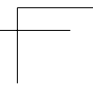
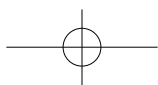
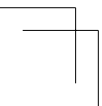
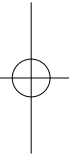
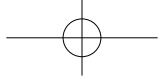
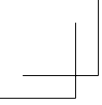


Hiroshima Reconstruction and Peacebuilding Research Project

# Hiroshima's Path to Reconstruction

January 2025

"Hiroshima for Global Peace" Plan Joint Project Executive Committee  
(Hiroshima Prefecture and The City of Hiroshima)



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Based on the Hiroshima Reconstruction and Peacebuilding Research Project Report

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### List of Abbreviations

ABCC: Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission
GHQ: General Headquarters / SCAP
HICARE: Hiroshima International Council for Health Care of the Radiation-Exposed
ICJ: International Court of Justice
ICRC: International Committee of the Red Cross
JICA: Japan International Cooperation Agency
NGO: Non-governmental Organizations
NHK: Nippon Hoso Kyokai
NPDI: Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative
RCC: Radio Chugoku Company, RCC Broadcasting Co. Ltd
UNITAR: The United Nations Institute for Training and Research

## Part I

# A Short History of the Reconstruction of Hiroshima:

Based on the Hiroshima Reconstruction and Peacebuilding Research Project Report



Supplementary information:

“A Short History of the Reconstruction of Hiroshima” was revised and restructured based on *Learning from Hiroshima’s Reconstruction Experience: Reborn from the Ashes* (March 2014) edited by the “Hiroshima for Global Peace” Plan Joint Project Executive Committee. Readers are encouraged to refer to the original report which is located on the Hiroshima Prefecture’s website at <https://hiroshimaforpeace.com/reconstruction/>

## Introduction

The fire bombings of the Second World War left over 200 municipalities in Japan burned down and war damage reconstruction projects were carried out in 115 cities by the War Damage Reconstruction Agency during the postwar period. Hiroshima, an atomic bombed city, was at first treated in the same way as other cities that were destroyed in air raids carried out with conventional weapons. For many years, no special attention was paid to the reconstruction of Hiroshima. However, in more recent years, after the Great East Japan Earthquake occurred on March 11, 2011, coupled with the severe damage caused by the resulting Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant accident, Fukushima and Hiroshima began to be discussed together, and more attention was directed towards the reconstruction of Hiroshima.

At the same time, conflicts and civil wars have occurred in various parts of the world, such as in Iraq and Afghanistan, where wars erupted after the terrorist attacks on the United States in 2001. In all these cases, reconstruction itself has become a big issue for peacebuilding. Needless to say, Hiroshima is not the only city which was reconstructed from a field of burned-out ruins. But many people who visit Hiroshima, including those engaged in the reconstruction projects of war-stricken countries, are always impressed at the feat of the reconstruction of Hiroshima. They walk through the city after visiting the Peace Memorial Museum and express a desire to learn more about the reconstruction of Hiroshima. What about Hiroshima causes them to view it as an example of reconstruction, and what do they want to learn from Hiroshima?

The damage and destruction caused by the atomic bombing in Hiroshima had different features from those of cities that suffered air raids by conventional weapons. These characteristics of the damage Hiroshima suffered in the war are closely related to the challenges Hiroshima faced in the process of reconstruction.

First, the mortality rate was higher and the scale of the destruction experienced in Hiroshima was greater than that of other cities and the major facilities concentrated in the city center were completely obliterated. On August 6, 1945, the city of Hiroshima suffered catastrophic damage from atomic bombing. It is said that around 140,000 people (roughly 40% of the population) died within the year of the bombing (1945). Just before the bombing, there were 76,327 buildings in Hiroshima City. Of those, 70,147, roughly 92% of all the buildings were destroyed or burnt. Also, excluding mountains, forests and unused fields, the usable land area of the city was 33,000,000 square meters, of which around 40% was reduced to ashes.

Second, many residents became the victims of radiation exposure from the nuclear weapon and the postwar administration faced a major issue of addressing the radiation damages unique to the atomic bombing.

Third, Hiroshima worked to find a new identity beyond being a military city. This resulted in the city's successful transformation into an international city of peace culture. Hiroshima had developed as a military city, assuming important military functions ever since the Meiji period. After the defeat in the war and the dismantling of the Imperial Japanese Army, Hiroshima worked at building a new identity under the "Peace Constitution." The entire local community, including the government administration, economic circles and citizens, worked together for the sake of reconstruction, and various projects involving the political, economic, and cultural sectors were undertaken.

As a result, the Hiroshima of today which is defined by “peace” gradually began to take shape.

The following chapters begin with an overview of the modern history of the city, then, Hiroshima from war time until the atomic bombing is described, and then, the manner in which reconstruction and the restart from ruins occurred is traced.

## **1 Modernization of Hiroshima**

The history of Hiroshima city begins with the construction of a castle located on the delta of the Ota River in 1589 by Terumoto Mori. Hiroshima was among several large local castle towns in the Edo period after Nagoya, Kanazawa and other major towns. After the Meiji Restoration, the town of Hiroshima became home to the Hiroshima Prefectural Government and the Hiroshima Garrison (later the Fifth Division) Headquarters of the Imperial Japanese Army. This helped the city maintain its position as the regional center of politics and military.

In the Meiji period, the Ujina Port was completed after five years of arduous construction in 1889, and the Sanyo Railroad and the streetcar in the city opened. In addition, new bridges and road networks, which traversed the delta were built. In addition to the cotton-spinning industry, one of the earliest industries to construct modern large-scale factories in Hiroshima, the city became home to the large-scale factories of the heavy and chemical industries in the period between World War I and World War II. The heavy and chemical industries developed as Hiroshima’s major industries.

Hiroshima was also a center of learning before the war and had a variety of educational institutions. The state-run Hiroshima Higher Normal School, opened in 1902 was known as the top school in the field of education in the western Japan. Both the Hiroshima Higher Normal School in the west and the Tokyo Higher Normal School in the east provided top level education in the field of education in the country. Moreover, many national government offices and branch offices of nationwide businesses were established in the city, and Hiroshima became a city with a large population after the six big cities in Japan. Hiroshima’s past as a center of administration, a military capital, and a center of learning led its transformation into a modern city.



A view overlooking the Aioi Bridge, the Nakajima district, and the Industrial Promotion Hall as seen from the Hiroshima Prefectural Commerce, Industry and Economic Association building (today’s Hiroshima Chamber of Commerce and Industry) at the east end of the Aioi Bridge around 1938. (Photo by Wakaji Matsumoto)

## **2 War and Hiroshima, the Devastating Impact of the Atomic Bombing**

As described above, Hiroshima was one of the most important military cities in Japan. Hiroshima Castle became a military base. With the outbreak of the First Sino-



## Part I A Short History of the Reconstruction of Hiroshima

Japanese War started in July 1894, Hiroshima became a major base for troop dispatch and military logistics. It was not generally known that a major poison gas production facility had been constructed (in April, 1929) on the Okunoshima Island in the Seto Inland Sea, located in the prefecture. In addition, during the final days of World War II, the Headquarters of the Second General Army, established to command troops in western Japan, was stationed in Hiroshima in preparation for decisive battles on the mainland.

On July 25, 1945, the United States narrowed down the potential targets of the A-bombing to the four cities of Hiroshima, Kokura, Niigata and Nagasaki (Kyoto was also picked at first, but excluded for political reasons). On August 2, the decision to use an atomic bomb on August 6 was made and the first target was Hiroshima. In the early dawn hours on August 6, 1945, the Enola Gay, a B-29 bomber, took off from Tinian Island in the Mariana Islands and headed straight to Hiroshima with an atomic bomb, nicknamed “Little Boy.” The morning of August 6, the weather in Hiroshima was sunny. Then, at 8:15 a.m., the Enola Gay dropped an atomic bomb. After falling for approximately 43 seconds, it exploded mid-air in a nuclear eruption approximately 600 meters above the Shima Hospital, slightly southeast of the Aioi Bridge which was the target. In the moment it exploded and a gigantic fireball appeared, intense heat rays were emitted, causing the ground temperature of the surrounding area reach to temperatures between 3,000 to 4,000 degrees centigrade. Also, the intensive bomb blast created maximum wind speeds of 440 meters per second at the hypocenter. The blast spread out radially, and swept the entire city in about 10 seconds.

### Overview of the damage to Hiroshima from the A-bomb

The Dropping of the Atomic Bomb	August 6, 1945-8:15 a.m.
Destruction wrought by the A-bomb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Characteristics</b>—The mass destruction and killing was indiscriminate and instantaneous. For years to come, many would suffer from the effects of radiation. Their struggle continues to this day.</li> <li>● <b>Heat Ray</b>—between 3,000 and 4,000°C at ground level (Iron melts at 1,500°C)</li> <li>● <b>Blast</b>—440 meters per second near the hypocenter. (A major typhoon may produce winds of 30~40 meters per second.)</li> <li>● <b>Radiation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial radiation (released in the first minute after detonation)</li> <li>• Residual radiation (remained above ground for a period of time after the first minute), which indirectly led to the illness or death of many who entered the city after detonation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Death (by the end of December, 1945)	Around 140,000±10,000 had died. The figure for Nagasaki was around 74,000±10,000.
Current status of A-bomb survivors (March 31, 2024)	Total population in Japan: 106,825 (Hiroshima City: 37,818) Average age: 85.58 (Hiroshima City: 85.20)

Source: “Hiroshima Pocket Peace Guide”  
(Produced by Peace Promotion Division, International Peace Promotion Department, Citizens Affairs Bureau, The City of Hiroshima)

Although the heat rays were only emitted for a short period of time, their extreme intensity caused anyone within a one-kilometer radius from the hypocenter either to die on the spot or to receive multiple severe burns. Even people over three kilometers away from the hypocenter were burned on the parts of their bodies that were not covered by clothing. Wooden structures located within two kilometers of the hypocenter were completely destroyed, and there were people left trapped under the remains. Shortly after, the fires broke out spontaneously from the heat rays, and the fires that started among the ruined buildings spread. Thirty minutes after the explosion, Hiroshima was covered in a disastrous firestorm. Anything flammable located within a two-kilometer radius of the hypocenter was engulfed in flames, and many people were burned to death.



