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Contribute Actively to Peace

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Anthony Brown

The speaker's profile

Sachiko Yasui was born the eldest daughter of a worker at Kawanami Shipyard, Hirohide, and a mother, Sayano, in Mezame-machi, Nagasaki, on October 17th, 1938. In April 1945, she entered Zenza National Elementary School. On August 9th, 1945, she was exposed to the A-bomb in front of her house in Mezame-machi, 900 meters from the hypocenter. Her two-year-old brother died instantly. Twenty-three members of her extended family had died within a month.

After the bombing, they evacuated to her father's hometown, Shimabara, and remained there until March 1946. In April 1946, she transferred to Kohyagi National Elementary School. In those days, she lost her hair because of A-bomb-related sickness. Since she had been unable to go to school for one year, she fell behind in class and was bullied by classmates. As a result of her effort, a year later she was commended for academic achievement. It gave her even more self-confidence. In April 1948, she transferred to Zenza Elementary School and graduated in March 1951. She attended Nagasaki Girls' Commercial Jr & Sr High Schools, and graduated in March 1957. She was employed at Maruzen.

When she was twenty-one, thyroid cancer was found during an examination by the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission. She had surgery and underwent rehab for six months. At that time, she drew emotional support from Helen Keller, who visited Nagasaki in October 1948, and Mohandas Gandhi, whom her father respected. Later she became a chief of officer

of Nagasaki Branch of Dai-Ichi Life Insurance Company, and now she manages rental building operations. Aside from her work, she gives speeches about peace and human rights on the world stage as a member of the Nagasaki Foundation for the Promotion of Peace.

YASUT's lecture

Hi, nice to meet you, everyone. I'll talk for 80 minutes. My talk is not only about my experience of the A-bomb. Knowing about history is being aware of our current living situation. And this awareness is different with each person. Please think about your future based on your current living situation. To do this, we need to know Nagasaki's history and share the experience of the A-bomb. My goal is to help create a safe and peaceful world where people can make their dreams come true. I want to share the same thoughts with you.

There was an American philosopher named George Santayana. He said "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. However, it is of no value only to remember history. It is good to reflect on past events and consider our ancestors' feelings." But thinking about our future is the most important. I think that it is very important to bear in mind what our ancestors felt. It will help us to find a way out of a hopeless situation. And our feelings will also link to the future. Please learn something about the past from my experience and your feelings will link to the future. I want to help you to lead a happy life. I want you to know the happiness which was gained from my experience.

I was exposed to the A-bomb when I was six. I felt the horror of nuclear weapons with all my senses. All of my friends and family were killed. My sorrow was immeasurable. This made me realize the sorrow of the A-bomb. Even today, more than 60 years after the bomb was dropped, I can't erase the memory.

It's not a tragedy. I found it was a very valuable experience. It was the tragedy of the A-bomb. Please learn this history. A past tragedy gives you advice about how to get over a difficulty and makes you understand your sanctity of human life.

The A-bomb plunged both adults and children into despair. It happened in just the blink of an eye. I was buried under rubble and completely helpless. It was designed specifically to explode a uranium bomb — or a plutonium bomb in an instant. Six kilograms of plutonium were used in the Nagasaki bomb, and twenty-three kilograms of uranium were used in the Hiroshima bomb. However only one kilogram of the plutonium in the Nagasaki bomb exploded. It was about the size of a tennis ball. A piece of plutonium of the same size of a tennis ball burned down Nagasaki. It killed many civilians, caused mass unemployment, damaged people's health, and destroyed nature. It destroyed everything and kept me from going to school.

I, who was buried under rubble and mud, was saved by my uncle and mother. My four friends were also buried, and mud got into our mouth and nose. We were too small to drag ourselves out. Some of them choked on mud and died.

