50th Anniversary of Atomic bombing
—Hoping to create a peaceful world—

Commemoration Address
Mr. Kenzabro Oe, 1994 Nobel Laureate
Urakami Cathedral, Nagasaki Archdiocese
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1995 marked the 50th anniversary of the atomic bombing. Nagasaki Junshin Catholic University invited Kenzaburo Oe, the 1994 Nobel Laureate, to speak on the theme of the 50th Anniversary of the Atomic bombing-Hoping to create a peaceful world-at Urakami Cathedral, Nagasaki Archdiocese on May 21, 1995. At the same time, a violin concert was held by his son, Hikaru Oe.

People Who Believe
And Those of Us Who Don't

Kenzaburo Oe
1994 Nobel Laureate

As President Kataoka has said, I was in the United States and the United Kingdom for three weeks.

First, I went to Atlanta, Georgia and, working in connection with next year's Olympics, I attended the Culture Olympics. Separated by the sea from here in Kyushu, my mother lives in Shikoku, and, as I heard from my sister, she has been bragging to the townspeople, "My third son is rather weak and was not good at running or swimming, but his long years of hard work have paid off; he just went to the Atlanta Olympics!" My sister said, "Mother, this year only the Culture Olympics are being held and the Atlanta Olympics will be in 1996 so even if you tell them that, they will know you are lying." But my mother replied, "No, in this town no one takes any interest in culture so it's all right." What is more she said, "I'm thinking of the future. In the middle of the 21st century, no one will remember whether it was 1995 or 1996. I want to make a legend of my son." I suppose she was half joking, but I am sure if she knew I was asked to speak here at Urakami Cathedral, she would be very proud. If she knew her grandson Hikaru's music would be performed as well, I think she would be especially delighted.

After Atlanta I went to the United Kingdom and, following a meeting in London, I went to southeast Wales. There they were having a regional arts festival which I participated in. Speaking so many times is very tiring; besides, my English is not very good. Feeling I would not be able to meet the expectations of the organizers, I became depressed and went to lie down in my room at the hotel on the coast. However, it seems the festival sponsors had done their research about me and had even asked my agent in a letter what to do should I become depressed. At that, my wife or a close friend shared the following advice. 'If Oe becomes depressed, just give him a rare book and he will cheer up.' Here I will introduce one book of the many I received, a collection of poems by the Welsh poet R. S. Thomas. Dylan Thomas is famous among Welshmen, but R. S. Thomas is one year older and still living. I did not know of him except by name. However, upon receiving and reading that book, I found him to be a wonderful poet. For many years he was a priest at a Welsh church and, as for the ideas in his poetry, I was soon convinced there was a deep connection to Christianity. However, he is also a man who writes poetry that is easily understandable to people like me who

are not religious. I plan to quit writing and study for about five years, and he is a poet surely worth reading in that interval. I think there are often such important coincidences in life.

I have wanted to study for myself the specific significance of Nagasaki's atomic bombing. Furthermore, I have also felt the desire to communicate that significance to foreigners. I have been thinking that for a long time, and so to be invited by Nagasaki Junshin Catholic University, and, moreover, to be invited to speak in this Urakami Cathedral, is a great honor. I think that this, too, is an important coincidence.

In Japan and around the world, there have been an uncountable number of comments about the atomic bomb over the last 50 years. However, I believe that most of them fall into one of two patterns. The first concentrates on the enormous power of the atomic bomb. American veteran soldiers are trying to show in the Smithsonian Museum exhibition that the atomic bomb's power was useful in bringing an end to the war. Such is the pattern of thinking of this type of people who think of the atomic bomb as a great authority.

The second pattern is that the atomic bomb is a tragedy that was brought upon human beings; this is the view the Japanese have long held. Especially, the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, on the basis their own experiences, speak this way. Accordingly, I think the atomic bomb has begun to be recognized as the most significant incident of the 20th century. However, at the Smithsonian Museum, Americans make no effort to show how great and terrible a tragedy occurred. That is the reality. It is obvious that there is a need to continue to make the voices of Hiroshima and Nagasaki heard.

In addition, in the course of my thinking up to now, on top of these two pillars of the power of the atomic bomb and the misery of the atomic bomb, I have come to think that there is one more important aspect to consider.

