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Remembering Hiroshima and Nagasaki

by David Krieger

The fourth of a series of occasional papers on
defence and disarmament issues in memory of
Frank Blackaby

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Preface

This is the fourth Blackaby Paper in the series commemorating the life and work of the late Frank Blackaby, sometime President of Abolition 2000 UK.

It is specifically targeted at two important dates in the disarmament calendar, the anniversaries of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, on August 6th. and August 9 th. 1945. It is published on the occasion of the 58th such anniversary.

Peter Nicholls.

Claire Poyner.

Editorial Committee.

Remembering Hiroshima and Nagasaki

At 1:45 a.m. on August 6, 1945, a US B-29 bomber, the Enola Gay, took off from Tinian Island in the Mariana Islands. It carried the world's second atomic bomb, the first having been detonated three weeks earlier at a US test site in Alamogordo, New Mexico. The Enola Gay carried one atomic bomb, with an enriched uranium core. The bomb had been named "Little Boy." It had an explosive force of some 12,500 tons of TNT.

At 8:15 a.m. that morning, as the citizens of Hiroshima were beginning their day, the Enola Gay released its horrific cargo, which fell for 43 seconds before detonating at 580 meters above Shima Hospital near the centre of the city.

Here is a description, from a pamphlet published by the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, of what happened immediately following the explosion:

"The temperature of the air at the point of explosion reached several million degrees Celsius (the maximum temperature of conventional bombs is approximately 5,000 degrees Celsius). Several millionths of a second after the explosion a fireball appeared, radiating white heat. After 1/10,000th of a second, the fireball reached a diameter of approximately 28 meters with a temperature of close to 300,000 degrees Celsius. At the instant of the explosion, intense heat rays and radiation were released in all directions, and a blast erupted with incredible pressure on the surrounding air."

As a result of the blast, heat and ensuing fires, the city of Hiroshima was levelled and some 90,000 people in it perished that day. The world's second test of a nuclear weapon demonstrated conclusively the awesome power of nuclear weapons for killing and

maiming. Schools were destroyed and their students and teachers slaughtered. Hospitals with their patients and medical staff were obliterated. The bombing of Hiroshima was an act of massive destruction of a civilian population, the destruction of an entire city with a single bomb. Harry Truman, President of the United States, upon being notified, said, in egregiously poor judgment, "This is the greatest thing in history."

Three days after destroying Hiroshima, after failing to find an opening in the clouds over its primary target of the city of Kokura, another US B-29 bomber, named Bockscar, attacked the Japanese city of Nagasaki with the world's third atomic weapon. This bomb had a plutonium core and an explosive force of some 22,000 tons of TNT. It had been named "Fat Man." The attack took place at 11:02 a.m. It resulted in the immediate deaths of some 40,000 people.

In his first speech to the US public about the bombing of Hiroshima, which he delivered on August 9, 1945, the day the atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, Harry Truman reported:

"The world will note that the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, a military base. That was because we wished in this first attack to avoid, in so far as possible, the killing of civilians."

While Hiroshima did have a military base in the city, it was not the base that was targeted, but the centre of the city. The vast majority of the victims in Hiroshima were ordinary civilians, including large numbers of women and children. Truman continued,

"But that attack is only a warning of things to come."

Truman went on to refer to the "awful responsibility which has come to us," and to "thank God that it has come to us, instead

of to our enemies.” He prayed that God “may guide us to use it in His ways and for His purpose.”

It was a chilling and prophetic prayer.

By the end of 1945, some 145,000 people had died in Hiroshima, and some 75,000 people had died in Nagasaki. Tens of thousands more suffered serious injuries. Deaths among survivors of the bombings have continued over the years, due primarily to the effects of radiation poisoning.

Now looking back at these terrible events, inevitably our collective memory has faded and is reshaped by current perspectives. With the passage of time, those who actually experienced the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have become far fewer in number. Although their own memories of the trauma to themselves and their cities may remain vivid, their stories are unknown by large portions of the world’s population.

The message of the survivors has been simple, clear and consistent: “Never Again!” At the Memorial Cenotaph in Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park is this inscription: “Let all souls here rest in peace; for we shall not repeat the evil.” The “we” in the inscription refers to all of us and to each of us.