One of my friends cried, "Mom, help me!" It was a muffled scream. I wanted to cry, too, but when I opened the mouth, more mud entered. I struggled to live with my mouth closed. However there was a limit. I would die if nobody helped me. At that moment, somebody pulled my legs. My chin was stuck under a timber, causing terrible pain. I wanted to say "Stop it," but I couldn't. The next moment, I was pulled out of there. My face swelled a lot. That was painful. I was crushed under pressure from the blast, and my face swelled from the recoil. But the swelling reduced after I was pulled out. My city was destroyed, and it was an unimaginable sight. I was so scared I couldn't say a word. My uncle asked me loudly, "Are your

friends buried in here? Say something.” I couldn't say anything. My mother patted my shoulder saying, “Don't you know where your friends are?”

It brought me to myself, and I nodded my head mightily in tears. A man nearby helped us find my friends. We dug up the area. We had neither hoe nor shovel. The adults clawed through rubble and mud. They worked hard to search for my friends. “There's a small leg!”, my mother shouted. “Yes, pull it out.” “No, it will be broken if I pull it.” “Then what should we do? Fire is coming closer. Pull it out!” When she heard this, she pulled the leg out feverishly. Looking into the rubble, we found five children in there. My uncle said, “Hurry up. Lift them from there. The U.S. attack may begin soon.” They cleared rubble, and children were rescued one after another. I felt nothing looking at my friends lying down in front of me. “Don't look back. Fire is closing in from the back. Follow me.” My uncle told me so. I gripped the hem of my mother's clothes. Just then a woman came running toward us. She yelled, “Where is my daughter, Yoshiko?” “She is right here. Pick her up and follow me.” Crying loudly, I gripped the hem of my mother's clothes and followed close behind my uncle. My uncle held two children under both arms. My mother held a child in her arms. We ran towards a mountain. Mt. Konpira stands behind the present Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum. We took refuge half way up the mountain. I didn't know where we were. I didn't have on my shoes. We escaped into the mountain over the rubble with no shoes on.

We finally arrived in the middle of the mountain. On the way there, many injured people pulled at my sleeve. They were wailing, “Give me some water, help me!”, but I couldn't help them. I also wanted to drink something. Leaving behind them, we finally arrived in the middle of the mountain. I could get a view of the whole city from the mountain. There were no

houses, everything was destroyed, and the entire city was engulfed in flames. My mind went blank. All I could do was staring in bemusement at my burning home town. At that time, my ten-year-old brother found us. He had gone out to catch cicadas with his friend. My brother said that his friend had died from getting rubble in his throat while holding an insect net. My ten-year-old brother was totally upset and went back home in tears. However the house had disappeared, and he didn't know what had happened to our parents. He wandered around the mountain, and then finally saw us. My oldest fourteen-year-old brother had escaped on his own, even though he got a nasty burn on his right shoulder. We could see him, too. At nightfall my father came over the mountain to find us. My oldest brother was in a bad condition due to the burn on his right shoulder. After seeing his condition, my father said, "Let's move to the nearby international cemetery to rest." "The cemetery is located on flat ground, so he may be able to lie down." We waited until dark and moved to the international cemetery. It was overflowing with people. One man screamed, "I can't stand it anymore. Kill me." People were screaming, wishing to die rather than to live. They groaned for water. We huddled together in a corner of the cemetery.

At around midnight, my mother couldn't bear it any longer and asked my father. "We left behind Sachiko's friends in the mountain and will leave behind my dead son here. I can't leave this place leaving them alone." "I want to bury them somehow or other," she said anxiously. "I know how you feel. But if we move here now, it will endanger the lives of our surviving children. Wait for one more day." We had no choice but to stay there two nights.

The next evening, my parents carried my dead friends from the mountain to a nearby burial place. My younger brother

was also carried there. "Hurry up. The U.S. forces may invade," my father said, but we had nothing to use. My parents picked up tiles and dug a hole for them. They desperately dug a hole. My friends were placed in the hole with their knees and elbows bent. Lastly my brother was placed in there. "This is all we can do now. We don't have time," my father said, and sought to cover it with soil. My mother shouted, "Stop it. It's too miserable to cover them with soil directly." She tore the hem of her shabby clothes. And she covered their face with scraps. Then they were buried. A small stone was placed there as a mark.

