Sharing the Spirit of Hiroshima with the World

Promoting the Culture of Peace

Creating a culture that renounces all forms of violence

Introduction

MATSUI Kazumi
Mayor
The City of Hiroshima

The City of Hiroshima is the first city in the world to experience an atomic bombing in war. Our *hibakusha* experienced the horrors of the bombing, and their will for peace is why our city continues to strive for the peaceful coexistence and prosperity of all humanity, as well as the realization of a truly peaceful world.

Our city's peace initiatives are supported by two laws: the Constitution of Japan and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law. The preamble of the Constitution of Japan stipulates: "We, the Japanese people, desire peace for all time and are deeply conscious of the high ideals controlling human relationship, and we have determined to preserve our security and existence, trusting in the justice and faith of the peace-loving peoples of the world."

The Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law, which was established under the Constitution, designates our city "as a peace memorial city to symbolize the human ideal of sincere pursuit of genuine and lasting peace," and states: "The Mayor of Hiroshima shall…establish a program of continuous activity toward completion of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City." It is based on these laws that we continue efforts toward the abolition of nuclear weapons and realization of lasting world peace.

To make the goals stated in these laws a reality, it is necessary to create a society and an environment that makes it possible for each and every citizen not only to prefer peace for the sake of leading better, happier lives, but to take action for peace in their day-to-day lives. It is the municipalities' role to implement community development strategies to achieve these goals, and I believe the culture of peace should be the groundwork of the process. As such, the City of Hiroshima is focused on helping to enable the culture of peace to take root in civil society, as well as to foster peace awareness—that is, working to promote the culture of peace.

But we cannot do this alone. Cities around the world must unite and cooperate in working toward promoting the culture of peace.

When we work together and strive for this goal, the *hibakusha* will for peace becomes a shared value in civil society. That shared value then becomes the consensus of civil society, and impacts world leaders, including those in nuclear-weapon-states. Only then will our leaders make the choice to pursue long-term security that does not rely on nuclear weapons for the sake of humanity instead of short-sighted security that focuses solely on their own nations.

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Index

1) The Atomic Bombing and the Spirit of Hiroshima 1

2) Becoming an International Peace Culture City 3

3) What is the Culture of Peace? 5

4) The Significance of Promoting the Culture of Peace 7

5) Promoting the Culture of Peace is the Role of Cities 9

6) The Will for Peace Based on the Realities of the Atomic Bombing 11

7) Promotion of the Culture of Peace by Mayors for Peace 13

Conclusion: Importance of Citizen-Led Initiatives 15

1 The Atomic Bombing and the Spirit of Hiroshima

At 8:15 am on August 6, 1945, the first atomic bomb used against human beings was dropped on Hiroshima.

(Photo by the US Army, Courtesy of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum)

600 meters over the city and with a blinding flash, the atomic bomb exploded 43 seconds after being dropped, creating a fireball that blazed like a small sun. More than one million degrees Celsius at its center, in one second the fireball reached a radius of over 200 meters, and the surface temperatures near the hypocenter rose to 3,000 to 4,000℃.

At the time of the explosion, fierce heat rays and radiation burst out in every direction, causing the air around the fireball to expand, creating a super-high-pressure blast. The complex interactions of these three factors inflicted tremendous damage upon the city characterized by instant and massive destruction, indiscriminate mass slaughter, and radiation. In particular, the damage caused by radiation led to decades of human suffering.

The precise number of those who perished in the bombing is as of yet unknown. The City of Hiroshima estimates that approximately 140,000 people died by the end of December 1945 when the acute effects of radiation subsided.

Approximately half of those who were within 1.2 kilometers from the hypocenter died within the day, and 80 to 100 percent of those who were closer to the hypocenter are thought to have died. Among those who were able to escape instant death or death within the day, the closer to the hypocenter they were at the time of the bombing, the more serious damage they suffered. Their mortality rates were also higher.

“No one else should suffer as we have”

This is the heart-wrenching message of the *hibakusha* who have overcome hatred for the perpetrators and the rejection of others while agonizing over their cruel and miserable circumstances. At the heart of this message is a love for humanity and the spirit of reconciliation.

As a response to this, the following words are inscribed on the Cenotaph for the A-bomb Victims to embody that message:

“Let all the souls here rest in peace; for we shall not repeat the evil.”

This inscription represents the **Spirit of Hiroshima**, which, enduring past grief and overcoming hatred, yearns for the peaceful coexistence and prosperity of all humanity, as well as for the realization of genuine world peace.

