



Interview Series: Nuclear Weapons, COVID-19, Climate Change – What Lies at the Roots of these Problems

Fumihiko Yoshida (Director, RECNA)

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19). If this invisible pathogen hadn't sprung up across the world, the closing ceremony of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games was scheduled for August 9, 2020. With the attention of people both inside Japan and overseas on this day, just how far could we get across a message from the nuclear bombing site of Nagasaki? I recall turning these thoughts over in my mind at the start of this year.

Then COVID-19 pandemic started to feel like a threat to us, and eventually the Olympic Games were postponed. In the midst of a situation in which all sorts of events became cancelled or postponed, we had to think about what and how we should try to communicate in the build-up to August 9. Meanwhile, the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum was also forced into temporary closure due to the pandemic.

Nonetheless, the Museum did not cease to send out its message. Resolute that even under circumstances such as these, the fact remained that 2020 would be

an important landmark year marking the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombings and we would have to turn it into a significant step towards the future, we displayed the following “75 Years after the Atomic Bombings: A Message from Nagasaki ” outside the entrance to the Museum.

Nuclear weapons, environmental issues, and COVID-19... the way to tackle all these global issues is fundamentally the same:

Have a sense of commitment.

Extend compassion to others.

Imagine the consequences.

Take action.

Let's take a step forward this year as we mark the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombings.

《被爆75年対談シリーズ》

核コロナ気候変動

問題の根っこにあるもの

ゲスト

- 第1話 田上 富久 (長崎市長)
- 第2話 山本 太郎 (長崎大学教授)
- 第3話 安田 二郎 (長崎大学教授)
- 第4話 高村 ゆかり (東京大学教授)
- 第5話 佐藤 優 (作家)
- 第6話 中満 泉 (国連事務次長)

I felt a great empathy within me about this message. In a short time, I was sitting before my computer writing a proposal. And as a plan for the 75th year after the atomic bombings, held by PCU-NC (which is composed of Nagasaki Prefecture, Nagasaki City and Nagasaki University) it was decided to produce the Interview Series: Nuclear Weapons, COVID-19, Climate Change – What Lies at the Roots of these Problems. The plan was that RECNA staff would interview specialists, starting with Tomihisa Taue, the Mayor of Nagasaki City, in the fields of nuclear weapons, COVID-19 and climate change, film the interviews and distribute them online.

The interviews that transpired totaled six, and feature in the first, Mayor Taue, and Satoshi Hirose and Keiko Nakamura; in the second, Professor Taro Yamamoto of the Institute of Tropical Medicine at Nagasaki University, and Fumihiko Yoshida; in the third, Professor Jiro Yasuda of the National Research Center for the Control and Prevention of Infectious Diseases at Nagasaki University, and Fumihiko Yoshida; in the fourth, Professor Yukari Takamura of

the Institute for Future Initiatives at the University of Tokyo, and Tatsujiro Suzuki; in the fifth, Mr. Masaru Sato, a writer, and Fumihiko Yoshida; and in the sixth, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, and Fumihiko Yoshida. We thereby obtained appearances to provide a varied and extremely prestigious lineup.

All of the interviewees agreed with the purport of the plan and willingly took part. Sparkling dialogue and an array of valuable words arose from the interviews, launched from the atomic bombing site.

I also believe that this plan served as an opportunity to make us realize the power of the Internet in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The interviews can be viewed at [here](#), and I sincerely hope that everybody will watch them.