Yet, the fate of the world, and particularly the fate of humanity, may hang on how we remember Hiroshima and Nagasaki. If we remember the bombings of these cities as just another point in human history, along with many other important points, we may well lack the political will to deal effectively with the challenges that nuclear weapons pose to humanity.

If, on the other hand, we remember these bombings as a turning point in human history, a time at which peace became an imperative, we may still find the political will to save ourselves from the fate that befell the inhabitants of these two cities.

In the introduction to their book, *Hiroshima in America*, Robert Jay Lifton and Greg Mitchell write, “You cannot understand the twentieth century without

Hiroshima.” The same may be said of the twenty-first century. The same may be said of the nuclear predicament that confronts humanity. Neither our time nor our future can be adequately understood without understanding what happened at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Since the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki there has been a struggle for memory. The story of the bombings differs radically between what has been told in America and how the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki recount this tragedy. America’s rendition is a story of triumph - triumph of technology and triumph in war. It views the bomb from above, from the perspective of those who dropped it.

For the vast majority of US citizens, the creation of the bomb has been seen as a technological feat of extraordinary proportions, giving rise to the most powerful weapon in the history of warfare. From this perspective, the atomic bombs made possible the complete defeat of Japanese imperial power and brought World War II to an abrupt end.

In the minds of many, if not most US citizens, the atomic bombs saved the lives of perhaps a million US soldiers, and the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is seen as a small price to pay to save so many lives and bring a terrible war to an end. This view leaves the impression that bombing these cities with atomic weapons was useful, fruitful and an occasion to be celebrated.

The problem with this rendition of history is that the need for dropping the bombs to end the war has been widely challenged by historians. Many scholars, including Lifton and Mitchell, have questioned the official US account of the bombings.

These critics have variously pointed out that Japan was attempting to surrender at the time the bombs were dropped, that the US Army Strategic Survey calculated far fewer US casualties from an invasion of

Japan, and that there were other ways to end the war without using the atomic bombs on the two Japanese cities.

Among the critics of the use of nuclear weapons at Hiroshima and Nagasaki were leading US military figures. General Dwight Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander Europe during World War II and later US president, described his reaction upon hav-

Einstein's Regret

Einstein's regret ran deep
Like the deep pools of sorrow
That were his eyes.

His mind could see things
That others could not,
The bending of light,

The slowing of time,
Relationships of trains passing
In the night, and power,

Dormant and asleep,
That could be awakened,
But who would dare?

He saw patterns
In snowflakes and stars,
Unimaginable simplicity

To make one weep with joy.

When the shadow of Hitler
Spread across Europe.
What was Einstein to do

But what he did?
His regret ran deep, deeper
Than the deep pools of sor-
row

That were his eyes.

David Krieger

ing been told by Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson that atomic bombs would be used on Japanese cities:

“During his recitation of the relevant facts, I had been conscious of a feeling of depression and so I voiced to him my grave misgivings, first on the basis of my belief that Japan was already defeated and that dropping the bomb was completely unnecessary, and secondly because I thought that our country should avoid shocking world opinion by the use of a weapon whose employment was, I thought, no longer mandatory as a measure to save American lives. It was my belief that Japan was, at that very moment, attempting to surrender with a minimum loss of ‘face’ . . .”

In a post-war interview, Eisenhower told a journalist, “...the Japanese were ready to surrender and it wasn't necessary to hit them with that awful thing.”

General Henry “Hap” Arnold, Commanding General of the US Army Air Forces during World War II, wrote,

“It always appeared to us that, atomic bomb or no atomic bomb, the Japanese were already on the verge of collapse.”

