

## **Post-war Reconstruction of Hiroshima as a Case of Peacebuilding**

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This article seeks to provide an overview of the history of Hiroshima's reconstruction mainly from the political perspective. Its aim is to describe the history of Hiroshima as a process of peacebuilding.

Hiroshima is quite often mentioned as an example of post-war reconstruction. But it remains to be explored how the history of Hiroshima is actually relevant to peacebuilding cases after contemporary armed conflicts. It is not rare that the differences between the history of Hiroshima or Japan and contemporary peacebuilding cases are emphasized. While fully recognizing the major differences between them, this essay takes a distinctive approach toward the history of Hiroshima. Namely, this essay seeks to identify whether Hiroshima's case could have any suggestions on contemporary peacebuilding cases. This does not mean that this essay only looks for similarities while ignoring differences. Rather, this essay tries to explore the suggestions to contemporary peacebuilding cases that the history of Hiroshima can provide as the special local city that has achieved remarkable post-war reconstruction and revitalized itself as a "peace memorial city." In other words, this essay aims to identify the importance of Hiroshima as a case of peacebuilding.

The history of Hiroshima which this essay describes is as follows; Hiroshima took one type of peacebuilding policies at the local city level during the early modern "Meiji" period in which Japan sought to overcome the structure of internal armed conflicts. The attempt was not successful at the beginning. However, some accidental factors led Hiroshima to develop as the "military city." The dropping of the atomic-bomb did not only bring about physical destruction; it also created a need for Hiroshima to reflect upon past peacebuilding policies and search for new peacebuilding policies. The history of Hiroshima after the Second World War is an

example of modified peacebuilding policies at the local city level.

The significance of Hiroshima is shown in its historical character as a clear peacebuilding case at the local level. Peacebuilding is a set of activities that ought to be pursued at the local level in the contemporary world, although much attention is paid to peacebuilding policies at the national level. Thus, the importance of peacebuilding at the local level is not sufficiently emphasized in most cases. The case of Hiroshima has significance, since it is one of exceptional historical cases that we can consider as a very evident successful peacebuilding example at the local level.

It goes without saying that Hiroshima has always been part of Japan. Thus, looking at the history of Hiroshima necessarily involves looking at the history of Japan. The historical transformation from “Hiroshima as a military city” to “Hiroshima as a peace city” coincides with Japan’s historical transformation from its identity as a militaristic nation to that as a pacifist nation. The history of peacebuilding at a local city called Hiroshima symbolically signifies the history of peacebuilding at a nation called Japan. The significance of Hiroshima also lies in the point that we can look at Japan by looking at Hiroshima.

The case of Hiroshima embodies an interesting case of post-war reconstruction in a Japanese local city, which revitalized itself from complete devastation. It illustrates its own distinctive historical nature, although this does not mean that Hiroshima is completely different from and irrelevant to other cases of post-war reconstruction. Of course, Hiroshima does not provide a universal model of post-war reconstruction. But at the same time, this essay claims that we can learn many lessons from the case of Hiroshima by looking at it as a clear and symbolic example of post-war reconstruction or peacebuilding at the local city level.

## **1. The Development of Hiroshima as a Military City**

### 1-1 Failure of DDR

This essay looks at the history of Hiroshima since the time of the Meiji era. There are two main reasons for this time frame. First, the factors of poor ex-*samurai* (traditional warriors or soldiers) and farmers in the rural areas affected the following history of Hiroshima. The facts that these factors existed in the Meiji era and that measures against the factors in the period influenced the following course of Hiroshima deserves attention. Second, internal wars continued until the end of the first decade of the Meiji era. The process of modernization proceeded as a peacebuilding process to overcome such a social structure prone to internal struggles. The Reconstruction after World War II was an adjustment to the particular type of modernization of “peacebuilding to overcome the social structure prone to internal struggles” that started in the Meiji era. It is thus necessary to look at this early modern period of “peacebuilding to overcome the social structure prone to internal struggles” even when we understand the history of Japan after World War II. This applies to Hiroshima, local city that symbolizes the history of Japan.

Sadaaki Senda from Satsuma *han* became the first governor of Hiroshima Prefecture in the Meiji era. One of the pressing needs for Senda, who followed the policies of the central government, was to alleviate grievances of ex-warriors who were deprived of privileges and of farmland villagers who were suffering from abject poverty. In the first decade of the Meiji era from the time of the Meiji Restoration to that of the Seinan War, there arose multiple revolts by ex-warriors throughout Kyushu region and Hiroshima’s neighboring prefecture, Yamaguchi. There were a considerable number of farmers’ riots. Thus, the central government adopted the policies to divide ex-warriors and farmers and console as many of them as possible. Geographically speaking, Hiroshima Prefecture, neighboring on unstable regions, was located at a frontline of the central government’s efforts to expand its influence. Senda’s initiatives in Hiroshima were in line with the central government’s policy goal. One concrete realization is a gigantic reclamation work of the seashore.

