

On the Occasion of Bertha von Suttner's Centenary

—Result=Ability(0 ~ 100) ×Passion(0 ~ 100) ×Thought(-∞ ~ 0 ~ +∞)—

Akio Komatsu

Ladies and Gentlemen:

My name is Akio Komatsu, chairman of the board of directors of The Human, Nature & Science Institute Foundation (HNS) in Japan.

It is my honor and greatest pleasure to meet you all today who love and respect our Bertha von Suttner at this special place commemorating the one hundredth year of her death and share with you her hopes and wishes throughout her life dedicated to peace.

As explained in the video, we (HNS) have, as positive Peace advocates, devoted our efforts since twenty years ago to creating a framework of human empathy through unofficial diplomacy, visiting war and peace museums world over.

According to newspapers, Japan decided to ignore the Potsdam Declaration on July 29th of 1945, and the atomic bombs, for the first time in human history, were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. World War II, the most devastating war in history ended when Japan surrendered following after Italy and Germany by signing on the Missouri on September 2nd. In Japan August 15th has been designated as the Day of the “Termination of the War” since the Emperor Hirohito made a radio broadcast on the day. The term “termination of wars,” we strongly believe, should have a very positive meaning that “Japan should be a forerunner to help put an end to all wars for good and bring about perpetual peace on earth.”

About a century ago Bertha von Suttner, a novelist and active pacifist in Europe and America, predicted the outbreak of a world war in her novel Lay Down Your Arms, warned the annihilation of mankind in Barbarization of the Sky, influenced Alfred Nobel in his decision to include a peace prize among Nobel Prizes, which she won as the first lady (the fifth laureate) in history. It is, I believe, our duty to make the best use of her renewed hopes and teachings in our world today.

In 2013, a sculpture of Suttner was made by Ms. Ingrid Rollema, a sculptor, and displayed during the centennial commemoration of the foundation of the Peace Palace (the World Court) in The Hague which was constructed with the donation from Andrew Carnegie. I was at the unveiling ceremony then and deeply moved by Ms. Rollema's personality and her work which definitely carries her profound thought. I am happy to be able to display, all thanks to many related people, a second bust of Suttner by Ms. Rollema before you today at this special place where she passed away a century ago. After the exhibition in Vienna the sculpture will be moved to Japan to advocate peace widely to the people who do not know much about Suttner. I also hope that many more sculptures of her will be built all over the world to encourage both people and money to form a steady current of peace.

Shimane Prefecture, Japan where I was born and started my business forty-two years ago is located on the other side of the Korean Peninsula where nuclear threat is a reality by now. Besides, it has the largest nuclear power plant in Japan. In 2005 Shimane Prefecture designated the “Day of Takeshima (Dokdo in Korean)” in their efforts to help establish the Japanese sovereignty over the island. However, it only triggered the further conflicts and disputes over the territorial issues of the islands and the seas in East Asia.

After contemplating in Japan the death of Yi Jun in 1907 who lived by his belief and was the chief delegate of the Imperial Korea to the 2nd International Peace Conference, the death of Bertha von Suttner in 1914, the outbreak of World War I, etc., and how these and other events were interwoven to form the present situations of the world, I would like to announce our project plan and make a proposal this day of June 17th of 2014 in Vienna, Austria.

It is a project of "Peoples' United Nations & the International Peace Center."

The framework of the United Nations was agreed upon in Yalta Conference in February of 1945 and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council have been playing leading roles of the international organization of 193 members who represent their own governments. They sometimes use their armed forces in order to practice justice. "The Peoples' United Nations" on the other hand is a group of people who "represent their own people" to discuss as rationally as possible on the bases of human nature and history how to make stories by which justice functions for everyone in the long run.

"The International Peace Center" plan was born from our studies of geopolitical meanings in the human history of Okinawa which is not yet free from various kinds of antagonism. The center will be a "facility of promises" to open the door to the future of humankind and help Okinawa become an "Island of Perpetual World Peace." The Center consists of the following three main institutions.

- (1) "The World War and Peace Picture & Video Center" will play a role of a kind of "central museum" of war and peace museums in the world by inter-connecting them on the internet by using ICT.
- (2) "The Memorial Tower" will collect the data of all the war victims in modern wars and record them permanently in the form of electronic data to which visitors have free access from any place of the world.
- (3) "The Palace of Wa (peace/harmony)" will make the best use of the forefront of science and technology and sponsor many activities to bring forth "the culture of Wa" such as peace conferences, "Wisdom Olympics," throwing light on people who have contributed to peace, etc.

On behalf of the Human, Nature and Science Institute I would like to propose to make the Korean Peninsula and Japan a nonnuclear zone with the strong support of the three big nuclear powers and designate the area as a birthplace of "Wa culture." Also, the step-by-step nuclear disarmament of all the nations with nuclear weapons, we believe, should start simultaneously.

About three hundred years ago, Sutoh Yahee of Hiyoshi Village of Izumo Province (now Yakumo Town, Matsue City, Shimane Prefecture), also my hometown, spent his own fortune and cut through a hard andesite mountain called Mt. Tsurugi with his hammers and chisels in order to change the route of the often flooding river and saved the villagers. He worked on the project for 42 years from 56 to 97 and died in peace at the age of 102.

His unyielding story like that of Bertha von Suttner will appear in the form of serialized novel titled The Eternal River on Nihon Suido Shinbun (The Journal of Japanese Water Service) beginning in July, 2014. Then it will be published as a book in five different languages; Japanese, English, Korean, Chinese and Russian.

A huge bronze statue of him was made in Shandong Province, China (known as a place where the collaboration between Kuomintang and the Communists took place) at around the same time when the sculpture of Suttner was made in Europe. His statue will be shipped to Japan to be placed in Yakumo Town on August 1st which is designated as the "Water Day."

A book titled Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan was written to introduce Japanese culture in early days to the Western world by Lafcadio Hearn who was born in Greece and came to Japan during the Meiji period. He wrote the book basing on his own experiences in Matsue.

Standing on Izumo, a birthplace of "Wa culture" and the land where The Eternal River was written, we will keep writing our own story of "world peace and water," making full use of ICT. It is our sincere hope that a steady current will be made soon and start running into a major stream toward our proposal of nuclear disarmament and the world peace project.

Thank you very much.

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