

Tsushima-maru Memorial Museum

Communicating Our Wish for Peace
to Future Generations



Talking About the Tsushima-maru Today

What does Tsushima-maru mean today?

Does it tell us of war? of peace?

What we really hope to talk about is the dreams that each person has.

Even in the dark and bitter time of war, people had their dreams.

They dreamed because they were alive.

When they became victims, their dreams for the future died with them.

Now we are alive in the future that they dreamed of.

When visiting the museum, let your thoughts and feelings speak to you.

Our museum doesn't have many valuable exhibits considering the number of people who lost their lives.

Why is that?

Is it because so much time has passed?

Is it because they didn't want to leave any mementos?



In the Battle of Okinawa, much was burned and destroyed.
Physical objects were destroyed.
But the aspirations of the people were by no means lost.

These aspirations are a strong hope for peace.
It's easy to feel sadness or hatred when talking about war.
Unless we make an effort to change our great sadness into hope, hatred leads us into a vicious circle of revenge.
But does this vicious circle of revenge heal our sadness?

So what does Tsushima-maru mean today?

The vicious circle of revenge is robbing children of new dreams all around the world.
Breaking the circle of revenge calls for individual effort.
This is exactly the issue that the children of the Tsushima-maru reveal to us.

August 22, 2004, Tsushima-maru Memorial Museum Foundation



Teacher, Help Me!

The Sinking of the Tsushima-maru

Boarding, then sinking...

In 1944 as the war drew gradually closer, the old, the young, women and children were ordered to evacuate outside the prefecture. A large group of schoolchildren boarded the Tsushima-maru for evacuation, which left Naha Port on August 21. However, the ocean had already turned into a battleground. On the night of the next day, the 22nd, the Tsushima-maru was hit and sunk by a torpedo from the American submarine Bowfin. Of the ship's 1,788 passengers including crew and soldiers, about 80% disappeared to the bottom of the sea.



Adrift on a Raft

In the pitch darkness of the endless sea, the survivors clung on desperately, trembling in fear and hoping not to die.



Sketches by Survivors

(Top) Passengers packed in a windowless sauna-like hold
(Left) Man-eating sharks tried to attack the survivors

Mother! Father! Help!



Tsushima-maru

It's said that a total of 1,661 evacuees from students of eight public schools in Naha and from other areas boarded the ship



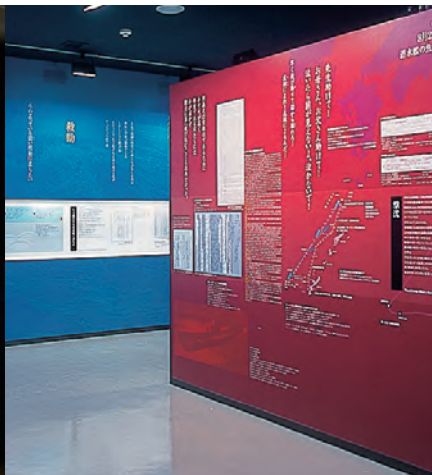
The “Gag Order”

“Don’t speak of it!”
A new suffering

After the Tsushima-maru was sunk, a strict “Gag Order” was issued banning anyone from talking about it.



A letter from a bereaved family provides evidence of this gag order. “You mustn’t mention any single thing to anyone in the neighborhood. It’s strictly confidential.”



The route of the Tsushima-maru and the records of the U.S. Armed Forces which attacked and sank it are displayed with an intercepted telegraphic message and decoded text, showing the circumstances of the sinking.

October 10: Air Raid

The tragedy that befell the survivors
The destruction of Naha by fire

Just 49 days after the sinking of the Tsushima-maru, the whole area of the southwestern islands was subjected to indiscriminate bombing by a U.S. task force. From 7 in the morning until the evening, military facilities such as airfields and ports, and urban areas were attacked from the air in five waves.



We won't Forget You

Photos and belongings of the victims

Considering the number of the victims, they left behind very few photos and belongings. Besides providing evidence that the victims once lived, these photos and objects are important mementos for people who lost their beloved family members and friends. Experience the various feelings conveyed through these remaining photos and belongings.

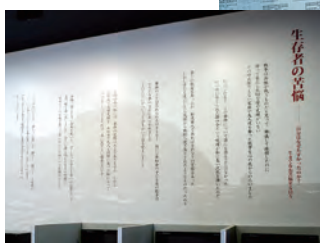


Audiovisual Corner



Welcome home everyone

The names of the victims are inscribed here with a background of scenes from their schools and neighborhoods at the time, so that their souls can rest here in peace. On the other side, the suffering of the survivors is spelled out over a background of the island of Akusekijima.





Schools were influenced by the war, too.

The classroom, where the children who died had spent much of their short lives, has been recreated. Textbooks, notebooks, magazines and toys from the school life of those times were deeply tinged with reminders of the war.

Schoolchildren in 1944



1st Floor Exhibition Room 2

Evacuation of Okinawan Schoolchildren



Evacuees from Tomari Public School

When wars intensify, the elderly, women and children are often evacuated to the countryside for safety. In Okinawa, schoolchildren were evacuated in groups formed at each school.



