



NEWSLETTER

Entering the Second Stage

Makoto Otsuka, *Director General, Holocaust Education Center, Japan*

The Holocaust Education Center, Japan was established as the first of its kind in Japan in July 1995. 1.5 million little lives were lost just because they were born Jewish. "Why did they have to be killed?" we have been trying to answer this question for the Japanese people, who are taught very little about the Holocaust.

In Japan the problems of bullying and violence have frequently occurred lately, and teachers are at a loss in how to combat these problems. The Holocaust tells us stories of "Righteous among the Nations", such as Sempo Sugihara, who inspire us to be courageous in any situations, and I'm sure that the Holocaust is one of the timeliest and the most universal themes to learn.

The HEC enters its 12th year next July, and almost 80 thousand people have visited our center since it opened. Our aim is to inform visitors about the Holocaust. The visitors, deeply touched, have asked themselves what they can do to create peace, and they have talked about the Holocaust in various places.

The Holocaust Education Center is now going to enter its second stage. The new center is under construction, which when completed, will provide a more effective and educational environment for more children visitors. It will be a two-story building with 810 m² of floor space.

There will be a permanent exhibition room, a temporary exhibition room, a lecture hall (which can seat 150 people), a children's room, a library and audio visual room, and a garden of Anne Frank's Rose. It will be completed in end of September 2007.

There will be enough space for groups of more than 100 people to see the exhibits deeply in silence. Our aim is to present the facts of the Holocaust to visitors, and allow them to think of ways in which they can help create a peaceful world.

Reproduction of Anne Frank's Room

We especially hope to reproduce Anne Frank's bedroom from the secret annex in Amsterdam, as the highlight of our new center. In 1971, I met Anne's father, Mr. Otto Frank, by chance while traveling in Israel. Since then we have remained in contact for more than 10 years. His words of "Do not just sympathize with the 1.5 million children who were murdered during the Holocaust, but also actually do something to create peace." became an inspiration to establish the Holocaust Education Center. Mr. Otto Frank was the only person from his family who survived Auschwitz. After the war he often visited the Anne Frank House

in Amsterdam from Basel, Switzerland, and got involved in educating young people who will live in the future, talking about peace to these people who come from all over the world.

Since his death, we have kept in contact with the Frank Family. Last year, for the 10th Anniversary of our center we welcomed Mr. Buddy Elias, the only cousin of Anne Frank alive. As President of the Anne Frank Fonds in Basel, Mr. Elias kindly donated the typewriter which Mr. Otto Frank used to type Anne's Diary, and about 100 other artifacts to our center.

For the Future

In the new museum we hope that visitors will not only learn the full story of the Holocaust, but also feel the Holocaust, the hope of peace of the murdered children, and the voices of peace of those who miraculously survived. We are planning to construct a replica of a ghetto wall of 3.5 meters high, and are also preparing witness videos of 5 survivors who are active in the Holocaust Museum of Montreal, Canada.

Many people from over 60 countries have donated to us valuable artifacts and documents, and have supported our center with warm words of encouragement.

We will keep acting as "an educational center that creates peace" with your kind assistance.

The new center will be dedicated to the late Rev. Takeji Otsuki (1906-2004), the founder of Beit Shalom Japan, and more than 2,000 people of good will from all over Japan, have donated to help us reach this plan. To remember this modest reverend, who has prayed for "the peace of Jerusalem" for more than 60 years, we will build a memorial wall made of Jerusalem Stones (5 meters high, 10 meters wide), inside the facade of the museum. We hope to build a graceful and dignified center.

March of The Living

The recent visit of Mr. Aharon Tamir and Mr. David Ben-Ner of the International March of the Living, made a deep impression on us. Young people from all over the world visit the sites of the Holocaust in Poland, and the Holy Land, Israel, making actions with the motto of "We can change the world"; it will give us ideas for a bright future.

*Remember the past and look forward for the future.
If you hope it, it is no more a dream.*



Model of the New Holocaust Education Center, Japan