Truman's Chief of Staff, Admiral William D. Leahy, wrote,

“It is my opinion that the use of this barbarous weapon at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was of no material assistance in our war against Japan. The Japanese were already defeated and ready to surrender.... My own feeling was that in being the first to use it, we had adopted an ethical standard common to the barbarians of the Dark Ages. I was not taught to make war in that fashion, and wars cannot be won by destroying women and children”

Despite these powerful statements of dissent from US World War II military leaders, there is still a strong sense in the United States and among its allies that the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were justified by the war. There is insufficient recognition that the victims of the bombings were largely civilians, that those closest to the epicentres of the explosions were incinerated, while those further away were exposed to radiation poisoning, that many suffered excruciatingly painful deaths, and that even today, more than five decades after the bombings, survivors continue to suffer from the effects of the radiation exposure.

The bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are in the past. We cannot resurrect these cities. The residents of these cities have done this for themselves. What we can do is learn from their experience. What they have to teach is perhaps humanity's most important lesson: we are confronted by the possibility of our extinction as a species, not simply the reality of our individual deaths, but the death of humanity. This possibility became evident at Hiroshima. The great French

existential writer, Albert Camus, wrote in the immediate aftermath of the bombing of Hiroshima:

“Our technical civilisation has just reached its greatest level of savagery. We will have to choose, in the more or less near future, between collective suicide and the intelligent use of our scientific conquests. Before the terrifying prospects now available to humanity, we see even more clearly that peace is the only battle worth waging. This is no longer a prayer but a demand to be made by all peoples to their governments - a demand to choose definitively between hell and reason.”

To rely upon nuclear weapons for security is to put the future of our species and most of life at risk of annihilation. Humanity is faced with a choice: Eliminate nuclear weapons or continue to run the risk of them eliminating us. Unless we recognise this choice and act upon it, we face the possibility of a global Hiroshima.

Living with Myths

In his book, *The Myths of August*, former US Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall writes:

“In the first weeks after Hiroshima, extravagant statements by President Truman and other official spokesmen for the US government transformed the inception of the atomic age into the most mythologised event in American history. These exhilarating, excessive utterances depicted a profoundly altered universe and produced a reorientation of thought that influenced the behaviour of nations and changed the outlook and the expectations of the inhabitants of this planet.”

Many myths have grown up around the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that have the effect of making the use of nuclear weapons more palatable.

To restate, one such myth is that there was no choice but to use nuclear weapons on these cities. Another is that doing so saved the lives of in excess of one million US soldiers. Underlying these myths is a more general myth that US leaders can be expected to do what is right and moral.

To conclude that our leaders did the wrong thing by acting immorally at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, slaughtering civilian populations, flies in the face of this widespread understanding of who we are as a people. To maintain our sense of our own decency, reflected by the actions of our

leaders, may require us to bend the facts to fit our myths.

When a historical retrospective of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki - which was to include the reservations of US military leaders such as Eisenhower, Arnold and Leahy - was planned for the fiftieth anniversary commemorations of these events at the Smithsonian Institution in

Washington, a major outcry of opposition arose from veterans' groups and members of the US Congress.

In the end, the Smithsonian exhibition was reduced under pressure, from a broad historical perspective on the bombings, to a display and celebration of the Enola Gay, the B-29 that dropped the bomb on Hiroshima.

Our Myths Help Shape Our Ethical Perspectives

Our understanding of Hiroshima and Nagasaki helps to give rise to our general orientation toward nuclear weapons. Because of our myths about the benefits of using nuclear weapons at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, there is a tendency to view nuclear weapons in a positive light. Despite the moral issues involved in destroying civilian populations, most US citizens can justify reliance on such weapons for our "protection." A good example of this rationalisation is found in the views of many students at the University of California about the role of their university in the management of the US nuclear weapons laboratories.

Early in 2003, I spoke to a class of students at the University of California at Santa Barbara. I presented the students with a hypothetical situation. They were asked to imagine that they were students at a prestigious German university during the 1930's after the Nazis had come to power. They discovered a secret laboratory at their university where professors were researching and developing gas chambers and incinerators for the Nazis to use in exterminating their enemies. I then posed the question: What were their ethical responsibilities after making this discovery?

The hypothetical generated a lively discussion. The students took their ethical responsibilities within the hypothetical situation seriously. They realised that there

would be danger in overtly opposing the development of these genocidal devices. Nonetheless, they were willing to take risks to prevent the university from going forward with their program to develop the gas chambers and incinerators. Some were ready to go to the authorities at the university to protest. Others were prepared to form small groups and make plans to secretly sabotage the program. Others were intent upon escaping the country to let the world know

A Short History Lesson: 1945

August 6th:
Dropped atomic bomb
On civilians
At Hiroshima.

