

## The Utilization of Museums and divers Learning in School Education

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## **2.2 The Utilization of Museums and divers Learning in School Education**

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The number of museums in Japan, though it depends on how we define museum, officially registered number of museums at Japanese Association of Museums totals two thousand eight hundred, today. In addition, considering non-registered minor museums such as those located in rural areas, the number is expected to exceed five thousand. Of those, museums on cultural science such as history, folklore and art as well as those on natural science such as science, animal and plant are included. Limiting its number to museums on cultural science, the number of museums in such area is approximately four thousand. Until five years ago, construction of museums had been apparently a fad through out Japan. Local governments and private enterprises unanimously had built new museums. However, as the Japan's economy started to slow down, such movement eventually died down just like the 'bubble' economy collapsed, and the number of newly constructed museums has remained low. Even at currently existing museums, they have been facing budget shortages. They have to deal with not only the financial problems but also the question of what role museums should play in order to survive in the future. For that, museums are now urged to change.

The change is not only asked for museums but also for education society as well. They have been working on shifting from current 'Knowledge-come-first' monolithic educational system to tolerant educational system such as life-long learning and education to focus on international understanding which is an education style to encourage independence and diversity. Along with the change, educational society sees museums as the place not only for an excursion site but also as an alternative learning facility which provides materials or opportunities schools do not have. They also request availability of museum materials for school use. This situation as such indicates the relation between museums and school education is becoming increasingly important, and it also means the rise of responsibility as museum to establish measures to meet with the possible needs. In order for museums to be accepted by children, the time has already come to promptly consider issues such as to what extent materials and information owned by museums should be open to public, how they should prepare and rearrange the exhibition materials so that children can actually

experience as well as participate, and what sort of information processing technology is needed as an applicable mean.

In this thesis, acknowledging such an issue, the author will introduce the outline and the examples of practical use she had come across through the implementation process of GDM project organized by National Museum of Ethnology.

## 2.2.1 The History of Museum and Social Education

### 2.2.1.1 The Dawn of Museums

Looking back at the history of museums in Japan, before the modern era (the Edo period) it had been considered as *kura* (warehouse) to store valuable treasures and the Buddhas belong to temples and shrines. The most well-known *kura* is *Shoso-in* in Nara prefecture. *Shoso-in* is regarded to have played a role as a *kura* which have stored the treasures of Todaiji temple from Nara period up until today. Some of them are treasures the Emperor *Shomu* owned in the eighth century, the apparatus used for the inauguration of the great Buddha of Todaiji. It is in a sense the time capsule of one field in Japanese culture.

*Kura* of this sort is a sanctuary where ordinary people are not allowed to enter except particular individuals. However, they used to hold an annual exhibition to the public such as those called *Hibutsu Kokai* (exhibition of Buddha statues not usually shown to the public) or *Shutsukaichou* (exhibition of Buddha images).

Temples and shrines have held festivals and events when they show traditional decorated floats and the ornaments to decorate floats have been stored and repaired taking advantage of the festivals and events. To this kind of events, many children often participate and it gives opportunities to learn about society.

In terms of the development of history of museum education, it is so an important example that it can not be missed. Despite such history, it was not until the end of Edo period that the concept of museum was introduced to Japan. Yukichi Fukuzawa, a prominent scholar in late Edo period through Meiji period, published *The state of the West* in 1866 and *The state of the West-additional edition* in 1868 in which he introduced museums as being facilities necessary for the education and the enlightenment for the people.

In Meiji period, which is called the policy for enhancing the wealth and military strength of country, the modernization of industry and agriculture had become the central government's main focus. Throughout Japan, especially in Tokyo, temporary markets to sell local produce and exhibition of local industries were held and furthermore they eventually had broadened these activities by participating in exhibi-

tions held abroad. 'Items' exhibited were not only limited to 'items' related to industry or produce but also included cultural 'items' such as carving and masks in order to introduce local traditions. Under such circumstances, as Japan's first museum, the Museum of the Ministry of Education, was held at a cathedral in Yushima, Tokyo.

