

Transition of the way of frightening in a Japanese haunted attraction

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Abstract

A haunted attraction is an amusement facility which frightens people by various ways. The origin of a Japanese haunted attraction dates back to the early 19th century. In a house, Oni which was one of Japanese demons was painted on a wall and phantom dolls were arranged. That exhibition had become the talk of the town. After that a haunted attraction is common as one of a show. Recently, actors who play demons or phantoms frighten people and gimmicks respond to IR sensor by installing VR technology, in addition to conventional exhibition method. In this study, we described the historical development of Japanese haunted attractions and discussed the recent circumstances of them with referring to “ZOMBIE MUSEAM” which was the haunted attraction held at Osaka in 2016.

Keywords-component; haunted attraction, amusement park, contents

I. Introduction

A haunted attraction is one of an attraction frightening and shocking people. But many people enter it. Because they would like to feel fear in safety. The way of frightening and evoking fear undergoes changes as techniques and skills go up. In this study, we described the history of Japanese haunted attraction and discussed the circumstances of recent Japanese haunted attraction with referring to the haunted attraction “ZOMBIE MUSEUM” which held at Osaka in 2016.

II. The history of a Japanese haunted attraction and its characteristics

We summarized the history of a haunted attraction in Japan according to the document [1] and [2]. From the late 17th century to the early 18th century, a show tent which made and exhibited a ghost doll, a goblin doll and a monster doll appeared in Japan. One doctor whose name was Hyousen exhibited ghost and monster dolls in one room in his house. And ghosts and monsters were painted on the wall. The room was called a ghost house and the rumor was spread in the city. Japanese haunted attraction’s basic pattern was that ghost dolls were exhibited in a room and were painted on a wall or a ceiling. It formed in this period and led to a present haunted attraction in Japan.

There were two haunted attraction styles (“scene style” and “maze style”) in Japan. In scene style, scenes which made people feel fear were produced. Scenes were composed by

exhibiting ghost dolls and paints. They were diorama-like. On the other hand, in maze style, visitors went through narrow and dark pathway. There were ghost dolls on the pathway and Actors playing ghosts tried to frighten visitors. This style was influenced by Western countries in the late 19th century.

From the early period of the history of a haunted attraction, exhibition style (like a ghost doll, a ghost paint et al) was main style in Japan. Until the 1940s, the style of actors frightening visitors was not main style. Main style was that a scene of a ghost story was recreated by exhibitions, diorama and so on.

At present, a haunted attraction was held in an amusement park, an exhibition hall of department store, event space, a theme park and so on. It is increasing that haunted attractions frightened visitors by a consistent story or a theme (like multiple murders in a hospital). A consistent story or theme or is announced by web, TV, newspaper and so on before the exhibition. This announcement provokes fear and curiosity. Of course, one of recent haunted attraction characteristics is that there are many gimmicks using sensor technology.

III. A case of Japanese haunted attraction “ZOMBIE MUSEUM”

“ZOMBIE MUSEUM” was held in department store of Osaka. Most authors planned and produced it. The dates on which this event was held were from July 29th to August 22th in 2016. The area of the venue was 660m². It contained nine different areas. Visitors’ walking distance was 130m. It took about 10 minutes for visitors to reach the goal. “ZOMBIE MUSEUM” had a story and a theme, and it was decorated in accordance with them. That is one of recent character of Japanese haunted attraction. We described the story being produced before the opening of the event as follows.

Zombies panic brought about in 2020. Scientists struggled to develop a vaccine of zombie virus all over the world. But the result was poor. News that Dr. Aoki had succeeded in developing a vaccine was announced was gone around the world. Then, the zombie museum established to admire Dr. Aoki’s achievement and to spread the idea “Protection of the world from zombies”. Data related to zombies and zombies caught alive were exhibited at the museum. People could learn how to deal with zombies. And it played a role of research center of zombies..... . Scientists could study on zombies. Actually, Dr. Aoki was going to transform into a zombie in process of research of a zombie. He worked out a plot to feed on visitors.