August 8th:
Agreed to hold
War crimes trials
For Nazis.

August 9th:
Dropped atomic bomb
On civilians
At Nagasaki.

David Krieger

what was happening in order to bring international pressure to bear upon the Nazi regime. The students were not neutral and most expressed a strong desire to act courageously in opposition to this university program, even if their futures and possibly their lives would be at risk.

After listening to the impressive ethical

Hibakusha Still Live on Earth

Hibakusha
still live
on earth

their soft
voices
of forgiveness

testimony
to our human
spirit

they bow deep
thanking us
for listening

to their
sad and painful
stories

Some day
the last hibakusha
will take

a last breath
and be
no more

but their pain
and their stories
will live on

David Krieger

stands that the students were willing to take and congratulating them, I changed the hypothetical.

I asked them to consider that it was now some 70 years later and that they were students at the University of California in the year 2003.

This, of course, was not hypothetical. The students were in fact enrolled at the University of California at Santa Barbara. I asked them to imagine that their university, the University of California, was involved in the research and development of nuclear weapons, that their university managed the US nuclear weapons laboratories that had researched and developed nearly all of the nuclear weapons in the US arsenal. This also happens to be true, since the University of California has long managed the US nuclear weapons laboratories at Los Alamos and Livermore.

After presenting the students with this scenario, I asked them to consider their ethical responsibilities. I was expecting that they would reach similar conclusions to the first hypothetical, that they would express dismay at discovering that their university was involved in the research and development of weapons of mass destruction and would be prepared to oppose this situation.

This time, however, only a small number of students expressed the same sense of moral outrage at their university's involvement and indicated a willingness to take risks in protesting this involvement. Many of the students felt that they had no ethical responsibilities under these circumstances.

Many students sought to distinguish the two scenarios. In the first scenario, some said, it was known that the gas chambers and incinerators were to be used for the purpose of committing genocide. In the second scenario, the one they were actually living in, they did not believe that the nuclear weapons would be used. They pointed out that nuclear weapons had not been used for more than 50 years and, therefore, they thought it was unlikely that they

would be used in the future.

Further, they did not think that the United States would actually use nuclear weapons because our leaders would feel constrained from doing so. Finally, they thought that the United States had a responsibility to defend itself, which they believed nuclear weapons would do.

Frankly, I was surprised by the results of this exercise. I had expected that the students would oppose both scenarios and that their idealism would call for protest against their university's management of the nuclear weapons laboratories.

In the second scenario, however, they had many rationales and/or rationalisations for not becoming involved.

This scenario was not hypothetical. It was real. It would actually demand something of them. Many were reluctant to commit themselves. Most had accepted the mythology about our leaders doing the right thing and the further mythology about nuclear weapons protecting us.

They had not thought through the risks associated with possessing and deploying large numbers of nuclear weapons. They had not considered the risks of accidents

and miscalculations, the dangers of faulty communications and irrational leaders. They had not considered the possibilities that deterrence could fail and the result could be future Hiroshimas and Nagasakis, in fact, globalised Hiroshimas and Nagasakis.

Most of the students were able to avoid accepting personal responsibility for the involvement of their university in the process of developing weapons of mass destruction.

Some also dismissed their personal responsibility on the basis that the university did not belong solely to them and that in fact nuclear weapons were a societal problem.

They were, of course, right about this: nuclear weapons are a societal problem. Unfortunately, it is a problem for which far too few individuals are taking personal ethical responsibility. The students represented a microcosm of a larger societal problem of indifference and inaction in the face of our present reliance on nuclear weapons. The result of this inaction is tragically the likelihood that eventually these weapons will again be used with horrendous consequences for humanity.

Making the Nuclear Weapons Threat Real

Just as most of these students do not take personal ethical responsibility to protest involvement in nuclear weapons research and development by their university, most leaders and potential leaders of nuclear weapons states do not accept the necessity of challenging the nuclear status quo and working to achieve nuclear disarmament.