Based on the experience of participating in the Vienna exhibition, the museum of the ministry of domestic affairs was founded in 1875 and later it was transferred to the Ministry of Imperial Household, which later became Tokyo National Museum in Ueno.

This museum was built on purpose to keep and exhibit the works of art belong to the Imperial Family or temples and shrines related to the Imperial Family, and it was forerunner of the Tokyo National Museum today. Meanwhile, several museums were built here and there in Japan but the most of them were characterized by their role as keeping cultural properties, art and as facilities for the privileged classes.

#### **2.2.1.2 Development of Museums**

In the post World War Two, The role of museums increased its significance to reconstruct society and culture devastated by the war. In 1947, The National Museum Law was enacted and the management of the national museums in Nara and Tokyo were transferred from the Ministry of Imperial Household to the Ministry of Education.

Due to the cultural administration and the education reform by the government, museums were recognized as the museums for the people as well as the museums for social education. The government legislated the social education law in 1949 and the museum law in 1951. The major purpose of museums until 1950's were thought to collect and preserve cultural properties and exhibit them unilaterally to the public.

In the 1960s, museums were built in various parts of Japan and the relation with local communities and schools were becoming more important and the contribution to social education was regarded significant. However, Heisei period would not allow museums to stick to those policies but shift its focus on Life-long learning activities and various services provided at museums.

### **2.2.2 Museum as a Place for Life-long Learning**

#### **2.2.2.1 The Growth of Self-learning and the Life-long Learning**

Economics not only improved the culture of the people's life but also created more leisure time, thanks to the prevalence of five-day work week and the like. Many Japanese today enjoy trips around the country and trips abroad are now so common that many leave their footprints in various countries in the world. That phenomenon

brought internationalization mood to Japanese life. As they go abroad, they return with a lot of information and products. Moreover, the popularity of Internet system provides us easier access to exchange information globally.

Even an individual, with an effort, has chances to conduct his or her own cultural activities. On the other hand, in light of society, many problems have arisen and we can not circumvent pushing beyond the century:

- the measures to be taken for the aging society
- the increasing hardship on the environmental issues
- the measures to be applied for internationalization

As to school education, there are issues and problems arisen such as understanding of international cultures and society and information oriented society we have never faced before. These issues are not to be learned only at school. The issues are to be learned individually, domestically, in the society as a whole throughout one's life and museums can not avoid them. Museums are necessitated to change in order to deal with such issues. According to the report published by the Central Education Council, "Life-long learning is defined as 'prolonged self-education' throughout one's life, learning on one's accord with the means and the methods suitable for each individual for self-fulfillment and improvement of life, and the facilities to help such learning should be developed and provided fully." (Summarized by the author).

Considering currently existing conditions stated above, museums are questioned what programs and what information they can supply. There are two means museums can take. One is in what way museums are suited to social education as a whole, and the other is how museums are dealing with individualizing education. Applicability to social education means the systematized common programs at museums. Specific activities are permanent exhibition, special exhibition, speech sessions, lectures, movies and publishing organized by museums.

On the other hand, applicability to individualizing education is to supply programs and materials to guarantee the freedom of learning where people can learn freely. For example, works promoted by museums are experiential learning, museum fan societies, creation activities, lending out materials and information cast. Museum alone does not have capability to implement this program more effectively. Needless to say, it is necessary for a museum to have inter-facility communication with other museums, libraries, public halls, community hall and schools but these facilities tend to be governments oriented and in the future communicating with civic groups and volunteer groups will be becoming important.

#### **2.2.2.2 Information Disclosure and the Study of Museum Use**

Recently in Japan where life-long learning is considered significant issue, museums have been attempting two activities, closely paid attention at educational activities by museums. One is positive educational activities promoted by science museums and the other is propagation activities promoted by general museums aimed at public or the trend of information disclosure. Especially at science museums, various educational activities are attempted and most of all, National Museum of Science in Tokyo energetically promote various programs considering cooperation with school education.