It is common for contemporary post-conflict peacebuilding to have a program of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR). This applies to Japan in the early period of the Meiji era. The Meiji central government proceeded with

disarmament and demobilization of ex-warriors in order to establish a new national army composed of common people conscripted by the central government in Tokyo. Thus, how to achieve reintegration of ex-warriors was a big task in this era. The seaside reclamation for cultivation was an attempt to resolve this issue by creating more lands to distribute to ex-warriors.

Senda conducted a large-scale reclamation project of Ujina area for the purpose of *jyusan* (business production) to relieve the ex-warrior class. It was intended to be an important project to provide ex-warriors with reclaimed land for cultivation. However, as the reclaimed land turned out to be poorly suitable for cultivation, the project ended in failure. Senda was demoted to take responsibility.

## 1-2 Progress of Hiroshima as a Military City

It was Ujina port constructed as part of Senda's project that drew great attention at the time of the Sino-Japanese War. Hiroshima station was at that time the western edge of Sanyo Railroad Line directly connected to Tokyo. This means that Hiroshima station was the closest railroad station to the continent. Then, before the War broke out, a new short railroad between Hiroshima station and Ujina port was rapidly constructed in almost 2 weeks.

Hiroshima Division (later called the 5<sup>th</sup> Division) had been stationed in Hiroshima since 1873 and deployed for counteracting domestic anti-government uprisings. In 1894 to 1895 at the time of the Sino-Japanese War, the Meiji Emperor came to Hiroshima and stayed to direct the military operation. Hiroshima was then a provisional capital, to which the military headquarters and the Imperial Parliament moved. Water facilities in today's Hiroshima were constructed as military facilities around this time by the Emperor's order.

Senda received a royal decoration at the time of the Sino-Japanese War for the achievement of the construction of Ujina port. As many military facilities and military railroads were constructed and Hiroshima flourished as a "military city," the Hiroshima City Parliament resolved to give Senda the honorarium of 3000 yen.

The intervention force was sent to China in 1900 from Ujina Port. At the time of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05), Hiroshima became a gathering point for tens of thousand of army officers and military horses and a supply base of the military. World War I and later wars continued to add new military histories and facilities to Hiroshima. As a result, the population exploded and modernization of the city rapidly advanced. Hiroshima's heavy industries further developed during World War II and eventually the Second Military Headquarters as well as the Chugoku Inspector-General Office were stationed in Hiroshima in order to prepare for "the major battle on the main land." Hiroshima was recognized as the center of West Japan under the emergency state of total mobilization of the Japanese.

Hiroshima at the time of 1945 was a "military city" that contained many important military facilities in addition to military-supplying industrial factories like Mitsubishi Shibuidling. Furthermore, Edajima island off the coast of Ujina had the navy elite academy and Kure, around 20 km from Hiroshima, was also known for a military port and navy factories. The famous giant warship, Yamato, was constructed in Kure.

The "reintegration" project (reclamation and construction of Ujina port), which is "R" of DDR in the words of contemporary peacebuilding, cultivated the way for Hiroshima to become the "military city" in an unexpected way. It is true that the development of military industries stimulated local economy. But this does not mean that such a development does not necessarily solve the original "R" problem.

Behind this development of Hiroshima as a "military city," there was a crooked economic structure of coexistence of heavy military industries and rural poverty. Early in the Meiji era, cotton cultivation prospered in Hiroshima although intensive labor work was required. But as cheap cotton was imported from China, domestic cultivation declined. Hiroshima had the second smallest farming area per person in Japan, so there appeared a large number of excessive workers around the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Hiroshima then became the largest prefecture in terms of the number of immigrants living abroad. It was even said that the standard language which Japanese immigrants spoke in Hawaii or the West Coast was the dialect of Hiroshima.

After the Excluding Japanese Immigrants Act was enacted in 1924 in the United States, immigrants from Hiroshima moved to Brazil or colonial territories of Taiwan, Korea and Northern China as public servants, teachers, merchants, and so on.

## **2. A-bomb Destruction and the Will to Reconstruction**

### 2-1 Destruction by the A-bomb

It was rather strange that such a military city as Hiroshima had not been attacked until August 6, 1945. The fact was that the United States refrained from attacking potential targets by conventional weapons in order to study the impact of the atomic bomb later.

The atomic bomb killed around 140,000 people directly in the year, and more in the following years. The central part of Hiroshima was completely destroyed. The area of the radius 500 meters instantly disappeared. 92% of the city area was burnt and 40% was ruined. Many who survived initially could not escape from the burning city. Many others who managed to escape from fire eventually died in suburban areas, since they could not receive appropriate medical treatments.

