about the battle.

Following this book, expanded efforts continued to record civilian experiences of the battle. The prefectural history *Accounts of the Battle of Okinawa*, published in 1971, presents war experiences gleaned from contacts with more than 1,000 people who had lived through the battle. Accounts were collected from forty group meetings in Chatan, Kita-Nakagusuku, Naha, and all districts of Shimajiri, and from personal interviews.

Naka Shohachiro, who worked on this prefectural history compilation project, explained in his book *Testimony from Okinawa*<sup>61</sup> why the experiences of civilians are so important. “Civilians are ordinarily concerned only with their everyday lives. Yet, until now these innocent people have not

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<sup>59</sup> Okinawa Times.(1950).

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Naka and Tanikawa.(1971).

told how much the war affected them. Okinawans gave up their homes and livelihoods for the war, yet there are no records of civilian war experiences. I thought this was a major void.”<sup>62</sup>

Naha City’s publication the same year of A record of city residents experiences during and after the war, Volume 1 was followed by the publication of civilian accounts of wartime experiences in dozens of cities, towns, and villages in the prefecture as part of their local histories.

## **2-2 Putting Peace Education into Practice in the Schools**

The Battle of Okinawa was an immense tragedy experienced by the Okinawan people. Transmitting accounts of it for future generations began spontaneously, has proceeded in the schools, and continues today. Yet the battle is not the only topic of peace education intimately familiar to Okinawans. They have lived under alien rule following the war and amidst the oppression of military bases that continues even after reversion. It could be said, in a sense, that Okinawan society and history themselves supply material for thinking about peace. Furthermore, the Battle of Okinawa, alien rule, and military bases are not separate and independent issues, but are mutually interrelated. In the previous section, we saw how the Battle of Okinawa, as described hesitantly by those who experienced it, conveyed the importance of peace. In this section, we introduce the specific practices of peace education and give examples of how it is taught in the schools.

### **2-2-1 How Can the Battle of Okinawa be Taught?**

June 23, designated as the day the Battle of Okinawa ended, is commemorated as “Memorial Day,” an official holiday in the prefecture. For Okinawa, June is a memorial month. Memorial services for victims of the battle and related events are held throughout the prefecture. They are conducted before June 23 in almost all schools in the form of peace assemblies, special homeroom presentations, and special classes. The primary aim is to nurture continuing advocacy for peace by helping children to understand the Battle of Okinawa as a whole, highlighting its special characteristics, and teaching the priceless value of peace. The varied methods for teaching about Memorial Day include lectures by those who experienced the battle, films about it, exhibitions of photographs, and reading aloud from books about war.

Particularly since the late 1960s, more efforts are devoted to “special classes” which are instructed by groups of teachers. The Okinawa Teachers Union gives the following explanation for conducting special classes.

“A few years after the end of the war Japan lost, people began talking about their tragic war experiences, and their hatred of war. But nowadays post-conflict generations comprise more than half the population, and it is rare for the subject of war to be

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<sup>62</sup> Naka and Tanikawa.(1971).

discussed even among family members . . . . As teachers in Okinawa who experienced the tragic war, lived under alien rule for more than 27 years, and endured countless hardships and deprivations, we must resolve to remember the past war, and to maintain opposition to war, advocacy for peace, support for democracy, and respect for human rights.<sup>63</sup>

To hear those who lived through the Battle of Okinawa speak about it in everyday life and convey their experiences for posterity has become increasingly difficult with the passing of the wartime generation. Recently, as experiences of the battle fade, teachers in the schools, sensing a crisis, have sought ways to convey the appeal for peace.

(1) Special Class

June 23 “Memorial Day”

1. Objectives: To inculcate an understanding of Memorial Day as a day for comforting people’s spirits dispersed in the oceans, the mountains, the fields, and the sky; and, at the same time, to instill a hatred of war and a love of peace. Below is one example summarized from a 1978 teacher’s guide<sup>64</sup> for a special class about “Memorial Day.

2. Instructional content

- (1) When is Memorial Day? (2) What happens on this day?
- (3) Why is it observed only in Okinawa?
- (4) What kind of damage did the battle cause, especially in the numbers of war dead?
- (5) What threatens peace in Okinawa?

U.S. military exercises, U.S.military’s live fire artillery drills over Prefectural Highway 104, expanded deployment of Self Defense Forces, pollution caused by bases

- (6) What must we do to protect our lives, our freedom, our property, and peace?

<Teachers guide for upper-level elementary grades (example)>

- (1) Topic: “Memorial Day”
- (2) Objectives for this time: Basic knowledge of the Battle of Okinawa; an intimate understanding of it as a brutal war in our homeland Okinawa; thinking about the significance of “Memorial Day”
- (3) For study at this time: Experiencing it through television and other media, children tend to think of war as “cool” and “awesome.”  
There is a problem with current movies that glorify war and portray characters heroically. Using the materials in this guide is important to instill understanding of war’s tragedy and of the preciousness of life.

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<sup>63</sup> Okinawa Prefecture Teachers Union. (1982).