Hiroshima in ruins. A photo taken from the Hiroshima Prefectural Commerce, Industry and Economic Association building (today's Hiroshima Chamber of Commerce and Industry), located at the east end of the Aioi Bridge. Oct. 5, 1945. (Photo by Shigeo Hayashi, Courtesy of Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum)

Radioactive waves emitted from the explosion caused severe damage to the human body. At a distance of one kilometer from the hypocenter, neutrons and gamma rays gave off four grays of radiation, estimated to be enough radiation to cause the death of one out of every two people. One after another, people showing no external injuries became sick after a couple of days and later died. People who were not directly exposed to the atomic bombing were also exposed to radiation. This included those who lived on the outskirts of town, where people were not directly exposed to the bombing but radioactive black rain fell, and those who were exposed to residual radiation upon entering the city.

It is unknown exactly how many people died from the atomic bombing. On August 6, at the time of the atomic bombing, it is estimated that there were about 350,000 people in Hiroshima City, including inhabitants, military personnel, and people who lived outside the city and commuted to the city for work. At that time, there were not only Japanese people, but also many people of different nationalities living in the city. They included Japanese-Americans born in the U.S., German priests, exchange students from Southeast Asian countries, people from Korean Peninsula and Taiwan which had both been under Japanese colonial rule at that time, people from the Chinese mainland, and a dozen U.S. prisoners of war. None of them escaped the devastation of the atomic bombing. The resources that Hiroshima City handed over to the United Nations in 1976 estimated the number of deaths to have been  $140,000 \pm 10,000$  at the end of 1945.

Rescue operations, the disposal of the dead and the removal of debris were carried out immediately after the bombing by the military. People searched everywhere for their lost parents, children, and siblings. Many had to cremate the remains of family members on their own. As unprecedented chaos unfolded, Hiroshima was blanketed in a cloud of grief and loss. Signs of the city's future reconstruction from the catastrophe were far, far, in the distance.

### 3 Reconstruction Planning

The atomic-bombing completely destroyed the city, including buildings as well as the public infrastructure, such as transportation and communication facilities and water and sewage systems. The reconstruction of Hiroshima City first began with development of urban infrastructure under the national government's war-damage reconstruction project as one of the 115 war-damaged cities in Japan. The citizens of Hiroshima City worked hard on emergency infrastructure restoration from the catastrophic damage, formulated reconstruction plans, and implemented reconstruction projects.



Restoration work at the Aioi Bridge (1946)  
(Photo by Yoshita Kishimoto. Courtesy of Hiroshi Kishimoto)

With the emergency restoration of infrastructure, it is said that the trains and streetcars were among the first services restored. As a result of the hard work put into the restoration and maintenance of the network, on August 9, three days after the bombing and the day the second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki—streetcar operations partially resumed in one section. On August 8, just two days after the bombing, the Japanese National Railways Sanyo Line was also reopened between Hiroshima and Yokogawa (a station next to Hiroshima Station). The main streets were first cleared of debris, just enough to let traffic flow again, and then the surface of the streets and the parapets of the bridges were repaired.



Proposed relocation plan of Hiroshima,  
from *Hiroshima Hibaku Yonju Nenshi: Toshi no Fukko* (Hiroshima Toshi Seikatsu Kenkyukai, 1985)

The water-supply system was also heavily damaged. Water pumps resumed operations four days after the bombing. However, water leaked and spouted at many places in the city; and repairing the waterworks was an arduous task. It is said that it took nine months to restore the water supply to the outskirts of the city. In the meantime, ground water was hand-pumped at many places after the war. The sewage system in Hiroshima was also seriously damaged. The situation gradually improved through efforts including the emergency restoration of the drainage pumping

stations and the clean-up and maintenance of the sewer pipes.

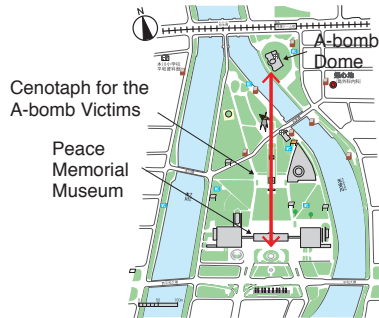
As for the city's reconstruction plan, 34 reconstruction plans proposed by citizens, government officials, and foreign people were published at the Hiroshima City Reconstruction Council and in newspapers. It was thought that reconstruction of the city from the ruins would be nearly impossible; but the reconstruction plan pursued the highest ideals attainable at the time, with ambitious plans for roads, including 100-meter wide roads, parks, green areas, and land readjustments to secure land for infrastructure. At that time, Hiroshima City was having financial difficulties with its budget. Citizens and those who were engaged in the reconstruction had to work hard and at times heavy burdens were imposed on citizens for the sake of reconstruction. At the same time, various forms of aid and support from overseas helped Hiroshima citizens to overcome the crisis that followed in the aftermath of the bombing.

#### 4 The Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law

Initially, the reconstruction planning (Hiroshima Reconstruction City Planning) encountered many problems such as financial difficulties, lack of human resources and shortages in materials and public land. Due to the catastrophic damage from the bombing, tax revenue was minuscule in Hiroshima City. Among the financial difficulties of the war-ravaged cities across the country, the hardship of Hiroshima was most extreme. In order to cope with these conditions, Hiroshima mayor Shinzo Hamai, city council members, and other local people concerned made strenuous efforts to find a way and lobbied the national government and the Diet. As a result of their efforts, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law was enacted as a special law based on Article 95 of the Constitution of Japan (a law that applies to a specific local public entity) in 1949. The law was supported by the local referendum, and it was promulgated and enforced on August 6 of that year (1949).

Enactment of this special law paved the way for special assistance from the national government, the transfer of national government properties and pushed reconstruction efforts forward. In addition, Hiroshima City was designated a "peace memorial city" under Article 1 of the law, stating, "Hiroshima is to be a peace memorial city symbolizing the human ideal of the sincere pursuit of genuine and lasting peace." Following the establishment of this law in 1952 the previous "Hiroshima Reconstruction City Plan" was amended to the "Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Plan." In the course of the amendment, a special project for constructing "peace memorial facilities" was approved, and this made the construction the Peace Memorial Park, one of the special features of the reconstruction plan, possible.

In 1949, a design competition for the Peace Memorial Park was conducted. First



Design for the Peace Memorial Park by the Kenzo Tange group

[The center of the museum (in the South), the Cenotaph for the A-bomb Victims (in center) and the A-bomb Dome (in the North) lie on a straight line.]

prize was awarded to the design submitted by Kenzo Tange's group. This competition, along with the design competition held the year before by the Catholic church located in Nobori-cho, Hiroshima (today's Memorial Cathedral for World Peace), attracted attention as a new trend in the field of architectural design, with the keywords of "Hiroshima" and "Peace."



The display hall under construction (July 1, 1952)  
(Courtesy of Hiroshima Municipal Archives)

First, the construction of the display hall, which later became the main building of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, started in February 1951. Then, the construction of the Peace Memorial Hall, today's Peace Memorial Museum's East Building, began in March of that year. The construction took a long time

because of the tight budget and the buildings were left unfinished for some time. In 1955, four years after the start of construction work, these buildings were completed one after another. At that time, the park itself was still full of homes that residents had been ordered to vacate. These houses were all cleared from the park by 1959, and the park was almost complete.

The benefits of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law were extensive—not only limited to just such special financial assistance from the national government. The law also provided moral support to the citizens by assuring them that the national government was watching over and assisting them. It seemed that the moral support accelerated the reconstruction. The efforts made by those in Hiroshima were not the only factors that played important roles in Hiroshima's reconstruction process; the support framework as well as physical and moral support played a significant role.

On the other hand, the reconstruction process in Japan typically started with a public authority that established the infrastructure. Once the land was prepared, what types of buildings would be constructed and how livelihoods would be rebuilt were typically left up to the private sector, such as land owners, building owners, and residents. Though there was a system to provide public loans—but for those in poverty, building their houses on their own was still quite difficult. Many people struggled daily just to get by. The implementation of the Peace Memorial City Construction Plan faced criticism and dissatisfaction from the citizens from time to time, such as disapproval for the land readjustment policies. We also must not forget the burden and sacrifices made on the part of the citizens during reconstruction process.

## 5 Pains Accompanying Redevelopment and Reconstruction

As discussed repeatedly, it was not easy to redevelop the city. In the area designated as roads, parks, and the riverbank greenbelts under the "Hiroshima Reconstruction City Plan," clusters of illegal housing and shops had been constructed by those who had lost their homes. The harsh reality was that the first step in reconstruction had to begin with the compulsory removal of the illegal buildings (in some locations).

For example, the Nakajima district, which would later go on to become the Peace Memorial Park, had a dense concentration of houses, shops, and recreational facilities before the atomic bombing. Being within 500 meters of the hypocenter, it suffered great damage. After the war, that large area was designated as a space for a park, and the residents were forced to relocate to other places. The residents in this area were not able to rebuild their communities as they had no choice but to live separately in different locations after the land readjustments.

The land owners, entitled to receive land at the time of the land readjustment, were able to start new lives on their new property, but those without such foundation were, in many cases, left with no choice but to live in illegally-built housing. As construction of the park progressed, those who lived in these illegal houses were evicted one after another.

From the Meiji period up until the atomic bombing, the Moto-machi district was the embodiment of a military city with many military facilities. As the Moto-machi district was also located a short distance, roughly one kilometer from the hypocenter, it also suffered devastating human and physical damage. In the war damage reconstruction plan, the western side of the former military site in Moto-machi was to be used mostly for park land. However, in measures to counteract the lack of residences, the city and prefectural governments and the Housing Corporation built emergency housing in this area.

By 1949, a total of 1,800 public homes had been built in the Moto-machi district. Still, there was a desperate need for housing, resulting in a barrage of illegal constructions along the banks of the Ota River by those without land. Later, the old public housing was replaced to mid-rise housing complexes. The construction of mid-rise housing complexes did not lead to the removal of all of the old and illegal structures from the densely packed housing clusters. Redevelopment of this area was the biggest task in the final stage of the war-damage reconstruction project in Hiroshima.



The surrounded central roof area converted to a green strip above the central shop (Photo courtesy of Norioki Ishimaru)

In March 1969, the Moto-machi district was designated by the national government as an area to be developed under the Residential Areas Improvement Act and the redevelopment project in the district started. Along the riverbanks, forced evictions from the illegally built homes were conducted as the greenbelts were being developed, and the Moto-machi and Chojuen high-rise apartment complexes were built by the residential area improvement project. The mall in the center, the rooftop gardens, and the piloti were also constructed in addition to housing. Today, the high-rise apartment complexes in Moto-machi have become historic structures that tell the story of Hiroshima's reconstruction process.