Cenotaph for the A-bomb Victims

The Spirit of Hiroshima also represents the will for peace of the *hibakusha* who experienced the tragedy of the world’s first atomic bombing. Based on the Spirit of Hiroshima, the City of Hiroshima continues to appeal for the abolition of nuclear weapons and realization of lasting world peace through preserving, disseminating, and conveying the realities of the atomic bombing.

2 Becoming an International Peace Culture City

After the bombing, the City of Hiroshima urged the national government to establish a law with the aim of constructing a peace memorial city to symbolize the human ideal of the sincere pursuit of genuine and lasting peace. As a result, a special law was created under the Article 95 of the Constitution of Japan: the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law. Applicable only to our city, it came into effect on August 6, 1949 after a local referendum.

The Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law is a short one, consisting of seven articles. Article 6 stipulates: "The Mayor of Hiroshima shall…establish a program of continuous activity toward completion of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City."

A poster calling for a referendum (Courtesy of the Hiroshima Municipal Archives)

This law created a foundation for Hiroshima to rise from the ashes with the tireless efforts of those who came before us, as well as generous support from home and abroad.

Legal Basis for Our City's Peace Initiatives

Japan's first special law based on Article 95 of the Constitution of Japan

Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law

Enacted on August 6, 1949

Article 1 It shall be the object of the present law to provide for the construction of the city of Hiroshima as a peace memorial city to symbolize the human ideal of sincere pursuit of genuine and lasting peace.

Article 6 The Mayor of Hiroshima shall, with the cooperation of residents and support from relevant organizations, establish a program of continuous activity toward completion of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City.

The peace that the City of Hiroshima strives for refers to more than just the absence of war. It refers to a state where people can live quality lives together in a favorable environment with their dignity maintained. The peace city we define is a city where citizens of all values and lifestyles can lead healthy and active lives, while respecting diversity and helping each other based on mutual trust. In a peace city where everyone can feel the importance of peace, rich culture and well-rounded citizens flourish.

Based on these ideas, our city's ultimate goal is to become an *International Peace Culture City*. By continuing the hard work our predecessors began in building a peace city, we seek to create an environment where the value of peace is shared by cities around the world.

Peace Memorial Park and the surrounding area

Hiroshima City Ideals

City that symbolizes the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law	›››	**Peace Memorial City**
Ultimate goal	›››	**International Peace Culture City**

Globally pursuing the realization of peace and where culture thrives

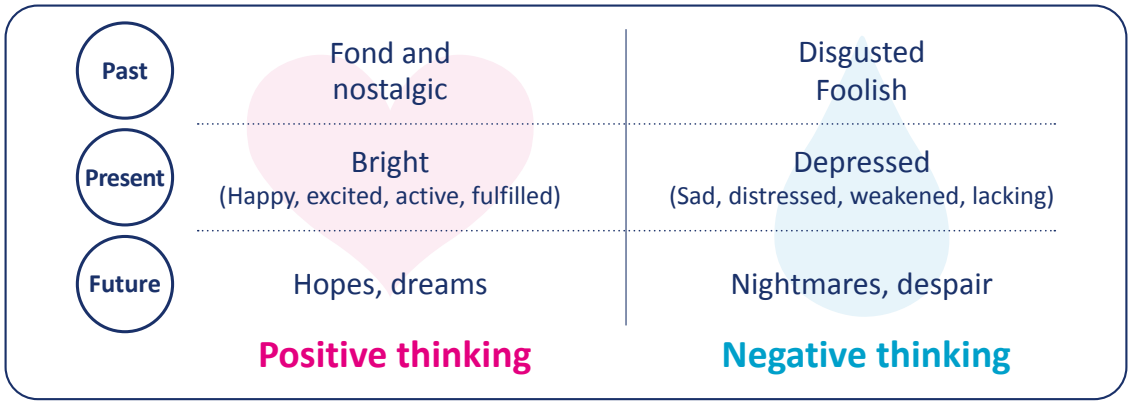
Peace Memorial Day

As the foundation for the establishment of world peace, the City of Hiroshima recognizes August 6, 1945, when the atomic bomb was used for the first time in human history, as a day which must be eternally remembered. Therefore, our city has designated August 6 as Peace Memorial Day to commemorate those who lost their lives due to the atomic bombing and to pray for the realization of lasting world peace. Every year on this day, our city organizes the Peace Memorial Ceremony, while many other peace events are held in and around the city.