<sup>64</sup> Okinawa Prefecture Teachers Association. (1978) p. 60.

learning process	study materials and activities	instructions for teachers
for getting a grasp	Have them tell what they've heard and read before about the Battle of Okinawa. Himeyuri Memorial(*1) Young Men's Memorial(*2) Mabuni Hill(*3) grandparents killed in the war	Ask how they felt before when they heard accounts of war. Have them think about how they feel now.
For a deeper understanding	(2)A deeper understanding of (1) based on teachers' explanations and materials about the Battle of Okinawa mobilization of the elderly and women sinking of the ship Tsushima-maru(*4) the October tenth air raid dying as a group(*5) the battles of assault and defense from Shuri to the southern area Young Men's Memorial Himeyuri Memorial 60% of those killed in the battle were Okinawans (one third of the prefecture's population) 20,000 bodies remain unexcavated (3)Listen to an explanation of problems caused by the Self Defense Forces, and discuss them as a group	Explaining everything is impossible, so choose two or three points and explore them  Help them understand the tragic war experiences of Okinawans, the cruelty and ugliness of war, and the preciousness of human life.  Explain unconstitutionality of Self Defense Forces, and discuss their pros and cons.
For consolidating	(4)Have students write their impressions or other compositions to consolidate their thoughts.	Encourage them to express hatred of war and a desire for world peace.
For reaching out beyond the classroom	(5)Reading Talking with family members about the significance of Memorial Day	Refer them to writings about peace they can read and advise them how to make opportunities for discussions with family members.

- \*1 Memorial tower enshrining the students and teachers of Okinawa Normal School, Girls' Division, and First Prefectural Girls High School who died in the Battle of Okinawa.
- \*2 Memorial tower enshrining teachers and students of Okinawa Normal School, Boys' Division, and Middle School who died in the Battle of Okinawa.
- \*3 The battle ended after heavy fighting in this area where several memorials have been built.
- \*4 This children's evacuation ship on its way from Okinawa to Kyushu was sunk by an American submarine, killing 1500 on board, mostly schoolchildren.
- \*5 Deaths in areas of heavy fighting of whole families and groups of refugees in caves who had nowhere to escape and took their own lives. In recent years, the term "dying as a group" has been used instead of "group suicides."

The aim of the above teachers guide is to describe the Battle of Okinawa as a whole, while emphasizing that the civilian perspective gives it special significance. For example, such war monuments as "Himeyuri Memorial" and "Young Men's Memorial" exist because school children

were sent to the battlefield where even infants, the elderly, and women died. By explaining that unexploded shells still remain, teachers can also illustrate how the “post-conflict” continues even to this day.

Starting in the late 1960s, the Okinawa Teachers Union designated five days each year for special classes: (1) May 3 which is Constitution Day, (2) May 15 which was the day of reversion, (3) June 23 which is Memorial Day, (4) October 21 which is International Antiwar Day, and February 11 which is National Founding Day. In practice, a survey by the Nakagami branch of the Okinawa Teachers Union found that the highest ratio of schools conducted special classes on Memorial Day at 92.5%, and the lowest ratio on International Antiwar Day at 49.7%. The figures from this 1982 survey are likely to be rather different today.

## (2) Peace education through experience

Many schools now conduct special classes in a more generalized format, encouraging students to think about Memorial Day by bringing them exhibitions of photographs with explanations, lectures by experts on the U.S. military in Okinawa, and accounts of people who experienced war. Recently, with the passing of the wartime generation, designing peace education with persuasive power for today’s children has become a serious problem, with criticism that it has become “stereotyped.”

In recent years, the trend has been away from studying peace passively by hearing lectures and seeing movies or photographs toward more studies of peace through experience. Students visit the Himeyuri Peace Memorial Museum and other facilities for peace education, do field work at former battle sites, and use the “*gama*” cave shelters to learn through experience.

In particular, *gama* have been utilized recently as sites for peace education where the tragedy of the Battle of Okinawa can be explained from the viewpoint of civilians. *Gama* are naturally occurring caves. During the battle, local civilians used them as evacuation shelters. They are especially numerous in the southern area where, because of their large size, not only civilians, but also military forces hid inside to live for long periods. American forces concentrated their attacks on Japanese forces in *gama*, shooting flamethrowers and phosphorous shells in indiscriminate assaults that killed many civilians inside.

Evacuees in one of the two *gama* in Yomitan Village obeyed calls by U.S. forces to surrender, but evacuees in the other *gama* refused to surrender and their lives ended “dying as a group.” This tragedy was the result of war propaganda depicting “American and British devil beasts,” and warning that people must “never become their prisoners.” Life inside caves without light or wood floor was extremely hard. Going outside exposed evacuees to the indiscriminate American assault, but inside they lived in fear of the Japanese soldiers there. Everyone had to keep silent to hide from U.S. forces. No one knew when the battle would end. Terror and uncertainty filled the inside of *gama*. When children learning today through experience inside the *gama* climb outside it again, they

all appreciate the value of peace, as their thoughts focus on the tragic circumstances of people who lived during the battle.

The practice of peace education also takes many other forms, such as media presentations, plays, musical concerts, and fieldwork. Below are the main activities listed in *Okinawa: action for peace* (1988), published by the High School Teachers Union Resource Center and the Research Committee for Peace Education.

