

September 17, 1988



THE OKINAWA PEACE MEMORIAL HALL



The Okinawa Peace
Memorial Statue

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Okinawa became the final battleground between the invading U.S. forces and the defending Japanese forces towards the end of World War II. It is remembered as one of the bloodiest battles in which more than 200,000 perished including U.S. and Japanese soldiers and Okinawan citizens.

Thus, the Okinawa Peace Memorial Hall was constructed on October 1, 1978 on Mabuni Hill where the war practically ended, to symbolize the ardent wish of our people who abhor the recurrence of such a tragedy to befall any nation regardless of their nationality, race, creed, or religion.

1) The Okinawa Peace Memorial Statue

—world's biggest "Tsuikin" lacquer statue.

Inside the hall is installed the Okinawa Peace Memorial Statue. It took 20 years for the late Shinzan Yamada, the most prestigious artist of Okinawa, to complete the "Tsuikin" lacquer statue, which is the world's biggest of its kind. It is 12 meters high and 8 meters wide. Artist Yamada developed a unique method based on traditional Ryukuan lacquerware techniques, and adopted it in moulding the prototype of the statue. This is an artistic work which was only possible in the spiritual and cultural climate of Okinawa.

2) Shinzan Yamada

Shinzan Yamada was born on Dec. 27, 1885 in Shuri, Okinawa.

1906—He attended the Tokyo Arts School where he studied Japanese paintings, sculpture, arts and crafts.

1940—He returned to Okinawa and experienced the war in which his eldest son was killed.

1957—He started his work on the Peace Memorial Statue which was to take more than 20 years to complete.

1977—He died at the age of 92.

3) "War and Peace"—18 paintings in the hall—

The wall of the hall are decorated with 18 paintings under the motif of peace, such as a serial of "War and Peace" which was donated by internationally known Japanese artist, Keiyu Nishimura. He was born in 1909 in Hokkaido, northern Japan. Presently he lives in Paris, France and has received various awards on his works, including the Paris Critique Prix.

4) World Spiritual Stones

In the basement of the hall are displayed many stones sent from various parts of Japan and other countries. These stones have been collected at 153 holy places of 80 countries and sent here with "an aspiration for the world peace".

5) Countless Stars

Above the Memorial Statue can be seen countless stars like our galaxy. Diamond cut, crystal glass are used to create an impression of different coloured twinkling stars.

6) Okinawa Peace Memorial Art Museum

Many paintings displayed here were donated in the motif of peace by noted artists on Okinawa and mainland Japan, such as Seikan Omine and Shozo Murata. It opened on Feb. 11, 1981.

7) Meditation Forest

The natural scenery of Okinawa is displayed here. With the Pacific Ocean visible to the right, Gajumaru and Deigo trees, and other plants indigenous to Okinawa make up this forest. A coral road leads to the Young Boy's Statue.

8) Young Boy's Statue

This statue was dedicated in memory of the many young boys and girls who died in the tragic war. It was made by a famous Japanese sculptor, Churyo Sato, with monetary donations from various elementary and Junior high schools on Okinawa and nationwide, to console the spirits of those children who perished in the war and to pray for the eternal peace. It stands in the meditation forest located beside the art museum.

9) Peace Bell

In the front garden is a 9 meter high bell tower which was donated by the Lions International Club 337. The bell is rung five times a day to console the spirits of those who died in the war. It is also intended that the sound of the bell will carry the Okinawan people's wish for peace across the Seven Seas and to every corner of the world.

10) The Seven Pillars Hall

As if to guard the other monuments in the Peace Park, the seven pillars like structure is the outside of the building which houses the Peace Memorial Statue. It represents the Seven Seas and "the Seven Continents" and also reminds us of hands folded in prayer.

11) Memorial Services and Major Events

- ◆ *Charity Exhibition of works on Jan*
- ◆ *Festival Honoring Children at the hall in May (Children's Day)*
- ◆ *Eve of Memorial Services For Those Who Perished
In The War at the hall on June 22*
- ◆ *Peace Prayer Services on Aug 15*
- ◆ *Mubuni Fire and Bell Festival on Dec 31
(farewell-to-the-year festival)*



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