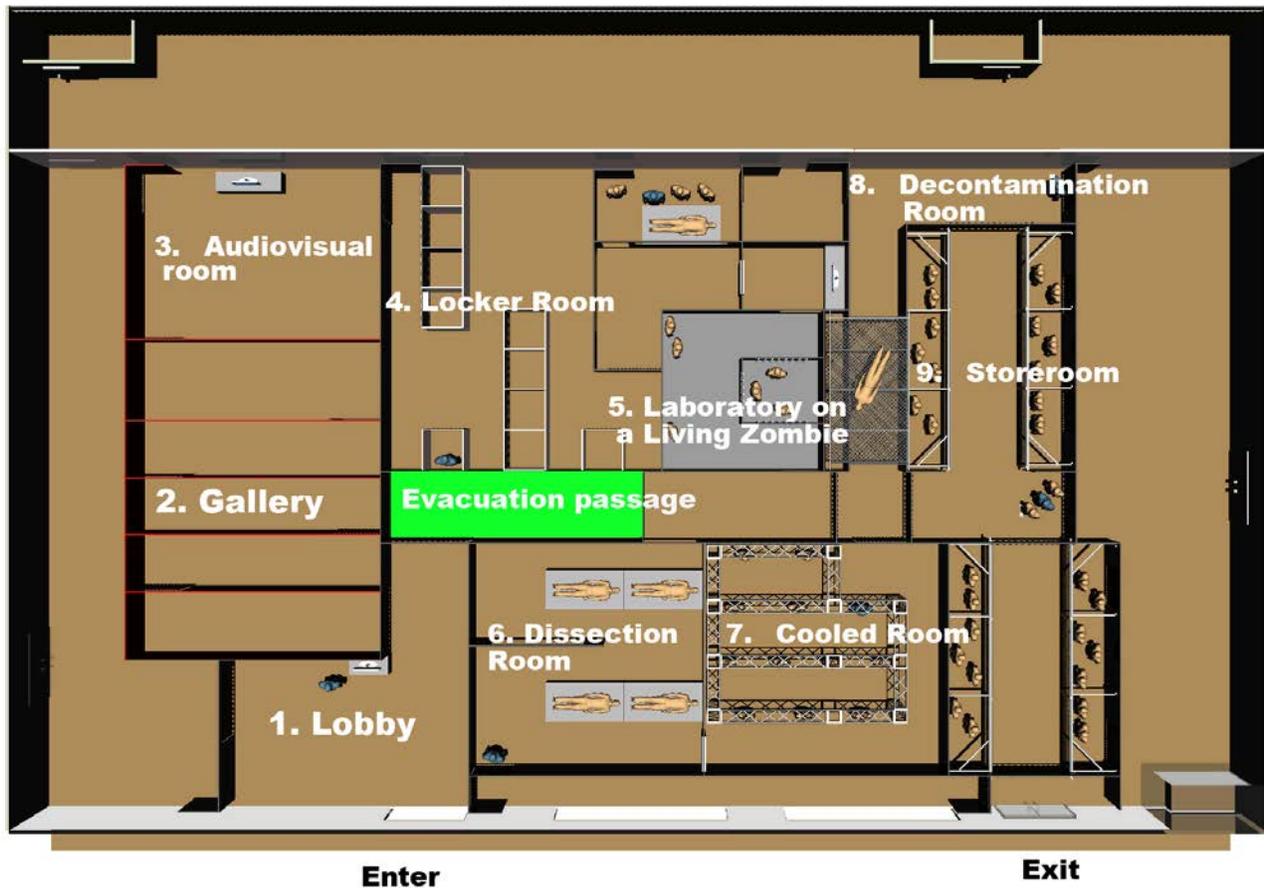


Fig. 1 Floor plan of "ZOMBIE MUSEUM"
Arrow head showed guests's pathway.

Catch phrase was "Please, never run". It reflected in the museum director's expectation that visitors became food for zombies. Curators said the phrase at the entrance. The director's expectation was set according to the story in order to keep consistency of the story.

We described an outline of each area as below (Fig. 1).

1. Lobby

An actor who played a curator showed a video to visitors. The director of the museum made greeting in the video. After showing it, a staff throw goods in the lobby from a evacuation path, or the curator transformed into a zombie. These stage effect were randomly selected in order not to lose repeat visitors' interest. The curator responded well to the director in the recorded video like a live video.

2. Gallery

Six paints whose theme was a zombie were exhibited in order to making visitors recognize that this hall was a zombie museum (Fig. 2). A device using a IR sensor and an air compressor was installed at the halfway. The device frightened visitors by blowing air. The 6th paint to which IR sensor was attached was moving, when visitors walked away in front of the paint.



Fig. 2 Six paints on the wall in the garalley

3. Audiovisual Room



Fig. 3 Exhibitions in audiovisual room



Fig. 5 Exhibitions in locker room



Fig. 4 Guests walked through barricade made of chairs.

5. Laboratory on a Living Zombie



Fig. 6 Exhibitions in laboratory on a living zombie

In this area zombies' heads, hands, fingers and so on were exhibited (Fig. 3). They were more concrete than previous area's exhibition. Visitors walk through gap of barricade which was made of chairs piping up (Fig. 4). There were bloody dead bodies on the narrow pathway. Visitors walked through the museum and viewed exhibitions so far. Hereafter, visitors walk through backyard of the museum. Hereafter, there were not exhibitions like a museum.