3 What is the Culture of Peace?

In relation to human feelings and behaviors, the City of Hiroshima defines peace and the culture of peace as follows:

- In life, people are prone to positive and negative feelings. Therefore, peace can be referred to as maintaining a day-to-day living environment where positive thinking comes more easily.



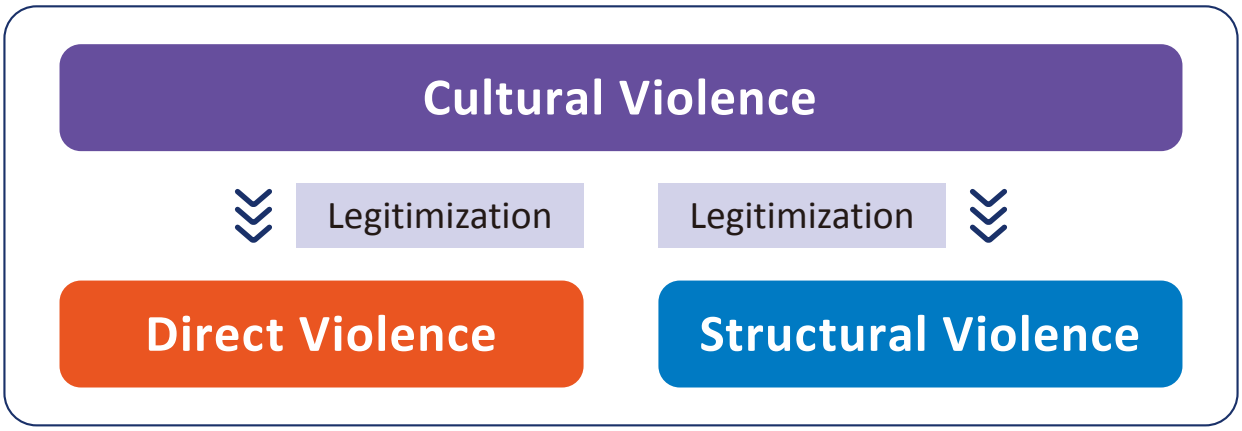
- The culture of peace can be referred to as the various actions that are indispensable to create such an environment and all of their results.
- An example of the culture of peace is music, fine art, and other cultural arts, as well as sports. As the arts and sports both transcend the boundaries of language, nationality, beliefs, and gender, they can be considered part of the culture of peace when undertaken in support of peace.

Dr. Johan Galtung, a Norwegian sociologist who is renowned as the father of peace studies, states that if the opposite of violence is peace, then the culture of peace can be explained as follows:

There are three forms of violence: direct violence, structural violence, and cultural violence. According to Dr. Galtung, direct violence is exercised in situations such as wars and military conflicts. Structural violence can be found in life-threatening situations caused by factors like racial and social discrimination. Cultural violence can be referred to as aspects that are used to legitimize direct violence and structural violence.

Dr. Galtung describes that a situation where cultural violence is not found would be cultural peace, and a culture where many aspects of cultural peace are found can be referred to as a peace culture.

Correlation diagram of the three forms of violence



Under this concept, we define the culture of peace as culture that affirms the absence of cultural violence and renounces all forms of violence.

Culture characterized by cultural peace (absence of cultural violence)

The Culture of Peace
Culture that renounces all forms of violence

For these reasons, we can define the promotion of the culture of peace as cities working to create the following environments so that we can build a world where no one is excluded and differences between individuals and groups are respected:

- An environment where each and every citizen acknowledges that what is important for living happily is being free from war, military conflicts, and life-threatening social discrimination.
- An environment where, based on their own thoughts, citizens do what they can for peace in their day-to-day lives.