At that time, we had played house, pretending to cook using soil and grass. Six children, including me, were trapped under the wreckage and they were killed almost instantly. I couldn't say anything to my dead friends. My cousin's mother mourned, touching her daughter. "She is still warm. Please help." There were no hospitals or doctors. My mother tore the hem of her shabby clothes, twisted it around her fingers, and scooped out mud from her mouth. After that she was buried. We couldn't help her. We went back to the cemetery where my brothers were waiting. As soon as we went back to the cemetery, my father gathered up some rags which had been ripped off by the blast and were scattered around. Since we didn't have on shoes, my father gave me the rags to cover up my feet. He also picked some electric cables up and tied them around my ankles. He said, "These are temporary shoes. It's dangerous to stay in Nagasaki. We'll escape to Shimabara." Shimabara is his hometown. We went there. In Shimabara, the air was clean and nature abounded in water. We just had to get out of Nagasaki. There was a station, 4.5 kilometers from the hypocenter. We heard that we would be able to take a wrecker train if we got there on foot. "No matter what happens, follow me," my father said. We waited till the dead of night with

temporary shoes on.

The time had come to leave. My father carried my oldest brother on his back because he was severely burned. My mother carried my youngest sister on her back and took me by the hand. The second-oldest brother could walk alone. I tried to keep my mind on what my father had said. We escaped from there. On the way I bumped into something big and black. Looking closely, I saw it was the charred bodies of adult holding a child tightly. I stood transfixed with fear. My father noticed me and shouted, "Come on, follow me." Maybe it was because he didn't want me to be so afraid that he shouted. My mother was surprised and pulled me close, saying "Snap out of it. We have to go." She took my hand, and I took a step. I kept on walking without thinking.

There were so many charred dead horses and cattle with their eyes open. We stepped to the right or left side, or over them. We kept on walking. Every life was burnt away, and the stench of death hung everywhere. This place, Nagasaki University, was turned into rubble. We walked 4.5 kilometers past here and got on a train. When we arrived at a station, it was flooded with survivors. They just groaned for water. We took a train without having eaten or drunk anything for four days. Four days later, we arrived at Shimabara station.

The first person to become ill was my second-oldest brother. "Dad, I can't walk any more." "What are you saying? We have managed to get here. Let's keep trying a little more." "No, I can't." One of our relative was living near the station. He rushed to us and felt my brother's forehead. He had a high fever. He was rushed to a hospital. My oldest brother and younger sister were placed with relatives, and I stayed at the hospital with my parents. His condition became progressively worse as the days went by. Ten days later, his hair had started falling out. He had grown terribly nauseous and had started

bleeding from the gums. My parents were confused about what had happened to such a healthy boy. In those days, nobody knew it was all because of the A-bomb. The only thing they could do was to speak words of encouragement to him at the bedside. An injection did not work, and he vomited the medication he had taken.

He repeated the same thing over and over again. On August 24th, he opened his eyes wide and said to me, “Goodbye. Please look after them for me.” Those were the words of my ten-year-old brother. My father panicked and ordered me to bring some water in a cup. As I relived the horrors of the A-bomb, I couldn't walk down a dark hallway to a water fountain alone. I wanted to have him drink water, but walking alone along the hallway was so scary. “What are you doing?”, my father hurried me. I snatched a cup from a nurse. I raced to the water fountain. The springwater in Shimabara is very clear. There was springwater at the end of the hospital. I filled a cup with water and ran back to the room. The water spilled and it was half gone. I held out the cup to my brother, but he couldn't drink. He used his last bit of energy and spoke to me, “Goodbye, Satchan.”

I lamented his death with clenched fists. We had lots of fights, but we were very close. He always allowed me to win. Seeing him, I just cried, tightening my fists. My mother panicked. “Call his name.” But I had lost my voice. Heartrending sorrow took away my voice. She took my fist, spread apart the fingers, and laid my hand on his hand. I could feel his warmth. His hand was still warm, but I couldn't speak to him. My ten-year-old brother left me a family bond.