In effect, the great power of the atomic bomb and the great misery it brought are both realities. Many people died. Many people were wounded. Those who died cannot be compensated for. However, many of those who were wounded have used all their strength to recover. I have come to understand that the way these people have rebuilt their lives must be the most important thing. As we continue into the 21st century, I believe that the experiences of those who faced the atomic bomb are the most essential things for us to preserve.

Now I have come to something which I, personally, cannot forget. It is something that was related to me by Doctor Fumio Shigeto, the former director of the Hiroshima Atomic Bomb Hospital.

It was just after my son Hikaru, whose music you will hear presently,

was born. He was born on June 13th. Soon afterwards I visited Hiroshima from the end of July to the first week of August. It was then that Doctor Shigeto spoke to me. I was still about 28 years old when he told me this.

There had been a young doctor who was helping Doctor Shigeto with his work. He was an eye doctor. He came right after the atomic bomb when they were very busy. The young doctor said, “Look how many people are wounded. Look how many people die one after another. And we don’t even know what kind of bomb this actually was. Above all, we have no idea how big a problem this radiation disorder is. Even so we must treat these people. I don’t think I can do it. So many deaths, so many wounded, and even now there are people all over Hiroshima walking the streets, headed for this hospital. It’s crazy to think that we, powerless humans we are, can cure them.”

Doctor Shigeto told the young doctor he must be tired and suggested going to the outskirts of town for a change of scenery. However, he could not really give the young man a proper answer. Then, after finishing some work, he came back and found that the young doctor had committed suicide.

Doctor Shigeto said that if that young doctor, who had been about the same age I was when hearing this story, was standing before him now, he knew what he would say to him. He said, “There are so many people wounded and suffering. There is nothing else we doctors can do but to heal them. There is nothing else we can do but try our best to heal them. Now I think I would have said this to the young doctor. I wish I had said it at the time...”

I thought about his words and knew that I, too, was suffering. My child had been born with an abnormality and needed an operation. However, if it was a success and he lived, we knew he would remain handicapped. A young doctor had even told me that on top of the physical handicap, my child would surely be mentally handicapped as well. How would the doctor take responsibility and what kind of operation would he perform on my child? How would life be with a handicapped child? How would my wife and I commit our lives to his treatment and care? I knew that I must think through these questions carefully before making a decision about the operation. Still, I was not able to think calmly because I was suffering so deeply. I think Doctor Shigeto sensed this in observing me and may have spoken to me in place of that young doctor. There are many people who are wounded and suffering. And as for our son, there is nothing else we can do but try our best to save him. Now I sense that this is what the doctor meant.

At that time, I felt extremely embarrassed, and I had to admit that I was running away from my child’s problem by coming to Hiroshima. So I re-

turned to Tokyo and went through the formalities necessary for my child's operation. Thirty-two years have passed since then and I think it was right that I took to heart Doctor Shigeto's words. More than right, it is as if I received something important. Even to a person like me who is not religious, moreover it being difficult to say so in such a place as this, it seems as if I received a gift from somewhere above. I think that has also played a large part in my literature up to now. It seems to me that my longing to think more deeply about such things and my decision to forego writing novels and study for a time are somehow connected.

I think of the wounded who have recovered from such an immense hardship as this, and the doctors who helped them, but of course the reality is that many people died as well. In Nagasaki and Hiroshima there were many who died immediately the day the bombs were dropped. Then, there were many who suffered and died long after. I had wondered how to link the greatness and importance of those who lost their lives with that of those who had been wounded by the atomic bomb but have recovered.

However, recently I think I received a clear answer about that. I found this answer in a letter from none other than the President of Nagasaki Junshin Catholic University. I am sure you all know about this, so I will put it simply. Many students were studying at Nagasaki Junshin Girls' High School at the time of the war. Among them, 213 students died. Teachers and Sisters who were farming in the area now known as Megumi-no-oka realized that the school was burning and the students must be dead when charred bible pages and student attendance lists were carried to them on the wind. After learning that more than 210 had died, Principal Yasu Esumi thought of closing the school. However, some parents came to speak with her. At the time Principal Esumi herself was wounded and bedridden in a temporary shack on Megumi-no-oka, then called Mitsuyama. "Of course, the children's deaths are a great sadness," they are said to have told her, "but thanks to your school our daughters could achieve a pure death. They died in prayer. That is a result of the Junshin education. Please keep the school open and continue educating students," they reportedly requested of her.

