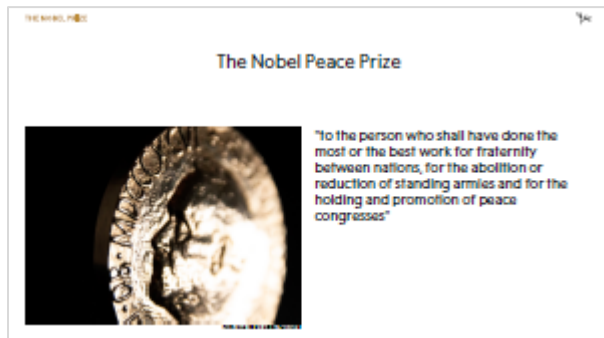


THE NOBEL PRIZE

Speaker's manuscript – Peace prize 2024 The fight against nuclear weapons

The Nobel Prize in Literature

- The Nobel Peace Prize is one of the five prizes established by the Swedish inventor Alfred Nobel and is awarded every year on 10 December.
- Before he died on 10 December 1896, Alfred Nobel wrote in his last will that most of his fortune was to be used for the awarding of five prizes to “those who, during the preceding year, have conferred the greatest benefit to humankind.” One of the prizes was to go to “the person who has done the most or best to advance fellowship among nations, the abolition or reduction of standing armies, and the establishment and promotion of peace congresses.”
- This clause has been interpreted in many ways, but the prize is awarded either to people or to organisations that have done something to promote peace.



Peace prize 2024

- The peace prize 2024 focuses attention on the most destructive weapons the world has ever seen: nuclear weapons. The prize is awarded to an organisation made up of survivors from Hiroshima and Nagasaki for their efforts to free the world of nuclear weapons.



The 2024 peace laureates

- Nihon Hidankyo is a Japanese grassroots movement founded in 1956.
- The organisation was established when several local associations of survivors of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 joined forces with victims of the nuclear weapons tests in the Pacific Ocean.
- The organisation took the name Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers, which in Japanese was abbreviated to Nihon Hidankyo.
- Nihon Hidankyo is awarded the peace prize for its efforts to free the world of nuclear weapons and for demonstrating through witness testimony why nuclear weapons must never be used again.



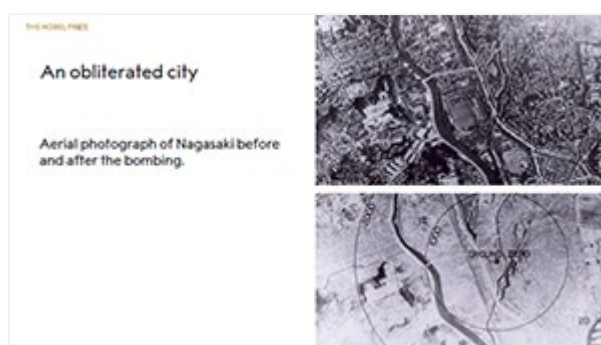
The atom bombs of 1945

- Atomic weapons are the most destructive and powerful weapons there are. Their explosive power gets its energy from either fission (splitting) or fusion (joining) of atom nuclei. The resulting nuclear reaction makes the weapon's explosion many times larger than other bombs.
- The first and only time nuclear weapons have been used in war was at the end of the Second World War. On 6 August 1945, the United States dropped an atomic bomb named Little Boy over Hiroshima. On 9 August they dropped a second bomb, Fat Man, over Nagasaki.



An obliterated city

- Aerial photographs of Nagasaki three days after the bomb was dropped shows a flattened and barren landscape – a completely obliterated city.
- Approximately 120,000 people were killed directly by the two atomic bombs that were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and about the same number died of burn injuries and radiation sickness in the months and years that followed.



Hibakusha: the survivors

- The Japanese word *hibakusha* means “survivors of the bomb” and refers to the people who were struck by the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.
- By giving witness testimony about their experiences, conducting educational campaigns and issuing warnings about atomic weapons, these survivors have made a powerful contribution to raising awareness of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of using atomic weapons.
- Nihon Hidankyo is the largest and most influential of Japan’s *hibakusha* organisations.