- (1) Students mostly from the media and drama clubs of Oroku High School wrote a scenario based on enlarged images from photographs taken on an earlier visit to *gama* at former battle sites. (1986).
- (2) Motobu High School: an exhibition of war documents and artifacts, lectures, panel discussion, antiwar concert, and more (1983, 1984)
- (3) Koza High School: a “peace concert,” featuring poetry reading and choral singing
- (4) Misato Industrial High School: a rock concert by the June 23 Peace Recitation Club
- (5) Yaeyama High School: Students made an antiwar video, “Forty Years after the War: A Special Documentary” (1985), and visited former battle sites on Ishigaki Island.

Other presentations listed were, in English class, “Learning about Okinawa from Collected Testimony in English;” in physics class, “Peace Education on how Nuclear Power leads to Nuclear Weapons:” and, in art class, antiwar posters on the Battle of Okinawa made from the perspectives of high school students.

## **2-2-2 “Reversion to the Homeland” and “Education for Japanese Citizens”**

Besides the Battle of Okinawa, the main themes of peace education before reversion were the problems caused by alien rule and “reversion to the homeland,” which was seen as their ultimate solution. Peace education was practiced at this time through the efforts of such pre-reversion teachers organizations as teacher study groups.

Teachers were responsible for peace education in the schools. There was little of it, however, at a time of acute shortages just after the war when it was all people could do to survive from day to day, and especially when schools lacked buildings and teaching materials. Nevertheless, with opposition to U.S. military rule and hopes for reversion on the rise, teachers groups intensified their efforts to find ways for teaching the spirit expressed in Japan’s Constitution and Basic Education Law. In these circumstances, the content of pre-reversion peace education focused less on the Battle of Okinawa and more on “reversion,” “education for Japanese citizens,” “U.S. military rule,” “harm caused by the bases,” and other issues that reflected political and social conditions at the time.

In 1954 the Teachers Association began holding a Research Conference on Education to collect and report the results of educational practice. Subsequent meetings of the Research Conference, in conjunction with regular curricular guidance, played a major role in identifying problems resulting from the arbitrary exercise of U.S. military rule and implementing research for peace education.

As one of the committees organized for the 1962 Research Conference, the “Committee on Education for Japanese Citizens” discussed ways to implement education that “Aims for the proper cultivation of Japanese citizens according to Japan’s Constitution and Basic Education Law.” This committee became the main venue for discussing the promotion of peace education. Its first session dealt with educating students as “Japanese” who live under U.S. military rule, discussing curricular guidance on such issues as (1) education in Okinawa and the spirit of Japan’s Basic Education Law; (2) U.S. military bases and Okinawa; and (3) improving student performance and education for Japanese citizens.

### **2-2-3 Moving from “Education for Japanese Citizens” to Education for Peace**

For 1972, the year of reversion, the Committee on Education for Japanese Citizens scheduled a single, unified theme, “How to continue the post-reversion struggle against war in education,” which was the first time its unified theme had not included the term “education for Japanese citizens.”

Reversion to Japan brought changes in many organizations, including teachers associations. In 1971, the year before reversion, the Okinawa Teachers Association consolidated its organization. This change was necessary so that teachers could negotiate on an equal basis as workers, whether employed by the G.R.I. or local district boards of education. Then, in 1974, the Association affiliated with the Japan Teachers Union.

Later, in 1978, the Research Conference’s “Committee on Education for Japanese Citizens” changed its name to the “Committee on Peace Education.” It subsequently adopted such unified themes as “How to create peace education and further the antiwar struggle for peace” and “nationalistic attacks and the emperor system” (1978, 1979), discussing numerous political issues, such as the movements opposing the Japan Self Defense Forces and the Emergency Defense Measures Law.

### **2-2-4 Guidelines for the Administration of Peace Education**

#### (1) “Guide for Conducting Peace Education”

In 1993 the Okinawa Prefectural Board of Education published the “Guide for Conducting Peace Education.”<sup>65</sup> This 140-page guidebook explained the significance of peace education for

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<sup>65</sup> Okinawa Prefecture Board of Education. (1973).

Okinawa with its distinct history as an independent country that had long prospered and developed through relations with other countries, but had experienced the tragic battle of Okinawa followed by alien rule. Thus, “education is urgently required that will cultivate an international outlook in children and students of the 21st century, and will foster a deeply held reverence for peace.”

It listed four basic concepts of peace education.

- (1) Teaching reverence for life and respect for the dignity of the individual according to the spirit of Japan’s Peace Constitution and Basic Education Law.
- (2) Cultivating an identity as one member of international society living in the world community, and nurturing qualities that will contribute to world peace.
- (3) Inculcating empathy for others.
- (4) Fostering a reverence for peace based on the distinctive character of Okinawa’s history.

The guidebook then outlined a plan for implementing peace education according to the basic concepts above.