## ⑥ Rebuilding of Industrial Economy

Since before the World War II, there was a high concentration of manufacturing sector in Hiroshima City in proportion to its population, but both factories and workers

were devastated by the atomic bombing.

Under these extremely harsh circumstances, how was Hiroshima able to rebuild its industrial economy so quickly? Here, we turn to the Census of Manufactures (compiled by the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry, the former Ministry of Commerce and Industry, or the former Ministry of Munitions) for clues. At the time the Census of Manufactures reviewed its statistics by prefecture. While the figures for Hiroshima Prefecture were used as the primarily reference material in this study, data compiled by Hiroshima City was covered as much as possible.

The number of employees in the manufacturing industry with five or more full-time workers in Hiroshima Prefecture returned to prewar levels between 1947 and 1948. This may partly be due to the fact that damage to major factories, located away from the hypocenter, was relatively minor. There were many victims from among those worked at these major factories located 4-5.5 kilometers from the hypocenter, but the facilities themselves had relatively little damage.

A large number of workers also contributed to the recovery and reconstruction of the manufacturing industry. The ratio of the number of workers out of the total number of employees in the prefecture was higher than the prewar and postwar national averages. In addition, female workers put a break on the postwar decrease of the number of workers.

Also, the relatively smooth transformation of the military facilities into private company facilities, especially in the manufacturing industry, strongly supported the reconstruction. The former army and naval facilities not used by the Allied Occupational Forces were transferred over to private control one after another, further facilitating the reconstruction of the manufacturing sector.

The manufacturing industry had been a key industry in Hiroshima Prefecture since the prewar period; however, size of individual factories and productivity were below the nationwide average. This figure improved after the war and exceeded the national level. Possible explanations for this improvement include the transformation of military facilities to private sector, the special procurement of the Korean War which erupted in June 1950, and the “Productive Prefecture Plan” announced by the prefectural government in December 1952. In April 1952, the construction of new ships, once prohibited under the Allied occupation, was allowed, and the shipbuilding industry which had gathered in the prefecture since before the war, became thriving. It gave this plan a great push.

### Reconstruction of Industrial Economy

A high concentration of manufacturing in Hiroshima City in proportion to its population

Both factories and workers were devastated by the A-bombing.

Factors of the quick rebuilding of Hiroshima's industrial economy after the A-bombing

- ◆ Inflow of workers from outside the city
- ◆ Active capital investments
- ◆ A large-stock of workers (both male and female)
- ◆ Smooth transformation of the military facilities to private companies



[Hiroshima Prefecture]

- ◆ Special procurement for the Korean War (1950~1953)
  - ◆ “Productive Prefecture Plan” and the thriving of manufacturing including shipbuilding industry
- ⇒ in 1968, Hiroshima Prefecture's value of manufacturing shipments reached the 1st in the Chugoku, Shikoku, and Kyushu Regions

Comparing data of 1940 and 1948, it is shown that the number of very small factories that were primarily family-run decreased sharply. It can be inferred that as the majority of these factories in Hiroshima City were established in mixed residential-factory areas relatively near the hypocenter, they suffered devastating human and physical damage and these businesses were unable to continue.

After being freed from focusing on manufacturing for the war industry, skilled-workers, ex-military personnel, the unemployed, and others worked to establish new businesses through their robust entrepreneurship. In the 1950s, a highly-dense agglomeration of “primary supporting industries” had formed in the center of Hiroshima City and supported production and prototyping of major enterprises. The manufacturing sector would continue to support the reconstruction of industrial economy in Hiroshima Prefecture until the 1970s.

## **7 Medical Care and Support for A-bomb Survivors**

Medical facilities and healthcare professionals in Hiroshima City also suffered devastating damage and casualties from the atomic bombing. All medical facilities in urban areas, excepting those made of reinforced concrete, were destroyed. A total of 2,168 (91%) out of the 2,370 healthcare professionals in Hiroshima City were exposed to the atomic bombing.

Physicians were prohibited from evacuation at that time, in preparation for relief activities in the event of an air raid. There were 298 physicians still in Hiroshima City at the time of the bombing. Of these physicians, 90% were affected and there were only 28 physicians who were uninjured. Dentists, pharmacists, and nurses also suffered as well. The healthcare professionals who were to be in charge of providing treatment for the injured and sick suffered catastrophic damages.

In critical condition, without regard for their own injuries, the healthcare professionals who narrowly escaped death treated people in bombed medical facilities and relief stations hurriedly set up in schools, temples, bridges, roads, and parks. Rescue teams came to help, not only from within the prefecture but also from the neighboring prefectures such as Okayama, Yamaguchi, and Shimane, and all the way from Osaka, Hyogo and other prefectures. There was support from abroad as well. Dr. Marcel Junod, the new head of the International Committee of the Red Cross’ delegation in Japan, arrived in Japan on August 9, 1945. He immediately negotiated with the GHQ for support, after he was informed of the appalling conditions in Hiroshima, and on September 8 he came to Hiroshima himself, bringing along approximately 15 tons of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment provided by the US army. Dr. Junod stayed in Hiroshima for four days and was involved in the relief activities.

In the late 1940s, immediately after the bombing, before medical care for A-bomb survivors was carried out systematically, physicians in Hiroshima were already working to provide medical care for A-bomb survivors and to conduct research on their health conditions, and making gradual progress. Their steadfast efforts later brought free medical treatments to A-bomb survivors. On March 1, 1954, the Daigo Fukuryu Maru (Lucky Dragon No. 5), a Japanese fishing boat, encountered the nuclear fallout (“ashes of death”) from a hydrogen bomb test conducted by the United States at Bikini Atoll, and crew members in the boat were exposed to radiation. After the Bikini Atoll Incident, action to petition the national government to support A-bomb survivors began. This



action spurred the formation of a law providing medical benefits to A-bomb survivors. It was a major step forward for the health and medical care, and for the welfare of A-bomb survivors.

By the end of the World War II, Hiroshima Prefecture had few public hospitals, and there were no medical institutions of higher education, or their affiliated hospitals. Instead, it was home to a number of military hospitals. After the war, military hospitals and the Japan Medical Treatment Corporation hospitals were diverted to national and prefectural hospitals. This helped increase the number of public hospitals in Hiroshima Prefecture to 74 by the early 1950s. In 1952, Social Insurance Hiroshima Citizens Hospital opened in Hiroshima city. Facilities for health and medical care gradually improved, primarily through public hospitals such as the Hiroshima University Hospital. In 1956, the Hiroshima Atomic-bomb Hospital which was specialized in treatment of A-bomb survivors opened on the premises of the Hiroshima Red Cross Hospital. In 1961, the Hiroshima Atomic Bomb Survivors Welfare Center opened as a healthcare and livelihood support facility for survivors.

Development of Hiroshima's medical sector is a monument to the hard work and impassioned efforts of Hiroshima's physicians, who were driven by their own feelings of guilty about the fact that they had been unable to do anything for people struggling with pain. The knowledge and expertise of those physicians who faced hardships as pioneers of the search for effective treatments for A-bomb survivors, have been passed down and has contributed to the medical care of radiation victims around the world.

### 8 Media and Reconstruction

How did the Japanese and foreign media cover the disaster wrought by the first atomic bombing in human history?

Journalists in news organizations tried to spread word of the unprecedented conditions in Hiroshima City. They were also suffered from the atomic bombing, and telephone and telegraph services were interrupted. Reporters of various news organizations struggled hard to send out their first-hand reports of Hiroshima's destruction. However, in the midst of unprecedented confusion, every one of these became "lost reports." Sometimes these reports were not shared because their head offices could not immediately believe the massive scale of the damages, and other times the reports failed to reach offices entirely in the confusion.

The Chugoku Shimbun had continued to issue the only newspaper in Hiroshima Prefecture at the time. The head office of the company was located some 900 meters east of the hypocenter. The building equipped with two rotary printing presses was completely incinerated in the bombing. The Chugoku Shimbun lost 114 employees or one out of every three employees of the head office.



The Chugoku Shimbun's head office building after being completely destroyed by the fires of the atomic bombing in 1945. (Photo by Toshio Kawamoto, Collection of Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum)

It is said that the first news report of the atomic bombing was a 6 p.m. radio broadcast on August 6. The national government and the military authorities hid the enormity of the damages from the atomic bombing and continued to tightly control the press in order to maintain morale among the people. Reporters were unable to report what they saw with their own eyes during the war. The reporters of the Chugoku Shimibun formed the “*kudentai*” (Verbal Reporting Corps) on August 7, to give verbal reports on emergency relief policies for victims of the bombing, temporary relief stations for the wounded, emergency provisions, and various other situations.

The photo below was taken by Yoshito Matsushige, a photographer at the Chugoku Shimibun, and shows A-bomb victims at the Miyuki Bridge, some 2.2 kilometers from the hypocenter. It was taken just past 11 a.m. on August 6. Matsushige was caught up in the bombing at his house in Midori-machi (currently Nishi Midori-machi, Minami-ku, Hiroshima City), some 2.7 kilometers southeast of the hypocenter. Fortunately, both he and his camera were unharmed. On the day of the bombing, he took five photos. These photos came to represent the atomic bombing of Hiroshima; but as the head office of the Chugoku Shimibun was completely burned, they could not run these photos in the newspaper. The first publication of these photos was on the page of *the Yukan Hiroshima*, dated July 6, 1946.

On August 14, 1945, the Japanese government accepted the Potsdam Declaration, and on the next day, August 15, the Showa Emperor’s imperial edict ending the war was broadcasted over the radio and the war came to an end. During the confusion that came with defeat, the strict press regulations from military authorities collapsed. On August 19, a photo of the ruins of Hiroshima was featured in newspapers, reporting the tragic scene nationwide. The people of Japan saw a part of the catastrophe wrought by the atomic bomb with their very own eyes. After reporting on the power of the atomic bomb, the press began reporting on the effects of radiation sickness.

As for the foreign media, Leslie Nakashima, a Japanese-American from Hawaii, sent out the first on-the-spot report from Hiroshima. Following Nakashima’s report, the American and European reporters who entered Hiroshima also ran their own reports. It was impossible for these reporters to miss the cruelty of the atomic bombing. At the

same time, films recorded in Hiroshima were used to reinforce the legitimacy of the atomic bombing. However, after the occupation of Japan by the General Headquarters (GHQ) started, coverage of the atomic bombing was blocked again. The media has not completely thrown off its yoke and self-imposed regulations until Japan recovered its sovereignty in April 1952.

