

By the Atomic bombing, this whole area was destroyed. Towns and temples disappeared. Some years later, a big Buddha statue was carried to this exact place from a northern mountain of Hiroshima. The Buddha, which had been called "Hiroshima Daibutsu", had quietly received and consoled many Hibakusha's deep sorrows and sufferings at the most serious times.

Then, the Hiroshima Buddha had gone missing at the time of the Peace Park construction. But a few years ago, it was found that it is enshrined at Gokurakuji Temple in Nara City. The chief priest of the temple happened to pass in front of our ceremony and participated together with us and raised a flag.

We learned for the first time that the place we have been holding a flag ceremony every year, was exactly the same place where the Hiroshima Great Buddha was enshrined and many survivors and Hibakushas had visited here and prayed. Hiroshima citizens who did know about the Hiroshima Daibutsu have almost all passed away.

By a curious coincidence, Gokurakuji Temple in Nara, has held the flag ceremony every year to pray for the peace of each country in the world on August 6 at the same time as us.

I would like to introduce a message from the chief priest of Gokurakuji Temple.

(reading of a message)

Thank you very much.