- (1) Implementation to be organized and planned appropriately for each grade level.
- (2) Schedule courses, ethics education, and special activities for a yearlong plan of instruction based on a summary of the main points to be taught.
- (3) Promote respect and understanding for the culture of each student’s own country and for international cooperation and understanding.
- (4) Teach peace comprehensively through education in human welfare and the environment.
- (5) Teach reverence for peace based on materials from local history.

The special feature of this plan is that it indicates how peace, and the reasons we should cherish it, are taught at each level of elementary, middle, and high school, as shown in the table “Peace Education Matrix” in Figure 2-1, below.

Figure 2-1 "Peace Education Matrix"

courses/ethics/special activities	Japanese Language		social studies		science		daily living	music	art	home economics	physical education	ethics	special activities
	lower/middle grade level	upper grade level	middle grade level	upper grade level	middle grade level	upper grade level							
(1)Teaching the preciousness of life													
reverence for one's own and others' lives													
(2)teaching the preciousness of peace													
individual well-being a calm and stable social environment a beautiful natural environment													
(3)teaching the horror of war													
World War I World War II and the atomic bombings Memorial Day (The Battle of Okinawa and museums)													
(4)thinking about the causes of the war													
Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars and their contexts Fifteen-Years War and its context military bases													
(5)teaching the significance of activities associated with international peace													
The League of Nations/United Nations disarmament conference and treaties olympic meets													
(6)nurturing mutual understanding of oneself and others													
trust and friendship tolerance understanding and respect for other cultures an understanding of the UNESCO Charter													
(7)Fostering a willingness to obey rules													
development of a public spirit and a respect for law courtesy honesty, truth open-mindedness law and justice												3	
(8)cultivating a spirit of mutual cooperation and empathy													
kindness work courage volunteering welfare activities													
(9)cultivating a sense of appreciation													
love of family love of school love of local community love of country love of humankind													
(10)nurturing sensitivity and enlightenment													
inspiration respect love of humanity love of the arts love of nature													
(11)cultivating an international outlook through a knowledge of Okinawa Prefecture's history and local character													
wide-ranging trade and peaceful relations during the period of the Ryukyu Kingdom Okinawa as a southern gateway Shuri Castle's restoration													

Source: Okinawa Prefecture Board of Education (1993) p. 64

As shown in the “Matrix,” special features of the “Guide” are that it teaches peace from a broad perspective within each course, showing how peace relates mutually to each of them, and indicates specific objectives for each grade level. Another special feature is its promotion of international coalition and cooperation while following an overall lesson plan that emphasizes Japan’s Peace Constitution and the philosophy of Japan’s Basic Education Law.

(2) The “Exhibit of Peace Messages from Children and Students” at the Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum

The “Exhibit of Peace Messages from Children and Students” is presented each year at the Peace Memorial Museum with the important purpose of transmitting the experiences of those who experienced the Battle of Okinawa for posterity residents. Its aim is for children and students to think about war and peace through painting, essays, poetry, and other creative activities. The most outstanding works are selected from those submitted and exhibited to the public. The number of annual submissions has increased every year since the exhibit opened in 1992, and is now close to 1500.

Many of these works express, with children’s acute sensibility and in their straightforward words and colors, what they learned from their families about the tragedy of war, the sorrow of losing family members, the fervent desire for peace, the solemnity of birth, and the preciousness of life.

## **2-2-5 U.S. Military Bases and Peace Education**

(1) Before reversion

The military bases built in Okinawa after the war have affected education in various ways. There have been crimes and accidents caused by the presence of the military bases, and not a few incidents in which children are the victims. Education seeks to transmit an unfaded record of the past through the testimony of those who experienced the Battle of Okinawa, films, and visits to former battle sites. In contrast, the military bases are a present and ongoing form of peace education that forces both adults and children to think about “peace,” “war,” “the nation-state,” and “the world.”

Before reversion, local events and social movements served in themselves as materials for peace education on the theme of “U.S. military bases.” When Okinawans mounted protest demonstrations in response to crimes and accidents resulting from the presence of bases, it was only natural that children’s eyes were opened to the social problems the bases caused, the “injustice of U.S. military rule,” and issues of “peace” and “human rights.”

(2) After reversion

Problems of noise, environmental pollution, and frequent crimes and accidents that result from the presence of the bases have been major political and social issues in Okinawa both before and after reversion. When peace education takes up problems associated with the military bases in Okinawa, its major themes are the present state of the military bases, the reasons why, in all of Japan, 75% of them are concentrated in Okinawa, the damage they cause, and the burdens they impose.

Living next to the bases and getting used to seeing them even as “normal,” children now learn the facts about them, about why they are here in their home community, about their community’s distinctive character and history, and about how it has changed from the way it was in the past. Through this process, they come to understand that noise and the many other troubles the bases cause are not “normal” occurrences, but manifestations of serious problems and injustices. This provides an opportunity for thinking about how to deal with them.

## **2-3 How government and citizen groups make Okinawa a transmission center for peace**

### **2-3-1 The Prefectural Government’s Peace Projects**

The strange-sounding policy listed as “peace administration” first appeared among the official duties of the Okinawa Prefectural Government in 1993 when the government established a department to carry it out. Its purpose was to “convey Okinawans’ appeal for peace widely inside and outside the nation, and contribute to the establishment of permanent peace”<sup>66</sup> With a total annual budget in recent years of between 300 and 330 million yen, its main functions are to operate facilities related to peace and to resolve issues left over from the war.

