

**Acceptance Speech by the Mayor of Nagasaki at the Gautam Buddha
International Peace Award Ceremony**

Tomihisa Taue

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Lumbini, Nepal

My name is Tomihisa Taue, Mayor of Nagasaki City, and it is an honor for me to be here before Dr. Ram Baran Yadav, the President of Nepal, and all the other members of the Nepalese government assembled here today.

Gautam Buddha was born here in Lumbini around 2,500 years ago. Buddha's way of living and philosophy of seeking spiritual peace goes beyond religions. This philosophy has exerted a great influence on the history, religions and cultures of the world. In my home country of Japan too, his teachings continue to have an impact on large numbers of people.

I am most grateful to have been chosen as one of the first recipients for this inaugural Gautam Buddha International Peace Award, which was started in order to express to the world all the Nepalese people's desire for peace.

I understand that we are receiving this award because of the way that the people of the cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima have worked together for many long years in an attempt to abolish nuclear weapons.

The survivors of the bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki speak about the physical and mental pain they have suffered in the hope that nobody in the world will ever have to go through such an experience again. The realization of a world without nuclear weapons is the strongest wish of all the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

This award is the source of great delight to the two cities, and I hope to widely share this delight together with our citizens.

On March 11th this year the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami brought devastating damage to the eastern coast of Japan's Tohoku region. Offers of assistance were made from all the corners of the earth, including the kind support of the Nepalese people. Nagasaki is situated far away from the disaster zone and suffered no damage as a result of the earthquake. However, as a fellow Japanese citizen, I would like to take this opportunity to express to Nepal the gratitude of the Japanese people.

In addition to the tsunami, the disaster also resulted in spreading worry after the accident at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant. Even now the international community watches on with deep concern at how the still unresolved accident is developing, and people across the world remain threatened by the terror of radiation.

However, it is important to fully understand the effects of radiation on the human body and upon understanding this I hope we will avoid spreading this fear.

Through this, I would like to once again stress just how inhumane it is to drop atomic bombs that release vast amounts of radiation, and the fact that we really do not need these sorts of weapons.

Claiming that nuclear weapons serve in preserving peace, not by dropping them but by the fact of possessing them, is an act that seeks to create a world based on intimidation rather than on trust. We should realize that this is a foolish act that could lead to a vicious circle of revenge.

Shortly after the bombing of Hiroshima, an atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki at 11:02 am on August 9th, 1945. Heat rays measuring a temperature of several thousand degrees, a blast wave that destroyed all the buildings in its path made of anything other than steel, and the damage

caused by radiation led to the deaths of around 74,000 people, around 75,000 people injured, and damaged more than 18,000 homes, virtually destroying the city of Nagasaki. The atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were of a size much smaller in comparison to present day nuclear weapons, but had a destructive force that was quite terrible.

Because of the large amount of radiation after the bomb exploded, those people who were not injured by the bombs, those involved in restoration work, and people who had decided to come and look for missing relatives gradually started to lose their hair, get sick, and die. The people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were the first to suffer this kind of radiation damage, and in recent years researchers at Nagasaki University have published results showing that the now aging survivors are developing cancers at a high rate.

Radiation has a destructive power that threatens people throughout their entire lives. And even up to the present day, we still do not know its full effects.

Over the sixty-six years since the atomic bombings, the survivors and the citizens of Nagasaki have tried to convey what nuclear weapons do to mankind, and have continuously appealed for their abolition. Even so, there are still over 20,000 nuclear weapons located throughout the world. We are calling for the conclusion of the Nuclear Weapons Convention completely banning all aspects of atomic weapons. We have made repeated efforts aimed at realizing everlasting peace throughout the international community. And now, I am once again reminded of how important it is for us to cooperate with the people of the world. How to deal with nuclear weapons is not just an issue for Hiroshima and Nagasaki, neither is it an issue that lies in the dim and distant past. It is a problem shared by all of mankind.

In Nepal as well, a nation that is situated between the major powers of India and China with a new government based on a neutral diplomatic

stance, I feel that the compelling wish for peace and stability is the same as it is for those of us in the cities that were bombed.

Mr. President and all those assembled here today, please take this opportunity to deepen your cooperative relationship with us, and call for the realization of lasting peace and the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Finally, in conjunction with my having been invited here to accept this award, Nagasaki City has, with the cooperation of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, decided to hold an exhibition about the atomic bombings at Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu.

Furthermore, atomic bomb survivors Ms. Kiyomi Iguro and Nagasaki City Councilor Toyoichi Ihara have joined us here today as Special Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons as well as some religious leaders from Nagasaki.

Mr. President and all of you present here today, I ask for your support to tell the people of Nepal about our exhibition so that many people may see the horrors caused by the bombings. If you find an opportunity to meet and speak with either of the two survivors here today, I hope that you will gain a greater understanding of how dreadful the atomic bombings were.

Having been honored with this 1st Gautam Buddha International Peace Award I will go forward telling people throughout the world about the peace-loving hearts of the Nepalese people.

Thank you for your kind attention.