

HIROSHIMA UNIVERSITY
HIROSHIMA CITY, JAPAN

Hiroshima City, Japan
25 January, 1951

Dear Mr. President :

In my capacity as President of Hiroshima University, situated in the center of Hiroshima, which is world-famous as "Atom-Bombed City" and designated by the Japanese Diet as "Eternal Peace Commemorating City", I am sending letters to a large number of universities all over the world. We have chosen to include your university especially in order to ask for your help in our great task of reconstruction here.

Since I came to this university in April last year, I have been making every effort to rejuvenate it to be a peace-university, as a spiritual and cultural center of a peace city.

Permit me to dwell a little on some of my own personal matters. Immediately after the cessation of hostilities, I gave up my academic career and entered into political life. I participated in establishing the new constitution of Japan as a member of the House of Representatives and as chairman of the Political Research Committee of the Socialist Party. I was actively engaged in the drastic reform of the Japanese educational system, as Minister of Education in the Katayama and Ashida Cabinets.

It was mainly for the following two reasons that I resigned as a member of the House of Representatives and from my political party in order to be president of this university.

1. I was firmly convinced that the establishment of a New Japan depends fundamentally upon the education of youth, namely, the nurturing of a new people. With the beginning of the Meiji era, Japan launched upon a remarkable revolution in the fields of politics and industry, but she has never had a renaissance and reformation in the strict sense of the word, as those experienced by the European peoples. Japan needs, above all, a spiritual or human revolution that will make the foundation of our new constitution solid.

2. In order to establish a peaceful city, nothing is more important for the Hiroshima people than to cherish peaceful thoughts, together with a will to realize

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permanent peace. This will be supported by the ever-present memory of a bomb devastated city, which was as grave and eloquent a tragedy as we had ever known. Especially do I think it necessary when I recollect that Hiroshima was one of the chief military centers since the middle of the Meiji era. Therefore I believe that our university has the important responsibility to be a spiritual center for the city. To fulfill this responsibility is extremely urgent, but it is difficult to attain, in view of the present situation at home and abroad.

Materially and spiritually, the establishment of a Peace-University is a herculean task, just as it is to keep the world in lasting peace. The citizens of Hiroshima City and Prefecture, supported by the National Government and Civil Information and Education Section, GHQ, SCAP, are co-operating in this enterprise. But on account of the stringent circumstances in Japan since the surrender, the work is slow to progress.

Apart from this, I think it a very significant project per se for many universities in the world to co-operate in the establishment of a Peace-University in a city that is often supposed to be Mecca of the world-peace-movement. It is for this reason that I should like to ask for your assistance in the reconstruction of our university. And this co-operation may not amount to much from the economic point of view, but it will be of deep significance, from the spiritual point of view, in contributing to international understanding and the permanent peace of the world. This will be of benefit not only to the students and professors of the university that receive it but also to those of the universities that offer it.

I know, however, that universities in any country are not always provided with ample funds for their own support, so that I want to place more emphasis on their moral assistance and encouragement rather than material contributions.

If you would accept one or both of the following two suggestions, it would be greatly appreciated.

1. I have a desire to establish within our university, an institute for research into international peace problems. As an initial stage for this program I want to collect books and periodicals concerning peace problems. This is also a gigantic task for Hiroshima University which, during the war, completely lost its central

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library and its contents. I wish for your help in this work. I should be very pleased if your university would send us one book, or pamphlet—the more, of course, the better—considered valuable by your university or of note in your country. We will inscribe on them the name of your university in memory of your goodwill and keep them permanently in the university's "international-peace-library". The reading of these books, indeed, the very existence of this library, I believe, will undoubtedly create and promote an atmosphere of universal friendship, spreading peace commensurate with the peace-university.

Our university consists of faculties embracing literature, politico-economics, education, sciences, engineering, and fishery and stock-breeding. If, therefore, your university has any extra books in these fields of studies and could spare them for us, in addition to the books concerning peace problems, it would be greatly appreciated.

2. I would like to ask for your co-operation in the "verdurizing" of our university. I was surprised when I came to Hiroshima for the first time after the war to see the half-built university-buildings standing on the bare, desolate ground destitute of a single tree with green leaves, just as the other parts of the city were. So I have worked out a plan to "verdurize" the university campus, and turn it from a burnt, red-rusty hue to a fresh green color. Not red, symbolizing struggle and blood-shed, but green which is the color of growth and hope, I believe, should be the color of our university. I would like to ask for your help in this program, too. When it is realized, thousands of students studying within this campus—there are 4,500 students in our university—will observe that the tree under whose shade they are taking their rest was sent through the goodwill of "A" university, the avenue along which they are walking was planted through the gifts from "B" and "C" universities, and that the hedge covered with pretty flowers is a symbol of "D" university's friendship, and new inspiration for international fellowship may result. Won't this be more powerful than thousands of words or a series of speeches to cultivate a peace-loving spirit in the minds of the students? Bearing such a dream in mind, I beseech you to send us a young tree that characterizes your country or your university. Under the present conditions, however, it might be difficult somehow. Should it be impossible, some seeds of the tree can take its place.

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We will do our best to sow and nurture them. If even that is not possible, we could procure a young tree here in Hiroshima at your discretion and expense. In this case, you would need to send us a sum of money amounting to three American dollars for one tree and a sign showing the name of its donor. If the species of the tree is indicated, it will be a help. If the tree you indicate can not endure the climate and soil of Hiroshima, will you allow us to select a substitute according to the advice of our professors who have specialized in horticulture? The tree you may donate, will long be remembered by the sign attached to it with the name of your university in addition to that of the tree.

In view of the critical international situation, I want to step forward in the direction of the slogan, "No more Hiroshimas", and beg your assistance in establishing this university as a peace-university as well as a spiritual center for the Atom-Peace-City.

With very best wishes for the prosperity of your university and the diffusion of a peace-loving spirit, I hope a friendly liaison and spirit of cooperation will be inaugurated between your university and ours.

Very sincerely yours,

Tatsuo Morito
President
Hiroshima University