Its comparative importance has changed somewhat under the current prefectural government, but peace administration remains a unique policy of the Okinawa Prefectural Government.

Peace administration in the Okinawa Prefectural Government has three important policy responsibilities. (1) “The Cornerstone of Peace,” a monument on which the names are engraved of each individual who died in the Battle of Okinawa. (2) “The Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum,” built to pass on accurately the historical lessons of the Battle of Okinawa and to contribute, from the viewpoint of Okinawans, to the establishment of permanent peace; and (3) “The Okinawa Peace Prize,” awarded to individuals and organizations who have contributed to the building and maintenance of peace in the Asia-Pacific area which has profoundly affected Okinawa geographically and historically.

(1) The Cornerstone of Peace

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<sup>66</sup> Okinawa Prefecture, Department of General Affairs Peace Promotion Division. (2003) Summary.

The Cornerstone of Peace is located in Itoman City at Mabuni where heavy fighting took place during the Battle of Okinawa. It stands at the southwestern edge of Okinawa Battlefield Park near the Peace Memorial Museum, Peace Memorial Hall, and the Memorial to the Dead in the Battle of Okinawa. Engraved with the names of more than 238,000 people who died in the Battle of Okinawa, the plates of this stone monument encircle a flame of peace. On a site of 17,000 sq.m. stand 116 engraved monuments with a total length of 2,200 m.

The Cornerstone of Peace was completed in 1995, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II and of the Battle of Okinawa. It was constructed to convey widely, inside and outside Japan, the “spirit of peace” cultivated through Okinawa’s history and environment, and to appeal for permanent world peace. Its plan is to engrave the names of every individual who died in the Battle of Okinawa, whether soldier or noncombatant and without regard to nationality.



President Bill Clinton visiting the Cornerstone of Peace during the 2000 G-8 Summit (Source: Okinawa Times )

Its three basic philosophical purposes are (1) to mourn those who died in the battle and pray for peace; (2) to pass on the lessons of those who experienced war; and (3) to provide a place for rest and study. There are war memorials throughout the world, but very rarely do they include all the names of a war’s victims engraved with equal prominence whether soldiers or noncombatants and without regard to nationality. It is this concept that evokes a sympathetic response inside and outside Japan.

The Cornerstone of Peace is based on this concept, pledging to oppose war by mourning without distinction between allies and enemies, since hating enemies makes no sense when the victors also suffer profound losses as victims of war.

## (2) The Peace Memorial Museum

Built in 1975, the Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum relocated to its present building which opened in 2000. Standing on a site of 12,000 sq.m., the structure occupies 10,179 sq.m., and has a basement floor, a ground floor, and a second floor. It was remodeled at a total construction cost of 4,900,000,000 yen as a facility to create peace, contributing to the establishment of permanent world peace.

Five purposes of the Peace Memorial Museum are (1) mourning all who have died in war and praying for permanent peace; (2) creating and transmitting the message of peace; (3) peace education, peace exchanges, and training of personnel for peace-related work; (4) building a peace network; and (5) providing a peace data base and research facilities.

The museum has a five-room permanent exhibit and, in addition, rooms for scheduled exhibitions, special exhibition, exhibition rooms for children, an information library, and a Peace Memorial Hall. The permanent exhibit covers two areas on the first and second floors. The “Area for Experiencing History” on the second floor is an observation type of exhibition where visitors learn about the tragedy of war and the preciousness of peace through historical experience. Its purpose is to pass on these lessons to future generations. Below are the five exhibition rooms that make up the permanent exhibit.

In addition, the museum holds about 12,000 volumes of books for general readers and children, and provides videos and other institutional support for peace studies. About 170,000 visitors came to the former museum in 1969, its last year of operation, but an estimated 300,000 to 400,000 have visited since the new museum opened. Besides presenting special exhibitions periodically, it permits the borrowing of such materials as exhibition panels and videotaped testimony to support peace studies.

### (3) The Okinawa Peace Prize

The Battle of Okinawa and military bases continue to be major issues of peace for Okinawa. The “Okinawa Peace Prize” was created in 1999, with basic guidelines established in 2001, to broaden a commitment to the concept of peace. It is awarded to individuals or organizations, in Japan or elsewhere, working in the Asia-Pacific region to resolve such problems that threaten the peace and survival of humankind as wars, regional conflicts, poverty, displaced persons, and environmental destruction. A recipient is selected every two years with the initial prize going to the Peshawar Association, supported by Nakamura Tetsu,” which contributes to the peace and security of humankind by providing medical care in Afghanistan. The next prize went to “AMDA” that continues to offer emergency medical assistance in Asia, Africa, and elsewhere.

In receiving the first award, Nakamura Tetsu of the Peshawar Association spoke of “contributing to peace through nonviolence,” acknowledging that this recognition by the people of Okinawa had special significance. We were deeply moved by the overwhelming contrast between Peshawar’s work in faraway Afghanistan and the deployment there of invasion forces from

American bases here in Okinawa. In his acceptance speech, he noted “living in a situation in which even speaking of peace is violently punished, I feel honored as a Japanese that this stolen voice of peace is spoken by the people of Okinawa, an “island of bases.”