4. Locker Room

There were ten lockers and a gimmick was installed each locker. When opening one locker, chewing sound occurred. While opening other locker, curtain was swinging by means of a fun. When visitors' attention were caught by lockers, actors who played zombies frightened visitors (Fig. 5). This zombie needed to wait at evacuation passage of the side of the lobby. Because he need to play a role in throwing goods in the lobby. Stuffs could went in and out back of the locker from the .

Four zombies' dolls crucified were exhibited on the wall (Fig. 6). And more eight zombies' doll were exhibited in a cage. One of four zombies on the wall was an actor and he frightened visitors when visitors' attention were caught by the cage. No light threw the actor and light in the cage was flashed in order not to visitors' attention toward the wall.

6. Dissection Room

In this area, it was simulated that zombies were dissected. Four zombies were put on a dissected table (Fig. 7). One of four zombies was an actor. All zombies' viscera were revealed from chest or abdomen. Hands, foots and heads of eight zombies were put on the floor, too.



Fig. 7 Exhibitions in dissection room



Fig. 9 Exhibitions in decontamination room

7. Cooled Room



Fig. 8 Exhibitions in cooled room

Eight zombies and four corpse storage bags hang from the ceiling (Fig. 8). One of zombies hang by rope that could swing with a motor. An actor who plays a zombie was appeared too.

8. Decontamination Room

In this area, wire net ceiling was constructed. Its height was somewhat low and a lot of hairs hang from the wire ceiling (Fig. 9). Visitors cleaved their way through hairs. At that time, air compressor worked and hairs touched visitors' face. Hairs' length were 2m.

9. Storeroom



Fig. 10 Exhibitions in storeroom

Twenty four pairs of zombies were put in the wire net of the side wall of the pathway (Fig. 10). The wire net was arranged double. Two metal net which were moved with a motor made metal sound. And more, two actors who play zombies chased visitors from the front and the back. They were giant zombies.

IV Discussion

Characteristics of "ZOMBIE MUSEUM"

We change zombie's positions and gimmicks according to time of the day or visitor's type in order not to let repeat visitors get tired. As a result, repeat visitors increased. The height of the ceiling was 6m. As fixed light of the hall shined on the whole hall, 25W bulbs were put at points. We did not light actors. But we light exhibitions. That induced that visitors could not judge the timing to being frightened. Zombies could not hide unlike a ghost. Actors had practiced the way of frightening visitors, when they were found by visitors. They learned the way of screaming referring to drug addict's going mad. Some actors were over 2m or over 140kg (8. Decontamination Room).

In the attraction, eight actors were arranged. Actors made up themselves without employing makeup artists (Fig. 11). Lacerate wounds were made of latex and they applied paint for body to exposed skins. Some zombies put out their eyes and putrefy their mouth.



Fig. 11 Make up samples

Advertisement

Advertisement videos were released on the web page and SNS two months before the date of the event. Entire structure of the haunted attraction was not clear in the video. One of the contents of the video was that a stuff hanging a zombie picture on the wall was attacked by a zombie (Fig. 12). It was likely a video shoot by a monitor camera and had low information about the hall. These were useful for attracting people's interest. This event had been held in 2015, too. This time, Instagram account and YouTube channel were created. We disclosed research resources about zombies on web and SNS before the date of the event. These disclosed research resources gave the worldview of the zombie museum to people.

Contents of research resources about zombies corresponded with the story set in advance. To matching the story with advertisement took recent haunted attraction's characteristic into account.



Fig. 12 A scene of advertisement video

Modeling method

We produced fifty zombies for three months (Fig. 13). We used a mannequin doll which were attached gauze for latex support. We painted it was with water-based acrylic coat by air brush. And we painted points where flesh and bones become

hollow with lacquer and gloss. Because they were dark and dull, when we painted it with water-based acrylic coat (Fig. 14). More ever, clotted blood was dropped on it.



Fig. 13 Zombie model samples



Fig. 14 Painted zombie's body samples

V Conclusion

We described the history of a Japanese haunted attraction and discussed the circumstances of a recent Japanese haunted attraction with referring to the haunted attraction "ZOMBIE MUSEUM" which held at Osaka in 2016. As a result, that narrow pathway was produced and many exhibitions existed in a recent haunted attraction gave us a glimpse into conventional style. Before the day of the event, it was advertised by means of web and SNS. And the whole attraction was consistent with the story and the theme set in advance. These points were new haunted attraction's styles.

References

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