

Speech of our association for the inauguration of the Lasséran garden

Good morning to all.

We are gathered here for the inauguration of the Peace Garden of the commune of Lasséran. This garden, which testifies to the commitment of the commune, is an educational tool for the promotion of peace. But it is also there so that we never forget the main threat to humanity.

I will begin with a sad reminder. On 6 August 1945, the Americans dropped "Little Boy" on Hiroshima, the first atomic bomb used on a battlefield, the first atomic bombing.

Three days after Hiroshima, the Americans dropped "Fat Man" on Nagasaki. I deliberately did not call this bomb the second atomic bomb. Because I think, I am sure, that all of us here can agree on one thing: If the bomb dropped on Hiroshima was the first one used in a conflict situation, the Nagasaki bomb must have been the last use of the atomic bomb in history.

"Never more.

We must never lose sight of the fact that Hiroshima was the beginning of a new era, and it is imperative that we meditate on the words of the philosopher Günther Anders, for whom, since the bomb exists, **"we have become 'more mortal', for we are no longer able to kill only men, but humanity itself.**

Moreover, beyond the utter inhumanity of the use of atomic bombs on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, recent historical work has demonstrated their absolute uselessness.

We are now going to inaugurate the peace garden in the town of Lasséran and, on this occasion, the children of the town and all those who wish to do so will erect Sentinels of Peace on this site.

The approach of the association "Sentinels of Peace, a stone laid is not thrown" is to propose a symbolic gesture, accessible to all. Through an artistic "Land Art" approach, art being a universal mediation, the raising of stones in balance that we call "Sentinels of Peace" makes people aware of the fragility of many balances of life, of our world, and in particular of peace... Here, it is the way to mark the world with a "symbol" in order to stimulate and perpetuate the "active memory" of the two atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

A first symbol

The pile of stones made available to participants in all our actions to erect "Sentinels of Peace" can be seen here, in this context, in a "symbolic" way as the ruins, consequences of the two atomic bombings, but of course also as the ruins and destruction consequences of all wars.

By "raising" "Sentinels of Peace", by using the stones of this heap of "ruins", people engage in a symbolic reconstruction of the destroyed buildings, but above all they inscribe this act in a step and a commitment for peace.

A second symbol

These are also and above all precious lives that were instantly destroyed by the bombings. The process of "**raising**" or "**putting back up**" the Sentinels, because a Sentinel of peace is fragile in time, can also be seen symbolically as the will to ensure the memory of the victims and also the relief of the "Hibakusha", these direct witnesses of the only atomic bombings in human history.

For, as the Mayor of Nagasaki recalled in a speech on 9 August 2016:

"Seventy-one years after the atomic bombings, the average age of the Hibakusha, the atomic bomb survivors, is over 80. The world is quietly moving towards 'an age without any more Hibakusha. The question now arises of how to pass on the lessons of the war and the atomic bombing that resulted from that war to the next generation.

The demand for a "succession" to be ensured is clearly present in this passage of the Nagasaki mayor's speech. In the French language, the verb "relever" has several meanings, including "to raise" something that has fallen, but also "to take over", in this case, to ensure the transmission of a message to future generations. By the "gesture" of raising or putting back up a Sentinel, each one of us expresses his or her will not to see this commitment to peace disappear, but to see this peace process always present, always "standing" and never letting it fall. And by this gesture, you are in fact a "**Sentinel of the memory of the Hibakusha**" and of their call for a world of peace free of nuclear weapons.

For the philosopher Günther Anders: *"What is morally decisive is not the blindness to the apocalypse, but the bomb itself, the fact that we have it. This means that it is the morality of the bomb [...] that we have to worry about here."*

This means that as long as the countries that have the bomb do not give it up, as long as they represent a threat simply because they have it, they must be considered guilty of posing the threat, it must be said again, of the destruction of humanity.

It is the mere fact of possessing the bomb that is absolutely immoral.

A third symbol

A sentinel erected can be seen as the symmetrical or rather the opposite of a mushroom cloud.

In conclusion, I hope you will not mind if I call on Günther Anders again, as he is an important author in raising awareness of the dangers of nuclear weapons.

At the end of one of his books, he said the following: *"My principle is: if there is the slightest chance, however small, of being able to contribute to something by intervening in this dreadful situation in which we have put ourselves, then we must do so."*

Which of course obliges me to talk about Lasséran and the remarkable work that has been going on here for years to promote peace. And on this subject,

Mr. Soriano told me during a preparatory meeting: "*If a small town like ours can do this work, the other towns have no excuse not to do it*".

So I salute the mayor of Lasséran and his entire municipal team, the municipal staff, the school teachers and the pupils, who have made this day possible, all of you, artists, volunteers and participants of all generations...,

THANK YOU