In accordance with their request, Principal Esumi did not close the school. Hence it has expanded and come to include this large university as well. It has educated many students and sent them out into the world. Before I implied that the very effort itself of people who are wounded but recovering has the power to awaken and nurture in us respect and trust in humanity. In this case, many wounded people, including Principal Esumi, made great efforts to recover. In turn, Principal Esumi received the support of the parents

who wished for her to carry on the dreams of these young women who had died.

Now, 50 years later, we should recognize that the aspirations of those who died were part of the foundation of this society's great recovery, reconstruction, and the production of new things. After long consideration I think that, if we do so, a strong connection will clearly appear between those who died and those who were wounded but recovered. It is necessary to communicate to the world the truth that 8,500 Catholic believers died in Nagasaki. At the same time, this Urakami Cathedral was burned. We need to tell the world how grandly and beautifully it has been rebuilt. Rather I think we have the duty to tell the world, and the right to tell the world. That is to say, I believe that we have the power to exceed the limitations of the Smithsonian Museum's exhibition and communicate the real meaning of this tragedy to the Americans, Europeans and others, to reach their true hearts.

I was informed of something regarding the reconstruction of this Urakami Cathedral. The original construction took 30 years. Eighteen years later, it was lost to the atomic bomb. Then, after another 34 years rebuilding, this wonderful Urakami Cathedral was completed anew. Now, I like mathematics, or at least simple calculation, and when I am feeling down I look for someone who will give me a book, and when I cannot get a book, I often solve mathematical problems. When I go on a trip I often take along a book of easy mathematical problems. Even with such simple mathematics, sometimes there are phenomena like the following. Modernization began with the Meiji Restoration in 1867, and the distortion brought about by this rapid growth caused a great war. Thus, the experiences of Hiroshima and Nagasaki could not be avoided. Furthermore, we then had 50 years of economic reconstruction. Considering it is presently 1995, it has been 128 years since the Meiji Restoration. This Urakami Cathedral was originally built over 30 years and was rebuilt over 34 years, adding up to 64 years, or exactly half the length of time of Japan's modernization.

We perceive the time between the Meiji Era and the present as a very long span of time in Japanese history, and the efforts to build Urakami Cathedral, as well as to rebuild it, add up to exactly half of that time. I think that is a considerable fact and simply reporting this to the Europeans and the Americans would deepen their respect for the Christians of Nagasaki.

I have been giving speeches and talking on television for three weeks in the United States and the United Kingdom, and I would like to simply state a detail from that experience and then move on. In reaction to a speech by President Clinton, I was asked by American audiences and television hosts to

give my thoughts as a Japanese person. President Clinton said that he, or rather the American people, do not have the intention to beg the Japanese for forgiveness about Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I was asked what I thought of that and I replied in the following way.

I said that I do not think that, were President Clinton to beg the forgiveness of the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it would be a great encouragement or consolation to the victims or their families. Instead, if Mr. Clinton were to apologize for dropping the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it should be to the children now living in the United States and the children around the world. He could say something like, "We American adults, in keeping with our initial course of aggressive nuclear weapon use, own them on a very large scale and by doing so, we are casting a dark shadow on the present and future of mankind." I said that as the American President he should apologize to the children of today and the children of tomorrow for the real and extreme suffering they may face and the fear they will live in.

One more thing Mr. Clinton said was that he thinks President Truman's decision to drop nuclear bombs was correct. I was asked my opinion and responded in this way.

I said I think it was a mistake. It is meaningless to say that an event that has become history and so belongs to the past is mistaken, as if to say that at that time another course of action would have been better. However, I think that, if we look to the future, there is a positive meaning to the statement. Even at the late stage of the war in August 1945, the scientists who participated in the development of those nuclear bombs or who had any general influence were writing letters to the president asking him to desist from using the bombs. Einstein was one of them. They thought that it was all right for the weapon they had developed, with such an exceedingly large power, to be maintained by the United States in order to keep the world at peace. However, they sensed that the use of it would give birth to great tragedy. The scientists had already mentioned the fact that, in reality, it should not be used. Without lending an ear to the words of Einstein and the others or to the recommendations of the scientists, Truman made the decision to drop the bombs. Then, these great tragedies resulted. Subsequently, for these 50 years, mankind has lived in suffering amidst the threat of large nuclear weapons. At the beginning of the 21st century, there will be a reduction of strategic nuclear weapons and so on, but even then 10,000 or 15,000 bombs will remain and the fear will continue. As the historical events that brought about the fear in the present and the threat for the future, I think President Truman's decision was a mis-

take. That is how I answered.