The office building of Hiroshima Prefecture was burnt completely, so the office moved to a half-burnt temple in a suburban area. Prefecture staff asked neighboring towns and villages for medical and food supplies. But it was too difficult even to communicate with those outside of Hiroshima. The office building of Hiroshima City was also almost burnt down, and many office staff died including the mayor. 50 emergency medical points were created for around 150,000 people who managed to escape from the central part of Hiroshima. But it was not possible to supply water, let alone medicine. Since the military headquarters was completely destroyed, the army maritime division at Ujina port had to go to the central part of Hiroshima for aid activities. But they could not handle such a serious tragedy.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Those who went to the central part of Hiroshima shortly after the bombing suffered from radiation damage later.

It could be asserted that pre-war Hiroshima was the symbol of the ultra-nationalistic character of imperial Japan. The word “madoutekure” many a time left by those who were dying to those who eventually survived in burning Hiroshima is said to have a connotation of revenge. As early as on August 7 a “military city” established the “Hiroshima Security Headquarters” under the command of an army vice admiral, which ordered that medical services for the victims, disposal of dead bodies and restoration of main roads be completed in 3 days. Aiming to recover military capability as soon as possible, it never stopped working overnight to repair transportation, communication facilities, light electricity, and so on.

Nevertheless, it was obvious in reality that the atomic bomb completely destroyed the functions of Hiroshima as a “military city.” Because the war itself ended less than 10 days after the bombing, Hiroshima was destined to abandon its identity as a “military city” since the time of the Meiji era. The atomic bomb destroyed the military city Hiroshima physically as well as psychologically.

## 2-2 Debate on Reconstruction

There was a rumor that there would be no grass or flower for 75 years in Hiroshima due to radioactivity. Immediately after World War II, the often-raised question was whether reconstruction of Hiroshima was possible in the first place or even if so, whether it was worth doing. For instance, in 1946 on the occasion of the conference on reconstruction of Hiroshima organized by the Governor of Hiroshima Prefecture, a vice-mayor of Kure City remarked: “I wish you to keep the ruined area swept by the flames as the commemorating graveyard for the maintenance of eternal world peace. I wonder if it is appropriate to construct a town on the land where so many people were killed. New Hiroshima will not necessarily come back to the original place of Hiroshima.”

Anticipating this kind of opinion, as early as on September 5, 1945, the influential local newspaper, Chugoku Shimbun, issued the editorial to say that “all of us, homeland-lovers, are so angry at the people who are not shamed to proclaim such

an irresponsible opinion that the ruined city of Hiroshima is a war memorial and ought to be preserved eternally as a complete ruin.”<sup>2</sup> This editorial concluded that “in order to establish a powerful great Hiroshima in the future, we shall never mind a certain decrease of the number of leukocytes and falling down in the middle of our reconstruction, so that we will guard the land of our ancestors with strong determination.”

Behind the scene of reconstruction of the ruined city of Hiroshima there was such a strong will to reconstruction. For those who survived in Hiroshima, the destroyed “military city” in the age after the unconditional surrender, it was only through reconstruction, certainly not through war, on the land of their ancestors that they could show their strong will power to the outside world.

### 2-3 System of Reconstruction

The office of Hiroshima Prefecture lost many of their buildings and staff, but continued to work with staff from branch offices. A small number of staff of the City of Hiroshima also worked hard for food distribution, issuance of sufferance certificates, disposal of dead bodies and bones, and so on. It was on August 21 that the chairs of local community committees gathered at the ruined city hall and received the notice of the beginning of a peacetime system including the transformation of military supplies to private ones, disbandment of national volunteer troops, demobilization of students, and so on. As the amount of distributed food was limited and the prices of food at black markets were high, survivors faced starvation. The City staff was only able to encourage private farming by distributing vegetable seeds and hold gatherings for tasting wild grass.

According to the pre-war system, the city planning section of Hiroshima Prefecture under the guidance of the Ministry of Interior was responsible for city planning. Thus, this section initiated reconstruction plans for Hiroshima.<sup>3</sup> But the City

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<sup>2</sup> Quoted in *New History of Hiroshima*, History Volume, p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> At the national level, the House of Reconstruction for Wartime Damage was



of Hiroshima should lead reconstruction planning, as GHQ sought to disband the Ministry of Interior. The City office established the department for reconstruction in January 1946 by allocating 1 chamber, 2 divisions, and 7 sections. In February the Council of Reconstruction of Hiroshima City was established as an advisory board of the mayor, in which 26 members with various backgrounds discussed plans for reconstruction. Lieutenant Montgomery, who was among 10,000 occupation troops stationed in Kure, participated in the Council as the “reconstruction advisor.”<sup>4</sup> The Prefecture of Hiroshima in December 1945 and the City of Hiroshima in January 1947 set up “reconstruction offices” respectively, while the Prefecture’s office covered the Eastern part of the ruined area and the City’s office covered the Western part.