4 The Significance of Promoting the Culture of Peace

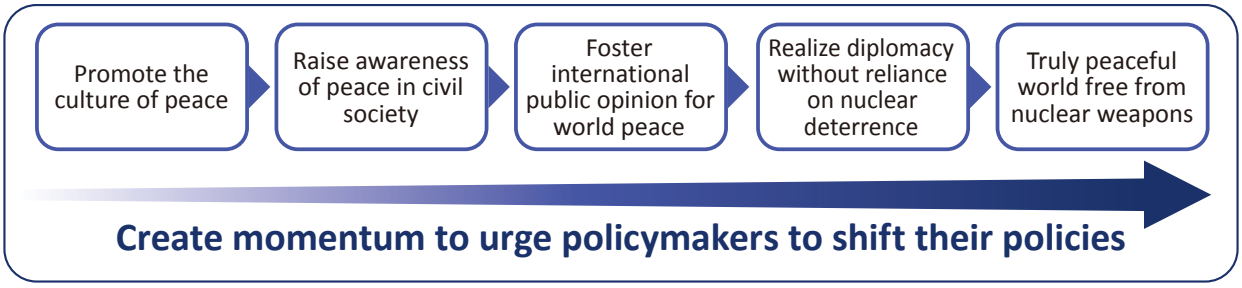
The ardent desire of the *hibakusha* and countless others for the abolition of nuclear weapons came to fruition with the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in January 2021. The treaty clearly states that nuclear weapons, a symbol of direct violence, must not be legitimized and should be totally prohibited. While the number of states endorsing the treaty continues to grow steadily, nuclear-weapon-states, as well as other nations that support the policy of nuclear deterrence, including Japan—the only country ever to experience atomic bombings in war—have turned their backs on the treaty. Is this truly the best we can do?

In an age marked by deepening divisions among nations and the aging of the *hibakusha*, we must strengthen the effectiveness of the treaty, which can be regarded as a fundamental norm of the international community in the pursuit of nuclear abolition. To achieve this, we have to create momentum to establish a consensus in civil society to strive for a world without nuclear weapons, and elect policymakers who take this consensus to heart, thus promoting a global shift away from the theory of nuclear deterrence.

In that process, what is innately important is for the culture of peace to take root across civil society, meaning that each and every citizen thinks about and takes action for peace in their daily lives. We believe that creating such an environment is the role of the cities, as they stand closest to their citizens.

In order to move toward realizing a truly peaceful world without nuclear weapons, it is necessary to turn the desire for creating world peace into the consensus of the international community. Promotion of the culture of peace by cities will urge policymakers around the world to strive for