Well, it is just my opinion, but even from reading her story in the letter I received from the current Junshin President, I sense dignity and magnificent humanity in Nagasaki Junshin Girls' High School Principal Esumi. I also feel that people like her have justice. Not a collective justice, but a personal embodiment of justice. Therefore, I have a feeling of admiration for them.

I would like to recall other women with such justice. One example could be found, quite recently, in a letter to the editor that was printed in the newspaper, *The Asahi Shimbun*. The contributor was Mrs. Horiuchi, a 75-year-old woman living in Fukui City. It was a comment on the anti-war resolution, which is a current issue in the National Diet.

She raises a question to the Organization of Bereaved Families of the War Dead, the opposition factions and those members of the Diet who oppose the anti-war resolution and say things like that the war was in self-defense and beyond our control or that if we recognize our aggressions, our fallen soldiers will have died for nothing. When Mrs. Horiuchi had been married only 10 months and was with child, her husband went to war. Then, in Burma, now Myanmar, he was killed in action. Over the last 50 years, she raised her child alone. She wrote as follows:

> For our husbands who were killed in action, according to militarism, to die for the emperor and to die for our country was a great cause. Without knowing that they were the aggressor, they were thrown out onto the battlefields. For our husbands who were killed in action, the anti-war resolution is surely our greatest plea. The aggressions were decided by the power of the state, but our husbands were the ones who were sacrificed. These 50 years since the war, somehow we have passed in peace, and that is because in each of our hearts lies an oath against war. Especially now, the National Diet should take a unanimous oath against war. Then, that will be compensation for the deaths of our husbands.

The wording she used is important. The Japanese word she used is *taigi* which is "a cause" in English, and implies a true sense of justice, or the justice of the whole country. Their husbands were killed for such a "cause." Without knowing what kind of war it was, that it was ultimately an aggressive war, they killed people and were killed themselves. For the wives it was not the cause, but rather an oath against war that they have carried in each of their hearts these last 50 years is what this 75-year-old woman is saying. I want to call this inner oath against war a kind of justice. It is an individual justice, but

it is a kind of justice that can also unite them with the all the wisdom of humanity. We must cherish such inner justice. I believe that we must continue to remember such people who carry it within them always.

We can read the same thing into some literature. Nagasaki-born author Kyoko Hayashi belongs to about the same generation as I do and is someone I greatly respect. She wrote a really superb short story called “The Empty Can.” I included it when I compiled a book of pieces about the atomic bomb which I titled *Nantomo Shirenai Mirai Ni [To the Unknown Future]*, published by Shueisha Bunko. It was also translated into English and published by the American company that publishes my works, Grove Press, under the title *The Crazy Iris and Other Stories of the Atomic Aftermath*.

In this short story “The Empty Can,” Ms. Hayashi writes about a woman who, like Ms. Hayashi herself, had experienced the atomic bomb when she was a student at a girls’ school. The woman was still living despite having glass inside her body. The great pressure of the atomic blast embedded glass fragments in her. She had never had anything done about them so, just recently, upon hearing there was an empty bed at the Atomic Bomb Hospital, she checked in and had them surgically removed. Some old classmates had gotten together and were trying to remember what she had been like as a student. Then one said this of her.

> ‘Remember? She was always carrying the bones of her mother and father in an empty can,’ said Oki. ‘Oh!’ I said. *That* was Kinuko! She was in the same class as me. I remember she was the girl who always came to school with her parents’ bones in her schoolbag. The girl kept the bones in a red, half-melted can with no lid. She covered the mouth of the can with newspaper and tied a red string around it so the bones wouldn’t fall out. When she got to school in the morning she would take her textbooks out of her bag to put in her desk. Then, with both hands, she would carefully take out the can and place it on the right-hand edge of her desk. When classes were finished, she would use both hands to carefully place it back in the bottom of her schoolbag and go home. At first, none of us knew what was in the can. The girl didn’t speak of it herself. None of us spoke very frankly about anything after the bomb, so while curious, no one asked her about it. The look of the girl’s fingers as she lovingly handled the can made us hesitate all the more.
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> However, one day our calligraphy teacher scolded, ‘What

is that can? Put it in your desk.' The girl hung her head and cradled the can on the knee of her workpants. Then she began to cry. The teacher asked her why she was crying.

