

Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum

The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum is the largest of Hiroshima's sites related to the atomic bomb. Designed by renowned architect Tange Kenzo (1913–2005), the museum opened in 1955, and in 2006 it was designated an Important Cultural Property of Japan.

The museum consists of two adjacent buildings inside Peace Memorial Park. The main hall houses an extensive collection of artifacts from the time of the bombing, while the east building is focused on peace education through a variety of media. The main hall recently underwent major renovation, and its collection is now even more powerful and moving.

Visitors enter the main hall's expansive exhibition rooms via a narrow and dimly lit hallway, lined with sizable photographs whose subjects range from a young girl in bandages to the bomb's mushroom cloud as seen from above. This newly added section is designed to convey a sense that one is trapped, much as victims of the bomb would have felt.

Next, a sequence of rooms tell the story of Hiroshima's A-bomb experience in depth, with the focus progressing from the material to the human. The bombing and its aftereffects, which even today continue to impact the people of Hiroshima, are explained through photographs, illustrations drawn from memory by survivors, and numerous objects. A mangled and scorched child's tricycle is among the artifacts, while some of the most moving pieces are among the smallest in the exhibit: tiny paper cranes folded by a local girl, Sasaki Sadako (1943–1955), as she lay in a hospital bed dying from leukemia caused by exposure to radiation.