From that point on, I have held fast to the word, “Bond (絆 *kizuna*) .” Every time I come across various books or hear someone's words, it reminds me of the word, “bond.” The kanji for “bond” consists of two parts: meaning “half” and “string.”

Everybody carries a short string, but it is useless. However when people open their heart and share ideas, short string will be weaved into something useful. Some say the meaning of “bond” is not only affection, but also helping each other throughout life. I formed a strong bond with my brother and said goodbye.

A week later, on September 1st, my oldest brother's condition became worse. His burnt shoulder had swollen and turned purple. My father spoke words of cheer to him. “Listen, actually, the war ended on August 15th.” “We don't have to escape anymore. Take your time to recover from the injury and let's start over again.” “It won't be long. Hang in there. We'll get through this together,” my father said. Then my fourteen-year-old brother looked up at the father's face with shining eyes as if he had forgotten the pain of shoulder. Despite sleeping on a thin futon, he never complained of pain. He asked “Dad, what was the outcome of the war?” “We lost,” father answered. Then my brother screamed, “Why? You said Japan had an advantage.” “Therefore I put up with every stress of war under the slogan, 'We don't need anything until we win.’” “Then why did Japan lose? Tell me the reason.” It was impossible to explain the reason.

My father had eyes full of tears and they rolled from his eyes. My brother asked, “Dad? Why are you crying?” “I can't believe Japan lost the war. We lost our house. How are we supposed to live with Mom and my sisters?” “If I am destined to die anyway, I will fight to protect Japan and my family, feeling like a Kamikaze.” “Please don't cry, Dad. Please wipe away your tears.” “Could you do me one last favor? Please sing my favorite military song, 'Umi Yukaba.’” My father started to cry uncontrollably. Though his son was suffering, he couldn't do anything for him. The all he could do was singing the song. “If I go away to sea, I shall be a corpse washed up.”

He stopped singing before the next bar. My brother closed his eyes and passed away. Many innocent people had been driven into war. "If I go away to sea, I shall be a corpse washed up." It means that many dead bodies float on the sea, and no one can recover them. No one calls to them. What do they really think when they are dying? My father did not talk a lot, but I knew how much his heart ached.

Two days later, on September 4th my uncle, who had saved my life, felt a prickling pain in his throat. The radiation had burnt down the interior of his body. Suffering from a prickling pain, my uncle died. I later heard that I was supposed to become his adopted child. And his wife (my aunt) suffered radiation burns on the lower body. I rushed to her bedside. There was uncle's body by the pillow. When I called her, she opened her eyes slightly. "Satchan," she called my name. "Just once, I wanted to let you eat steaming sweet potatoes as much as you want and to joke and chat with you." "But I couldn't." Watching her face, I was waiting for the next words. Her eyes did not open again. My aunt also died.

Twenty-three members of my extended family had been killed within a month after the A-bomb was dropped on August 9th. Two of them went missing. No matter how hard we tried we were not able to find them. Sixty-six years have passed, but they are still missing.

First of all, I became seriously anemic and lost my hair because of A-bomb-related disease. I was filled with an empty feeling and did not have the energy to reach for anything. I did not have the energy to wash my face. The after-effects of the A-bomb's radiation started with symptoms of an empty feeling. Some people displayed the symptoms when they were tossed by the bomb blast, and they were unable to get up. We could manage to flee to Shimabara. After a while I became increasingly vulnerable. I couldn't eat anything and lost the

capacity to think. This was the beginning of the after-effects of the A-bomb's radiation. My parents were afraid that I would die.

My father treasured a gold watch and always wore it. He asked to exchange the watch for something to eat for me. We could feel the warmth and kindness of the people in Shimabara. I have liked Udon (noodles) since I was little. My father asked a farmer to exchange the watch for Udon. The farmer felt sorry for us and gave us some Udon. We could get mushrooms from Mt. Unzen. My mother made soup stock from the mushrooms and made me delicious Udon. The Udon saved my life. It was the first real food I'd eaten since the bombing. Then my appetite was back. I had a new lease on life.