Witness testimony

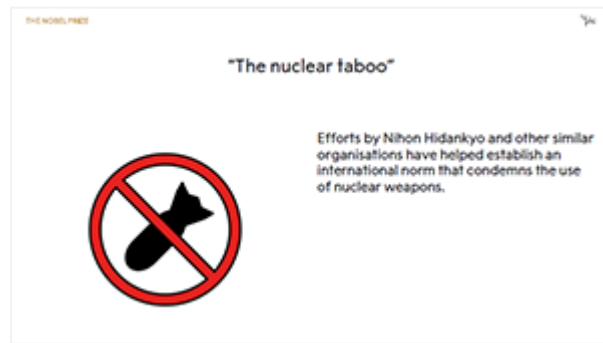
- Setsuko Thurlow’s is one of many powerful witness testimonies about the atomic bombs dropped on Japan. She was thirteen years old when Little Boy was dropped on Hiroshima. Setsuko Thurlow is a member of Nihon Hidankyo and has also been involved in the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), which was awarded the peace prize in 2017.
- At the award ceremony, she gave a speech in which she gave an account of her experiences:



“I still vividly remember that morning. At 08:15, I saw a blinding bluish-white flash from the window. I remember having the sensation of floating in the air. As I regained consciousness in the silence and darkness, I found myself pinned by the collapsed building. I began to hear my classmates’ faint cries: ‘Mother, help me. God, help me.’ Then, suddenly I felt hands touching my left shoulder, and heard a man saying: ‘Don’t give up! Keep pushing! I am trying to free you. See the light coming through that opening? Crawl towards it as quickly as you can.’ As I crawled out, the ruins were on fire.”

“The nuclear taboo”

- Tireless work by Nihon Hidankyo and other similar organisations has impacted the way nuclear weapons are viewed. In the decades following the Second World War, an international norm gradually emerged in which nuclear weapons are seen as morally unacceptable.
- This norm is usually referred to as “the nuclear taboo”.
- Recently this norm has come under pressure. That is an alarming development, according to the Norwegian Nobel Committee.



Nuclear-weapon states

- Nine of the world’s countries have nuclear weapons. They are Russia, the United States, China, France, Great Britain, India, Pakistan and North Korea.
- Russia and the United States together own 90 % of the world’s nuclear weapons.
- Several nuclear-weapon states are modernising and upgrading their nuclear weapons. It has also become increasingly common for states to threaten to use nuclear weapons in ongoing wars.
- In bestowing the peace prize on Nihon Hidankyo, the Norwegian Nobel Committee wants to honour all the survivors who, despite their suffering and painful memories, continue to inspire action and remind the world that nuclear weapons must never be used again.
- Nihon Hidankyo’s work is helping to maintain the “nuclear taboo”, which has become increasingly important and is essential to ensuring a peaceful future.



A long tradition of peace prizes against nuclear weapons

- Bestowing the prize on Nihon Hidankyo is consistent with Alfred Nobel’s will and his desire to reward efforts for the greatest benefit to humankind.
- Several previous prizes have been awarded to people and organisations that worked to rid the world of nuclear weapons.



THE NOBEL PRIZE

Examples include Linus Pauling (1962), a scientist and also a Nobel Prize laureate in chemistry who contributed to the establishment of a treaty that regulates nuclear weapons testing; Alva Myrdal and Alfonso García Robles (1982), who worked at the United Nations for disarmament and nuclear weapons-free zones; and ICAN (2017), which was recognised for its work to achieve an agreement that bans nuclear weapons.

Paper cranes

- These are some of the thousand paper cranes that have been folded by school student and donated to the Nobel Prize Museum by the organisation ICAN. On the 468 red paper cranes are the names of ICAN's member organisations.
- Paper cranes have become a symbol for peace and for innocent victims of atomic weapons.
- That is because of the story of Sadako Sasaki. She was two years old when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. At the age of eleven she became sick with leukaemia (blood cancer), a disease that became much more common as a result of the radiation. According to an old Japanese folk belief, if you fold a thousand paper cranes you will be granted one wish, and when Sadako became sick she began folding cranes. She folded more than a thousand cranes, but she still passed away at the age of twelve.