According to AMDA Director Sukanuma Shigeru, “In Japan Okinawa is the only society related by blood. Thus, distant relatives, rather than others nearby, are treated with special care. Many of the powerless people of the world needing aid are from societies related by blood. How should we interact with these societies? People in Okinawa have learned the principles of humanity and how not to act from experience in their daily lives. What I hope most for Okinawans is that they will look again at the world, not as something geographical, but as a society related by blood.”<sup>67</sup> He evoked everyone’s sympathy by speaking of a historical spirit of mutual support among Okinawans, which continues in practice today, as a much-needed contribution to international relations.

## **2-3-2 Peace Projects in Cities, Towns, and Villages**

### (1) Nuclear-free declarations by local governments

In the 1980s, a nuclear-free declaration was issued in the city of Manchester, England. During the Cold War between East and West when the cities of Europe were in danger of nuclear attack, a movement spread among local communities to issue nuclear-free declarations based on the belief that nuclear deployment only increased the risk of retaliation. Beginning in the 1980s, the ratio of local communities with nuclear-free declarations has also increased in Japan, reaching 80% at present.

In response to this movement, nuclear-free declarations were issued in Okinawa during the 1980s, with the number of declarations<sup>68</sup> gradually increasing until now the prefecture itself, as well as its cities, towns, and villages, have all issued nuclear-free declarations<sup>68</sup>. So many communities joined this movement because the prefecture was once the site of the devastating Battle of Okinawa and remains the location for military bases, making people especially eager to abolish nuclear weapons.

Below is an example of one declaration, from Ogimi Village. It speaks of the continuing buildup of arms despite worldwide appeals for the abolishment of nuclear weapons. “As citizens of the first nation victimized by nuclear weapons and as people who experienced the tragedy of war, we in Okinawa appeal to nations with nuclear weapons for an end to all wars and the abolishment of nuclear weapons that threaten human existence.” Opening by warning of the nuclear threat, it

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<sup>67</sup> Okinawa Prefecture Information Section.(2004) p. 8.

<sup>68</sup> The nuclear-free declarations of Okinawa Prefecture and all its cities, towns, and villages are published on the home page of the Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum. <http://www.peace-museum.pref.okinawa.jp/htmls/heiwa/hemenu.htm>

continues by expressing the importance of abolishing nuclear weapons that threaten peace for the community of Ogimi Village. “We residents of Ogimi village seek, first and foremost, peace for the area where we live. This hope for peace is a natural desire for us villagers, but we also regard it as our mission in helping to guarantee the survival of humankind. Thus, the Village Council hereby pledges, for the sake of everyone’s right to live, to appeal for lasting peace, to oppose nuclear weapons, and to work for their abolishment.”

#### (1) Unique peace projects of cities, towns, and villages

##### 1. Haebaru Town

Haebaru Town, located just south of Naha City, has a population of 33,000. With an area of 10 sq. km., it is a farming community where mainly squash and other vegetables are grown, but is best known for the production in former times of Ryukyu splash-pattern cloth, the textile for which Okinawa is famous. An army hospital was set up here for Japan’s 32nd Army (Jewel Corps), known as the Okinawa Defense Army, in preparation for the Battle of Okinawa, using what was then the Haebaru elementary school as one of its wards. It was a place of tragedy where, after Defense Army Headquarters withdrew from Shuri and retreated south, the seriously wounded were either abandoned in the underground hospital cave or forced to kill themselves by drinking cyanide if they were too injured or sick to evacuate.

Haebaru Town established a section for peace administration in 1989 with activities centering on the Municipal Culture Center. The basic mission of peace administration has been to organize the townspeople to conduct their own research thorough reclamation of the town’s history and traditions. The two-story Culture Center building was reconstructed from a former kitchen for school lunches, using steel-reinforced concrete at a cost of seventy million yen. It functions as a municipal museum with exhibits on four topics: “The Battle of Okinawa,” “Emigration,” “Folkways,” and “The Arts”. “The Battle of Okinawa” section is located in the center of the permanent exhibit, and includes a recreated Haebaru Army Hospital cave based on the testimony of surviving army nurses.

The Culture Center also compiles local historical materials relating to the Battle of Okinawa, and organizes exhibitions and lectures on folk culture, traditional industries, and post-conflict life. In addition, it manages peace exchange visits of local elementary school children and former wartime evacuees who travel together to Kumamoto and Miyazaki, places where Okinawans evacuated during the war.

##### 2. Yomitan Village

With a population of just over 38,000, Yomitan Village is located along National Highway 58 on the west coast of Okinawa Main Island’s central district. 28 km. from Naha, it has many cultural artifacts, scenic spots, and historic sites and relics. During a period of great suffering, it was the

location of the initial U.S. landing during the Battle of Okinawa when heavy bombing from sea and air reduced it to scorched earth; and, for a time after the war, almost the entire town was seized by the U.S. military for use as a military base. Bases still occupy 1,649 hectares, or 45% of the town's 3,517-hectare area, despite villagers' vigorous demands for return of land used by bases that have "blocked the development of our village."