'It's my mother and father's bones,' she answered. The calligraphy teacher took the can from the girl's hands and placed it in the middle of the teacher's platform. 'Let's offer a moment of silence to pray that her parents will find happiness in the next world,' the teacher said, closing his eyes. After a long silence, he returned the can to the girl's desk and said, 'From tomorrow, please leave it at home. Your parents will wait for you to get home from school every day. It's better that way.'

That girl was Kinuko.

That girl could not bury the bones of the mother and father she lost to the atomic bomb. She could not find a proper place. As she was just a girl, she did not have the strength. I think she carefully considered how to mourn for her parents and, ultimately, put their bones in a can and carried them with her to school. That may even have been the proper way to go about it. If you read Greek tragedies, there is a story about a daughter who suffers as she does not know how to properly mourn for her dead family. Similarly, in spite of the fact that she does not know how to let go of her family, I discern a real justice expressed through the behavior of this young girl. It seems that the small justice in the heart of this young girl is in reality stronger, deeper and better developed than the cause of the country who dropped the atom bomb, or the cause of the other countries who approved of it. I believe that this kind of personal justice, this way of people having their own individual inner causes, will have an important meaning in the progress of Japanese society from here on.

The poison gas attack perpetrated by the religious cult Aum Shinrikyo in Tokyo's subways earlier this year has drawn a lot of attention. One high-ranking government official said in response to it that young people these days are losing their sense of purpose. I think that might be true. Even worse, adults are losing theirs as well. However, the official meant that, at times like this, national goals must be set and young people must take those goals to be their own. The official was regretting the government's error in not having done so.

To me, this way of thinking is mistaken. A major national goal can also be called a "cause." What kind of mistakes have such "causes" forced the people of the world to make these past 50 years? And before that, how thor-

oughly were such “causes” enforced in the minds of the Japanese and Americans? We must reflect on how, in the nearly 100 years we have seen of the 20th century, such major national goals have endangered personal humanity and, furthermore, how they have endangered this earth mankind calls home. I think the government official I mentioned earlier also needs to reflect on this. What must be pointed out to the young people of today is not national goals and causes, but the need to try to unite the justice in our hearts.

I am sure you know of the British critic and novelist George Orwell. In a book about him, one scholar writes that Orwell was a person who had great hope for the future of mankind. He believed that for future society to be easy to live in, man must have a sense of integrity and decency. “Decency” is a word I myself used to describe the Japanese *ningenrashisa* when speaking in Stockholm to make myself more easily understood to foreigners, but it is also a word that Orwell used quite often to encompass meanings such as graciousness, humanity, and generosity of spirit. Orwell thought that if future society has such decency, as well as a carefully preserved sense of justice, it will be easy to live in, regardless of its structure, but if it does not, it will be impossible for people to live in happiness.

Neither this kind of decency nor the idea of justice are “causes” or national goals. As I said, each person is an individual and we can think of them as having a sense of decency and justice. This is the definition of justice that I believe in.

Listening to the story of Sr. Esumi, the principal of Nagasaki Junshin Girls’ High School at the time of the atomic bombing, I sense that she must have been a woman of decency and justice.

Likewise, the Fukui woman I mentioned earlier who has continued to think of and write about the husband she lost and the war she lost him to, she also has decency and personal justice. The girl in Kyoko Hayashi’s short story, who was so overwhelmed she could not tell anyone, not even her friends, the meaning of the empty can she carried with her, she also had justice in the emotions which were protected by her solitude. Knowing she must give her mother and father an honorable burial, she chose to put their bones, the thing most important to her in the world, in an empty can and carry it to school. I sense real justice in this.

In the world of Christianity, when one speaks of such justice, I believe it is known as righteousness. Removing the first Chinese character from *seigi*, the word for justice, you are left with *gi*, the word for righteousness. I dream of a society where the righteousness of those who believe and the justice of those of us who do not can meet eye to eye and cooperate. I dream of this for

Japanese society and for the world.