Later, a national movement demanding to ban atomic and hydrogen bombs and a movement by A-bomb survivors to ask for support in the form of state reparations that began after the Bikini Atoll Incident in March 1954. The media responded to these movements by creating a foundation of the coverage of the atomic bombings and peace and dealt with the issue of



Photo taken at the Miyuki Bridge, immediately after the bombing (just past 11 a.m. on August 6, 1945). (Photo by Yoshito Matsushige, Courtesy of the Chugoku Shimibun)

## Part I A Short History of the Reconstruction of Hiroshima

nuclear weapons from a humanist perspective, as people are the ones who suffer from the effects of nuclear weapons.

How did the people of Hiroshima survive life in the ruins? The only choice left for many citizens who suffered from the atomic bombing, and those who evacuated during the war and returned to a city that had been completely reduced to ruins, was to rebuild their livelihoods on their own. A census of the city's population on November 1, 1945 shows that the population had dropped to one-third of its pre-bombing levels, leaving it at just under 140,000 people in the periphery of the city, which had escaped the fires.



The urban area three months after the bombing. Left to the back is the Hatchobori district. (Photo by the Chugoku Shimbun, November, 1945)

Even with the arrival of peace that followed defeat in the war, the rationing of staple foods did not increase but continued to decrease. People's main staples were potatoes and thin rice gruel mixed with vegetables and wild grasses. Black markets sprouted up immediately and thrived in the ruins of Hiroshima. Just after the bombing, at around the end of August 1945, small stalls appeared in the area in front of Hiroshima Station. However, the black markets in Hiroshima City fell into rapid decline following police crackdowns, and gradually transformed into public and private markets.



The Hiroshima City Children's Library opened with donations from people of Japanese Americans. (Photo by the Chugoku Shimbun, 1952)

Before the war, Hiroshima was the prefecture with the largest number of people emigrating overseas. People of Japanese origin with ties to Hiroshima living across the globe quickly moved to support their hometown. Donations and relief goods were sent from Hiroshima Kenjinkai, the Hiroshima society in California, Hawaii, Brazil, Argentina, and elsewhere to support reconstruction efforts.

The creation of a professional baseball team in Hiroshima, the Hiroshima Carp, gave the people even more reasons to dream. Unlike the other teams, the Hiroshima Carp had no parent company, and its capital funds were contributed to by local governments and influential people in the government and private sectors. While they experienced serious financial difficulties from their start, the people of the city and the prefecture started supporters' groups to support their local team through donations. People came to see the development of the team as tied with the progress of the reconstruction and development of Hiroshima.

The Korean War, which erupted in 1950, brought with it a boom in special procurement around the country. The people of Hiroshima began to feel tangible improvements in their daily lives, including having more food and clothing. At the same time, citizens had to make strenuous efforts to overcome strain and inconsistencies, to finally achieve a full reconstruction. These included forced evictions under the land readjustment projects of war damage reconstruction, an ever-increasing need for garbage and sewage treatment on the heels of a rising population, the redevelopment projects of the Moto-machi district, and more. As former Mayor Hamai, also called the “A-bomb Mayor,” once wrote: “We’ve lived through it.” This sentiment is shared by the citizens who made tremendous efforts to rebuild their lives from the ashes of the atomic bombing.

## 9 A City in Search of Peace

### (1) Peace Administration

Hiroshima City’s peace administration undertook the significant role of promoting a crucial part of the reconstruction process—the creation of a new identity for Hiroshima. Two years after the bombing, the Constitution of Japan was enforced on May 3, 1947. In Hiroshima, various actions were taken in support of the pacifism of the new constitution. On August 6, 1947, in response to the citizens’ requests, the first Peace Festival was held by the City and other organizations under the slogan of promoting a lasting peace.



Peace Memorial Ceremony held on August 6, every year and participated by 40,000-50,000 people (Courtesy of the City of Hiroshima)

In addition, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law (enforced on August 6, 1949) was the crystallization of Hiroshima citizens’ thoughts on the new constitution in a form of a law as the will of the people of Japan. At the start of the reconstruction of Hiroshima, there was a strong awareness of the pacifism inherent in the constitution among the citizens.

The Peace Festival has been held annually except for 1950. Today, it has been renamed the Peace Memorial Ceremony, and the Mayor of Hiroshima delivers the Peace Declaration during the ceremony which conveys Hiroshima’s wish for the abolition of nuclear weapons and the realization of lasting world peace.

### (2) Peace Movements

The Peace Festival organized by Hiroshima City could be called the start of the peace movement, based on the experiences of the atomic bombing. The citizens’ call for world peace communicated from Hiroshima through means such as the Peace Declaration, and garnered great sympathy not only from within Japan but also from overseas. Various global actions for peace drew attention to the A-bombed cities, with the World Federalist Movement and the Partisans for Peace Movement coming to wield particularly powerful influence on local governments and citizens in Japan. The peace movements implemented by Hiroshima citizens gathered proponents of preserving the A-bomb Dome, elucidating the realities of the atomic bombing, and passing on survivor’s experiences of the bombing. The activities discovered a direction that leads to

the activities of the NGO's of today.

After the war, some were of the opinion that the A-bomb Dome should be preserved, while others were of the opinion that it should be torn down. Discussions were frequently held among citizens. However, as the urban area became reconstructed and the A-bombed structures gradually disappeared, the public support for preserving the A-bomb dome became stronger. In the summer of 1966, Hiroshima City decided to preserve the A-bomb Dome, and a fundraising campaign to cover the necessary costs began. As a result, donations from within Japan and abroad poured in, the goal far surpassed. Hiroshima City commemorated completion of the preservation work by holding a "Hiroshima Atomic Bomb Exhibition," in major cities including Tokyo, which were well received in all locations.

The success of the fundraising for the preservation of the A-bomb Dome and of the subsequent A-bomb exhibitions showed that presenting the facts of the atomic bombings could arouse public interest in the abolition of nuclear weapons. Since the late 1960s, apart from the preservation movement for the A-bomb Dome, there have been other efforts in Hiroshima to clarify the realities of the atomic bombing, and share and pass it on to society and future generations. Particularly, the map restoration project of the A-bombed areas elicited numerous testimonies about the realities of the bombing from citizens, and led to the formation of various citizens' organizations with such objectives as praying for the repose of the A-bomb victims.

In 1975, NHK called for the citizens to draw and submit pictures of the atomic bombing to be kept for future generations, and many A-bomb survivors supported this project. They voluntarily drew pictures and wrote captions depicting their own experiences of the bombing. It is said that about 900 pictures in total were sent to NHK. These pictures were first displayed at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, and have subsequently continued to play a role in communicating the realities of the atomic bombing in Japan and abroad.

### (3) Restart of Schools and Peace Education

According to the *Hiroshima Genbaku Sensaishi* (Record of the Hiroshima A-bomb War Disaster) (City of Hiroshima, 1971), 78 schools were damaged in the atomic bombing. Of them, 34 were either completely destroyed or had burned down, seven were completely destroyed, four had completely burned down, 20 were half-destroyed, and one was half-burned, leaving just 12 in usable condition. After the bombing, the majority of those schools were used as temporary relief stations for the injured, so for some time, it was impossible to conduct classes at schools.

However, the first action taken towards resuming classes was quick, and schools in Hiroshima City gradually resumed classes between September and November 1945. In fact, many children had lost their families and teachers were also suffered from the bombing, and there were, actually, very few students who attended the day schools reopened. Although schools were reopened, classrooms and teaching materials were practically nonexistent. Teachers brought their own materials, or had to use handmade teaching materials or those that were donated.

Japan was placed under the control of GHQ after the war ended, and it was made to shift from militarism to democracy. A new school system (six years of primary school, three years of junior high school and three years of senior high school system) was

implemented in April 1947. In that year, the Fundamental Law of Education was enacted, and education based on the Courses of Study as the standard for curricula launched.

In September 1951, the San Francisco Peace Treaty was signed. In the April of following year, 1952, the peace treaty went into effect and Japan recovered its sovereignty. Therewith, the occupation of Japan by GHQ ended. The restrictions on the freedom of speech was gradually eased around that time. For example, *Genbaku no Ko; Hiroshima no Shonen Shojo no Uttae* (Children of the A-bomb: Testament of the boys and girls of Hiroshima, Iwanami Shoten, 1951), a collection of essays by children, was compiled to present their A-bomb experiences by Arata Osada, an A-bomb survivor and professor at Hiroshima University. After the Bikini Atoll Incident in March 1954, peace movements calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons spread throughout Japan. These movements also led to a peace movement initiated by children after Sadako Sasaki's death, to pray for peace by folding paper cranes, and to establish a symbolic monument for children.

The academic abilities of Japanese children improved remarkably as a result of the educational policies introduced through the revisions in the Course of Study to promote the systematic approach of teaching. According to an international comparative study of scholastic abilities, Japan achieved higher rankings. After these survey results were published, education in Japan became a focus of international attention. It was believed that education was a factor that enabled Japan's recovery from the tragedy of the war.

In 1969, the Hiroshima Prefecture Hibakusha (A-bomb survivor) Teacher's Association was established and teachers in Hiroshima began a movement promoting peace education. Initiatives focused on passing down A-bomb experiences took a firm hold in the 1970s, and peace education was stimulated nationwide by a movement to promote school trips to visit the A-bombed cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

#### **(4) A-bomb Survivors' Personal Perspectives on Peace**

What are the A-bomb survivors' perceptions of their A-bomb experiences in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and what messages do they want to pass down future generations? This section takes up the survey titled, "Questionnaire Survey: 60 Years after the Atomic Bombings" conducted by the Asahi Shimbun in 2005 and examines the survivors' responses to the open-ended questions to shed light on the survivors' personal perspectives on peace, using statistical methods. The questionnaire targeted 38,061 people who possessed either the Atomic Bomb Survivor's Certificates or the Class 1 Health Check Certificates, and was conducted as a joint project with Hiroshima University.

First, the top 50 words that appeared most frequently in the experiences and messages written by 6,782 respondents are taken up. Words related to the recollections of their A-bomb experience can be mainly classified into two groups: (1) cluster of words describing the unforgettable hellish scenes from after the bombing, expressed with words such as "head," "face," "hands," "burns," "hospitals," "corpses," "water," and "voices", and (2) cluster of words expressing A-bomb experiences in relation to family members, such as "mother," "father," and "home."