We stayed in one room of the house of relatives. There was an old drawer in the room. Three white urns of my brother, uncle and aunt had been placed in the drawer. I wanted to see them. I opened the urns while my parents were out. This was the first time I'd seen human bones. "This is what happens when people die," I thought. I was scolded for doing such a stupid thing. But of course my brother wasn't even there. Our life in Shimabara started this way.

Winter came. My sister and I were wrapped in a blanket we'd been given, and made it through the winter. Kohya tofu or freeze-dried tofu is made during the cold season. Country people worked hard. They started to make Tofu from 2 or 3 a.m. The tramontana from Mt. Fugen aired the Tofu and made Kohya Tofu. We owed a lot to people in Shimabara. I was told, "Why don't you help making Kohya tofu to cheer yourself up?" I started helping with the Kohya tofu shivering with cold, and it became a familiar food. That was when I learned tofu was rich in protein. Apparently, I was getting over my sickness, but I didn't recover completely.

The next spring came. My father was concerned that I had

not gone to school. He decided to go back to Nagasaki to send me to school. My mother was anxious about having no house to live in. He took us back to Nagasaki with the sole purpose of sending me to school. My father built a hut by himself on devastated land. During the cold winter season, we dug the ground to make a Japanese-style warming device, a kotatsu. When night fell, neighbors came to my house to warm up because they didn't have such a warming device. And they talked about the war and what would become of Japan. I always listened to their conversations.

One day, I was sent to the principal's office early in the morning. "Take the first grade education because you didn't finish it." The principal gazed at me from top to bottom and said, "How awful." "I want to take the second grade class," I said to him. "No. Any person who does not finish the first grade education must take it again." I knew it was hardly possible for me, who couldn't even write my name to advance to the next grade. But my brother's last words willed me to go on to the second grade. The principal did not agree. I appealed with tears. At last, he gave me the textbooks for the second grade. "As you insist so much, I'll give you a chance. But once you fall behind, you will be dropped back to the first grade." I promised and moved up to the second grade. However I couldn't understand it at all. In class, classmates read out of textbooks, but I couldn't understand where they were reading because I couldn't read or write.

My mother always waited for me to come home with a stick in front of the hut. She cracked it down on a rock, saying, "Show me the textbooks." Nothing was written in them. "I told you to put a mark at least." But I couldn't. She took away the textbooks and ran to the school. She consulted my teacher about me. "Your daughter is in poor physical condition. It's difficult to continue in the second grade. It's advisable to drop

back to the first grade.” Nevertheless I didn't listen to them. My mother preached to me. But I begged, “I'll study hard.” “No. Your grades can never improve.” The next day, she let me go to school reluctantly .

There I encountered bullying. Because I had no hair, was grimy, and wore the same clothes every day. Moreover I couldn't even write my name. They said, “There is no point in taking classes for you. Just do the cleaning.” I did cleaning. I sometimes spilled a bucket of water on the floor. The classroom was flooded with water. I wiped it up. My days became filled with cleaning. They stole my poor lunch. Thinking about it now, it can't be helped. We were suffering from food shortages. I didn't know who ate it.

My mother helped me to study every day. One day I managed to solve a question. I felt the joy of learning. Summer vacation came, and we were given homework. I came to feel the pleasure in finding the answers by myself. The second term began. The bullies hadn't done their homework, so I helped with it. Then the atmosphere in the classroom changed. “When you find something hard to bear, write an essay about it,” my mother told me. I was not good at writing essays. I thought writing about my frustration would be a little easier, but it wasn't easy. We didn't have much money to buy notebooks or pencils. The only thing I could do was study hard.

The next spring, the principal handed me a certificate of merit for outstanding students. My homeroom teacher was the most pleased and told me to show it to my mother. I brought it back home walking on air. There were three small boxes in my house. The urns were on the boxes. From left, my aunt, brother, and uncle. Lighting a candle, my mother saw my testimonial and smiled through her tears. She set it against my brother's urn. “Congratulate her. She made a big effort.” She couldn't stop crying from happiness. I was standing behind her. She

folded me into her arms, saying, "Good job. Remember this feeling for a lifetime." "Your dad and mam are gradually getting weaker. We don't know how long we can live together with you." "Even if we die, go to school. If you face a problem, rely on your teacher."

