

**After our Trip to Hiroshima/Nagasaki
(To Mayor Daley)**

I recently went to Japan with a group of 19 DePaul students and professors to study the atomic bomb and its effect on the country, its citizens, and the culture. During the trip through the cities of Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Kyoto, we saw through the museums and heard through the testimony of the survivors about the horrors of nuclear war. We bring to you a letter from Mayor Akiba of Hiroshima asking for you to sign onto becoming a member of Mayors For Peace. We must stand up as an influential American city and let it be known that Chicago will not tolerate the existence or use of nuclear weapons in any situation. We must avoid the atrocities of nuclear war at any cost.

-Hal Conick

The positive and forgiving attitudes of the *hibakusha* – atomic bomb survivors - that we met in Hiroshima was the most incredible part of my trip. These people lost homes, friends, and relatives in the unprecedented and unnecessary atomic bombing of Hiroshima, yet are not resentful. I cannot say that I would have the same response, and so these *hibakusha* made me realize that the problems I have in my own life are trivial compared to the problems the world faces, especially the threat of nuclear warfare. My trip drove home to me the importance of doing something about nuclear proliferation, lest another city have to relive the horrors of Hiroshima.

-Christopher Hoffman

December of 2007 I had the most inspiring experience of my life. After discussing what occurred on August 6th 1945 and learning the effects of the atomic bomb, we went to Japan to visit the Peace Memorial Museum and Peace Park in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. While the Peace Park and Museum opened up my eyes, the citizens of Japan opened up my heart. I have never met anyone as kind, peaceful, and forgiving. Hibakusha, which are victims of the atomic bombing were very welcoming and kind hearted when they spoke with us. They did not have a thread of hate in their heart. Everyone's message, no matter what age or how bad they were affected by the atomic bomb was to promote peace and love, and to not repeat history. So all I ask of is something so simple yet so hard to get. I wish for everyone to live with peace and love in their hearts, and hopefully one day we will eliminate all nuclear weapons for we will not have the need for them. We will live in a world of peace one day; all we need is one act of kindness at a time.

-Sireen Irsheid

The impact of the atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was incredible in its physical and human toll; and its effects are still felt to this day. Meeting those who directly experienced the bomb and descendants of those who did opens up a painful divide between those who support use of massively destructive weapons and those who realize the bomb's indiscriminate destructive power. The Mayors for Peace is the path towards a nuclear-free 21st century where weapons that can kill millions and for generations are not

an option. As a world-class city and hopeful Olympic host, Chicago should pave the way for those cities around the world who have not yet joined the Mayors for Peace.

-Christopher Jansen

A person will question and reevaluate the world multiple times throughout life. Fully experiencing compassionate Japanese culture enabled me to update my moral and ethics. While the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have mysteriously survived nuclear warfare, it is not necessary for other cities to repeat the same mistake. I will never forget the horrific images which seemed almost not real and will forever remain in my mind. It is now clear to see how essential world peace is for the survival of mankind.

-Matthew Lechleider

Stories are what people hear, learn from, and are intrigued with. Life is its own story of complicated events intertwined with the complicated stories of other individuals. On this trip to Japan I've learned it's not book facts that keep the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki alive rather it's the stories of Hibakusha who can testify to the horrors of nuclear weapons. These stories must be kept alive in order to remember these events and to sensitize ourselves to the harsh reality of nuclear weapons.

-Hugo Luna

Through DePaul's class, my fellow students and I have had the experience of going to Japan and viewing the rebuilt cities that have experienced the horrors of nuclear weapons. In a world that is working for progress it is important that mistakes are not forgotten so that they are not repeated.

The unfortunate and innocent victims in Hiroshima and Nagasaki are deserving of historical memory and stand as a reminder of the preciousness of life. Our class went and remembered and now the task is to spread an idea of peace that our class has seen in Japan and help others to understand the threat of atomic weaponry. A mention of peace in our community could give an insight that has long been forgotten in our country.

-Margaret Miller

When our trip to Hiroshima and Nagasaki first began, nuclear weapons, war, and peace were not important issues to me. But after experiencing everything I did in Japan, I realized just how pertinent these issues are to us today. I believe that after visiting the museums, meeting the survivors, going to the memorials, and learning just how terribly powerful the atom bomb was, it is impossible to believe that war and nuclear weapons are acceptable.

-Rhonda Moffett

During the brief amount of time I spent in Japan, I witnessed a population instilled with an enormous sense of community and a true dedication to peace. I am in awe of how

these people are able to examine such horrendous events through lenses, not of hatred or revenge, but through those of pacifism and prevention. The number one message the Japanese have spread since the atomic bombings is that of respect for all living things. I am sorry that more people are not as fortunate as I am to have visited such a unique country. However, individuals from all over the world can still choose to follow the example of the Japanese by spreading notions of peace—something that has been stalled by the sheer existence of nuclear weapons. I truly believe that if those who use any sort of pro-WMD rhetoric truly understood the ramifications of employing these weapons, their use (physical or as deterrent) would cease to be an option. What occurred sixty-three years ago can never happen again—this is the greatest lesson I took away from my trip to Japan.

-Claire Sherman

On my recent trip to Japan I learned not only the historical and the cultural aspects of the Japanese, but also about the people themselves. I realized that it is our ability to separate ourselves from others that allows humans act destructively towards other humans. The people of Japan taught me patience and compassion for others. I admire their character and benevolence towards all people. For the preservation of humankind, we need to have this kind of compassion that does not have boundaries. We need to have the kind of compassion that will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against each other. I ask you to join Mayors for Peace to represent Chicagoans our devotion to humankind.

-Ashley K. Wade

On my recent visit to Japan with DePaul University, I witnessed firsthand the power that nuclear weapons can unleash. Not only did the bombs kill tens of thousands of innocent civilians instantly, their after-effects caused illness and death for years to come after the conflict was over. No human deserves to be exposed to such an inhumane weapon, which is why I believe it is crucial for Mayors around the World to band together in an effort to protect their cities. We must not forget the years of suffering the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have endured and make sure that it will never happen again. By joining the Mayors for Peace organization, you will be making a powerful statement to the World that Chicago is taking positive steps towards nuclear disarmament and peace.

-Matthew Zuziak