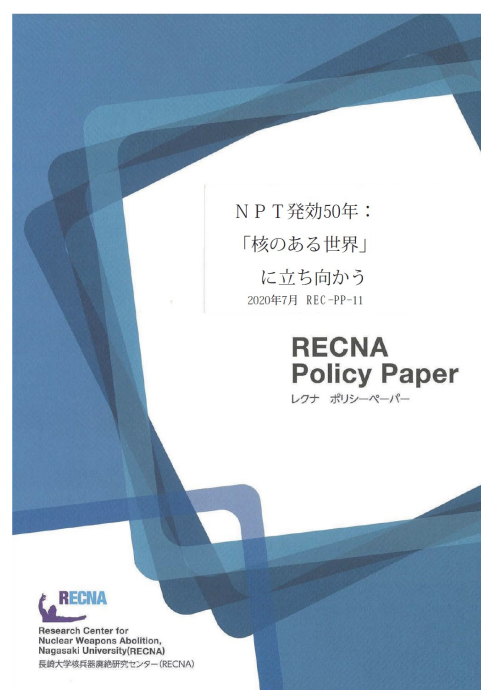
(Currently all interviews are posted only in Japanese. RECNA is considering the addition of English sub-titles, but for the meantime please use the YouTube auto-translation function.)

Policy Paper:

“50th Anniversary of the NPT Entering into Force “Opposing a World with Nuclear Weapons” (July 2020) REP-PP-11

Tatsujiro Suzuki (Vice Director, RECNA)

This year is the 50th anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) entering into force. I doubt that there is anyone who would disagree that the NPT has contributed tremendously to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. However, both the security environment and political-economic situation with regard to the NPT are very different today from what they were 50 years ago, while the situation regarding nuclear weapons is extremely difficult. Looking back over the past 50 years, in addition to recognizing the fruits of the NPT achieved thus far, we need to ask ourselves what the current issues are, and how they can be overcome in the future. In order to answer these questions, we asked RECNA professors and external specialists for



RECNA Policy Paper ([REC-PP-11](#))

Available in Japanese only

their opinions, which we have compiled and summarized in this policy paper (in Japanese).

Entitled “The NPT What can be learned from the past 50 years? ” Chapter 1 reviews the NPT’s half-century history. The first section, “Fruits and Issues of the NPT ” (Yoshida and Hirose), appraise the NPT’s achievements as having been effective in nuclear non-proliferation to a certain extent, while on the other hand harshly criticizing the NPT as a nuclear arms control treaty. The next section, “The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and NPT ” (Nakamura), states that moving forward we will enter a period in which the TPNW and NPT will operate in parallel, emphasizing the importance of the role of civic society in ensuring that the international norm brought about by the TPNW lead to strengthened implementation of Article VI of the NPT. The section entitled “Issues and challenges for peaceful use of nuclear power ” (Suzuki) notes the rise of new threats to nuclear nonproliferation/security measures, pointing out the difficulty of addressing these threats through the NPT alone and emphasizing the need to consider the form that a new international framework should take.

Entitled “Security: how can we find a way out of reliance on nuclear weapons? ” Chapter 2 discusses how we can overcome the concept of nuclear deterrence. The section “Limitations and dangers of nuclear deterrence ” (Yoshida) points out the risk of limited nuclear war expanding into all-out nuclear war, as well as the lack of countermeasures to security policies after nuclear deterrence has failed and nuclear weapons have been used, emphasizing the risk of reliance on nuclear deterrence. The section “Risks of reliance in nuclear deterrence brought about by cutting-edge technology ” (Suzuki) points out that not only does the use of AI and cyber technology for military purposes destroy trust in nuclear deterrence and increases risk, but also we have entered a completely new age in terms of nuclear deterrence. In the section “The Japan-United States security alliance and nuclear umbrella ” (Yoshida) suggests that the more we depend on the nuclear umbrella, the more the risk of

us becoming the target of nuclear missiles launched by conflicting nuclear states increases, posing the question, “Does the nuclear umbrella truly contribute to Japan’s peace of mind?” The section entitled “Illegality of threat and use of nuclear weapons” (Hirose) identifies problems with the use of nuclear weapons from the perspective of international law—especially international humanitarian law—pointing out the possibility that the Prime Minister or other related persons may be subject to legal action due to Japan’s reliance on nuclear deterrence. The section “The Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone (NEA-NWFZ) and regional security ” (Yoshida and Suzuki) verifies the security merits brought about by the NEA-NWFZ, evaluating the zone as a concept capable of greatly reducing Japan’s dependence in the nuclear umbrella while maintaining the Japan-United States security alliance.