Their enthusiastic attempts are not limited to simply reviewing exhibition or organization. They even locate staffs in charge of educational matter, introduce volunteer system as personnel aspect, establish the adventure halls or the Science theaters as facility and equipment aspect.

They attempt such activities so that ambiguous concept of museums being open to schools and public can be understood as rather specific activities.

However, as realities, the activities at many museums today still perform the function as supplier of general subjects and the museum use by civic and children are at best visiting during trips or excursion. Accordingly, establishing the study of museum use is most of all important, considering the educational activities from the standpoint of museums.

The development of the study of museum use based on various museum activities is important but it rarely has been tried. The reason originated, in my opinion, from the fact the discussion have been focused mainly on exhibition and on object oriented usage. Whereas, information disclosure by administrative organs as well as museums is requested in the society.

The development of the study of museum use in the future will need to focus on not only materials but also on the way of museum information used and the ideas to make museums more attractive to stimulate the use of museums by schools and society. The attempts as such will be means to expand the study of museum use.

#### **2.2.2.3 The Challenges of National Museum of Ethnology**

Various attempts have been tested at NME. For civic, they hold events anyone can participate such as wearing ethnic costumes or warehouse explore in the events called museum excursion and seminar tours or mobile museums mainly with exhibition are planned outside the building. As the attempts aimed at children, they have been holding experiential workshop, which is called 'Children Summer seminar' where children can actually make things. Furthermore, though materials used be rented out only to museums and art museums, renting some materials regarded as durable through exposures have just started since 1998 Fall.

In terms of exhibiting materials and disclosing information, not only GDM but also National Museum of Ethnology is promoting plans in which they will make text data of specimens as well as image data open on the Internet starting 1999 Spring. Currently the result of such attempts has not been as fruitful yet, but we are confident that it must receive a good evaluation as one of NME' strategies toward 21st century. However the question remains whether the system, manuals and personnel to promote the strategies have been available.

## **2.2.3 Museums and the School Education**

### **2.2.3.1 Education using Text**

The issue what the education should be is important in case we think of educational museums and school education using text. Since Meiji period or even *Terakoya* (privately owned schools) in Edo period, it has been common perception that learning should be done by using text (textbook). This kind of perception has apparently led to the current educational system concentrated on written tests.

Although the importance of books should not be denied, letters and words should not be regarded as the most significant aspects of education. What counts is how we adopt the wisdom our ancestors and the society have given to us, or how we make the most use of it in our life. Various educational systems such as school education, social education and domestic education have been discussed. Whether the discussion can depart from the fixed values of text and word oriented education is questioned, and it is more complex regarding school education because of convoluted entrance examination issue.

### **2.2.3.2 Transformation and the Museum Use of Education**

As schools facilitate the classes of living study, it is symbolic that multifaceted experiential education is groped for. Museums are being re-recognized as useful site where they can actually experience such education. In addition, With the introduction of five-day week, the museum use by families will be regarded as important. However, the currently existing problem is in what way museums are used at schools. As a mean to estimate the current situation, I will present the outline of the study result presented by Osaka Board of Education. The study was conducted aiming at teachers at elementary schools and high schools on the museum use. The following result is based on the research conducted by the committee in 1996.