Satoshi Nagashima, Director of the Department for Reconstruction of the City of Hiroshima submitted an ambitious and futuristic plan for constructing large main roads. The idea of constructing a 100 meter road was proposed for the purpose of job creation as well. Shinzo Hamai, City officer who was elected to be the mayor in 1947, took the role of establishing the course of reconstruction by saying that “the goal of reconstruction of Hiroshima is to create a peaceful, beautiful and international city.” Yet, the progress of reconstruction was so slow, since the City’s budget for reconstruction was then only 56 million Japanese yen despite the estimate that it would require 2.3 billion yen. The involvement of the national government was expected, which was difficult without new legislation.

#### 2-4 Tasks for Post-war Reconstruction

When a heavy typhoon hit Hiroshima after the a-bomb, temporary huts and air-raid shelters for survivors were flooded. It is said that 80% of the bridges of the city were swept away.

Hiroshima City appealed for the establishment of the survivors’ first-aid

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established in November 1945. In December the same year, the cabinet sanctioned the Basic Principles of Reconstruction Plans for Areas of Wartime Damage. Hiroshima Prefecture had to reconstruct Fukuyama and Kure in addition to Hiroshima.

station to the surrounding cities and also tried to control survivors' return to Hiroshima city. The construction of temporary houses was limited around main roads, while burnt areas were temporarily preserved for agricultural uses. The City tried to improve the city planning on this occasion, since small sections in residential areas had been built in disorder in the pre-war time.

Though the limitation on citizens' inflow was not deregulated until October, 1945, citizens had begun reconstruction individually. Hiroshima Prefecture and Hiroshima City started constructing residential houses through the residence corporation, but they could not proceed due to shortage of lumber. Only 392 houses were finally built in 1946. It is said that about 5,000 houses were built by the citizens' initiatives in 6 months after the war.

In the beginning, there were serious shortage of electric power and lack of the reconstruction fund. Electric power fell into a critical condition in 1946 when industrial demands began to rise. Although the construction of new power plants was highly expected, it was only in 1949 after repeated requests to the central government that the loans were provided to construct heating and water electric power plants.

The City of Hiroshima sold education reconstruction public lottery in 1950 and sport public lottery in the following year. Overseas fund raising activities were also attempted to take advantage of a number of emigrants from Hiroshima. "Hawaiian Hiroshima War Damage Relief Association" was organized and about 48,000 dollars were raised in Hawaii. 20,000 dollars were sent again, and they were used for widows' home, handicapped persons' facilities and elementary school buildings and so on.

More than 80% of all factories in Hiroshima city were small and medium-sized enterprises, which met critical conditions by inflation and the so-called "Dodge Line."<sup>5</sup> The national government established the Small and Medium Enterprise Agency in 1948 and People's Finance Corporation was founded to provide the loan of the small long-term business funds to small and medium-sized enterprises. It established its branch house in Hiroshima in 1949 and then, applications rushed in.

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<sup>4</sup> After Montgomery went home soon, the position remained vacant for a long time.

<sup>5</sup> As for the Dodge Line, see Unit 2 of this Module.

Against a fund of 25,000,000 yen which was assigned to Hiroshima, there were 1,695 applications for 142,326,000 yen. Hiroshima Prefecture coped with this and started “Hiroshima Prefecture Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Small Loan System.” Hiroshima City began “Hiroshima City Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Promotion Special Loan.” This provided up to 200,000 yen for 2 months. Small and medium-sized enterprises were further promoted and Hiroshima City commerce and industry information bureau was established in the municipal office in 1949. Various joint small and medium sized enterprise associations were organized for the improvement in technology, the improvement of the management efficiency and the investigation research about the commodity market.

In 1949 Hiroshima City began the relief work for the unemployed in war damage reconstruction areas such as city area cleaning arrangements and maintenance of streets, parks and school playgrounds. About 100,000 people participated, which promoted war damage reconstruction businesses. But most demobilized soldiers could not find jobs in town, and thus went to villages.

Half of the machine tool industry, thermal power plant, chemical industry and all of 3/4 of the steel production capacity and the army production capacity, shipbuilding ability, light metal production capacity were removed for compensation by GHQ’s “compensation designation.” The designated factories shifted to produce new models of woodwork machines and farming machines. In 1948 the occupation policy changed and only the army facilities were decided to be removed. The shipbuilding industry and the machine industry came to begin to put productive activities in orbit.

Hiroshima’s industry came back to life after the Korean War Special Procurement. The amount of military procurement order inside Hiroshima Prefecture was about 400,000,000 yen in 4 months and about 1,256,000,000 yen in one year until June, 1951. The amount of shipping increased drastically with the manufacturing industry, which had been a war industry during World War II. For example, the Japan Steelmaking Hiroshima factory took the order of “100,000 car (7,000,000 yen) for the military procurement” with the outbreak of the Korean War. The deficit until 1950

changed to the surplus in 1951. Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Ltd. Mihara Vehicles Factory, received orders of freight cars and tank cars for South Korea and as a result dissolved the deficit of 2,000,000 yen every month.

“Hiroshima City Factory Establishment Regulations” were enacted in 1951. Hiroshima City provided bounties to attract more small and medium-sized enterprises.