Chapter 3—“Actors who takes what action? ”—discusses various actors, not only nation states. The section “Nuclear states, nuclear umbrella states, and states supporting the TPNW ” (Yoshida) indicates the actions that would be appropriate in the age where the NPT and TPNW are operating in parallel from the relevant perspectives of each party. The section “The role that atomic bombing sites should play in the future ” (Tomonaga) evaluates the role played by civic society in the process of formulating the TPNW, from proposal to establishment, emphasizing the necessity for discussion of how the complementarity of the NPT and TPNW should be promoted in the future. The section “Mission of a newspaper company that experience the atomic bombing ” (Miyazaki) explains the basic stance of the Chugoku Shimbun in Hiroshima with regard to reporting on the atomic bombings and nuclear weapons, emphasizing the newspaper’s mission to convey the truth regarding the damage caused by nuclear weapons. The section “Security policies and civic society: the case example of the Japan NGO Network for Nuclear Weapons Abolition ” (Kawai), summaries the activities of the Japan NGO Network for Nuclear Weapons Abolition thus far, leading to the conclusion that in future, the Network will “not only lobby the political sector, but also

act to influence markets and economies.”

Entitled “Future Visions (Yoshida, Suzuki, Hirose, Nakamura), Chapter 4 summarizes the policies that need to be implemented moving forward. In addition to summarizing basic awareness of the issues thus far, this chapter identifies three of the matters raised in the Chair’s Report for the Group of Eminent Persons for Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament as policies that need to be implemented moving forward:

(1) Options other than the Conference on Disarmament (CD); (2) From treaties to intergovernmental agreements and norms and (3) Participation and involvement of a diversity of actors. Finally, as a lesson learned from the pandemic, this chapter points out the possibility of acceleration of a “paradigm shift in security perspectives” as well as upheaval towards the strengthening of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation policies.

Joint Research on “Disarmament Education”

Keiko Nakamura (Associate Professor , RECNA)

As voices are being raised in concern about fading memories of the atomic bombings in light of advancing age of surviving Hibakushas, the diffusion and expansion of disarmament education for younger generation aimed towards realization of “a world without nuclear weapons” have become urgent issues. The importance of disarmament education is also mentioned in the preamble to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which was adopted by the United Nations in 2017, and its effectuation simply a matter of time.

In the 2019 academic year, RECNA embarked on joint research related to peace and disarmament education, working in cooperation with the International Christian University Peace Research Institute (ICU-PRI), which shares RECNA’s awareness of this issue. Nagasaki University and ICU concluded a Comprehensive Collaboration Agreement in March of last year, positioning peace and disarmament education as a pillar of this research collaboration.

In the 2020 academic year, a joint research project entitled “Leveraging the Japan-Korea Collaborative for Peace and Disarmament Education: Evidence-based Education Program Development, Implementation, and Evaluation ” was launched with funding from Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (KAKEN). Led by ICU-PRI Director Professor Toshiaki Sasao in the role of principal investigator,

this research team comprises seven researchers from the two universities who are specialists in such fields as nuclear disarmament, peace, development education, and ICT education. The three-year project plans to formulate, implement, and evaluate a peace and disarmament education program aimed at the university student generation in both Japan and South Korea as a first step towards developing a universal program that can be applied in other regions as well.

“Peace” may be a single word, but because of the two countries’ different historical backgrounds and geopolitical situations, there is a significant difference in the way that it interpreted by people in Japan and South Korea. Especially in light of the current political tension between the two countries, this gap in interpretation appears even wider. Based on this reality, this joint research project between RECNA and ICU-PRI aims to search, in both theoretical and practical terms, for a style of peace and disarmament education capable of contributing to the realization of denuclearization in Northeast Asia in addition to overcoming the differences between Japan and South Korea and achieving the mitigation of nuclear risks, which is a common benefit. This year—the first year of the project—fact-finding surveys will be conducted in both Japan and South Korea with regard to how peace and disarmament education is being carried out in the two countries, and program development will be carried out based on analysis of these survey results. In the project’s second year, actual classes on

peace and disarmament will be held at universities in Japan and South Korea using a pilot program, and the classes will then be evaluated. In the third and final year of the project, the program is to be fine-tuned and improved.