The Ultimate Goal of Culture of Peace Promotion

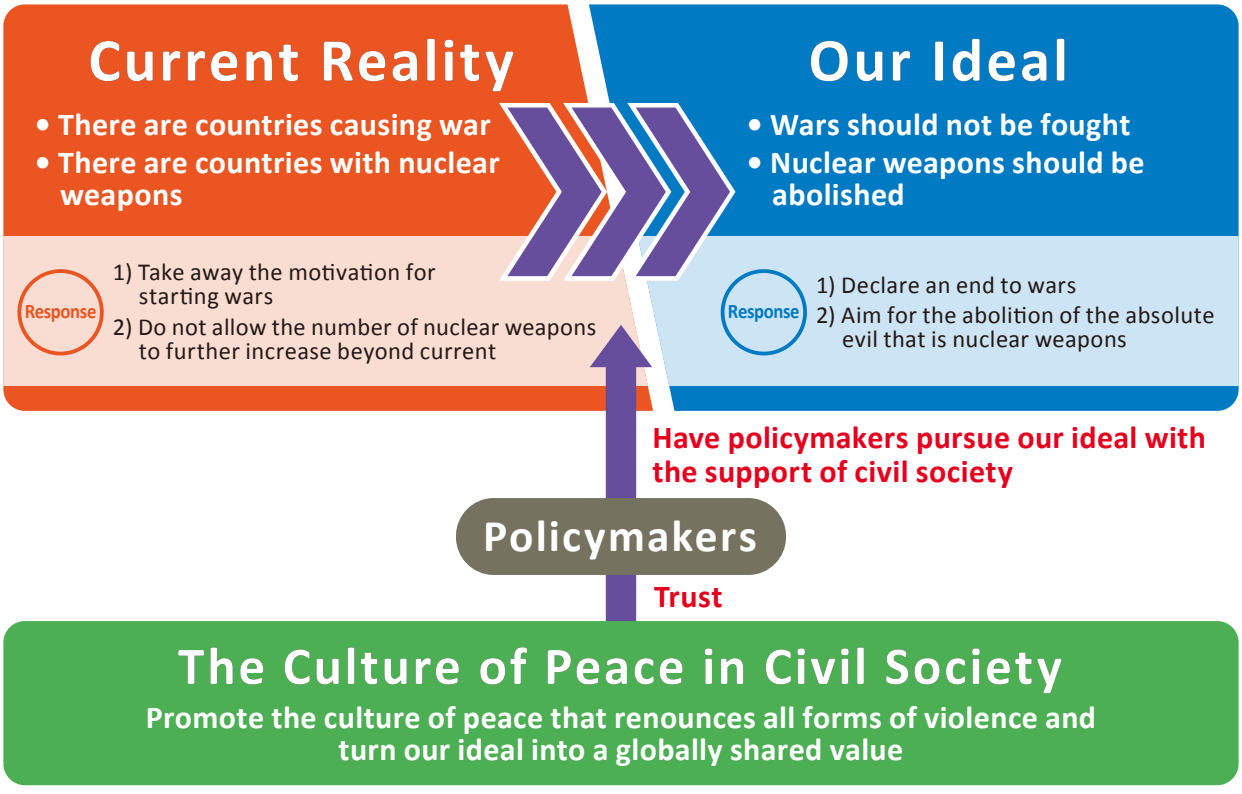


security policies for humanity that do not rely on nuclear weapons. As such, we believe promoting the culture of peace is a sure way to steadily urge policymakers to shift their policies.

At current, there are countries that want to cause war and countries that possess nuclear weapons. When it comes to national security, the idea that threats are a practical way to take away the motivation for starting wars in order to avoid them or prevent a further increase in the number of nuclear weapons is gaining momentum.

In order to pursue our ideal, namely wars should not be fought and nuclear weapons should be abolished, the world should declare that there will be no more wars, and strive to abolish nuclear weapons that are an absolute evil.

We are facing a dangerous situation globally. Civil society chooses our leaders and policymakers. If the culture of peace takes root in civil society, and we can make our ideal a shared value in civil society, then policymakers who strive to avoid wars and eliminate nuclear weapons will be elected over those who seek war. These policymakers, supported by civil society, will then pursue making our ideal into a reality.



5 Promoting the Culture of Peace is the Role of Cities

In order to create an environment that enables the culture of peace to take root in civil society, here are some examples of Hiroshima City's initiatives:

Examples of initiatives that contribute to the promotion of the culture of peace

1. **Initiatives that enable citizens to enjoy the benefits of peace through cultural arts and sports exchanges**
2. **Initiatives that provide citizens with opportunities to participate in peace study or activities to share in the will for peace**
3. **Initiatives that spread the will for peace through city image**
4. **Initiatives that allow citizens to understand the realities of the atomic bombing on a personal level**
5. **Initiatives that help the city gain global recognition as a peace city**

(1) Initiatives that enable citizens to enjoy the benefits of peace through cultural arts and sports exchanges: create opportunities for citizens to appreciate the peace that surrounds them by holding art and sporting events.

(2) Initiatives that provide citizens with opportunities to participate in peace study or activities to share in the will for peace: offer peace education to young people who will become the leaders of tomorrow and provide citizens with lifelong peace learning opportunities.

(3) Initiatives that spread the will for peace through city image: use flowers to create a relaxing landscape and develop buildings that are symbolic of peace.

(4) Initiatives that allow citizens to understand the realities of the atomic bombing on a personal level: preserve atomic-bombed buildings and convey the experiences of the *hibakusha* to the next generation.

(5) Initiatives that help the city gain global recognition as a peace city: hold international exchange events and spread messages of peace at home and abroad.

About Culture of Peace Month

In 2021, the City of Hiroshima designated the month of November as Culture of Peace Month during which a variety of peace culture events are held with the cooperation of private companies and citizen groups, among others.

We have currently expanded our initiatives to the Hiroshima Regional Urban Area and conduct integrated PR for Culture of Peace Month by using a common logo for each event, which helps to facilitate mutual participation. We believe that participation in these events will foster peace awareness in citizens and serve as an opportunity for them to take action for peace.

Event held during Culture of Peace Month

We will continue to expand the events held during Culture of Peace Month and widen the extent of our initiatives worldwide so that citizens will take the initiative to think about and act for peace.

Culture of Peace Month Logo

6 The Will for Peace Based on the Realities of the Atomic Bombing

With the concept of creating a city filled with the will for peace at our core, the City of Hiroshima regards spreading the will for peace to the world as its mission. To achieve this mission, we are committed to preserving, disseminating, and conveying the realities of the atomic bombing, as this is the basis of the *hibakusha* will for peace. In particular, with the continued aging of the *hibakusha*, opportunities to hear their testimonies firsthand are becoming increasingly limited. Thus, we are focused on creating an environment in which the next generation of leaders will take their experiences and aspirations for peace into their own hands.

