



NEWSLETTER

Towards the 10th Anniversary

of the founding of the Holocaust Education Center Japan

Makoto Otsuka, *Director General*

“Remember the past, and look forward to the future.”
“The person who saved one person saved the whole world.”

Since the Holocaust Education Center, Japan, the first one in Japan, was established in June 1995, seven and a half years have passed, and we have welcomed 57,000 visitors from in and outside of the country. The museum has played an essential role as an educational center and helped Japanese people learn about the fact of the Holocaust, especially about the 1.5 million children killed in the Holocaust only because they were born Jewish. We appreciate very much all the help from Jewish communities in 40 countries, the Holocaust Museums, and the survivors of the Holocaust. Thanks to them, the activities of the Center have moved the hearts of many Japanese educators and children.

On April 9th, we commemorated “Yom HaShoah,” the Holocaust day, and had a ceremony together with Israeli Ambassador in Japan, Mr. Itzhak Lior, on April 14th. We also had the pleasure of welcoming the fifth president of Israel, His Excellency Itzhak Navon. Their visits encouraged us very much and inspired us with hope.

Last November, the Center invited Ms. Tova Ben-Zvi, a survivor and an active singer in Israel and Poland. She was compelled into Lodz Ghetto for five years, sent to Auschwitz, miraculously escaped from the Death March and survived. The “Small Hands,” an active group of young school children, planned and organized “The Holocaust Music Forum 2002.” Ms. Tova Ben-Zvi talked

about her experiences, sang the songs on the Holocaust, and emphasized the meaning of being in Israel. She held lectures in 16 places, such as Hiroshima University, Kannabe Culture Hall, Tokyo Nakamura School, and Tokyo JCC Synagogue, etc.. Her lecture tour went on

for a month. We were grateful to her for her earnest will and hope for peace as well as her actions full of kindness.

Now toward the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Holocaust Education Center Japan, we have started making a compilation of lectures given by guest speakers. We also plan to lay 30 typical questions and answers on a board which many children have asked.

To my great pleasure, the fifteen delegation members of the “Small Hands” are going to visit Los Angeles and San Diego this year. This whole project has come true with the cooperation of the Israeli Consul General in Los Angeles and Japan Society of San Diego and Tijuana. The delegates will visit Jewish schools and Synagogues to sing Hebrew songs and will hold presentations on the Holocaust Education Center Japan as well as the life of the late Consul, Sempo Sugihara.

The learning of the Holocaust is proceeding step by step in Japan and is being gradually accepted. It encourages Japanese children to ask this essential question, “why on earth did the Holocaust happen?” We would like to enrich the learning of Holocaust to educate children living in the 21st century, so that it will help them come to know the meaning of their existences, to broaden their outlook, and to have a tolerant mind.



Children studying about the Holocaust in HEC

Visit of Mr. Itzhak Navon, The Fifth President of Israel

In the morning of April 17, after visiting the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum the last day, the fifth Israeli president His Excellency Mr. Itzhak Navon visited HEC. Peacefully and with dignity, he closely looked at each display with deep emotion. He wrote the following impressions of him in Hebrew.



Mr. Itzhak Navon in HEC

You connected your fate with the fate of Israel, in identification with the hardest period of its history, the period of Holocaust. You lead and built the Holocaust Education Center, which is thousands of miles away from Israel and the center of destruction Auschwitz and other death camps.

You and your people are doing vital work and educational task among youth and adults. May you be blessed!

I wish you many years of creative activity, which remembers the sad past and hopes the shining future. Your acts give hope that the future will bring everyone of each nation to happiness and peace, and will bring the shout of joy from Israel.

May you be blessed and congratulations.

With deep respect and warm blessing, Itzhak Navon

Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Memorial Day) 2002

On April 9 (29 of Nisan), the Holocaust Education Center welcomed Israeli Ambassador Mr. Itzhak Lior, and had a commemoration ceremony, together with a congregation of 100 people. After silent prayer, verses from Ezekiel chapter 37 were recited, Motele, Eli Eli, and Hatikvah were sung, and 6 candles were lit for the late children, mothers and teachers. Then prayers were dedicated for the peace of the world, commemorating the 6 million victims, never to make such a tragedy happen again. Mr. Itzhak Lior described the museum as “Mikdash M’at (Small Shrine)• Eand showed high respect to the activities of the center, which promotes peace among youth.



Mr. Itzhak Lior at the commemoration ceremony

On the Dedication of the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Taipei

Menashe Zipori, Representative of Israel Economic and Cultural Office in Taipei

Thousands of miles away for the killing fields of Europe in one of its darkest hours, and two generations later from the one that witnessed the infernal fires and the gas chambers, extinguishing life of the one and a half million souls of innocent Jewish children, from among the total, six million Jews who perished during the Holocaust, on the beautiful Island of Taiwan, known also, appropriately, as Formosa, a kind people, the Taiwanese, inaugurated a unique Memorial and a Museum for those lost Jewish souls.

The main purpose of this Memorial is actually, a Holocaust education center, to expose the Taiwanese in general, and the young generation in particular to the horrors of the Holocaust that took place in conquered Europe, during the 2nd World War and where the Nazi regime.

Although the Taiwanese had their own share of sufferings and persecutions along the centuries, yet Father Chou, the Head of the Churluchien Church thought it is necessary to familiarize the dedicated followers of his own church and the Taiwanese public as a whole, of the persecutions, discrimination, sufferings and unpardonable crime to try and annihilate an entire nation, namely, the Jews. Just by claiming them to be “different” to be of “inferior race” to be “evil” etc..

The infatigable Rev. Chow, who has been dedicating

most of his years to the well-being of his church and community of Jenteh Town in Tainan County, is a kind and selfless soul who have shown utmost kindness and understanding for the Jewish people in general, and the State of Israel in particular.

His tireless efforts to erect a worthy Memorial for the victims of the Holocaust was finally crowned with the opening of such a memorial on June 29, 2002 with the participation of members of the tiny Israeli-Jewish Community in Taiwan, including the Head of the Israel Representation Office in Taipei, high-level officials from the Taiwanese government, church community members and many others. Among them, we note the Head of the German Institute in Taipei, Dr. Klaus Rupprecht.



Mr. Zipori in the Holocaust Museum in Tainan

Also present at the solemn ceremony was Rev. Makoto Otsuka, the Director General of the Holocaust Education Center at Fukuyama City, Hiroshima, Japan and probably the most inspirational person behind the erection of the Hall as well. His worthwhile support, both spiritually and materially, was of great significance towards establishing the Center.

Finally, many thanks should also go to the well-known “The Beit Shalom Japan” and its most revered leader, Rev. Masaru Otsuki of Japan, who has shown a deep commitment and good faith towards the State of Israel and its people.