My father sitting next to me continued, "She is right. My health is becoming worse. Maybe we can't leave you anything." "So here's what I want you to remember." "Do not blame every trouble on the A-bomb or war." "Don't detest people. Complaining will never bring peace to you." "If you insult or hate someone, you might get revenge, but there can be no peace." "Your brothers have died. You will never forget how they died." "Keep in mind. There can be no peace without ridding yourself of negative emotions. This is all I can leave you."

My father died of liver cancer. My mother died of acute leukemia. She pretended to eat rice and served it to me. My only surviving sister also died of leukemia. My entire family died leaving me behind. I have gone through a lot of difficulties in my life.

I hope the talk I'm going to give you will help you in the future. After the bombing, we had to work hard for survival. We just struggled to survive without any explanation of what had happened to us. It was a challenge in an unknown world. A person is here today, gone tomorrow. Here in the morning, gone in the evening. We faced such a world. I had to go to school, and to carry out my parents' wishes. I had neither money nor health. My survival started from nothing.

For the next 10 years from 1945, I lived blindly. I didn't think what that war was about, what the A-bomb was about, and why the A-bomb had been used. During those ten years, there was nothing to worry about. I just attended school and studied hard. I received a scholarship to study in junior high school. In

those days, what I was personally proud of was health. There is nothing more wonderful than being healthy. I could climb mountains and bathe in the sea without worry. At the time of the reconstruction of the city, A-bomb survivors were subject to discrimination and prejudice, and they couldn't get medical treatment. Later, I heard the results had been sent to the U.S.

When I was 21, I met a doctor during a physical examination. He discovered my thyroid cancer. Cesium had built up in my throat. The symptoms are most obvious in children under ten. As you know, cesium is becoming a problem in Fukushima now. I developed thyroid cancer. The doctor persuaded me to undergo surgery. I was hospitalized in the Genbaku Hospital. During the surgery it turned out to be a malignant cancer. A week later, removing the stitches, the doctor said hesitantly. "We will get through this together. You need to undergo more surgery." I asked why, and he answered that it was because I was not doing well after the operation. I was scheduled to undergo more surgery because my sickness wasn't under control. The second surgery brought me tremendous anguish. Of course it was performed under anesthesia. A week later, I found that I had lost my voice. The doctor asked me to say something, but I couldn't. I was very depressed. I fell into the depths of despair. How hard I had tried to keep on living, only to have lost my voice.

Helen Keller came to Nagasaki when I was in the sixth grade of elementary school. I remember seeing her. She was a deaf and blind person. Standing at station square, she gave us a message through a sign language interpreter that she was hoping for Nagasaki's early recovery. She, in a wide-brimmed hat, was very beautiful. I was dressed in rags, but I had good health. I wanted to become a person like her. I thought that she was wonderful, calling for peace despite her handicap. I recalled that day in the hospital. I had lost my voice, but I

could still hear and see. It persuaded me to give it another try. I preserved with rehab with help from the doctor and nurses. Finally, my voice recovered. Therefore I can talk to you today. I experienced the importance of words at that time.

With just one word, you can give your friends courage or promote friendship. You can encourage a depressed friend by saying, "We'll get through this together." I feel the true meaning of the word. Since I can speak, I want to use my words effectively. If there are people with emotional problems, I want to talk to them. Nobody is hopeless. If you have faith, things can surely turn out well. I want to make effective use of my words. That is why I talk about my experience of the A-bomb for the sake of peace. Many people were dying one after another. That situation made me understand that we are all mortal beings. I thought in my child's heart of hearts, "None of us goes on forever." As I get older, when I look back on that day, I always feel the preciousness of human life. Treasure every encounter, for it will never recur. The thing I tell young people is that, even if your life seems full of pain, it's too soon for you to die. Children are mistreated and killed. Why do they have to suffer such treatment? Have a regard for human life. For this, I want you to learn the history of Nagasaki. And when you have a family, please talk a lot about the meaning of peace with your children. Please build such a relationship with your children. This is the fastest way to peace.