The villagers' dedicated efforts in peace administration include the "nuclear-free declaration" in 1982, the First Creative Exhibition for Peace in 1988, the enactment of guidelines for peace administration in 1991, and passage by the village council in 1995 of a resolution renouncing war. In particular, the resolution renouncing war is almost unprecedented among cities, towns, and villages in the prefecture. Proclaimed on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the end of the Battle of Okinawa, it begins by advocating "A bright future for humankind. We dedicate our energies so that tomorrow will bring coexistence for humanity to live together cooperatively, liberated from the nuclear threat, and in harmony with nature." It urges renunciation of war as the "spirit of Okinawa" so that "a society without weapons can become a reality," and renews "our pledge to appeal for permanent peace and to renounce war."

### **2-3-3 Efforts of Citizens' Organizations**

#### **(1) The Himeyuri Memorial Peace Museum**

This museum, built in 1989, tells about the unit of female students known as the "Himeyuri (star lily) Nurses Corp." At the time of the Battle of Okinawa, 222 female students between the ages of fifteen and nineteen from Okinawa Normal Girls School and the First Prefectural Girls High School were mobilized as battlefield nurses, along with 18 of their head teachers. 123 students and 13 teachers lost their lives. Surviving students from the Himeyuri Nurse Corps built the museum for repose of the spirits of their schoolmates who died, and as an appeal for peace. The "Himeyuri Memorial," enshrining these war victims together, is located on the same grounds.

The museum is a one-story building constructed on an 11,667 sq.m. lot around a central flower garden. Exhibition Room No. 1 is "The Himeyuri in their Youth." Before being remodeled in 2004, its theme was "On the Eve of the Battle of Okinawa," and it depicted how the shadow of war fell suddenly over a peaceful school when mobilization began for the battle.

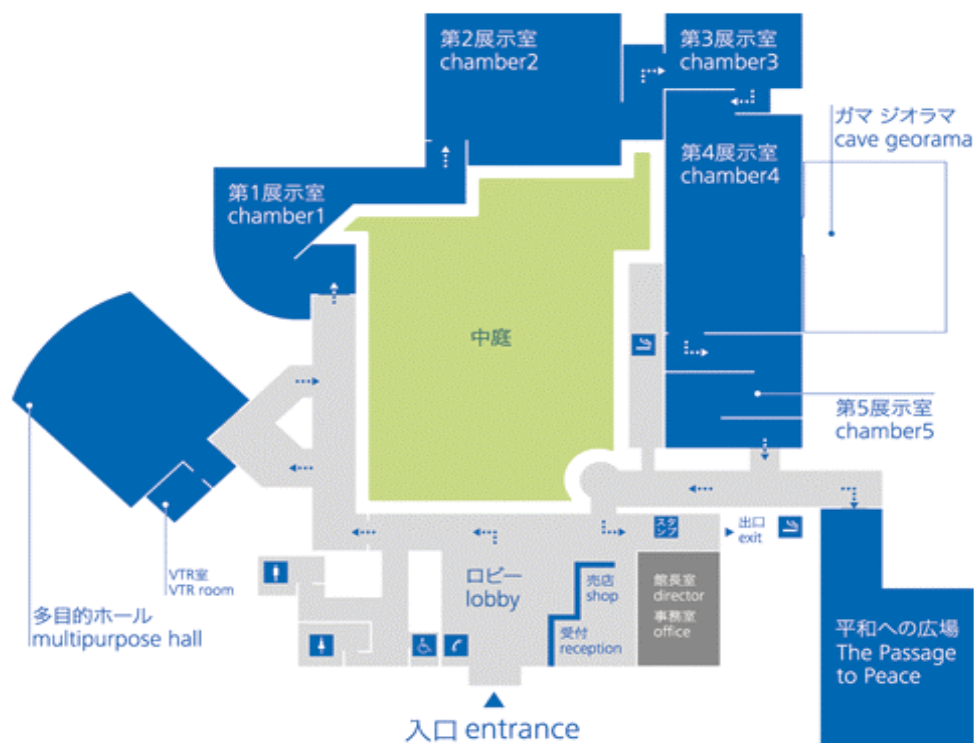
Exhibition Room No. 2 portrays, through a georama and survivors' testimony, the hospital cave of the Okinawa Army Hospital in Haebaru where the mobilized students were posted. The trench was an underground cavern winding around like an ant hole. Inside, where two-tier bunk beds were set up, the students frantically nursed the sick and wounded.

Exhibition Room No. 3, "The Order to Disband and Wandering toward Death," shows how the Japanese military's "order to disband" the corps with the approach of U.S. troops forced the students out of the cave onto the battlefield where they were surrounded by American soldiers.

Within a few days after the “order to disband,” more than 100 students died. The tragedy that unfolded then is conveyed through U.S. military film and survivors’ testimony.

Exhibition Room No. 4, titled “Their Spirits in Repose,” presents pictures on the walls of the more than 200 students who later died in the battle, and books containing survivors’ testimony. In addition, Ihara Surgery Trench No. 3 (presently Himeyuri Memorial), where many died during attacks of gas grenades, is recreated in full size.

