

PRESS RELEASE

February 27, 2013

The Right Reverend Dr. Gunnar Stålsett,
Bishop Emeritus of Oslo in the Church of Norway
to receive the Niwano Peace Prize

The Niwano Peace Foundation will award the thirtieth Niwano Peace Prize to The Right Reverend Dr. Gunnar Stålsett, Bishop Emeritus of Oslo in the Church of Norway.

The presentation ceremony will take place in Tokyo, Japan, on Thursday, May 16th, at 10:30 a.m. In addition to an award certificate, Bishop Gunnar Stålsett will receive a medal and twenty million yen.

The Niwano Peace Prize recognizes Bishop Stålsett's extraordinary and persistent work for peace. His life and career are truly examples of what is needed and what can be done to bring about lasting and just peace, and what religious ideas, ideals, and inter-religious institutions can contribute. The Niwano Peace Prize honors Bishop Stålsett's service to humankind in its search for wisdom and paths to peace.

To avoid undue emphasis on any particular religion or region, every year the Peace Foundation solicits nominations from people of recognized intellectual and religious stature around the world. In the nomination process, some 600 people and organizations, representing 125 countries and many religions, are asked to propose candidates. Nominations are rigorously screened by the Niwano Peace Prize International Selection Committee, which was set up in May of 2003 on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the Niwano Peace Prize. The Committee presently consists of twelve religious leaders from various parts of the world, all of whom are involved in movements for peace and inter-religious cooperation.

Here are some comments by members of the Committee on the selection of Bishop Stålsett for this year's award:

- - I was deeply impressed by Gunnar Stålsett's personal stature: his solid and incessant commitment to peace in concrete mediation activities in various parts of the world, the interfaith dimension of his activities, as well as his involvement in various international peace institutions and for the cause of social justice. The interview added insight on the candidate's sense of mission and his attention to God's guiding light in his life. (by J. Povilus)
- - Bishop Gunnar Stålsett is a tireless worker for peace, a deep believer in

the broad peace to which we aspire, with justice and a spiritual foundation. He has been directly and indirectly involved in a host of conflict situations around the globe over many years. He has also been serving as a leader of many peace organizations, including Nobel Peace Prize Committee, the Niwano Peace Prize Committee, Religions for Peace, etc. (by P. Doojai)

- - After a long life devoted to peace and reconciliation between religions in many countries Bishop Gunnar Stålsett is an outstanding example of the kind of person who deserves recognition by the award of the Niwano Peace Prize. (by A. Unterman)
- - He has been involved in world social policy change with wisdom and vision. He is an Elder in the world movement of peace and spirit. (by M. Hodgson)
- - Bishop Stålsett is a tireless, highly respected peacemaker in many parts of the world. He has provided wise leadership in the political field as well as in worldwide and regional Ecumenical and Inter-religious organizations. (by B. Rantakari)
- - Notwithstanding the important reservations we discussed last year about our personal engagement with Gunnar, he truly exemplifies what we seek for the Niwano Peace Prize, with his openness, his determination to work for peace, his courage in taking stands, and the strong and wise spiritual inspiration he brings. (by K. Marshall)

The Niwano Peace Prize

The Niwano Peace Foundation established the Niwano Peace Prize to honor and encourage individuals and organizations that have contributed significantly to inter-religious cooperation, thereby furthering the cause of world peace, and to make their achievements known as widely as possible. The Foundation hopes in this way both to enhance inter-religious understanding and cooperation and to encourage the emergence of still more persons devoted to working for world peace.

The Prize is named in honor of the founder and first president of the lay Buddhist organization Rissho Kosei-kai, Nikkyo Niwano. For Niwano, peace was not merely an absence of conflict among nations, but a dynamic harmony in the inner lives of people as well as in our communities, nations and the world. Seeing peace as the goal of Buddhism, Niwano devoted much of the last half of his life to promoting world peace, especially through inter-religious discussion and cooperation.

Past Niwano Peace Prize recipients are:

1. Archbishop Helder P. Camara (1983)

2. Dr. Homer A. Jack (1984)
3. Mr. Zhao Puchu (1985)
4. Dr. Philip A. Potter (1986)
5. The World Muslim Congress (1987)
6. Rev. Etai Yamada (1989)
7. Mr. Norman Cousins (1990)
8. Dr. Hildegard Goss-Mayr (1991)
9. Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne (1992)
10. Neve Shalom/ Wahat al-Salam (1993)
11. Paulo Evaristo Cardinal Arns (1994)
12. Dr. M. Aram (1995)
13. Ms. Marii K. Hasegawa (1996)
14. The Corrymeela Community (1997)
15. Ven. Maha Ghosananda (1998)
16. The Community of Sant'Egidio (1999)
17. Dr. Kang Won Yong (2000)
18. Rev. Abuna Elias Chacour (2001)
19. Rev. Samuel Ruiz Garcia (2002)
20. Dr. Priscilla Elworthy (2003)
21. The Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative (2004)
22. Dr. Hans Küng (2005)
23. Rabbis for Human Rights (2006)
24. Dharma Master Cheng Yen (2007)
25. His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal (2008)
26. Rev. Canon Gideon Baguma Byamugisha (2009)
27. Ms. Ela Ramesh Bhatt (2010)
28. Mr. Sulak Sivaraksa (2011)
29. Ms. Rosalina Tuyuc Velásquez (2012)

The Niwano Peace Foundation

The Niwano Peace Foundation was chartered in 1978 to contribute to the realization of world peace and the enhancement of a culture of peace. The Foundation promotes research and other activities based on a religious spirit and serves the cause of peace in such fields as education, science, religion and philosophy. The Foundation's endowment of about 4.0 billion yen makes possible the Niwano Peace Prize and other activities such as grants, research projects, lectures, symposia, and international exchanges. The Niwano Peace Foundation is a government-recognized charitable organization. Contributions are tax-deductible.

For further information please contact Mr. Tadashi Takatani of the Niwano Peace Foundation.

Tel: +81-3-3226-4371

Fax: +81-3-3226-1835 E-mail: t.takatani@npf.or.jp URL: www.npf.or.jp