### **3. Identity-led Type Peacebuilding**

#### 3-1 The Concept of Peace Memorial City

When the City of Hiroshima asked for help from GHQ for the first time in 1946, MacArthur rejected the request, saying that he could not accept all the requests from all the cities suffering from war damage. Nevertheless, what Mayor Hamai requested in 1949 was not material and technological aid. He asked GHQ to allow for the idea of the “peace city” and sanction the draft of the Hiroshima Peace City Act. Then MacArthur offered his support. At the time of the beginning of the Cold War, anything relating to “Hiroshima” and “peace” was politically sensitive. Still, MacArthur supported the idea of making Hiroshima a “peace memorial city.” It was probably because he wanted to reconstruct Hiroshima as a peace city, rather than as a resentful bombed city. It was certainly desirable for those Americans who felt guilty of the dropping of the a-bomb.

Mayor Hamai also appealed the significance of making Hiroshima “an international peace memorial city” to members of the national Diet.<sup>6</sup> He presented the vision of Hiroshima becoming an international sightseeing city as “Geneva in the new

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<sup>6</sup> In the discussions on the “Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Act,” the idea of “commemorating peace” in Hiroshima was born. This was based on the understanding that the bombing of Hiroshima was the decisive moment for the end of World War II. This was the explanation in the Lower House by the Diet Member Hisao Yamamoto, who proposed the Construction Act. See *New Hiroshima History*, Document Version, p. 241.

age.” He emphasized that his idea was so significant for the world and for Japan. As a result, the Diet unanimously passed the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Act in 1949. The region specific legislation required a referendum and more than 90% of the voters supported it.

The Act enabled the City to obtain ex-military sites for free and sell them for financing reconstruction programs. The Act also encouraged the financial support of the national government.

Article 1 of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Act proclaims that “the goal of the Act is to construct the city of Hiroshima as a peace memorial city which is the symbol of the ideal to faithfully realize eternal peace.” This idea was the very factor of the legislation of the Construction Act pursued by Mayor Hamai.

The reason why Hamai emphasized the possibility of Hiroshima becoming a “sightseeing city” was the reality that simple restoration of pre-war Hiroshima was not an option. It was impossible to restore a “military city” in post-war Japan, and thus new foundations were necessary.

### 3-2 Establishment of Identity by local administrations

The concept of “peace memorial city,” which was promulgated by Hamai, sanctioned by MacArthur, and enacted by a national law, characterizes the post-war history of Hiroshima. It was this concept which founded a basis for reconstruction of Hiroshima. Hamai held the Hiroshima Peace festival<sup>7</sup> on August 6, 1947 and read the first “Peace Declaration” to “establish the ideal of world peace by eternally abandoning war.”<sup>8</sup> MacArthur sent a favorable message to the festival, namely, supported the attempt to record Hiroshima as a memory for peace. According to Hamai, “the fundamental question is what kind of city we are going to make out of a former military city....We

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<sup>7</sup> In the previous year, the gathering for Citizens’ Peace Reconstruction was organized by the Association of Cities and Towns of Hiroshima to commemorate the first anniversary of the dropping of the a-bomb.

<sup>8</sup> From 1947 up to now, except 1950, the mayors of Hiroshima continued to issue annual Peace Declarations on August 6.

have decided upon the development plan of a cultural city.” As early as in December 1945 Governor of Hiroshima Prefecture, Tsuneo Kusunose, expressed a similar idea. He said; “I would like to ask for donations for reconstruction from all over the world in order to make Hiroshima the memorial city for peace which brought an end to the war. I want to make Hiroshima an eternally neutral major cultural city, which is also a center point of the great Setonaikai-sea sightseeing area.”

The idea of transforming Hiroshima into a cultural city for peace seemed to be widely supported. This new identity of the former “military city” Hiroshima, however, indicates a rather unclear relationship between “Hiroshima” and “peace.” It does not seem that GHQ, the government of Japan, the local government of Hiroshima, and citizens in Hiroshima shared the same understanding of the concrete relevance of Hiroshima to peace. At the time of the first peace festival, in front of attendants from GHQ, Mayor Hamai read the message that “a lucky fact in many unlucky things was the bombing of Hiroshima ushering in the end of the miserable war.” He concluded the first Peace Declaration by saying that “we declare peace this way.” It is not the case that the historical understanding of the atomic bomb as an usher of peace was shared by ordinary citizens in Hiroshima shortly after the bombing. They would felt it difficult that there was peace to be declared in the ruined city of Hiroshima. The continuous holding of Citizens’ Gathering for Peace Reconstruction was rather a proof that the peace festival organized by local governments did not exactly express the complex feeling of ordinary citizens.<sup>9</sup>

In August 1950, shortly after the outbreak of the Korean War, Japanese authorities as well as GHQ were very cautious even about the peace festival, which

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<sup>9</sup> The number of the participants in the peace ceremony was between 1,000 and 3,000. But it is said that around 70,000 people attended other amusing events on the day of the peace festival. On the other hand, according to the opinion polls conducted in 1950, 67% of the a-bomb survivors thought the peace festival needed to be changed for the reasons that there too much of “merrymaking” (67%); that the festival was too formal relevant to a limited number of people (14%) and that it was waste of money (14%). Namely, the citizens of Hiroshima were in those days divided into a group of people who enjoyed “merrymaking,” another group to “religiously console the dead,” and the other group who had the “second May Day” organized by labor unions. The expansion of the elements of “consolation” in the 1950s was criticized around the time of the “Ampo Struggle (against the US-Japan Security Alliance)” of 1960. The tension between the elements of “consolation” and “peace movement” was the major factor to continuously change the nature of

was eventually cancelled. Other gatherings were cancelled as well.