What helped me to understand the horrendous consequences and risks of nuclear weapons was a visit to the memorial museums at Hiroshima and Nagasaki when I was 21 years old. These museums keep alive the memory of the destructiveness of the relatively small nuclear weapons that

were used on these two cities. They also provide a glimpse into the human suffering caused by nuclear weapons.

I have long believed that a visit to one or both of these museums should be a requirement for any leader of a nuclear weapons state. Without visiting these museums and being exposed by film, artifacts and displays to the devastation that nuclear weapons cause, it is difficult to grasp the extent of the destructiveness of these devices.

One realises that nuclear weapons are not even weapons at all, but something far more ominous. They are instruments of genocide and perhaps omnicide, the destruction of all.

To the best of my knowledge, no head of state or government of a nuclear weapons state has actually visited these museums before or during his or her term in office.

If political leaders will not make the

Hibakusha Do Not Just Happen

For every hibakusha
there is a pilot

for every hibakusha
there is a planner

for every hibakusha
there is a bombardier

for every hibakusha
there is a bomb designer

for every hibakusha
there is a missile maker

for every hibakusha
there is a missileer

for every hibakusha
there is a targeter

for every hibakusha
there is a commander

for every hibakusha
there is a button pusher

for every hibakusha
many must contribute

for every hibakusha
many must obey

for every hibakusha
many must be silent

-David Krieger

effort to visit the sites of nuclear devastation, then it is necessary for the people of their countries to bring the message of these cities to them. But first, of course, the people must themselves be exposed to the stories and messages of these cities.

It is unrealistic to expect that many people will travel to Hiroshima or Nagasaki to visit the memorial museums, but it is not unrealistic to bring the messages of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to communities all over the world.

In Santa Barbara, California, where the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation is located, we have tried to bring the message of Hiroshima to our community and beyond. On the 50th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima we created a peace memorial garden that we named Sadako Peace Garden.

The name Sadako comes from that of a young girl, Sadako Sasaki, who was exposed to radiation as a two-year-old in Hiroshima when the bomb fell. Sadako lived a normal life for the next ten years until she developed leukemia as a result of the radiation exposure.

During her hospitalisation, Sadako folded paper cranes in the hopes of recovering her health. The crane is a symbol of health and longevity in Japan, and it is believed that if one folds one thousand paper cranes they will have their wish come true. Sadako wished to regain her health and for peace in the world. On one of her paper cranes she wrote this short poem, "I will write peace on your wings and you will fly all over the world."

Sadako did not finish folding her one thousand paper cranes before her short life came to an end. Her classmates, however, responded to Sadako's courage and her wish for peace by finishing the job of folding the thousand paper cranes. Soon Sadako's story began to spread, and throughout Japan children folded paper cranes in remembrance of her and her wish for peace. Tens of thousands of paper cranes poured into Hiroshima from all over Japan. Eventually, Sadako's story spread throughout the world,

and today many children in distant lands have heard of Sadako and have folded paper cranes in her memory.

In Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park there stands a monument to Sadako. At the base of that monument is this message,

“This is our cry. This is our prayer. For peace in this world.”

It is the message of children throughout the world who honour Sadako’s memory.

