

Commitment to Peace

“I want to live. I want to live happily with everyone.”

Her wish in vain, this 12-year-old girl died.

Sadako Sasaki experienced the atomic bombing at age two, then was suddenly diagnosed at 12 with “A-bomb disease.” While in the hospital, she never lost hope. She continued steadfastly to fold paper cranes in an effort to live.

The morning of August 6 fifty-nine years ago, people were going about their lives as usual on the streets of Hiroshima enveloped by rivers and greenery. A war was on, but it was just a summer morning like any other. Then, a single atomic bomb made it a morning that humankind can never forget.

By the end of the year, the bomb’s heat, blast, and radiation had taken the lives of 140,000 people. Then, year after year, many people suffered and died from radiation damage.

Sadako Sasaki was one of those people.

Every year as summer approaches, we children of Hiroshima take on Sadako’s wish and fold cranes in hopes that the people of the world can all live happily together.

However, people are still warring in our world.

Millions are living in fear, suffering, and dying.

Countless buried landmines are injuring many.

Even children are given guns and told to fight.

And the nuclear weapons that burned Hiroshima to the ground are still with us.

The sorrow of war creates hatred, and that hatred leads to deeper sorrow.

Yet the stories we hear from the *hibakusha* are filled not with hatred, but with the strong desire that “no one else ever suffers the way we did.”

We must make the *hibakusha*’s desire our own and work to build a peaceful world.

Every day paper cranes are delivered here to Peace Memorial Park from every corner of Japan and many countries around the world. Looking at these cranes, we are energized by the realization that most people are bound beyond language, culture, or religion by a common desire for peace.

Until the day when all children live in peace and can fold cranes in gratitude for a peaceful world free from nuclear weapons and war, we pledge to continue telling the world the stories we have been told about the cruelty of the atomic bomb and the sanctity of peace.

August 6, 2004

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