

Toward a Nuclear–Weapon–Free Future

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Nuclear weapons, which harness the radiant energy of fission and fusion reactions, are used to cause destruction and death. Can such weapons really save the planet?

I am convinced that nuclear weapons can never save the planet or the humanity. As long as nuclear weapons exist, there will be no peace in the future.

Last summer I went to the United States for a study abroad program. Some people may associate "America" with a free country, but others may also associate it with being more dangerous than Japan, because some states allow individuals to own guns. In Texas, where I lived, it is legal to own a gun, and it was not uncommon to see people with guns. My host father also kept a gun. When I asked him why he kept a gun, he said, "Just in case. Just in case something happens." I didn't ask him any more questions, but I wondered what he meant by "just in case." I assumed he meant to protect himself and his family from robbers or kidnappers with the gun if he encountered them, or more fundamentally, to keep them away by showing that he had a gun in the first place.

Something similar happens all over the world. Countries that have nuclear weapons can seemingly get along with other countries because they have nuclear weapons ready to launch at any time. The fact that these countries have nuclear weapons is what prevents others from attacking them. In other words, they believe that having nuclear weapons protects their national security. This is "nuclear deterrence" and one reason why nuclear weapons have not been eliminated from the world.

What does it mean to protect the people and the nation? Who are the "people"? Is it one's own people or all of humanity? And what is the "nation"? Is it your own country, a group you belong to (like NATO), or all the countries of the world? If "people" and "nation" mean only one's own people and one's own country, then they can be protected by "nuclear deterrence." If nuclear weapons do not fall on one's own country, there will be no radioactive effects, and one's own people may be unharmed. However, if nuclear weapons are used against others, they will eventually affect one's own people, as is clear from the current situation in Ukraine. For example, the world economy is on the verge of crisis due to the inability to supply food such as wheat, and famine is spreading in Africa. Even if nuclear weapons do not fall on

one's own country, it is inevitable that it will eventually be adversely affected. It should also be clear that it will never be possible to protect all humanity and all nations. As long as nuclear weapons exist, there is always the possibility that they will be used, and even if the area to be "protected" is limited to one's own area of concern, even if they are used in a distant country, it is impossible to avoid suffering from nuclear weapons.

The Japanese government, which has been increasing its defense spending in recent years, did not participate in the negotiating conference for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and is taking other actions that could be described as preparations for war. Is this really what it is doing to protect Japan and the world? Japan, which went through two tragic experiences in August 1945 and has continued to appeal to the world for the abolition of nuclear weapons as the only A-bombed nation in the world, is already trying to deprive the world of peace by such contradictory actions. I believe that it is Japan's duty to continue to appeal to the world about the threat of nuclear weapons and the tragedy that Japan experienced. Japan should not allow the possession of nuclear weapons or rely on deterrence by joining the "nuclear umbrella."

Nuclear weapons are considered "inhumane weapons." Is there such a thing as a "humane weapon"? Weapons are designed to kill people, so they cannot be humane at all. In other words, anything possessed for the purpose of killing people, not just nuclear weapons, is probably a cause of war. If this is the case, then nuclear weapons, which can kill indiscriminately, should not exist in this world.

The atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, where I live, on August 9, 1945. In Nagasaki, there is the Atomic Bomb Museum, parts of the Urakami Cathedral that were destroyed in the explosion, and the one-legged *Torii* Gate, so you can immediately understand how destructive a nuclear weapon can be. An atomic bomb, which destroys people and the city in an instant, was dropped by the U.S. military on people living normal, ordinary lives. Every year, August 9 is a school day in schools throughout Nagasaki Prefecture, and on that day, students learn about the war and the tragedy caused by the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki, and there is also an assembly to commemorate the victims of the bomb.

"No war!" "The use of nuclear weapons must be prohibited!" People all over the world continue to cry out, but the majority of them probably have vague ideas about why nuclear weapons are wrong and why they should be banned. I think we have only focused on the fact that "atomic bombs were dropped" and have failed to understand why we ended up the way we did and the process that led to end. I believe that the way to world peace is to learn why it was considered necessary to start a war and to consider how to prevent tragedies like the atomic bombing of Nagasaki from happening again, whether or not the United States was unilaterally at fault for dropping the atomic bombs, and taking into consideration the wrongs

that Japan committed against other countries,