We have no choice but to beg you, young people. I don't know how long I can live. There is nothing but to beg you. My talk is not a pleasant topic. I actually want to get away from it. If I were you, I wouldn't want to listen. But it's inevitable. We have to think about the current world situation. We have gone through life maintaining the minimum standard of living. This is the basic human need. We had no desire to have special meals, a large amount of water, a luxurious home, or excessive

medical treatment. The A-bomb deprived us of the basics of life.

A huge disaster has struck North-eastern Japan. A nuclear accident occurred at a nuclear power plant in Fukushima. I felt a strong jolt as if the half of Japan was swept up by the tsunami. The International Year of Rice said "Rice is Life," but the rice harvest decreased by half because of the disaster. Japan's food self-sufficiency ratio is very low. There exist nuclear weapons. And, it is absolutely absurd to use nuclear energy. Once shattered, it reveals the weakness of mankind. I have faced nuclear weapons since my childhood without running away from them.

I don't want to upset your life and peace any further. The nuclear accident in Fukushima is no longer someone else's affair. I heard a story of a Greek myth. Do you know "the Sword of Damocles"? Please keep this story in mind. It will help you. "It's no longer someone else's affair. It will threaten future prosperity." Those are Damocles's words.

Damocles was envious of a king. "If I were a king, I could have vintage wines and delicious meals," he thought. The king then offered to switch places with Damocles. The king wanted to tell him that taking charge of the responsibility of the country was not easy at all. Damocles expected delicious food and drink. He looked at the ceiling. A shiny sword was hanging from the ceiling by only a single hair. It could break at any moment, and the sword could fall on his head. Do not envy other's position. There is something behind their prosperity. The lesson, "the Sword of Damocles," is essential for living.

The ground that supports the Japanese islands is quite soft. Some call them "the islands on tofu." There are 54 nuclear power plants on these tofu islands. Newspapers and the TV report problems concerning the power plants. The sloppy management of nuclear power plants was discovered. Despite

the myth of safety, there have been cases of accidents.

When you think about peace, you may think you don't have to listen to talk about the war because Japan is peaceful now. I used to think that, too. But we can't see into the future without knowing the past. In order to do that communication skills are essential. You are lacking in the spirit of communication. Let's make the most of a conversation. Communication and cooperation lead us away from war and violence toward a global peace. I feel it from my wartime experience. Communication is to talk with somebody, and our attitude is important. Don't you look at people with scornful eyes? Do you see things in the same way that they do, without discrimination? Trying to do so can lead to solidarity. Cooperation is the ultimate expression of love. I believe, it's easy for you to imagine that these three points form the basis of peace. A spirit of love and cooperation can create wonderful communication.

Why do we need this? Now we live in a global society. This brings both good and bad. The world has become a smaller place. Thus, I have always believed we need to cultivate our minds and communicate our message of peace to the whole world. Simone Weil, a French philosopher, said, "Unless one has placed oneself on the side of the oppressed, to feel with them, one cannot understand." Children have been killed by war or starvation. Living in such a tragic situation, there are no parents who don't love their own children. This goes beyond borders. And children also love their parents. There are no differences in religion. Always remember this when you go abroad. Then your message reaches people overseas. I don't know where your future lies. Please bear this in mind.

Having a spirit of communication, feel empathy for their broken hearts. If you feel emotional pain, it will connect you with history, regardless of nationality. If you keep talking about

yourself too much and try to force your opinions on people, nobody will follow you. Furthermore, the world will encounter various problems. Nuclear weapons still exist on this planet. I don't know when the Fukushima nuclear power plant issue will be solved. I, as an A-bomb survivor, feel helpless against this issue. We can't live without facing reality. Please address this issue directly. In the future, more and more nuclear problems will occur.

