



“Global Voyage for Nuclear Free World”: Disarmament Education

- Peace Boat’s Hibakusha Project makes it possible for Hibakusha to share their testimony around the world, including with schools, governments and the media, a very rare and meaningful educational opportunity.
- Students, educators, mayors, diplomats, policy makers, civil society representatives and Nobel Peace Laureates have joined this project, in ports and onboard the ship.
- Three documentary films on the project, by young filmmakers from Costa Rica, Japan and the UK, have been screened internationally. As a tool for disarmament education, “Flashes of Hope: Hibakusha Travelling the World” is available for online purchase on Amazon for US\$20 (<http://amzn.to/flashsofhope>)
- “I Was Her Age” commemorating the 70th anniversary of atomic bombings is freely downloadable on Vimeo (<http://bit.ly/herage>).



“Global Voyage for a Nuclear Free World” Working with other victims and survivors

- Hibakusha from South Korea, Canada, the United States and Brazil have also joined the project.
- Peace Boat’s programs link the issue of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to Japan’s wartime behavior, bringing issues about historical recognition and the Asia-Pacific into disarmament education.
- The Hibakusha meet with other victims and survivors of war, including Holocaust survivors in Auschwitz and people affected by Agent Orange/ Dioxin in Viet Nam, to share their experiences and explore how to pass their knowledge on to future generations and prevent the recurrence of such tragedies.



Contact Peace Boat

Web: www.peaceboat.org
 Address: 3-13-1-B1 Takadanobaba,
 Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, Japan, 169-0075
 Tel: +81-(0)3-3363-8047 - Fax: +81-(0)3-3363-7562
 Email: pbglobal@peaceboat.gr.jp



Global Voyage for a Nuclear-Free World -Peace Boat Hibakusha Project-

Since 2008, Japan-based international NGO Peace Boat has invited Hibakusha (atomic bomb survivors) of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to participate in the “Global Voyage for a Nuclear-Free World: Peace Boat Hibakusha Project.” As of August 2016, over 160 Hibakusha have travelled around the world giving personal testimonies about the effects of the atomic bombs and called for nuclear abolition. This project is held annually onboard Peace Boat’s global voyages. As the average age of the Hibakusha is now more than 80 years old, the time remaining for them to directly send out their urgent message is very limited.



WHAT IS PEACE BOAT?

Peace Boat is a Japan-based, international NGO that has been working since 1983 to promote peace and sustainability through the organization of peace voyages onboard a large passenger ship. Founded with the aim of examining Japan’s history as an aggressor in the Asia Pacific region, it conducts projects for reconciliation and peace. Peace Boat is an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and actively participates in advocacy and educational activities on issues such as disarmament, conflict prevention and sustainable development, including through networks such as the international Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC). Peace Boat also coordinates the “Global Article 9 Campaign to Abolish War”, promoting peace constitutions around the world.

The Peace Boat Hibakusha Project is supported by the Cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan Confederation of Atomic and Hydrogen Bomb Sufferers Organizations (Hidankyo), Mayors for Peace 2020 Vision Campaign and more. The Hibakusha participating in this project have been officially appointed by the Japanese Government as “Special Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons.”

The symbol of this project is the folded paper crane, a traditional Japanese symbol of hope and peace.



Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

In August 1945, towards the end of WWII, atomic bombs were dropped by the United States on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These were the first nuclear attacks in the history of humankind. The bombing of Hiroshima took place on August 6, 1945, and Nagasaki three days later on August 9. The uranium atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima directly killed an estimated 80,000 people, and by the end of the year, total casualties reached 140,000. The plutonium bomb dropped on Nagasaki caused approximately 74,000 deaths.



Photo by US Army, provided by Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum

Hibakusha

The survivors of the atomic bombs are called Hibakusha (literally “explosion-affected people”). Currently, there are approximately 174,000 Hibakusha officially certified by the Japanese government. These include not only people directly injured by the bomb blast, but also those affected by radiation through “black rain” or entering the city in the days after. Although they are provided with some support through social security, many do not receive enough medical support for their diseases. They are still affected by radiation, which causes diseases such as cancer, leukemia and thyroid diseases. There is also indication of genetic effects on second and third generations. The rights of the Hibakusha living abroad have long been left unresolved. Due to colonization, many people forcibly brought from Korea and China were in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and around 70,000 Koreans experienced the bomb, as well as many Allied Prisoners of War in Japan at the time. Furthermore, many Japanese Hibakusha later immigrated to places such as the US, Canada and Brazil. These Hibakusha were not eligible for support from the Japanese government until they were successful to gain certain rights through various recent law suits.



Sculpture at Nagasaki Peace Park

Global Hibakusha

In addition to overseas Hibakusha, many people around the world are victims of the nuclear chain. Over 2,050 nuclear tests have been conducted around the world, including by the US in the Bikini Atoll, Marshall Islands, and Nevada; by the Soviet Union in Kazakhstan; and by France in Polynesia and the Sahara Desert. Furthermore, there are also reports of effects of radiation near nuclear weapons factories in the United States, and indigenous people in Australia and Canada are suffering as a result of uranium mining in their lands. These people around the world are referred to as “Global Hibakusha.”



Photo by US Army, provided by Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum

The Nuclear Threat Today

About 15,000 nuclear weapons exist in the world as of August 2016. Over 90% of these are possessed by the US and Russia, while the UK, France and China possess several hundred each. These five countries are recognized as the Nuclear Weapon States by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Outside the NPT, India, Pakistan and Israel have acquired nuclear weapons, and North Korea is also developing them. These Nuclear Weapon States still have their nuclear weapons on high alert, just as during the Cold War. Other countries like Japan are relying on the US “nuclear umbrella” for their security. Risks of further proliferation are still high, while many countries falsely believe that nuclear weapons make them more secure.



Growing Momentum to Ban and Eliminate Nuclear Weapons

Over recent years, there has been a renewed global focus on the humanitarian impact that any use of nuclear weapons would have, whether intentional or accidental, as well as a growing understanding of the risks these weapons pose to humanity. US President Obama’s historic visit to Hiroshima in 2016 highlighted the important role Hibakusha play in raising awareness about the catastrophic consequences of these deadly weapons and demanding a nuclear-free world.

With the holding of three international conferences and a reframed debate at the United Nations around the Humanitarian Initiative on Nuclear Weapons, a large majority of governments are calling for the negotiations toward and conclusion of a treaty that prohibits nuclear weapons and leads to their total elimination.

Nuclear Weapon Free Zones for the Middle East and Asia

Most of the world is already nuclear-free. Latin America, the South Pacific, Southeast Asia, Africa, Central Asia and Antarctica have all become Nuclear Weapon Free Zones (NWFZs) through treaties. Movements to create additional NWFZs in regions including Northeast Asia and the Middle East are gaining ground.

Civil Society Actions

Civil society has been playing a key role in mobilizing people around the world to demand that their governments initiate and/or support negotiations for a treaty banning nuclear weapons. Peace Boat is partnering with several global networks, such as the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN, www.icanw.org), Mayors for Peace (www.mayorsforpeace.org), and Abolition 2000. (www.abolition2000.org)

Please join the International Signature Campaign in Support of the Hibakusha Appeal for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons (bit.ly/joincampaign)