In 1951 the Peace Memorial Ceremony was conducted on August 6, and in 1952 it was again renamed the “Spirit Consolation Ceremony and Peace Memorial Ceremony.” This means that a “spirit consolation” ceremony became possible only after Japan’s restoration of sovereignty. The idea of commemorating peace achieved by the dropping of the atomic bomb disappeared from the ceremony. Then, the number of attendants rose from a few thousand to tens of thousand. The government of Japan began to delegate Prime Minister’s representatives at the ministerial level. In 1968 the title finally changed to “the Ceremony to Console the Atomic Bomb Victims and the Ceremony to Pray for Peace.” Up to this time, the new identity of Hiroshima as a “peace city” was solidly established and recognized as an overlap of Japan’s new identity of a “peace nation.”

The overlap of identity did not mean the same concrete policies at all. From around the late 1960s it became common that the Peace Declarations referred to ongoing political affairs like the Vietnam War. Instead of commemorating peace, the mayors began to discuss threats to peace and criticize nuclear powers including the United States.

In the process of reconstruction, the first priority was put upon the new identity of a “peace city,” all the more because Hiroshima had been a “military city.” Later, after the restoration of sovereignty, the elements of spiritual consolation were introduced, and the issue of peace could be discussed in concrete terms. Then, the perspective of “commemoration of peace” developed into the perspective of “praying for peace.”

Now in our contemporary time, as the need for international cooperation is widely shared, there appeared many further attempts to reshape the identity. The City of Hiroshima helps *hibakusha* to testify in various forms and also to contribute to anti-nuclear movements. The Prefecture of Hiroshima presents its “peace contribution activities” as the pillar of their peace contribution. Again, Hiroshima’s attempt to develop the identity of a “peace city” coincides with Japan’s attempt to develop the

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peace ceremonies in Hiroshima.

identity of a “peace nation” by strengthening the aspects of international cooperation.

### 3-3 Peace Memorial Park

The method of recording the memory of the atomic bomb was important, not only because of the need to express the feeling of consolation to the dead, but also because of recognition of the history of Hiroshima as a source of its new identity. If the atomic bomb was forgotten or recorded only as a memory of hatred and misery, a new “peace city” of Hiroshima would not be able to advance reconstruction.

In order to make an official and positive record of the memory of the atomic bomb, first, a symbolic place for the “peace memorial city” was constructed and, next, recorded contents of memories were enriched. After the enactment of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Act, the national government also established a council to discuss policies on the “peace memorial city.” Among others, the Special Committee on Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction made a number of important proposals concerning the Peace Memorial Park and other items in its Report submitted in 1951.

The idea of constructing a symbolic park in the ruined city had been discussed in many ways. Especially after the enactment of the Construction Act, the plan of creating a large park came to be understood in the context of the “peace memorial city.” A park near the hypocenter was needed to create an official center for the memory of the atomic bomb. There had to be one place where survivors, outsiders and newcomers could all find what the bombing was about and what it would mean. Otherwise, the city would not be understood to have one meaning like “peace.”

As a result of a competition, the plan of Kenzo Tange, advisor of the House of Reconstruction for Wartime Damage, was adopted, and the Peace Memorial Park was constructed with the assistance of the national government at as much as two thirds of the total budget. According to Tange, the Park is a “factory to create peace” that harmonizes “practical functions” and “spiritual symbols.” One expression of this idea was to make an invisible straight line linking the atomic bomb dorm with the



consolation monument in the very middle of the Park. A collective grave to bury unidentified bones was also incorporated into the Park. The Peace Memorial Museum as the center for information on the atomic bomb was located in the Park. The Reconstruction Exhibition of 1958 started the use of the Park to send symbolic messages to the outside world from Hiroshima. The International Conference Hall is always the best place to hold symbolic conferences like the international conference of the Mayors for Peace. Annual peace praying ceremonies always take place in the Park. Now, the status of the Peace Memorial Park is unsurpassed. It has an indispensable role to give a visible image to the policy of reconstructing Hiroshima as the “peace memorial city.”