In addition RECNA is planning to hold a special symposium on the theme of disarmament educa-

tion—tentatively entitled “Disarmament Education in an ‘Age without Hibakushas’ ”— on November 25 (Wed.) this year as part of commemorative events for the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombings. (Please refer to page XX for details.) An interim report on the joint research being carried out by RECNA and ICU-PRI is to be presented at this symposium.

Nagasaki Peace Declaration 2020: 75 years of a “World with Nuclear Weapons”

Satoshi Hirose (Vice Director, RECNA)

In this “landmark year” marking 75 years since the atomic bombings, the Peace Memorial Ceremony was held on a much smaller scale than usual due to the unforeseeable spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. For some 75 years, Hibakushas have been tirelessly calling attention to the horror of those bombings and calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons, yet despite these efforts, nuclear weapons have not decreased in the slightest—in fact, the number of states possessing nuclear weapons has actually increased. The current global situation is so serious that the hands of the Doomsday Clock used by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists to symbolically appeal the time remaining until the destruction of the world moved to less than two minutes before “The End” for the first time. However, to what extent do we individual members of the public feel a sense of impending crisis, despite the seriousness of the situation we are facing? This was the fundamental question posed by this year’s Nagasaki Peace Declaration.

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the spread of a sense of ownership among the people of the world that “The issue of the COVID-19 is an issue that affects me, too,” leading to many people turning their eyes to a new normal lifestyle—wearing masks, washing their hands, and social distancing. Nevertheless, the possibility of the COVID-19 pandemic causing the immediate annihilation of humanity is extremely low. In comparison, in the sense that the use of nuclear weapons could lead directly to the instant-

aneous destruction of humankind, it has to be said that it is nuclear weapons that pose the more serious threat to humanity as a whole. Despite this, we need to take this opportunity to earnestly ask ourselves again, “To what extent do we have a serious sense of ownership that ‘nuclear weapons are an issue that affects me, too?’”

Some may say the issue of nuclear weapons is an issue for state policy, an issue for major powers and nuclear states. Is there perhaps a sense of resignation among ordinary members of the public that nuclear weapons are a faraway issue that they can do nothing about, weakening their awareness that they are all stakeholders in the issue? However, as this year’s Peace Declaration cited the words of those who suffered the atomic bombing, those who became the actual victims when the atomic bombs were dropped, either dying or living with tremendous pain for a long time, were general members of the public—tens, hundreds of thousands of them. As long as nuclear weapons exist in the world, there is no guarantee that you yourself will not become the next victim of nuclear weapons. The Hibakushas have been warning people of the horrors of nuclear weapons for 75 years; to what extent have people understood these words mean that the issue affects them personally, too? As matters stand, a new age with no Hibakushas will arrive while the enormous sense of frustration at “people not getting the message” Hibakushas had been carrying will remain.

Unlike infectious diseases, nuclear weapons do not occur naturally; they are created intentionally by humans. Accordingly, it is also possible for them to be abolished 100% through human resolution, and the treaties necessary to achieve this have already been adopted. All that is preventing the realization of a world without nuclear weapons is human will. It therefore has to be said that we are all constantly at risk of becoming the next victim of a nuclear bombing. If it is possible for this many general members of the public and the government to share a sense of cri-

sis regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and implement countermeasures in such a short period of time, why is it that no people have been able to share a sense of crisis regarding nuclear weapons—which pose a far more serious threat—and tackle this issue as one that affects them personally? Together with the sense of frustration from the atomic bombing sites, this year’s Nagasaki Peace Declaration conveyed the message of hope that if people could only gain awareness, they could change the world.