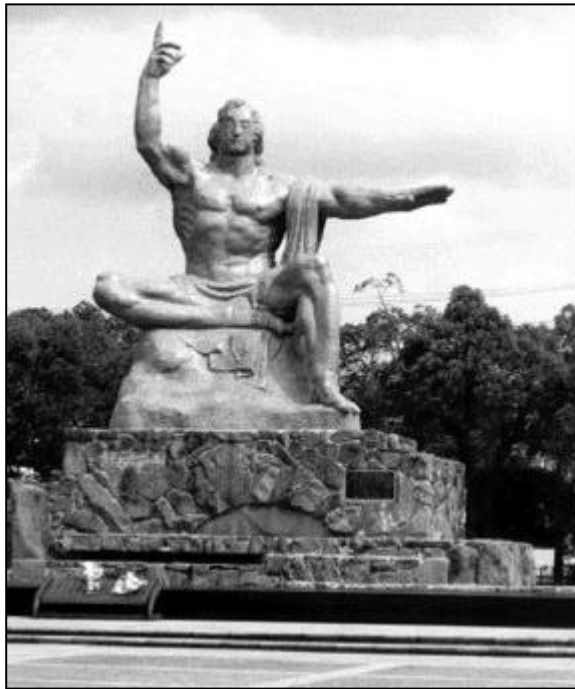
Sadako Peace

Garden in Santa Barbara is a beautiful, tranquil place. In this garden are some large rocks, and cranes are carved in relief onto their surfaces. Each year on August 6th, Hiroshima Day, we celebrate Sadako Peace Day, a day of remembrance of Sadako and other innocent victims of war.

Each year on Sadako Peace Day we have music, reflection and poetry at Sadako Peace Garden. In this way, we seek to keep the memory of Hiroshima alive in our community.

In addition to creating Sadako Peace Garden and holding an annual commemoration on Hiroshima Day, we also made arrangements with the Hiroshima and Nagasaki Peace Memorial Museums to bring an exhibition about the destruction caused by the atomic weapons to our community. The museums sent an impressive exhibition that included artifacts, photographs and videos. The exhibit helped make what happened at Hiroshima and Nagasaki real to many members of our community.

At the time of the exhibit, several hibakusha, survivors of the bombings, visited our community and spoke in public about their experiences. They brought to life



Nagasaki memorial

the horrors of nuclear weapons by relating their personal experiences. There are also many books that collect the stories of atomic bomb survivors. It is nearly impossible to hear or read of their experiences without being deeply moved.

Here is the description of one hibakusha, Miyoko Matsubara, who was a 12-year-old schoolgirl in Hiroshima at the time of the bombing. Her description begins upon awakening from being

unconscious after the bombing:

“I had no idea how long I had lain unconscious, but when I regained consciousness the bright sunny morning had turned into night. Takiko, who had stood next to me, had simply disappeared from my sight. I could see none of my friends nor any other students. Perhaps they had been blown away by the blast.

“I rose to my feet surprised. All that was left of my jacket was the upper part around my chest. And my baggy working trousers were gone, leaving only the waistband and a few patches of cloth. The only clothes left on me were dirty white underwear.

“Then I realised that my face, hands, and legs had been burned, and were swollen with the skin peeled off and hanging down in shreds. I was bleeding and some areas had turned yellow. Terror struck me, and I felt that I had to go home. And the next moment, I frantically started running away from the scene forgetting all about the heat and pain.

“On my way home, I saw a lot of people. All of them were almost naked and looked like characters out of horror movies with their skin and flesh horribly burned and blistered. The place around the Tsurumi bridge was crowded with many injured people. They held their arms aloft in front of them. Their hair stood on end. They were groaning and cursing. With pain in their eyes and furious looks on their faces, they were crying out for their mothers to help them.

“I was feeling unbearably hot, so I went down to the river. There were a lot of people in the water crying and shouting for help. Countless dead bodies were being carried away by the water - some floating, some sinking.

Some bodies had been badly hurt, and their intestines were exposed. It was a horrible sight, yet I had to jump in the water to save myself from heat I felt all over.”

After describing her personal struggle as a survivor of the bombing, Miyoko Matsubara offered this message to the young people of the world:

“Nuclear weapons do not deter war. Nuclear weapons and human beings cannot co-exist. We all must learn the value of human life. If you do not agree with me on this, please come to Hiroshima and see for yourself the destructive power of these deadly weapons at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum.”

The Deep Bow of a Hibakusha

for Miyoko Matsubara

She bowed deeply. She bowed deeper than the oceans. She bowed from the top of Mt. Fuji to the bottom of the ocean. She bowed so deeply and so often that the winds blew hard.

The winds blew her whispered apologies and prayers across all the continents. But the winds whistled too loudly, and made it impossible to hear her apologies and prayers. The winds made the oceans crazy. The water in the oceans rose up in a wild molecular dance. The oceans threw themselves against the continents. The people were frightened. They ran screaming from the shores. They feared the white water and the whistling wind. They huddled together in dark places. They strained to hear the words in the wind.