Words such as "world," "peace," "nuclear weapons," and "nuclear" appear frequently in testimonies of A-bomb survivors. As pointed out earlier, it can be seen that the core element of the survivors' perspectives on peace was "world peace" achieved through

the “abolition of nuclear (weapons)” through the questionnaire. Based on their tragic A-bomb experiences, the survivors of the atomic bombings have gathered the core of their strong messages to protest against nuclear weapons.

The survivors’ perceptions of their atomic bombing experiences differ slightly by gender. Women tended to talk more about A-bomb experiences in relation to their family. The analysis of the testimonies shows that men had a stronger tendency to advocate for peace through the abolition of nuclear weapons, while women had a stronger tendency to call for peace, by calling for not only the abolition of nuclear weapons but also the absolute renunciation of war. This suggests perspectives on peace also differ by gender. Despite slight observable difference in messages according to gender, there were no significant differences seen according to location (Hiroshima or Nagasaki), age, or survivor category (according to how they were exposed to radiation). In other words, the survivors shared a common desire in their peace perspective, “world peace through the abolition of nuclear weapons.”

The “Questionnaire Survey: 60 Years after the Atomic Bombing” also asked the survivors what has supported them emotionally. According to answers received from respondents, the survivors’ physical and psychological trauma was alleviated by their families, communities and the peace movements. With these supports, they have tried to overcome their tragic experiences and have established their perspectives on peace, which is a world without nuclear weapons.

## Conclusion

What can be learned from Hiroshima's reconstruction experience?

The first point to be noted is that destruction in itself does not mean the end. The first step in Hiroshima's reconstruction began the very instant following the atomic bombing when it seemed that everything had been lost.

Second, reconstruction is an act that generates something new and simultaneously revitalizes what had been handed down from the past and nearly lost. Hiroshima's reconstruction did not create everything anew. It was also an initiative that brought back social functions, culture, and traditions that had existed in the Hiroshima communities before the bombing.

The third point is the significance of the stances that those who have directly experienced tragedy take as they tend to be the ones who most strongly long for peace. The presence of A-bomb survivors—their thoughts and attitudes—were essential to the construction of a city of peace in the reconstruction period.

Fourth, the road to reconstruction is not a straight path. In the course of Hiroshima's reconstruction, friction, opposition and clashes often occurred. However, the efforts for reconstruction may be even further solidified by overcoming those hardships.

Fifth, achieving reconstruction requires the active awareness of every citizen, even more so than special organizations, leaders, and other systems. Important roles were also played by the War Damage Reconstruction Agency, leaders such as the governors and mayors, people of the prefectural and city governments who were in charge, and systems such as the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law. However, what ultimately achieved and anchored the reconstruction was the repeated, everyday efforts of individual citizens who possessed and acted with a keen awareness that they were "citizens of the City of Hiroshima, a city of peace."



## Part II

# Questions for Hiroshima:

FAQ on Reconstruction of Hiroshima



## Q1 What was Hiroshima like before the atomic bombing?

**A** At the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Hiroshima was a small village with some small islands that floated on the mouth of the Ota River. In 1589, warlord Terumoto Mori started construction of his castle there. Two years later, he moved into this castle to rule the area and named it “Hiroshima.” Terumoto Mori joined the Western Army against Ieyasu Tokugawa in the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600 and lost the battle. After the battle, Mori was transferred to the provinces of Suo and Nagato and Masanori Fukushima, then appointed as lord of Hiroshima-han (a feudal domain), but in 1619, he lost his holdings for unauthorized castle repairs. Nagaakira Asano became the next feudal lord. Afterwards, Hiroshima had been a castle town of Hiroshima domain, with yielding of 430,000 koku of rice, governed by the Asano Family throughout the Edo period. Hiroshima developed as big city which was surrounded by inner and outer moats and canals, and with residential areas and temple districts established along with the Saigoku Kaido Road, which passed through the southern area of the castle.

After the establishment of a new Meiji government in 1868 followed by the Meiji Restoration, Hiroshima was made a prefecture in 1871, and the City of Hiroshima was established in 1889. As the prefectural capital, Hiroshima City developed into an economic and political center in western Japan. In 1889, construction of the Ujina port was completed. Then, railroad construction reached Hiroshima, and streetcars began operations in the city in 1912—Hiroshima’s transportation network has been developed. In addition, Hiroshima enjoyed its position as an industrial and educational center, with a booming spinning industry and the various educational institutions, such as the Hiroshima Higher Normal School. Hiroshima had become the core city of the Chugoku and Shikoku regions prior to World War II.

At the same time as the above developments, Hiroshima also developed into a military city. In the early Meiji period (1870s), the Hiroshima Garrison of the Fifth Military District (later reorganized and renamed the Fifth Division) was set up in Hiroshima, and troops such as the 11th Regiment of the infantry and the Western Drill Ground were set up around Hiroshima Castle. When the Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1894, Ujina port served as a gateway for dispatching military personnel and a 6-km military railroad, connecting Hiroshima Station and Ujina Port, was completed in a rushed construction project that took slightly more than two weeks. In September of that year, the Meiji Emperor moved the Imperial Headquarters from Tokyo to Hiroshima, to directly command the military, and the Imperial Diet was held in Hiroshima. The city of Hiroshima served as a provisional capital until April 1895. After the Sino-Japanese War, various Army troops and facilities were established in Hiroshima. At the very end of the Pacific War, in 1945, the Headquarters of the Second General Army, integrating troops stationed in Western Japan, was established in Hiroshima as the last line of defense for Western Japan, to prepare for the anticipated decisive battles on the mainland.



The Imperial Headquarters was placed in Hiroshima during the First Sino-Japanese War.  
(A picture postcard)  
(Courtesy of Hiroshima Municipal Archives)

## Q2

## What was reconstruction plan for Hiroshima?

**A** The reconstruction plan of Hiroshima City included (1) highly urgent emergency measures for restoration, and (2) a reconstruction plan targeting 115 cities throughout Japan based on the “Basic Policy for the Reconstruction of War-damaged Areas (*Sensai-chi Fukko Keikaku Kihon Hoshin*),” which was adopted by the Cabinet in December 1945.

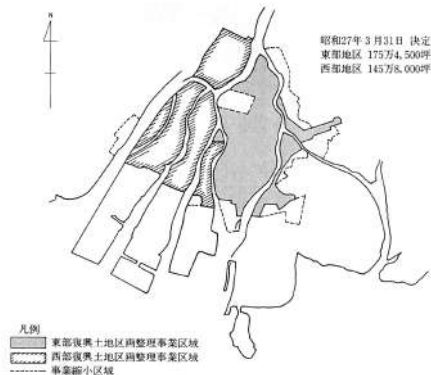
The first part [see (1) above] included funeral services for the victims of the atomic bombing, removal of debris, elimination of dangerous structures, restoration of the water-supply and sewage system, restoration of the transportation, electricity, gas, and telephone networks, and the construction of temporary housing. Starting in Fiscal Year 1946, these measures were implemented over the course of three to four years.

As the plan for reconstruction [see (2) above], plans for the construction of road networks, for parks and green areas, and for land readjustment were set by November 1946. However, at the time, Hiroshima City was having extreme financial difficulties meeting its budget, and projects were not able to proceed as planned. The city government and council urged the people, such as members of the National Diet, to obtain the support of the National Government. In May 1949, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law passed both houses of the National Diet, providing more generous support to Hiroshima than was provided to the other war-damaged cities. However, Hiroshima’s reconstruction plan had to be scaled back when fiscal austerity became unavoidable due to revisions made to the U.S. occupation policy in Japan that year.

Projects on road planning were implemented on 27 routes totaling about 80 kilometers. Trunk roads, including one 100 meter-wide road (currently Peace Boulevard) and others 36 to 40 meter-wide were constructed. The roads were drastically expanded compared to the prewar days, when most roads were 22 meter-wide.

As for the construction of parks, 88 parks, green areas (including riverbank greenbelts) and cemeteries were built in a 170 hectare area, some of them included the Chuo Park, which was constructed on a former military site, taking up an area of about 70 hectares in the city center, where the Fifth Division Headquarters was placed, and Peace Memorial Park which was constructed on the 11 hectare site of the former Nakajima district, which had been extremely near to the hypocenter.

Land readjustment projects were implemented in total area of about 1,060 hectares which included all areas that were totally burned and some of those that were partially burned in the atomic bombing. The City of Hiroshima handled an area of 579 hectares in the east and Hiroshima Prefecture handled 481 hectares in the western.



Partition of Land Readjustment

(Source: *Sensai Fukko Jigyoshi*, City of Hiroshima, 1995)  
(Courtesy of Urban Development Coordination Division,  
Urban Development Bureau, the City of Hiroshima)

### Q3

## What laws and frameworks supported Hiroshima's reconstruction?

**A** The Japanese National Government launched its reconstruction projects by establishing the War Damage Reconstruction Agency in November 1945. On December 30 of that year, the Cabinet adopted “the Basic Policy for the Reconstruction of War-damaged Areas,” targeting on 115 cities that had suffered particularly severe damage and starting reconstruction projects centered on land readjustments.

The City Planning Division of the Hiroshima Prefectural Government took a leading role in the reconstruction of Hiroshima City. By November 1946, the division formulated the Hiroshima Reconstruction City Planning that included projects for roads, parks and green areas, and land readjustment based on feedback from Hiroshima City government and local residents. Reconstruction projects for roads and parks and green areas were implemented under the framework of the previously developed City Planning Act. Regarding land readjustments, ad hoc city planning act went into effect in September 1946, and land readjustment projects were implemented under its framework.

Meanwhile, a variety of ideas (e.g. selling the war-devastated lands, building a horse racing track, and holding lotteries) were proposed to raise funds for reconstruction in addition to the two lotteries that were held: the Hiroshima Prefecture School Reconstruction Lottery (1948) and the Hiroshima Prefecture Public Infrastructure Reconstruction Lottery (1949). However, neither of these resolved the problem, nor did giving the former military land, which spread across 585 hectares, to the city free of charge, something that the city had the highest hopes for.

Shinzo Hamai, was elected as a mayor of Hiroshima in 1947 and started petitioning the GHQ, the National Government and the Diet in November 1948. He intended to acquire support from the National Government by getting special legislation approved. The mayor persuaded the authorities of the significance of using national funds for Hiroshima's reconstruction as a peace memorial city, and intended to formulate the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law. Tadashi Teramitsu, Director General of the Proceedings Department of the House of Councillors and originally from Hiroshima drafted a bill that passed both houses as legislation initiated by House members in May 1949 after obtaining the approval of the GHQ. Both houses approved the bill unanimously.

The Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law is made up of seven articles. Article 1 states “It shall be the objective of the present law to provide for the reconstruction of the city of Hiroshima, as a peace memorial city, to symbolize the human ideal of the sincere pursuit of a genuine and lasting peace,” and Article 4 clearly states that ordinary assets may be transferred to local public entities as deemed necessary by the National Government. The law paved the way for reconstruction under the generous support of the National Government.



Poster calling for participation in a local referendum for the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law (1949) (Courtesy of Hiroshima Municipal Archives)

## Q4

## Was there any friction during the reconstruction process?

**A** Hiroshima's reconstruction was led by local governments, such as prefectural and city governments, and sometimes their actions alienated local residents.

Black markets were established in front of Hiroshima Station immediately after the war – an area that was filled with clusters of illegal constructions that often caused massive fires. In March 1949, fires caused about 100 houses and 500 shops to burn. And from 1955 to 1957, the area experienced great fires, which badly burned several dozen homes and shops every year. This made measures for eliminating illegal constructions a pressing issue. However, resolving the issue through talks between Hiroshima City and local residents proved challenging. In September 1957, the city authority carried out compulsory evictions accompanied by the police. In 1965, the Hiroshima Station Building with seven stories and one underground story was completed and the reconstruction in this area was almost settled.

In Moto-machi district, southwest of Hiroshima Castle, there was an expanse of former military land. A total of 1,815 public housing units were built there, including temporary housing units built by the City by around 1947. However, illegal homes were also built in the area and reached 2,500 in number in 1949. By 1960 or so, another 900 makeshift shacks lined up along Aioi Street which stretched along the riverbank, and at the time was referred to as an “A-bomb Slum.” This area also suffered from frequent fires.

After 1954, in Moto-machi district, construction plans for a bus terminal, a baseball stadium (the former Hiroshima Municipal Baseball Stadium), and 53 four-story municipal housing buildings had been proceeding and so the city had to procure sites for these projects as soon as possible. Particularly, the city tried to secure a site for the baseball stadium by relocating decrepit municipal housing. However, 800 residents formed an alliance against the evictions in December of that year. This led the city government to finally decide to build the stadium outside the municipal housing district. It was completed in July 1957, and adored by citizens as the home of the local professional baseball team, the Hiroshima Toyo Carp.

Eventually, the redevelopment of the Moto-machi district was carried out, by both the prefectural and city governments, as a housing improvement project rather than a war damage reconstruction project. The problems associated with illegal buildings were finally solved when 2,600 shacks were removed between fiscal years 1969 and 1974. Then, 8-to20-story high-rise housing buildings (accommodating 2,805 families) were completed in 1978 by the prefectural and city governments and the Housing Corporation. Today, these high-rise housing buildings are called evocative of Hiroshima's reconstruction history.



A fire outbreak on Aioi Street  
(Collection of the Chugoku Shimbun)

**Q5**

## How severe were the economic losses following the atomic bombing and how were industries and the economy restored?

**A**

### Economic loss

Economic loss refers to the physical property lost (e.g. buildings, machines, equipment, roads, and bridges) and financial assets lost (e.g. cash, deposits, savings, stocks, and securities). Unfortunately, estimating the value of the financial assets that were lost is practically impossible as crucial documents and books were incinerated. However, there are ways to estimate the value of the physical property that was lost.

For example, a survey conducted by the City of Hiroshima revealed that 70,147 out of a total 76,327 buildings including houses, stores, factories, and schools had been totally or partially incinerated or destroyed. This number included 64,000 private homes and 600 factories, allowing us to estimate the amount of damaged furniture, private property, and plant facilities.

According to the *Municipal Handbook* 1946 edition (1947) published by the City of Hiroshima, the total amount of damage in six categories (private homes, buildings, bridges, roads, private property, and communication facilities) was estimated to have been 763,430,000 yen (at the time). On the other hand, a report published by the Economic Stabilization Board in 1949 estimates the total property damage in Hiroshima City was 695,000,000 yen (at the time). (For reference, the exchange rates for Japanese yen to U.S. dollar was 50 yen/dollar in 1947 (military exchange rate) and 360 yen/dollar in 1949.)

More detailed data on the total losses can be found in *Hiroshima, Nagasaki no Genbaku Saigai* (1979), jointly edited by Hiroshima City and Nagasaki City. It estimated there was 884,100,000 yen (value as of August 1945) lost. This amount was equivalent to the annual income of 850,000 average Japanese persons at that time—since Japan's per-capita income in 1944 was 1,044 yen.

### Reconstruction of industrial economy

The reconstruction of Hiroshima's industrial economy was driven by a variety of factors. It can be noted that most of the factories damaged by the A-bombing were small, with less than five employees, and located in the heart of the city. Many large-scale factories survived the devastation, and the workforce of Hiroshima Prefecture remained almost the same level.

One more major factor for the reconstruction was government led projects. In September 1949, Hiroshima City announced a five-year plan for reconstruction of its industry (draft), which set a goal of increasing industrial production by 3.3 times its fiscal year 1948 level by fiscal year 1953; and this goal was almost achieved. Special procurement demands during the Korean War, which broke out in June 1950, also contributed to increased production of automobiles and canned foods and laid the foundation for the economic growth that would occur in subsequent decades.



Downtown of Hiroshima City, July 1953  
(Collection of Hiroshima Municipal Archives)

Q6

## What systems or research/support institutions were formed to provide medical care for A-bomb survivors?

### A Legislation

In March 1954, the crewmembers of a Japanese fishing boat, the Daigo Fukuryu Maru (Lucky Dragon No.5), were exposed to the radiation of the American hydrogen bomb tests at Bikini Atoll in the Pacific Ocean. In response to this incident, a movement to ban nuclear bombs was launched and A-bomb survivors began taking action requesting national support in order to cover the costs of their medical treatment and for assistance with their living expenses. As a result, the A-bomb Survivors Medical Care Law was enacted in 1956, and enabled survivors to receive health examinations and medical care by using national funds. The act was later amended in 1960, allowing some survivors to receive medical benefits for support with their living expenses. However, there were criticisms that the survivors eligible to receive these benefits was limited under certain conditions and that the livelihood support provided was insufficient. In 1968, the A-bomb Survivors Special Measures Law was enacted, enabling victims to receive special and healthcare allowances in addition to medical benefits.

However, there were still limits on distribution based on income, age and others factors. In 1995, the Atomic Bomb Survivors' Support Law was enacted by combining the A-bomb Survivors Medical Care and the A-bomb Survivors Special Measures laws. Through this law support for survivors expanded—to cover more than previous two laws—by eliminating the income limit, enabling survivors to receive allowances that included livelihood support and benefits for bereaved families of A-bomb victims.

### Research for the medical treatment of A-bomb survivors

Doctors in Hiroshima began provided medical treatment to A-bomb survivors immediately after the A-bomb attack. In January 1953, Hiroshima City and the Hiroshima City Medical Association established the Hiroshima Atomic Bomb Survivors' Treatment Council (ABSTC) (currently the Hiroshima Atomic Bomb Casualty Council), to offer free medical treatment and health checkups for survivors.

In 1956, the Hiroshima Atomic-bomb Hospital of the Hiroshima Red Cross Society (currently the Hiroshima Red Cross Hospital & Atomic-bomb Survivors Hospital) opened to provide medical services to those suffering from the aftereffects of radiation exposure. In 1961, the Research Institute for Nuclear Medicine and Biology (currently the Hiroshima University Faculty of Medicine, Research Institute for Radiation Biology and Medicine) was established at Hiroshima University to conduct fundamental research on issues such as the impact of radiation on the human body.

In 1947, the President of the United States issued a directive to continue carrying out investigations on the aftereffects of radiation, and the secretariat of the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission (ABCC) was established. In 1950, an institute was established in Hijiya district to carry out genetic research on survivors. However, these activities were criticized by survivors, who felt they were only being studied and not offered treatment. In 1975, the Japan and U.S. governments reached an agreement to reform the organization into the Radiation Effects Research Foundation (RERF) and have it continue doing researching survivors.

In 1991, organizations engaged in medical treatment for survivors and research on the aftereffects of radiation in Hiroshima worked together to launch the Hiroshima International Council for Health Care of the Radiation-exposed (HICARE), which provides training for overseas medical providers and sends professionals to overseas locations.

## **Q7** What support did Hiroshima receive from overseas?

**A** Of the foreign nationals who provided relief to Hiroshima, Marcel Junod, a Swiss doctor and chief representative to Japan of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), was probably the first. Dr. Junod arrived in Hiroshima on September 8, 1945 (one month after the A-bombing) and brought along approximately 15 tons of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment provided by the U.S. Army that saved many lives. Later, a monument was set up in a green space near the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum in commemoration of Dr. Junod; and the anniversary of his death (June 16) is still commemorated each year.

Floyd Schmoie, an American university lecturer, started making frequent visits to Hiroshima in 1949 and continuously built houses for those who had lost their homes in the atomic bombing. He fundraised in the U.S. and worked with Japanese volunteers. By 1954, he had built a total of 20 housing units and one community center. Since 2012, the community center, the last remaining structure, has been opened to the public as the Schmoie House, a branch of Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum.

Norman Cousins, editor-in-chief of the New York-based magazine, the *Saturday Review of Literature* visited Hiroshima in 1949. After Cousins returned to the U.S., he called on citizens to participate in a moral adoption program for Hiroshima's atomic bomb orphans. His decade-long efforts resulted in about 20,000,000 yen being sent to nearly 500 orphans to take care of their expenses. Cousins also helped female A-bomb survivors—who suffered from keloid scars—receive medical treatment in the U.S. In May 1955, 25 girls, made a journey to the U.S. and stayed for over a year while receiving operations and treatment.

Support was received from overseas Japanese immigrant communities as well. In April 1948, people living in Hawaii who traced their roots to Hiroshima Prefecture established the Hawaii Society for Relief of Hiroshima War Victims and sent total amount of 90,000 USD to Hiroshima Prefecture and Hiroshima City. In 1951, another 20,000 USD was sent to Hiroshima City. The Hiroshima City Children's Library and other facilities were constructed with the Hiroshima Kenjinkai of South California in the United States' four million-yen donation sent in 1950 and the Hiroshima Kenjinkai of Peru's 1.4 million-yen donation.



Monument in Memory of Dr. Marcel Junod



Q8

## What are the ongoing measures in Hiroshima to abolish nuclear weapons?

A

### Peace administration

The Peace Declaration has been delivered by the mayor of Hiroshima every year at the August 6 Peace Memorial Ceremony to convey Hiroshima's desire for the abolition of nuclear weapons to the people of the world. The recent declarations contain appeals including; becoming a party to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW); calling on all leaders of nuclear-armed nations to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki; and establishing a new security system based on trust and dialogue.