#### **4. Problems in the Process of Reconstruction**

##### 4-1 Land Problem

It is worth noting that the Peace Memorial Park has been supported by the people in Hiroshima struggling to make ends meet every day. The atomic bomb destroyed the area around the hypocenter covering Nakajima, today's site of the Park. However, this does not mean that the bombing extinguished land ownership over the site. Nakajima area used to be a highly developed commercial district. So landowners were generally not satisfied with the idea of constructing a large park in Nakajima. What is complex was the fact that until the time the construction of the Park started, legal and illegal barracks had already been set up on the ruined site. Even when landowners were persuaded to sell their lands at appropriate prices, the construction of the Park inevitably created the issue of forced removal of the people living in the district, most of whom did not have stable means to live. The same applied to the construction of the 100 meter road or the “Peace Boulevard” (formal name after the enactment of the Construction Act). The process of reconstruction sometimes created disputes especially regarding use of land.

## 4-2 A-bomb Slums

Those who lost home but continued to live in Hiroshima tended to construct temporary barracks in the ruined area. This resulted in the appearance of many a-bomb slums in Hiroshima. Especially, Motomachi to the North of the Peace Memorial Park contained around 20,000 survivors of the war. The riverbed housed 900 barracks and constituted a major a-bomb slum. Because of its history as the reverse side of the “peace memorial city,” it was said that Hiroshima’s post-war period will not be over without improvement of Motomachi.<sup>10</sup>

The Chuo Park area in Motomachi was a military site in the pre-war time and it was originally part of development planning of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Construction Act. While development of this area remained untouched, the number of illegal residents was increasing and their presence could not be ignored. Thus, in 1957, it was decided that a part of the Chuo Park should be a residential area. In line with this decision, it was only after the late 1960s that the a-bomb slum barracks began to be removed. The development project for Motomachi continued until 1978 and those who had lived in Motomachi were gradually allocated new apartment rooms for the construction period.

Compensations to victims and social security to the victims were controversial issues still now. There are some court disputes still now as regards the treatment and the legal status of non-Japanese survivors in particular.

## 4-3 Peace Education

Education is the vital issue of reconstruction in the sense that it deals with mental development of the future social stakeholders. Reconstruction of Hiroshima in the

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<sup>10</sup> There were many a-bomb slums at riverbeds in Hiroshima. In Fukushimacho and Minamikannonmachi, there were a-bomb slums of Korean survivors. The Ministry of Construction, the City of Hiroshima and the Prefecture of Hiroshima negotiated with

education sector faced difficulty in both hardware and software. The atomic bomb destroyed most schools in Hiroshima City and almost 80% of educational facilities became dysfunctional. It is estimated that one fourth of the students in the city were killed. The number of so-called a-bomb orphans reached around 4,000 or 5,000.<sup>11</sup>

As there was no expectation of public support, most school started classes at student-made barracks or “blue-sky classroom” in September or October 1945 with almost no equipment or stationeries. Actual classes were quite limited, since students spent most time for physical reconstruction efforts.

The initial main task for the local government was to prevent infectious diseases from spreading by improving sanitary situations. The percentage of the budget for the education sector was around 15%, while the City received 6% of the subsidy for the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Act for education.

Even under such a circumstance of physical difficulty, many teachers tried to develop what is now called “peace education,” which aimed to convey the experience of the atomic bomb to children for the purpose of peace. For instance, some teachers’ unions became active and responded to the international movement for nuclear abolition by attempting to publish the stories of survivors or *hibakusha*. But this kind of move was oppressed by the Commission of Education under the supervision of GHQ.

During the occupation period, the thorough “press code” was imposed by GHQ and it was almost impossible to publish books on miseries caused by the atomic bomb. In this sense it was not strange for teachers promoting “peace education” to face political difficulty. But what is more serious is the confrontation between the authorities and teachers’ unions continued well after Japan’s restoration of sovereignty.

Hiroshima’s “peace education” attracted not only the local population but also those from the outside who were interested in peace movements or anti-nuclear movements. Many teachers were *hybakusha* themselves, and opportunities to meet

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residents by offering alternative residential sites, and so on.

<sup>11</sup> Due to radioactive disorder, only 1,500 children out of them were able to live for decades.

with *hybakusha* were prioritized in peace education. There were many *hybakusha* who did not hesitate to give “testimonies” to school children in Hiroshima as well as visiting students from the outside. From the 1960s onward as peace movements and anti-nuclear movements continued to spread domestically and internationally, “peace education” immersed itself into many sections of the educational sector. It is also true that serious ideological divisions among peace movement campaigners and *hybakusha* organizations indirectly affected and weakened “peace education” as well.

The authorities did not necessarily sympathize with the movement of “peace education.” During the occupation time, the members of the Commission of Education were elected by the public. But from 1956 the members were appointed by the local government and then further deteriorated a confrontational relationship with the teachers’ unions. After the end of the Cold War, teachers’ unions became somehow weakened, while the Ministry of Education issued an order to “correct” unbalanced education at schools in Hiroshima. Many say that “peace education” in Hiroshima is at the crossroads.