Speaking of radiation, you see the word 'sievert' in the newspapers. Most people believe that sievert is just a unit of radiation, but actually it's a person's name. Standing at 190 cms and weighing 150 kg, he was a big man. His house was in a forest near Stockholm, which had many lakes and was as huge as 260 the Koshien baseball park. He had a big house. His father had a successful electric cable business and had become a millionaire. He took over his father's business when he was young. However it immediately went into the red. He realized that he was not cut out for business, and started to study radiation. He always paid attention to radiation protection. He kept insisting on treating radiation with respect right until the end.

Madame Curie, who exposed herself to the dangers of radiation, died young because of radiation sickness. A fear of radiation can be seen in the life of Wilhelm Röntgen who discovered X-rays. He was active as the pioneer of X-rays. We receive the benefits of his work when we get sick. There had been no precedent to study X-rays. One of his pupils was so exposed to radiation as to change the shape of his fingers. It is said that he was the first victim of radiation. I was surprised to read about it. We are living in history. The newly harvested rice decreased by half, even fruit and vegetables did so. When we think about it, we should keep "the Sword of Damocles" in our minds and be strong. I've been allowed to stay live. The

actions and ideas of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi taught me to never lose hope. They also taught me that we should have courage and that nothing grows without human love. Based on this great insight we can see a vision for the future support for life. What kind of happiness should we earn? How should we choose? How should we live our life to eliminate war and violence? They left these messages to us who live for the future.

Japan has changed so much that no one can remember. However things will be changing between the Japan of the past and the Japan of the future. Looking to the future, I will consider how I should live my life. Our time is up. Thank you for your kind attention. My feelings to pray for your safety and growth remain unchanged.

Please be truly grateful for the grace of God and study hard. I am an A-bomb survivor and lost every thing, but with that thought I persevered. I studied on a tombstone because we didn't have a table. The tombstone is in Sakamoto International Cemetery. I played and studied on it. There were many homeless children. I taught them on the street. There was nothing to do but study, not to achieve high grades. Then why? There was no other way to live than being smart. Otherwise, I couldn't get a job. Even though the A-bomb caused tremendous suffering and sadness, my parents gave me a courage to live. Thinking "I refuse to give up" will bring dreams or hopes to your future. The ultimate reason is how we will survive. This is the primordial theory called hope. How we survive. I think this is very important. I had a chance to study, met remarkable elders, read their books, and am in good health so that I can stand here before you. Thank you for your kind attention. Any questions?

Q&A

—According to a newspaper report, you met Canadian Inuits in Vancouver. Many American and Canadian Indigenous people have been exposed to radiation from a uranium mine. Did you meet such people at that time?

YASUI:

That's a good point. I attended the world peace conference in Vancouver at the time of the 50th anniversary of the end of the war. At that time, I met members of the Squamish Nation. Placing my feet flat on the ground, I danced with them hand in hand. I didn't hear about the radiation damage from the uranium mine.

Most of them had been forced to participate in the Second World War, but once the war was over, they were driven out of their homes. They suffered serious ethnic discrimination. This was an introduction between Canadian Inuits, who experienced ethnic discrimination, and I, the A-bomb survivor. We felt an awareness of a sense of peace by joining hands. They have good hands. They made music for me and greeted me playing guitars. They were a well-built people, and tied their waist-length hair into a braid. They ran around with drums. It was overwhelming. They faced the truth with a stern eye. Only when they recognized what I said was true, I had escaped suffering, and I felt for them, they drew closer. Therefore I could dance with them. That was a really moving experience.

One of them said, "I know Nagasaki was damaged by the A-bomb. Why do you feel for our suffering? And why do you understand our pain? I appreciate the thought, but I want to know the reason." "We can become close with each other as people who have gone through a hell." They were touched and gave me a pin in the shape of maple leaf as a souvenir. And my hands were filled with their fountain pens and pins. We sang

together, hugged, cried, and encouraged each other. If I live for 100 years, that moment was the most emotional time in this half of my life. This is the memory of Canadian Inuits.

Thank you.