Figure 2-2 Inside Layout of the Himeyuri Peace Memorial Museum



Source: Himeyuri Peace Museum (2005)

The name “Himeyuri” became known throughout Japan after Ishino Keiichiro published his novel *Himeyuri Memorial* in 1951. The same year Nakasone Seizen, who had been one of the head teachers with the Himeyuri student nurses, published *An Okinawan Tragedy: Memoirs of the People of Himeyuri*. In 1953 the film “Himeyuri Memorial” came out, and became a huge, record-breaking hit. At a time when post-conflict confusion was beginning to settle down throughout Japan, a growing number of people from the mainland visited the battle sites in Okinawa’s southern district and the Himeyuri Memorial.

Many were already making pilgrimages to the Himeyuri Memorial before the museum was built and, with its growing renown from films and writings, between 800,000 and 900,000 people have come on pilgrimages every year since the museum opened. It has become known nationwide as a place for peace studies, and the total number of visitors has exceeded ten million during those

fifteen years. The United Nations included the Himeyuri Peace Memorial Museum in its “Peace Museums of the World,” published in 1996.

### (2) The S.S. Tsushima Memorial Museum

The “S.S. Tsushima Memorial Museum” opened in Asahigaoka Park, in the Wakasa section of Naha City, on August 22, 2004, the sixtieth year since the children’s evacuation ship S.S. Tsushima was sunk by an American submarine. This museum, built with two stories and a rooftop floor, is located on a lot of 930 sq.m. and has a floor space of 769 sq.m. The S.S. Tsushima Memorial Stone and Kozakura Memorial also stand in Asahigaoka Park.

On August 21, 1944, the S.S. Tsushima left Naha Port with school children, their head teachers, and other evacuees aboard. Around 10:00 on the evening of the 22nd off the Tokara Island Chain in Kagoshima Prefecture, the ship was sunk by a torpedo attack from an American submarine. Many passengers remaining in the ship’s hold and others who jumped into the ocean were swallowed up by the high waves and died. Among the 1418 victims were 775 schoolchildren.

Considered a military secret, this incident was not made public during the war, but in 1950 an association of bereaved families was formed and in 1954 the Kozakura Tower was built enshrining the victims where every year on August 22 memorial services are held. In the museum’s permanent exhibit on the second floor, a series of panels show what happened to the S.S. Tsushima from the time it left port until it was sunk, leaving passengers drifting in the water awaiting rescue.

In the first floor exhibition rooms are beds from the ship’s hold, belongings left by the child evacuees who died, and photographs from their school days. It also includes a school classroom recreated from the period, recorded testimony of survivors and bereaved families accessible on video screens, and wooden panels engraved with the victims’ names. There are 101 photographs of the victims (showing a total of 116 people) and 23 belongings left behind by 14 of them.

People working at the museum explain that “It is not only a memorial facility to provide repose for the victims’ spirits and convey the love of the bereaved families, but a space for “children of the S.S. Tsushima” to meet “children living today,” to speak with each other, and to continue communicating this event to future generations.”<sup>69</sup>

### (3) The One-Foot Campaign Association

Officially named the “Association for Teaching Children about the Battle of Okinawa through Film,” this organization is commonly called “Association of the One-Foot Campaign for a Documentary Film on the Battle of Okinawa.” It was formed mainly by scholars and intellectuals in 1983. Its purpose was to raise money from people in Okinawa for the purchase of unreleased films of the Battle of Okinawa taken by the U.S. military, and to use them for teaching children about it. Besides the approximately one-hundred reels of U.S. Air Force film on the battle stored at

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<sup>69</sup> Okinawa Times.(2004) p. 5.

America's National Archives, the Marine Corps and Navy held thousands of reels. The cost of acquiring these films was 100 yen per foot (about 35.5 cm.). It was 70,000yen per one reel. Response to the fund-raising campaign was enormous, with a total of 10,000 people registering as members, so that by April of the following year, 1984, more than seven million yen had been collected. After arrival in May of the twelve reels ordered, totaling 9600 feet, screenings were held. They were given at the first convention in Okinawa of the Japan Teachers Union, at meetings of the Lower House Committee on Foreign Relations, the Upper House Special Committee on Okinawa and Northern Japan, and before the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly with widespread public response.

In a little over a year, more than 30 million yen had been contributed, enabling the association to purchase a total; of 44 reels, about 30,000 feet, of film for screenings to more than 50,000 people. The 50-minute movie "Okinawa: Testimony for the Future," independently produced from film purchased in the United States, also includes material on post-conflict Okinawa. It was shown in Peru and Vietnam, also with considerable public impact. "Testimony for the Future" drew praise in many fields as an outstanding and highly recommended film. In 1995 a second film, "Okinawa Battle Documentary" (55 minutes, in color), was produced.

By 2003 these documentary films had been shown more than 120 times to more than 12,000 viewers. In addition, videos were produced for sale and copies have been sent out more than 20,000 times to teachers of classes in peace studies as acclaim for this project has continued from many fields.

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