

14. Appeal from Hibakusha

Convenor: Steve Leeper, Mayors for Peace

Speaker: Satoru Konishi, Nihon Hidankyo

Mr. President, honored delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

The atomic bomb survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki demand implementation of the unequivocal undertaking stipulated in the final document of the 2000 Review Conference.

If *this body* fails to act now to eliminate all nuclear arsenals, you will doom your children and your children's children to pain and suffering that all Atomic bomb survivors imagine over and over.

In the morning of August 6, 1945, I saw the blinding flash of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima. I was 16 years old and standing 4.5 kilometers from ground zero. I watched in awe as the colossal white column rose into the sky, as if a ferocious monster were climbing up to challenge heaven. Hiroshima was soon engulfed in a sea of flames that burned well into the night. Tens of thousands of mothers and children were shouting and begging in vain to be rescued.

By the next morning, the city had been razed to the ground, reduced to a vast nuclear desert. I wandered about in a daze. At one point, I noticed a voice shouting for water. The sound came from a deformed face that looked like a boiled flabby lump of white tofu. Due to the shock, my memories of that day are only a few incoherent fragments, but I still hear that man begging for water. I wonder if he forgave the 16 year-old-boy who failed to respond to his dying request.

Hordes of nuclear refugees wandered aimlessly through hell on earth. We have seen the end of the world from which only this body, *you*, can save us. We have seen nightmarish catastrophe beyond imagination and expression. We were stripped of humanity, the dead and survivors alike. Those who lived carried life-long physical and emotional injuries, including a "radioactive time bomb" that could explode at any moment. We suffered cruel, endless torment. Nuclear weapons are evil, immoral, inhuman instruments of the devil. They must be exorcised from our world now, before it is too late.

We hear that the United States is developing so-called "usable" or "combat" nuclear weapons. When we hear such reports, we survivors feel a visceral horror. The use of nuclear weapons is imminent. It is about to happen. You must stop it.

The tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are far from over. The cruel and inhumane aftereffects are still being felt and will be for generations to come. Almost all cases of survivors death in the last decades were cancer.

We call on all government leaders to:

- Learn the lessons of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and draw from there the wisdom required for survival.
- Commence multilateral negotiations immediately toward swift conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention for total elimination.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, please listen to the voices of atomic death from the pen of a deceased poet of Hiroshima,
TOGE Sankichi (Translated by KONISHI Satoru):

Our Fathers, give them back to me; our Mothers, give them back to me!
 Our Elders, give them back to me;
 Our Children, give them back to me!

My humanity, give it back to me,
 And all Humans linked to me !

Peace, give it back to me!
 One, indestructible peace for ever,
 As long as this human world will last.

Thank you.

Reference: TOGE, Sankichi

August 6.

How Could one forget that flash !
 One instant swept thirty thousand off the streets,
 Underneath crushing darkness
 Stifled fifty thousand screams.

The yellow smoke went whirling upwards,
 Buildings were rent, bridges smashed,
 Trams stood full of charred bodies,
 Interminable rubble and cinders, Hiroshima!

Then wandered in lines the hands on breasts,
 Shred skin dangling,
 Treading in spilt brains,
 Tatters of clothes around their hips,
 Naked people, wailing, weeping.
 Bodies scattered like stone Buddha images over the parade ground,
 Tangled mass crawled to moored timber rafts,
 Died soon in heaps under the scorching sun.

Towards evening, flames rising against the sky,
 Licked the parts of the city, where mothers and brothers were
 Under the collapsed houses jet alive.

In the morning, when the sun shines
Over the group of schoolgirls, fled so far,
On the floor of arsenal, polluted by dirt,
Swollen, eyes shattered, half a body shaved, baldheaded,
Unable to know, who is who.
There is nothing more what does move but swarms of flies
Around the basins, in the hanging stench.

How could one forget the silence,
Reigning over the whole city of three hundred thousand?
How could one forget the wishes,
Coming from the gray eye sockets of wives and children,
Which never more came back, never more,
Cutting our souls
In that silence!