Yaasan, Hiisan, Shikaraasan

A letter home to Mom

One of the evacuees described their life as "Yaasan, Hiisan, Shikaraasan." These words mean "Hungry, cold and lonely", and they express the feelings of the children at that time.

Making the Tsushima-maru a Signpost to Peace

The children of the Tsushima-maru and today's children

The desire to make the Tsushima-maru a signpost to peace is firmly rooted throughout Okinawa in the form of child-centered activities.

What can we do today for the souls of the victims adrift on waves?



One exhibit shows the people of Akusekijima paying their respects at a war memorial, and children at Okinawan elementary school learning about the Tsushima-maru.



What we can do

"Peace studies" involving cleaning the war memorial every June and plays about the Tsushima-maru are held to teach children about the horrors of war and the value of peace.

We need to think about peace without forgetting the sad facts of war, giving our thoughts to the children of our age who lost their lives.



Releasing butterflies as a prayer for peace in a memorial service



As part of the peace studies at elementary schools, a play called "The Tsushima-maru" is performed at school art festivals.

To You Who Are Alive Today

We, who were born more than 60 years ago,
lived in times defined by war.

When it was no longer safe to stay in Okinawa,
we were headed to Kyushu, but the ship we boarded,
the Tsushima-maru, was attacked and sunk
by an American submarine.

Some of us who were thrown into the sea
survived somehow,

but most of us became exhausted, were
swallowed up by the waves and
sank to the bottom of the sea.

We're in the ocean spreading in front of you,
just as we were.

Why did we have to die?
What harm did we do to anyone?

Now we want you to promise that
you will live peacefully so that
no more children have to go through what we did.





Memorial to the Victims of the Tsushima-maru Kozakura no To

The Suzushiro Children's Association of Aichi Prefecture (under then chairman Katsura Kawai) wanted to provide a memorial for the children of Okinawa. They organized a successful 1-yen donation campaign supported by many people, including the Governor of Aichi. Chief priest Hosho Nako of Hajozan Gokokuji Temple promoted construction of the monument, and an unveiling ceremony was held on Children's Day on May 5, 1954. The tower is built on the opposite side of the Tsushima-maru Memorial Museum across Asahigaoka park observatory, with the bow facing toward Naha Port. (Designed by Seikichi Tamanaha)



A bronze dove by Professor Seikichi Tamanaha, Faculty of Arts and Crafts, Okinawa Prefectural University of Arts, was placed on the monument in 1978. The currently plaster figure stands in the entrance hall of the museum.



Basic data on the Tsushima-maru incident

There isn't a single reliable item of data on the Tsushima-maru. Although it's unthinkable now, at the time no detailed investigation was conducted. This is another essential aspect of the Tsushima-maru incident.

① Tsushima-maru Passengers 1,661

Tsushima-maru Commemoration Association Survey Data (As of August 27, 2005)

		Passengers	Victims	Survivors
Evacuees	Schoolchildren	834	775	59
	Leaders / General Evacuees	827	709	118
	Total	1,661	1,484	177
Crew		86	24	62
Ship Gunners		41	21	20
Total		1,788		

② Victims of the Tsushima-maru Sinking

Number of people identified by name

Evacuees	Schoolchildren	780
	Trainers and Caretakers	30
	General Evacuees	627
Crew		24
Ship Gunners		21
Total		1,482

* Numbers above will be increased continuously based on notifications from bereaved families.

[As of August 22, 2012]

③ Number of Survivors of the Tsushima-maru

- (1) In principle "Unknown." The reason is that 1,661 passengers and 1,482 victims are unverified numbers. On the morning of the departure, there were people who suddenly decided not to go, and parents who forced their unwilling children to board, and so the figure of 1,661 is uncertain. "Passengers - Victims = Survivors" doesn't tally.
- (2) The figures in books published until now saying "there were 177 survivors including 59 schoolchildren" cannot be used any more. These figures come from the book Akusekijima by Tatsuhiro Oshiro, but as the author of the book stated, "When I carried out an oral survey, people said there were about that many survivors, so the figures aren't accurate."
- (3) However, from materials discovered so far, the following figures emerge. They can be used as an approximate guide.

Number of Survivors of the Tsushima-maru

Evacuees rescued by fishing and patrol boats	177
Sailors and Gunners	82
People who reached Amami Oshima alive	21
Total	280



■ **Open hours** AM 9:00 ~ PM 5:00 (Last entry PM 4:30)

■ **Closed** Every Thursday and New Year Season (12/31~1/3)

■ **Entrance fee** Adults: 500 yen, Ages 13 to 18: 300 yen, Elementary school students: 100 yen, Groups (20 people or more 10% off)

Access Information Monorail: Get off at Kenchomae Station and walk 15 minutes

City bus : Number 1, 2, 3, 5, 15, 45

Get off at Nishinjo or Kume Yubinkyokumae and walk 5 minutes

* The entrance to the museum is on the 2nd floor. Those with difficulty climbing the stairs may enter from the 1st floor by calling for assistance using the intercom. (5 wheelchairs are available)

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