In July 2021, Mayors for Peace (president: Mayor of Hiroshima) formulated a new action plan and vision (PX Vision) for a peaceful transformation and a sustainable world. They have been developing various activities such as signature-collecting campaigns for issues including calling for early conclusion for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in collaboration with citizens from member cities, NGOs and various sectors. They also have been working on activities conveying the reality of the atomic bombing such as holding A-bomb exhibitions both overseas and in Japan.

Based on the "Hiroshima for Global Peace" Plan formulated in 2011, Hiroshima Prefecture began organizing the Hiroshima Round Table as an international conference seeking nuclear disarmament in East Asia, and working on compiling the Hiroshima Report, which is an outcome of a research project on the major countries' current status of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

So far, Hiroshima Prefecture, the City of Hiroshima and other municipal governments in the prefecture, have sent written protests to the governments of nuclear-armed nations each time they conducted nuclear tests. Since the 1990s, many of the nuclear-armed nations have unilaterally ceased nuclear explosion tests. Hiroshima Prefecture and the municipal governments in the prefecture continue to send written protests on the subcritical nuclear experiments carried out by the U.S.

### Two peace museums

Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and Hiroshima National Peace Memorial Hall for Atomic Bomb Victims are located in Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park. The museum conveys the reality of the atomic bombing through exhibition of articles and materials including; artifacts left by the A-bomb victims; photos; and drawings by the survivors. The memorial hall was established to mourn the lives lost in the atomic bombing through registration of the names and photos of the victims and to convey the A-bomb experience of victims through atomic bomb memoirs.

### Peace education

For the furthermore enrichment of peace education included in the curriculum of every local school, the Hiroshima Municipal Board of Education created a peace education program—the program would be carried out in accordance with students' stage of development. Since Fiscal Year 2013, the program has been provided at all municipal elementary, junior-high, and high schools.

The supplementary reading materials, "Hiroshima Peace Note," edited by the Hiroshima Municipal Board of Education, are organized to ensure that students know the importance of life, understand such important facts as the realities of the atomic bombing to develop future-oriented minds and then acquire the knowledge and abilities necessary to build a peaceful and sustainable society.



Hiroshima Peace Notebook

## Q9

# How are the citizens of Hiroshima working towards peace?

**A**

After the WW II, various activities and movements advocating for peace have been started in Hiroshima, matching in the trend of their times.

### The “lost decade”

The decade after the A-bombing (from 1945 to 1956 when a nationwide organization, Japan Confederation of A-and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations [Nihon Hidankyo] was established) is referred as the “lost decade.” This is because A-bomb survivors were neither understood by society nor fully supported by government administrations during those years. However, even in this period, anti-nuclear and peace movement gradually developed in Hiroshima. Specifically, in 1952, the Asia Congress for World Federation was held and called for a ban on atomic weapons.

### Bikini Atoll hydrogen-bomb incident drove the movements to action

In March 1954, the Japanese fishing boat Daigo Fukuryu Maru (Lucky Dragon No.5) was exposed to radiation from American hydrogen bomb tests at Bikini Atoll. Spurred on by the incident, movements against atomic and hydrogen bombs began across Japan; and the first World Conference against A & H Bombs was held in Hiroshima. Since then, movements in Hiroshima have taken leading roles in anti-nuclear and peace advocacy, and Hiroshima has consistently called for the abolition of nuclear weapons and relief for A-bomb survivors.

### Split and diversification of the movement against atomic and hydrogen bombs

As the movement against atomic and hydrogen bombs in Japan was linked with the labor movement, initially, the movement had the support of many political parties. However, the conservative party withdrew its support due to a conflict of opinion between the political parties. Then, the peace movement split into three in the early 1960s, and was weakened even further.

Coincidentally, this led to the rise of new citizen movements. The movements split from political activities and set more concrete objectives to achieve. Citizens worked together to achieve these many objectives including asking the Japanese government to issue a white paper on atomic and hydrogen bombs, restoration of a precise map of the A-bombed area, preserving the A-bomb Dome, organizing atomic bomb exhibitions throughout Japan, and purchasing movie footage of Hiroshima and Nagasaki taken by the U.S. Military. The activities of these movements were actively broadcasted with the full support of the mass media.

### Movement beyond the border

In the late 1970s, the movements expanded beyond Japanese borders. Signature-collecting campaigns for the abolition of nuclear weapons increased in scale until they were held across the country; and 18 million and 23.7 million signatures were collected for the first and second UN Special Sessions of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament, respectively (SSD I in 1978 and SSD II in 1982, both held in New York). Citizens of Hiroshima visited the U.S. (500 participated in SSD I and 1300 participated in SSD II) to call for the abolition of nuclear weapons. Since then, citizens have had strong interest in diplomatic campaigns for nuclear disarmament, such as those held by the United Nations.

### Issues following the enactment of the Law Concerning Relief to Atomic Bomb Survivors

A-bomb survivors have continued to demand nuclear weapons abolition and state reparations for damages caused by the A-bombing. In response to demands for reparations, in 1995, the Law Concerning Relief to Atomic Bomb Survivors was enacted. However, some citizens who had experienced the “black rain” and the resultant negative impacts on their health, were outside of the geographical area eligible for support under the aforementioned law. In 2021, the government addressed a lawsuit wherein said citizens demanded their own Atomic Bomb Survivor’s Certificates. In response to the citizens’ concerns, the government has since been improving support for A-bomb survivors, including by officially recognizing black rain survivors as A-bomb survivors and providing them relief since the beginning of the 2022 fiscal year. However, nuclear weapons abolition still remains a critical issue, and efforts to achieve it continue to this day.

## Q10 How is Hiroshima passing down the experience of the A-bomb to future generations?

**A** The City of Hiroshima has been conducting various measures to properly pass on the reality of the atomic bombing and the experiences of A-bomb survivors to future generations.

### Training A-bomb Legacy Successors

As survivors age, fading of the experience of A-bombing survivors has become a great concern, and passing along their experiences and desire for peace is an important and urgent challenge. In response to this issue, Hiroshima City started a three-year training program for A-bomb Legacy Successors in 2012. Furthermore, since 2022, Hiroshima City has also been accepting family legacy stories, and training Family Legacy successors to pass on their own relatives' stories.

### Sharing survivor testimonies with visitors to Hiroshima such as students

Visitors to Hiroshima including students of elementary, junior high and high schools on field trips are given opportunities to listen to survivor testimonies. 31 A-bomb survivors are commissioned by the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation (as of March 31 2024). In fiscal 2023 1,464 groups with a total of 113,463 individuals listened to testimonies.

### Hiroshima Peace Volunteer Program

A citizens' volunteer training program was started in 1999 and publicly-recruited volunteers offer visitors explanations about the exhibition at the Peace Memorial Museum and the monuments in the Peace Memorial Park. As of March 31 2024, 202 people are registered as volunteers, and they perform guidance on a rotating basis.

### Recording and utilizing videotapes of survivor testimonies

Since fiscal 1986, survivor testimonies have been recorded on videotapes to preserve as many testimonies as possible for future generations. As of March 31, 2023, a total of 1,317 testimonies are recorded.

### Hiroshima Peace Forum

Starting in fiscal 2002, Hiroshima Peace Forum is held to provide an opportunity through lectures and discussions for citizens to contemplate the atomic bombing and war, and to explore how they can contribute to cause of peace. Since 2009, the forum has been held in cooperation with Hiroshima City University.

Over 200 citizens and students from all age groups (from teenager up to 60s and 70s) take the course, which consists of six Saturday sessions held May through July in the first semester and from October to December in the second semester. (The program will be changed to twice a year in the next fiscal year.)

### Passing on the A-bomb experience through the use of AI and VR

In order to accurately and surely pass on the words of A-bomb survivors and their thoughts on peace to future generations, new efforts to pass on the A-bomb experience using digital technologies such as AI and VR include the production of "A-bomb testimony response devices," the creation of a search system that consolidates information on A-bomb accounts into a single database and uses AI for input and output, as well as the development of a new A-bomb testimonial response device. In addition, a search system that utilizes AI for input and output is being developed.

### Peace Study Program at elementary, junior high, and high schools

Peace Study Programs are offered by dispatching lecturers to schools in Hiroshima City to introduce the reality of atomic bombing and measures for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

In fiscal 2023, the programs were offered at a total of 95 schools.

Please refer to the following website for further information about Hiroshima City's devotion to peace.  
<http://www.city.hiroshima.lg.jp/www/contents/1418094048249/index.html>

## Q11

### Does Hiroshima support post-conflict regions?

**A** Originally, Hiroshima's peace efforts were focused on nuclear disarmament. However, the Hiroshima Prefectural Government has started announcing plans to support reconstruction in post-conflict regions.

#### Plan to support reconstruction efforts

Following the 50th anniversary of the atomic bombing, in 1996, the "Hiroshima International Contribution Plan" was formulated by Hiroshima Prefecture, the City of Hiroshima and other related organizations to contribute to world peace and prosperity under the principle of "peacebuilding" by reforming already existing initiatives. In 2002, Hiroshima Prefecture and the Nippon Institute for Research Advancement studied the theoretical significance of reconstruction support offered by local governments in their report *Kioku kara Fukko e: Funso Chiiki ni okeru Fukko Shien to Jichitai no Yakuwari* (From Remembrance to Reconstruction: Post-conflict Reconstruction and Revitalization as Agendas for Local Governments). In 2003, the *Hiroshima Peace Contribution Plan Report: From praying for peace to peacebuilding* was compiled.

Further, in 2011, the "Hiroshima for Global Peace" Plan was compiled as a new plan encompassing both the abolition of nuclear weapons and reconstruction/peacebuilding. Based on the plan, efforts to support reconstruction and peacebuilding in post-conflict regions have been implemented.

#### Actions based on the plans

Based on the plans above, Hiroshima Prefecture has worked together with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to support Cambodia's reconstruction under the framework of the "JICA Partnership Program" since 2005. This project provides support for human resource development mainly in the educational sector including elementary schools and elementary school teachers' training institutes in agricultural areas, in cooperation with universities in Hiroshima Prefecture as well as education professionals. Since 2014, Hiroshima Prefecture has also supported the training of young candidates to serve in local administrations in Mindanao, the Philippines, in collaboration with the universities in the prefecture. Mindanao Island had suffered from a conflict that lasted over 40 years.

