

Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum

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The building of the Peace Memorial Museum, located at the Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima Japan, was built in 1955 to tell the story of Hiroshima before, during and after the bombing.

It has since been a main attraction for tourists visiting the city. The museum receives nearly one million visitors annually. The museum provides its visitors with information about major events that surrounded the war, Hiroshima's role in the war, all the events which took place on the day of the bomb-dropping on Hiroshima as well as a number of memorable exhibits showing remains from the atomic blast.



Figure 1. Location of Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum in the Peace Park. Source: Peace Memorial Museum homepage <http://www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/>

Layout concept

The museum is split up into the East Building and the West Building. The East Building contains exhibits which provide historical information about the city of Hiroshima before the atomic bomb and the state of the city following the event. In particular, it highlights 3 of the few buildings left standing following the atomic blast. The Atomic Bomb Dome, Hiroshima City Hall and the Hiroshima Red Cross Hospital were three buildings that suffered damage but not total collapse from the atomic blast.



Figure 2. External view of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. The West and East Buildings are connected via a hallway on the third floor. Source: Peace Memorial Museum homepage: <http://www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/>

Connected to the East Building is a hallway on the third floor is the West Building. In this area of the museum, everyday items exposed to the bomb were displayed and stories of individual victims are told. Some of the displays include: lunch boxes with the charred food remains, burnt clothing, a child's tricycle and other personal belongings. The personal nature of the displayed items really makes the experience much more real and tangible. *See figures below*



Figure 3. Selected displays from the West Building. Top Left: A charred lunch box from the blast. Right: Two sets of children's clothing following the bomb. Bottom Left: A historic picture of the A-bomb dome which is currently preserved in Hiroshima's Peace Park. Source: Melissa Sung

The Museum also provides peace education to groups of individuals. As part of their peace education efforts they will invite a survivor to come and share their story. While our group from McMaster was there, we had the opportunity to listen to the story of a female survivor. *See insert.* The survivor who shared her story with us was in grade seven at that time and was part of a student mobilization effort where students were called upon to volunteer to make fire-breaks within the city. It was while she was working on clearing the roads for such fire-breaks that the atomic bomb was exploded. Her story was very touching and made the experience really come to life.

Figure 4: A female survivor sharing her story with a group of students from McMaster University. Source: Melissa Sung



Another interesting thing was that the museum would feature artwork from survivors. This was a very effective way to allow survivors an outlet to share their feelings and emotions with other people through the medium of art.

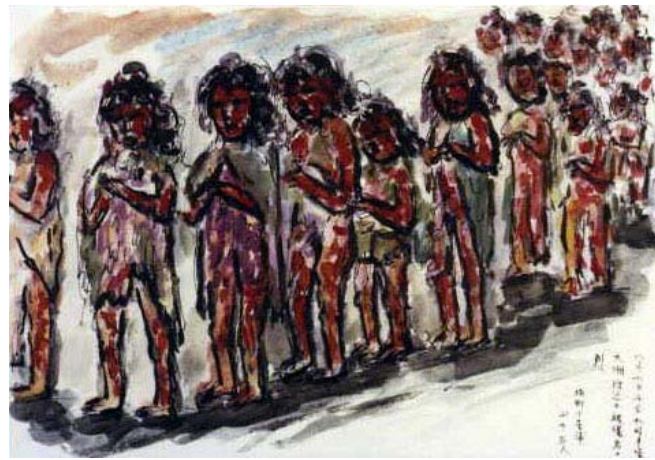


Figure 5: Survivor's share their stories through artwork. Top Left: A pillar of fire. Above: Victims fleeing to the suburbs. Bottom Left: Seeking water from the cistern. Source: Hiroshima Peace Museum homepage <http://www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/>



References

“Hiroshima Peace Museum” Website:

<http://www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/>

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<http://www.theworldisnotflat.com/dispatch/2006/05/14/hiroshima-peace-park-and-peace-memorial-museum>

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