Looking back on Nagasaki Youth Delegation Activities

Members of the Eighth Nagasaki Youth Delegation

Members of the Eighth Nagasaki Youth Delegation were continuously active from the time of their appointment in December 2019 up until August 2020. In concrete terms, approximately 30 study sessions were held on topics ranging from the reality of the atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 to the current situation regarding nuclear weapons, with RECNA staff members and external instructors invited to participate as guest speakers. Moreover, study of atomic bombing sites

was not limited to Nagasaki, but also included a three-day/two-night trip to Hiroshima to further deepen learning. At the end of April, the Delegation was to have been dispatched to United Nations Headquarters in New York, USA, for the holding of the NPT Review Conference, but this overseas trip was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, the Delegation switched to holding events and conducting other activities mainly via the internet.

At the end of May, an online event entitled “All hu-



Members of the Eighth Nagasaki Youth Delegation

mans could be next Hibakushas, All humans could make others be Hibakushas” was conducted online in English via Zoom. We hosted the event with the notion that, living in a world in which nuclear weapons exist, we are all at risk of becoming Hibakushas due to an accidental bombing or other use of nuclear weapons, and by accepting the existence of and depending on nuclear weapons, we could actually find ourselves in the position of causing other people to become Hibakushas. Touching on and explaining various perspectives of the nuclear weapons issue, such as the current situation regarding nuclear weapons and the history of war perpetration, we received comments from participants such as “I felt even more that the nuclear weapons issue is relevant to me personally.” We members of the Eighth Nagasaki Youth Delegation were able to convey our thoughts to the approx. 90 participants who joined the event from various locations throughout Japan and the world.

At the end of July, the “Eighth Nagasaki Youth Delegation Activities Debriefing ‘For Our Future’: All humans could be next Hibakushas, All humans could make others be Hibakushas” was held. This event was held using a new method whereby scenes from the venue were streamed simultaneously online, with approx. 70 people participating either remotely or in person. At this event—which could be said to be the culmination of the Eighth Nagasaki Youth Delegation’s activities—the members gave presentations about everything we had learned, thought, discussed, and gained through all of our Delegation activities. Based on our desire to made people see the nuclear issue as being relevant to them personally, we spoke about how, with regard to a range of social issues, “Even if you are uninterested, you cannot be unaffected.” For we members of the Eighth Nagasaki Youth Delegation, being able to share this mindset—which has also been the motivational power behind our activities—with others feels like a huge step forward.

On August 9, we had the opportunity to speak with Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, who is the first Japanese woman to serve as the UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

When we asked Ms. Nakamitsu—who is active on the front lines of security and humanitarian aid what “peace” meant to her, she said, “A society in which all people can live in safety. However, just because there is no war going on, it does not mean that there is peace; what would be ideal is a situation in which society leaves nobody behind.” Ms. Nakamitsu also shared with us the values that she has acquired through her personal experience of living overseas for many years and having a Swedish husband. Her comments that “What is common sense in Japan is not necessarily common sense elsewhere in the world” and “In order to understand what another person is saying, it is necessary to gain knowledge from various angles rather than sticking to one idea” are words of advice that could only be spoken by Ms. Nakamitsu, who has seen the reality of the world with her own eyes, making them all the more persuasive.

Finally, Ms. Nakamitsu gave us a message: “Japanese people can be too serious at times, and so I would like to you take on many challenges without fear of going outside the box. For young people in particular, I have high expectations that you will think and act for yourselves.” We felt that we wanted to be strong and follow the path in which we believe like Ms. Nakamitsu.

Moving forward, the members of the Eighth Nagasaki Youth Delegation intend to put the experience and knowledge we have gained through the Delegation’s activities overall to good use, continuing to think and communicate about nuclear issues and the abolition of nuclear weapons as we travel our respective life paths.



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Research Center for Nuclear Weapons Abolition, Nagasaki University

1-14 Bunkyo-machi, Nagasaki, 852-8521, JAPAN

Tel. +81-95-819-2164 Fax. +81-95-819-2165

E-mail. recna_staff@ml.nagasaki-u.ac.jp

<http://www.recna.nagasaki-u.ac.jp/en-top/>

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