

感謝の言葉

祖父が愛してやまなかった北海道の地に、こうして「樋口季一郎記念館」が建てられました。いわば市民運動のようなさまざまな思いをここまで結実された樋口季一郎記念館準備委員会の皆様に心から感謝申し上げます。

祖父樋口季一郎は、大東亜戦争の末期に第五方面軍司令官として北海道、千島、樺太の防衛に携わってきました。1945年(昭和20年)8月15日、終戦の詔勅が下り、連合軍もマッカーサー元帥による停戦命令に従い、日本には平和が訪れるはずでした。ところがスターリンはそれを無視して、樺太、千島、さらには北海道東北部を占領する新たな作戦を開始したのです。もしこれを許せば、スターリンはさらに本州東北地方の領有、首都東京の分割統治まで考えていたようです。

残念ながらこのことは終戦後忘れ去られ、千島・樺太はおろか、本来はアメリカが占領するはずであった国後・択捉・歯舞・色丹の北方四島までもロシアに実効支配されたままとなっています。ともあれ、現在の北海道の平和も自明なことではなかったのです。

終戦後の一時期、祖父母は小樽郊外朝里の山中に隠棲し、地元の皆さんとの交遊を楽しんでいましたが、公職追放のため無収入では生活が立ちゆかず、祖母の故郷だった宮崎県に移り住みました。最後は東京の私どもの家に同居がかない、1970年(昭和45年)10月11日、老衰により82年の生涯を終えました。毎朝、戦死された将兵の慰霊のために祈りを捧げる姿は、戦後生まれの私たちにも胸打たれるものがありました。

いまここに記念館が建立され、彼が北海道防衛のために心血を注いだデスクが運び込まれました。戦後75年間にわたり大切に保管され、記念館にご寄贈下さった陸上自衛隊真駒内駐屯地史料館の皆様にも心から御礼申し上げます。

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親族代表 樋口隆一

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Word of Appreciation

I am very pleased that the Higuchi Kiichiro Memorial Museum has been completed in Hokkaido, a place my grandfather loved so much. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the members of the Higuchi Kiichiro Memorial Museum Preparatory Committee for making its construction possible through a grassroots movement.

My grandfather, Kiichiro Higuchi, worked to defend Hokkaido, the Kuril Islands and Sakhalin as commander-in-chief of the Fifth Area Army at the end of the Greater East Asia War (i.e., Pacific War of World War II). On August 15, 1945, the Emperor of Japan issued an Imperial rescript regarding the termination of the war and the Allied Forces followed with a cease-fire order issued by General Douglas MacArthur. Peace was supposed to come to Japan. However, Stalin launched a new campaign against Japan to occupy Sakhalin, the Kuril Islands and northeastern Hokkaido. He set his sights not only on Hokkaido but also the Tohoku region in northeastern Japan and even divided rule over Tokyo with the United States.

This aspect of history may have faded into obscurity over time, and Russia's effective control is still underway not only on the Kuril Islands and Sakhalin but also the four islands off Hokkaido of Kunashiri, Etorofu, Habomai and Shikotan, which the United States should have occupied. Regardless of this, we owe the peace of Hokkaido today to all these brave men who fought for their homeland.

After the war, my grandparents once lived in seclusion in a mountainous area in Asari near Otaru, Hokkaido, enjoying interactions with local residents. However, my grandparents became unable to make a living because they had no income since my grandfather was ousted from office. They moved to my grandmother's home in Miyazaki Prefecture. Ultimately, my grandfather came to live with my family in Tokyo and died of old age on October 11, 1970 at the age of 82. I was born after the war, but my family and I were truly moved by his praying every morning for the souls of the officers and soldiers who had perished on the battlefield.

This museum displays the desk at which my grandfather put his all into defending Hokkaido. I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt appreciation to staff of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force Camp Makomanai Museum who had preserved the desk over the 75 years after the war's end and donated it to the Higuchi Kiichiro Memorial Museum.

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Ryuichi Higuchi, representative of Higuchi Kiichiro's closest living relatives
(musicologist, conductor, Meiji Gakuin University Professor Emeritus)