Our city also works in collaboration with cities at home and abroad in an effort to preserve, disseminate, and convey these realities. Our initiatives transcend differences, such as creed, gender, and nationality, and we believe this approach is a concrete example of initiatives that help the city gain global recognition as a peace city.

Preserve

- ☐ Preserve atomic-bombed buildings and trees
- ☐ Collect *hibakusha* testimonies and materials

Disseminate

- ☐ Promote peace through welcoming visitors
  - Call for visits by world policymakers
  - Invite and hold international conferences
- ☐ Mayors for Peace
  - Increase membership
  - Distribute seeds and seedlings from atomic-bombed trees

Convey

- ☐ Draft and disseminate the Peace Declaration
- ☐ Manage the Peace Memorial Museum
- ☐ Facilitate *hibakusha* testimonies and A-bomb Legacy Successor presentations
- ☐ Pass on the *hibakusha* experiences through AI and VR

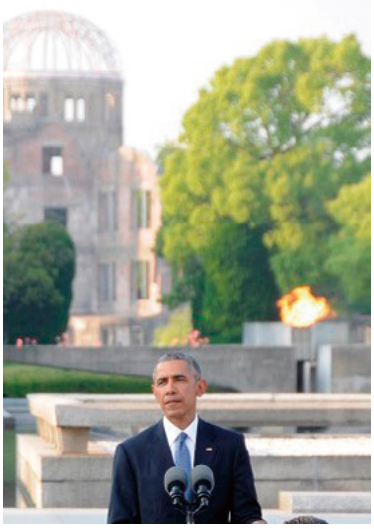
Atomic Bomb Dome

Hibakusha testimony

Among these initiatives, we are particularly focused on calling on policymakers and people from around the world to visit Hiroshima.

After the atomic bombing, Hiroshima was reduced to nothing but a burnt plain. From the ashes, the city underwent an incredible transformation and recovered to become the beautiful city that it is today. If the majority of people who visit Hiroshima are able to witness this stark contrast, we believe it will allow them to not only truly experience how precious peace is, but also to witness the power of what humans can achieve when they don't give up, and the power of turning adversity into a driving force for growth. Initiatives such as these are collectively called *Promoting Peace Through Welcoming Visitors*.

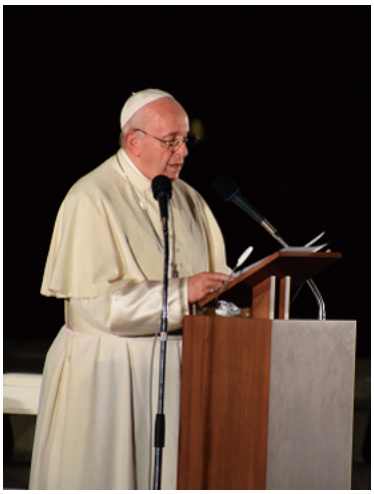
It is also of the utmost importance for policymakers across the globe to truly understand the consequences that await the moment they decide to use a nuclear weapon. We would like to make their visit to Hiroshima an opportunity to resolve to take political action towards the abolition of nuclear weapons, no matter how arduous the journey may be.



US President Barack Obama

In order to abolish nuclear weapons, it is necessary to make the will for peace the consensus of civil society. While the promotion of the culture of peace is an indispensable philosophy and effective measure in doing so, we must remember that the notion is supported and sustained by none other than the realities of the atomic bombing.

G7 Hiroshima Summit



Pope Francis

7 Promotion of the Culture of Peace by Mayors for Peace

Mayors for Peace, for which the mayor of Hiroshima serves as President, is a network to promote the culture of peace in collaboration with cities around the world while sharing in the value of peace.

Mayors for Peace

List of member cities▶

In June 1982, then-Mayor of Hiroshima, Takeshi Araki, put forth a proposal during the 2nd UN Special Session on Disarmament held at the UN Headquarters in New York. His proposal was for a program that would promote solidarity between cities to work for the total abolition of nuclear weapons. This led to the establishment of Mayors for Peace, a nonpartisan organization, and it was registered as an NGO with the UN Economic and Social Council in 1991. The mayor of Hiroshima serves as its President with 9 Vice Presidents worldwide, including the mayor of Nagasaki.

Mayors for Peace, which has grown into an international network of peace cities with approximately 8,600 member cities in more than 160 countries and regions around the world, is currently seeking to expand its membership to 10,000 cities. Japan has a membership ratio of 99.9% with 1,740 out of 1,741 municipalities joining the network.

