

Commitment to Peace

This is Hiroshima's last Peace Memorial Day of the 20th century.

The past 100 years have brought enormous changes to our lives, making them extremely convenient and affluent. But have we created a truly happy and peaceful world?

That summer fifty-five years ago , with a sudden, blinding flash, Hiroshima was engulfed in blistering heat and violent winds. In that instant , conversations among friends and family , the chirping of birds, the green of trees and grass-all were lost and gone forever in a cyclone of flame. Our hometown was burned to the ground, a flat scorched plain stretching as far as the eye could see. And yet, those left behind managed somehow to overcome their pain and grief. Supported by hope and the will to live , and by their determined pledge “not [to] repeat the evil,” they rose from the rubble and began the long struggle to recover. Now, we find ourselves living in a beautiful city , filled with sparkling water and lush greenery.

Despite our strong desire for peace, our world still struggles with war, hunger, poverty, and nuclear weapons. Those nuclear weapons were built by human beings, and if we want to make the new century one of genuine, world-wide peace, we human beings must, with our own hands , deliberately eliminate them from the face of the Earth. To accomplish that, we must first seek to solve the problems of bullying and violence we experience in our own lives. It was our grandmothers and grandfathers who brought Hiroshima back to life, and from them we have learned that we truly can, if we work together, create a happy and peaceful world.

Having carved into our hearts the *hibakusha*'s passion for peace, we hereby pledge, as children of Hiroshima who will live in a new age, to join hands with people around the world, communicate with them, and do our best to be bridges to Peace in the 21st century•

People of the world, let's begin with whatever we can do to build peace.

We all long for world peace.

We hope we can work towards it together.

August 6, 2000

Children's Representatives:

Kanako Okada (Sixth Grade, Hiroshima City Kaminukushina Elementary School)

Sho Yokota (Sixth Grade, Hiroshima City Nagatsuka Elementary School)