I would like to end with a poem by the Welsh priest and poet I mentioned earlier, R. S. Thomas. He is a true man of faith. However, upon reading the entire collection of his poetry, quite different from his younger work, I could sense a gradual change in the way he thought about faith as he passed 60 and neared 80 years of age. More than just a change, he seems specifically to describe how he really thinks of God.

Thomas writes that he is always praying, and he believes that there is a God, but that God has never quite appeared before him conclusively. However, he still believes that there really is a God and, if he prays, someday God will conclusively appear before him, and when He does, His side will be warm to the touch. That is the experience he continues to hope for, as we see in the poetry of his later years. This story of touching God's side you may perhaps recall from the Gospel of John, when the disciple of the same name as this poet, Thomas, tests the risen Jesus. To me, that way of feeling is a very intimate one and I think it would be nice if I myself could see faith in the same way, but instead I would like to translate and read this poem. The name of the poem is "Threshold," as in a threshold between one room and another, a threshold that one crosses when passing over into another world, or as meaning the brink of an enormous hole dug so deep it is like an abyss, too dreadful to peer into. This poem is about standing on a threshold like that.

I emerge from the mind's
cave into the worse darkness
outside, where things pass and
the Lord is in none of them.

I have heard the still, small voice
and it was that of the bacteria
demolishing my cosmos. I
have lingered too long on

this threshold, but where can I go?
To look back is to lose the soul
I was leading upward towards
the light. To look forward? Ah,

what balance is needed at
the edges of such an abyss.
I am alone on the surface

of a turning planet. What

to do but, like Michelangelo's
Adam, put my hand
out into unknown space,
hoping for the reciprocating touch?

This last phrase of the poem I rendered in Japanese as *henrei no sesshoku*, literally "reciprocating touch." Cultural anthropologists often use the noun form, reciprocity. For example, in the Trobriand Islands of Papua New Guineau, if one gives a gift, they always receive a gift in return, which is said to be the first ancient form of human relations. This way of exchanging offerings from a position of mutual equality is a kind of "reciprocating." In the line, "What to do but, like Michelangelo's Adam, put my hand out into unknown space, hoping for the reciprocating touch?," Thomas is saying there is a threshold before him, a large abyss from which he cannot turn back. So what should he do? Like Michelangelo's Adam, he can only extend his hand out into the unknown space around him. In other words, the only thing he can do is to pray. He is saying, "I don't know what is out there, but I can only pray. And while praying, as I extend my hand this way, I am hoping that someone, I know not who, will touch my hand in return. I can only hope for that." That is what Thomas is trying to express in this poem.

Neither do we know what is out there, but there is nothing else we can do but to pray, even if we are not confident that our prayers will bring about any change. However, if we reach out our hands like Michelangelo's Adam, someday something might touch our fingertips. Thus, Thomas openly shows us the present condition of his spirit. I read in his autobiographical essay that he has retired from the ministry and is living in solitude, devoting all of his energies to the anti-nuclear movement.

Personally, I like such people who are searching for answers. They believe they can, and must, transcend. Therefore, as though reaching out towards something, they pray. I like people who feel a need to pray. I think that I am, in part, such a person. Of course, I respect people who are believers, but even those of us who are not religious reach out our hands like Adam and our poor hearts hope that another hand will touch ours. I think there are many people hoping. Rather, I think there must be an extremely high number of people hoping. Even if they do not have faith, somehow they cannot stop themselves from reaching out their hands. Of course those hands are not visible, but I believe that if those of us who have those hands were to cooperate

and proceed in the same direction as those who truly have faith, that would be the best model we could provide for young people of how to live as this century ends and the next begins. That is possible in Japan, in Korea, in Europe and the United States. I believe that, as a society in which both the faithful and those who are not believers live together, that is the best way for the people to cooperate.

There are so many people gathered here at this Urakami Cathedral to listen to me speak and to the music Hikaru has written. Many Christian university students and church members have worked to prepare for this event. That in itself is an example of the faithful reaching out their hands to those of us who are not believers. I think that if we could extend our hands in reciprocity, and if that were to continue as the basis of our way of life as we move forward into the future, it would be such a wonderful thing.

Being invited to speak here today and have Hikaru's music performed, I feel a hand reaching out to me and I know I can do something to reciprocate. I have a hunch that that will be one of the forces that influences my literary endeavors from this point on.

Thank you very much.

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