In July 2021, Mayors for Peace adopted the Vision for Peaceful Transformation to a Sustainable World (PX Vision for short). In addition to two objectives, namely, “Realize a world without nuclear weapons” and “Realize safe and resilient cities,” it introduced a third objective: “Promote the culture of peace.”

Based on the PX Vision and Action Plan as a set of concrete action guidelines, Mayors for Peace, together with its member cities, their citizens, and NGOs, strives to realize lasting world peace in order to build cities where citizens act with a strong sense of solidarity.

PX Vision

A Realize a world without nuclear weapons

With cities and the citizens who live in them being their targets, and catastrophic consequences on a global scale to be inflicted by their use, nuclear weapons are the greatest threat to the safety and security of citizens' lives. We will urge global leaders to effect peace-oriented policy change by calling on the UN and national governments, especially the nuclear-armed states and their allies, to take concrete action for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

B Realize safe and resilient cities

In pursuit of ensuring citizens' safety and security, we will strive to address and solve a diverse range of issues distinctive to each member's region that are threatening the coexistence of the human race, such as starvation, poverty, the plight of refugees, human rights abuses, and environmental degradation.

C Promote the culture of peace

We will seek both to create an environment that urges policymakers to demonstrate decisive leadership to effect peace-oriented policy changes that facilitate the abolition of nuclear weapons, and to establish a civil society in which citizens act with a strong sense of solidarity for the realization of peaceful coexistence between the whole of humanity. To that end, we will cultivate peace consciousness and cause the culture of peace—the culture in which the everyday actions of each member of the public are grounded in thinking about peace—to take root in civil society as the foundation of lasting world peace.

Mayors for Peace Supporters

Mayors for Peace promotes the #OurSharedPeace initiative through its official Instagram to share users' wishes and actions for peace across borders and to amplify them as a global public voice calling for peace. We invite you to join us by following the account and becoming a Mayors for Peace Supporter. Share your thoughts on peace and peaceful scenes you discover in your community with people around the world.

MFPSUPPORTERS_EN

Conclusion: Importance of Citizen-Led Initiatives

As mentioned herein, a true culture of peace based on the will for peace of the *hibakusha* must take root in local communities in order to achieve lasting peace.

In community development, municipal governments coordinate social capital, which is comprised of mutual trust and connections, as well as cultural capital, such as people's abilities and nature, using their authority and the measures available to them. However, these so-called "soft" or intangible elements differ from the "hard" or tangible elements in that soft ones cannot be tackled by municipal government alone. Only with citizen-led participation can we truly begin to work on the soft elements.

The culture of peace is much the same. Municipal governments must work to create city planning that incorporates the culture of peace. However, even though municipal governments can propose that citizens should desire peace in order to live happy lives, and that they consider and take action for the realization of peace in their own ways, but in the end, the ones who must actually take action are the citizens themselves.

When citizens take the lead and practice what they can for peace, the results build upon each other to create momentum that becomes the driving force to move world policymakers to work for peace. As a result, citizens will be able to enjoy the peace they have created to lead fulfilling lives.

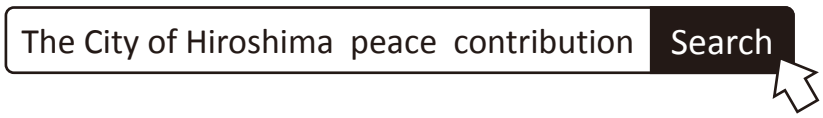
The City of Hiroshima believes that it is our job as a municipality to steadily promote citizen-led initiatives that help to build the culture of peace. In addition, as the TPNW has been established as an international norm, we will work to promote it as a road map for civil society. Together with Mayors for Peace member cities, the City of Hiroshima aims to help the culture of peace take root around the world. We want to make the abolition of nuclear weapons, and the realization of lasting world peace that comes with their abolition, the consensus of civil society.

Help us to better promote peace!

The City of Hiroshima accepts donations from individuals and organizations who wish for a peaceful world. Your donation will be used for the effective implementation of our city's peace initiatives, such as those introduced on page 11, as well as the preservation of the Atomic Bomb Dome.

Donate today and help us realize a more peaceful world.

For details, please visit the Hiroshima City website:
https://www.city.hiroshima.lg.jp/english/peace/1029866/index.html



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