- 1) The usage ratio of museums:  
Elementary schools is high in the ratio (excursions)  
Most of all, upper grade students' use is comparatively high
- 2) The motivation to use museums:  
'To supplement materials to lessons' (elementary schools)

- 'To acquire various leaning form' (high schools)
- 3) What to learn and request from museums:
  - 'Interest, Enthusiasm, Attitude' (Lower grades)
  - 'Knowledge, Comprehension' (Upper grades)
- 4) The prerequisite tasks given prior to visit:
  - 'To give assignments' (both elementary schools and high schools)
  - 'To acquire manners on visiting' (elementary schools)
- 5) Teaching materials on visits:
  - Mainly worksheet used at elementary schools
  - Museum brochures used by high schools students
- 6) Opinions after visits:
  - The higher the grade is, the more students say "I don't know"

Judging from the outcome, the higher the grade becomes, the less time is spent on visiting museums by the students due to tests and exams. In terms of the way the museums are used, it is rather for extracurricular activities such as excursion or field trips than for regular classes. Also, many referred to the necessity to have preliminary visits for check and prepare worksheets in order to make museum visit as effective as possible. Worksheets are material capable of providing divers forms of learning with better quality as well as useful items for teachers in instructing students and can be used as a good reference when they make the contents of GDM and instruction manuals regarding renting out the museum materials as teaching materials. As our assignments some points out it is inevitable to establish strong ties between museum staffs and students, teachers, parents on the school events and club activities. But whether there are any appropriate staff is questioned.

Although the museum is, in a broad sense, regarded as an education facility, this issue would probably have derived from the museums themselves who have directed their attentions only toward research, exhibiting and collecting materials and regarded the museum education concentrated on the material and information as just an extra profile.

Naturally enough to say, museums, unlikely to schools, do not have anything as designated text books. Museums should supply materials and services to help learners educate themselves. Based on the materials and information supplied, museum is a place where people observe those materials and information firsthand and learn culture behind them. However, the question is left whether learners can thoroughly comprehend culture. One or two visits by children are not enough in order to understand what museum is trying to convey. The reality is children as well as even teachers are not able to comprehend how they should use museum.

### 2.2.3.3 The Suggestions and Cooperation of School Museum

As attempts to support their understanding, I will introduce innovative cases, which are the foundation and the effective use of school museums and cooperation. Recently, I have seen a few cases that school museums are being established taking advantage of vacant class rooms. Children organizing and exhibiting materials at school museums give them sort of a virtual experiences as if they are museum staff and provide chances to get acquainted themselves with handling and understand the importance of the materials. By doing that, they not only comprehend the process of exhibition but also nurture the manners out side school to take enthusiastic attention to materials. In order for that, it is necessary for National Museum of Ethnology to support the foundation of school museums and provide enough materials. As measures to take, it is necessary to provide teaching materials and programs which are easy to use at school and can be used as the base of the museum founding. It is for now regarded as the short cut that they make the information application system using the Internet to which students and teachers can freely access. GDM is one of the most effective means to establish the system.

### 2.2.4 Conclusion

What makes museum what it is is to carry various materials. Classifying the materials depending on characters and purposes, they are divided into research material, exhibition materials, preservation materials, study materials. Of course, a material can be classified into several kinds depending on situations. The importance of defining current existing materials as academic materials will be increasing. Academic materials should exist to be used and is to be selected steering against possible damages through uses but selecting is not an easy task. No matter how eager they are to use the *realia*, it is not always available. In that case, the secondary material as an alternative (in a form of films, replica, and image) is needed but they can not exceed the quality of the *realia*. It is said that academic activities at museums is to experience and learn with five senses(seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching). No matter how advanced the information processing technology becomes, it is just a pie in the sky to learn all the five senses from computer. It is my recognition that the real multimedia learning at museums is to take advantage of the secondary information in case there is a trouble using the *realia*, and to supplement the secondary information with a *realia* in case the secondary information is not effective enough. Museums in the future, regardless of their scale, needs to explore individuality or characteristics. There are various forms of museums in the future:

- preservation and observation oriented museums which focus on the *realia*
- academic, education oriented museums which focus on the academic research
- living related, experience oriented museum which focus on people's everyday life

However, we must not forget fundamental duties, as museum is to provide opportunities where people learn and educate themselves and to supply various systems and information to create such environment.

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