## **Conclusions**

This paper has looked at the history of Hiroshima from the viewpoint of policies of peacebuilding. Now it is worth asking what kind of lessons we can draw from the case of Hiroshima.

First, Hiroshima’s history indicates qualitative differences of policies of post-conflict peacebuilding. Almost the same social and economic structure has been the task for both those who are engaged in contemporary peacebuilding activities and those who were engaged in policies of Japan/Hiroshima from the Meiji era to the post-war period of World War II. The case of Hiroshima shows an example of remedy of building a military city and then that of constructing a peace memorial city. This history of Hiroshima coincides with that of Japan which excessively militarized itself in the pre-war era by over-centralization for the purpose of “overcoming the social

structure prone to internal struggles” and revitalized itself in the post-war era by reflecting upon itself to become a “peace-loving nation.” Namely, Hiroshima once adopted a measure of totalitarian militarism in order to overcome turmoil after the period of internal wars. Japan’s conditional success in pre-war modernization suggests that such a measure actually functioned as remedy in the post-war society. However, the tragedy of World War II illustrated the limit of this remedy. This experience of Japan could provide some suggestions to some contemporary post-conflict societies.

In short, pre-war “peacebuilding” since the Meiji era was an insufficient form of peacebuilding in the sense that it was intended to overcome the social structure prone to internal struggles through ultra-nationalistic policies, which averted social and economic structural reforms and substituted external adventurism for them. Its problems peaked at the time of World War II. Japan and Hiroshima after World War II show the cases in which the course of peacebuilding is modified in accordance with the way people reflect upon the past. Peacebuilding policies begin with the analysis of “root-causes” of past conflicts. Only the form of peacebuilding which really deals with the root causes of conflict can lead to real peace. Post-war pacifism after World War II brought about reforms on excessive concentration of political power and economic wealth in domestic society. Today, Japan no longer has many of the social and economic problems that it used to have in the early Meiji era. The eradication of such root-causes led to the foundation of 64-year Japanese post-war peacebuilding. The histories of Hiroshima and Japan indicate that while totalitarian militarism may be an option, it is not an option to eradicate “root-causes” and lead to durable peace.

Second, the history of Hiroshima shows the importance of policy making through construction of new identity in post-conflict peacebuilding. Peacebuilding always starts with the given difficult reality after the war. It is not simply concerned with the physical and economic difficulty. Rather, what is more serious is rebuilding people’s minds in hatred and the sense of loss. The history of Hiroshima symbolically illustrates the role of a sort of inverted way of thinking in a post-conflict society. Any policy cannot really extinguish people’s hatred and sense of loss. At the same time, any peacebuilding policy that ignores people’s hatred and sense of loss would be

superficial or empty, and thus destined to fail. While accepting difficult reality as a given fact, policy makers must exhibit a vision to make people move forward for a hope. The idea of “Hiroshima as the peace memorial city” was born as a source of a new identity that encouraged people to discard “Hiroshima as the military city” physically and psychologically destroyed by the a-bomb and to envision a future by starting with the harsh reality in front of them.

In the midst of the turmoil after a war as in Hiroshima after World War II, people insist that what they need is not an abstract ideal, but a foundation of life. Those policy makers who do not hear this voice will fail. But the task of stabilizing and developing people’s lives after a war cannot be systematically and fully achieved without a vision to reconstruct an identity of the entire society. The case of Hiroshima may have been a rare case in which the idea of the peace memorial city was clearly linked to a physical reconstruction plan. In any event, however, it is essential to have a policy vision to navigate the lives of survivors in a certain constructive direction. The history of Hiroshima shows a role of such power of human ideas or visions in a chaotic situation of post-conflict society.

Third, the history of Hiroshima indicates a close linkage of peacebuilding policies between a local city and an entire nation at multiple social levels. The paradoxical realism of “becoming the peace memorial city due to the dropping of the atomic bomb” cultivated the starting point of peacebuilding for Hiroshima. In fact, the same kind of logic applied to Japan at the national level that revitalized itself as a “peace-loving nation” after being completely denied its own modernization since the Meiji era. Hiroshima is a symbolic source of Japan’s postwar identity, not simply because it is the city on which the atomic bomb was dropped in the country known as the only nation that suffered from a nuclear bomb. The local city called Hiroshima symbolizes Japan in its historical evolution of identities from the military city’s militarism to overcome the social structure prone to internal struggles to the peace memorial city’s pacifism after the collapse of the its previous identity.

The linkage between a local city and a nation may not always be as dramatic as that of Hiroshima and Japan. Still, the case of Hiroshima is an interesting example

to see the fact that the process of peacebuilding evolves in a complex relationships between local and national levels.

The observation made here should not directly apply to all contemporary post-conflict societies. Each post-conflict society has its own circumstances and Hiroshima has its own particular distinct history. However, if we assume that Hiroshima is a case of post-conflict peacebuilding, it would not be totally pointless to see some lessons in its history that might be relevant to some contemporary tasks.