In some places there were some people who thought they heard an apology. In other places there were people who thought they heard a prayer.

She bowed deeply. She bowed more deeply than anyone should bow.

-David Krieger

A Simple Proposal

I should like to offer a simple proposal related to remembering Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which is also a way to confront the deadening myths in our culture that surround the bombing of these cities. I propose that every community, throughout the globe, commemorate the period August 6th through August 9th as Hiroshima and Nagasaki Days. The commemoration can be short or long, simple or elaborate, but these days should not be forgotten.

By looking backward we can also look forward and remain cognisant of the risks that are before us. These commemorations also provide a time to focus on what needs to be done to end the nuclear weapons threat to humanity and all life.

By keeping the memory of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki alive we may also be helping to keep humanity alive. This is a critical part of our responsibility as citizens of Earth living in the Nuclear Age.

Each year on Hiroshima and Nagasaki Days, August 6th and 9th respectively, the mayors of these two cities deliver proclamations on behalf of their cities. These proclamations are distributed via the internet and by other means.

Copies may be obtained in advance and shared on the occasion of a community commemoration of these days. It is also a time in which stories of the hibakusha, the survivors, may be shared and a time to bring experts to speak on current nuclear threats.

The world needs common symbols to bring us together. One such common symbol is the photograph of the Earth from outer space.

It is a symbol that makes us understand immediately that we all share a common planet and a common future. Hiroshima and Nagasaki are other common symbols. We know that these names stand for more than cities in Japan; they stand for the massive destructiveness of nuclear weapons and for the human strength and spirit needed to overcome this destructiveness.

The world needs to recall and reflect on the experiences of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as symbols of human strength and indomitable spirit. We need to be able to remember truly what happened to these cities if we are going to unite to end the nuclear weapons threat to humanity and all life. We need to understand that it is not necessary to be victims of our own technologies, that we are capable of controlling even the most dangerous of them.

In their book, *Hiroshima in America*, Lifton and Mitchell conclude:

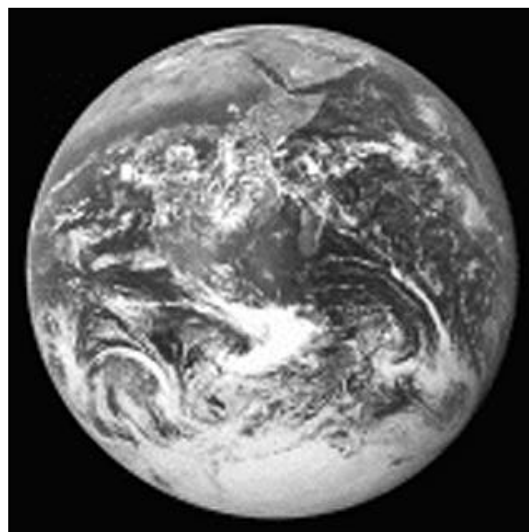
“Confronting Hiroshima can be a powerful source of renewal. It can enable us to emerge from nuclear entrapment and rediscover our imaginative capacities on behalf of human good. We can overcome our moral inversion and cease to justify weapons or actions of mass killing. We can condemn and then step back from acts of desecration and recognize what Camus called a ‘philosophy of limits.’ In that way we can also take steps to cease betraying ourselves, cease harming and deceiving our own people. We can also free our society from its apocalyptic concealment, and in the process enlarge our vision.



We can break out of our long-standing numbing in the vitalizing endeavour of learning, or relearning, to feel. And we can divest ourselves of a debilitating sense of futurelessness and once more feel bonded to past and future generations.”

The future is in our hands. We must not be content to drift along on the path of nuclear terror. Our responsibility as citizens of Earth and of all nations is to grasp the

enormity of our challenge in the Nuclear Age and to rise to that challenge on behalf of ourselves, our children and all future generations. Our task must be to reclaim our humanity and assure our common future by ridding the world of these inhumane instruments of indiscriminate death and destruction. The key to humanity’s future runs through Hiroshima and Nagasaki’s past.



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