Efforts are also being made in Cambodia towards activities to improve health and sanitation conditions in collaboration with NGOs, the faculties of medicine and dentistry of Hiroshima University, other universities in Hiroshima Prefecture and medical professionals, as well as the construction and furnishing of the "Cambodia-Hiroshima House" in Phnom Penh through the Hiroshima-Cambodia citizens' exchange group.



Cambodia Hiroshima House



Dental checkups in Cambodia

In addition, Hiroshima Prefecture has some institutions, including the Japan International Cooperation Agency's (JICA) Chugoku Center and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research's (UNITAR) Hiroshima Office. These institutions accept trainees from post-conflict countries/regions to support the human resource development needed to rebuild their nations.

## Q12 Why was Hiroshima able to successfully rebuild its infrastructure and culture in such a short period of time?

**A**

There are many possible explanations for Hiroshima's success. Several are outlined below.

### Occupation policy of the GHQ

The US-led General Headquarters (GHQ) basically ruled Japan, while keeping its prewar system of central and local administrations as well as police organizations, aside from leaders accused of war crimes. This helped maintain public order, even after the surrender of Japan. No civil war or revolution took place.

### New identity

During the prewar and wartime periods in Japan, the nation's sovereign power resided with the Emperor. Then, the country began to take on a militaristic tinge after the outbreak of the First Sino-Japanese war. However, after the World War II, most citizens accepted the reformed national structure as a peaceful state under the new Constitution. A pacifist principle of "never waging war again" became a backbone for a new identity for the people of Japan and enabled the country to concentrate on production activities.

As in other Japanese cities, the people of Hiroshima accepted this shift in their identity from a wartime "military capital" to a postwar "city of peace," allowing them to concentrate on reconstruction efforts.

### Reconstruction measures led by national and local governments

War damage reconstruction was a challenge of national significance in Japan. In 1945, the War Damage Reconstruction Agency was established and launched reconstruction measures as a national policy. In addition, thanks to the enactment of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law (a special law that applied to a specific local entity—based on Article 95 of the Japanese Constitution), Hiroshima received generous support from the national government to accelerate its reconstruction.

### Continuation of social structures

After the Meiji Restoration in 1868, politically, legally, economically, culturally, and educationally Japan promoted the modernization of its social structures to catch up with the Western world. Most of this social system (particularly the Civil Code and administrative systems) has been kept after World War II, even though the state as a whole was temporarily impoverished due to the defeat in war and was reformed by the GHQ to a certain extent. In this regard, Japan was able to effectively achieve reconstruction using its already-established social systems, though it had much more post conflict rebuilding to do than many other countries in the modern age, as those countries had to begin its nation-building from scratch.

### Industrial structure in Hiroshima and a working population

Before the atomic bombing, Hiroshima City had a relatively high concentration of manufacturing for the size of its population. The atomic bombing caused enormous in damage to factories/offices as well as loss in the number of workers. Meanwhile, factors including below contributed to the recovery and reconstruction of Hiroshima Prefecture's manufacturing industry, many of the major factories survived with relatively minor damage to their facilities due to being located away from the hypocenter, The ratio of the number of manufacturing workers out of the total number of employees in the prefecture was higher than the pre and postwar national averages, a steady supply

of workers including female workers, a relatively smooth transfer of military facilities to private company ownership, especially in the manufacturing industry, and boom during the special procurement that came with the Korean war.

**Message to those currently working to rebuild their countries**

It is suggested comparing the reconstruction issues that your country currently faces to the problems faced by Hiroshima in its reconstruction process, might be useful. Some issues are likely to be shared and others totally deferent. Each country or region has a different path to reconstruction. Hiroshima hopes to share its experiences so that you may find a better way to find success in your home country or region.

Part III

# Exploring Hiroshima:

Columns



# Map related to Hiroshima's Reconstruction



**Cenotaph for the A-bomb Victims**  
(Memorial Monument for Hiroshima, City of Peace)  
It resembles an ancient arch-shaped house, in part to shelter the souls of the victims from the elements. The stone chest in the center holds the registry of the names of persons who died from the bombing, regardless of nationality. As of 2024, 344,306 people have been registered in the list of A-bomb victims.

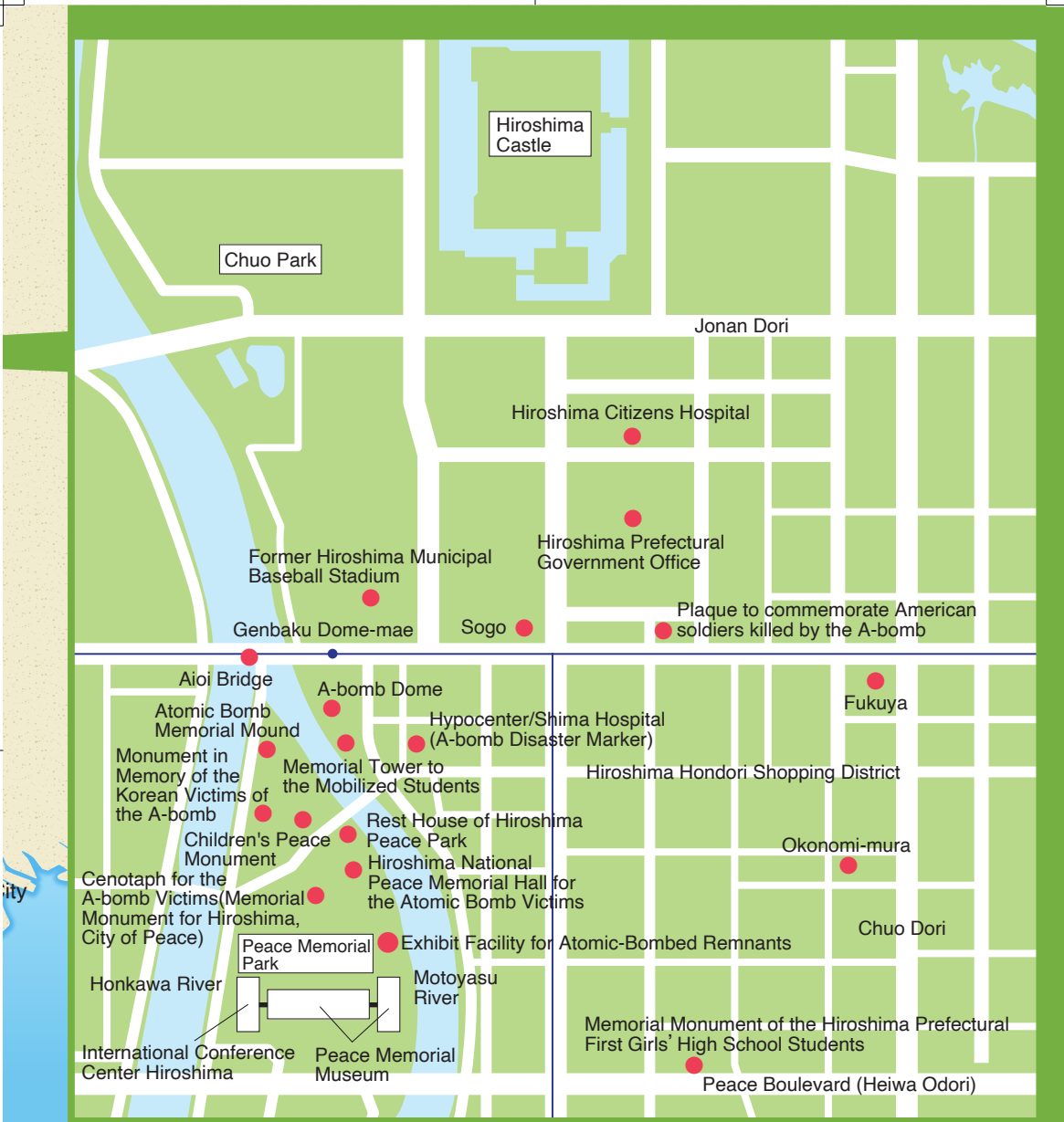


**Atomic Bomb Memorial Mound**  
A vault lies under the mound and contains the ashes of roughly 70,000 of the deceased that are unclaimed either because their names are unknown or their families and relatives have died.



**Children's Peace Monument**  
A bronze statue which was built in 1958 to mourn all the children who died from the atomic bombing and to pray for lasting world peace. A national call for donation put out by Sadako Sasaki's classmates and donation was collected from all over the country.





**Hypocenter/Shima Hospital**  
(A-bomb Disaster Marker)

The atomic bomb was exploded 600 meters sky above Shima Hospital. The building was destroyed instantly, and all patients, nurses, and others estimated to have been in the building disappeared without a trace.



**Former Army Clothing Depot**

The Former Army Clothing Depot was completed in 1914, and was an institution responsible for the manufacture and storage of the army's clothing and boots. Right after the atomic bombing it was used as temporary first-aid station, and after the war it was utilized as a school classroom and a shipping warehouse. In 19 January 2024, it received designation by the national government as an important cultural asset.

©Websites for useful information on the related sites



[Dive! Hiroshima]

<https://dive-hiroshima.com>  
Website managed by the Tourism Promotion Office of the Hiroshima Prefectural Government

## Okonomiyaki and the Hiroshima Toyo CARP

### Introduction

On October 15, 1975, the “Okonomimura (Okonomiyaki Village)” (in Shintenchi, Hiroshima) overflowed with customers. The crowd earned bragging rights that day as they cheered the first league championship of its local baseball team, the Hiroshima Carp. The party was televised throughout Japan, and it is said that that was the time when Hiroshima’s soul food, Okonomiyaki gained national recognition.

### 1. Special layering technique

Hiroshima’s unique Okonomiyaki is known for its carefully constructed layers, created using a creative cooking technique utilizing a spatula and a cast-iron grill. Unlike Osaka-style Okonomiyaki, which simply mixes all the ingredients together, Hiroshima Okonomiyaki is made up of layers of cabbage, small pieces of deep-fried dough, bean sprouts, deboned pork ribs, a crepe-like dough made from wheat flour and more. After cooking a while, the mixture is flipped over and Chinese noodles, that have been stir-fried separately, are added to it. Everything is layered on top of the thin round crepe and is flipped over. It is served with a local specialty sauce and green seaweed flakes.



Hiroshima Okonomiyaki  
(Collection of Hiroshima Prefecture)

The evolution of this Hiroshima-style Okonomiyaki coincides with the city’s reconstruction process. Shortly after the end of war, stalls selling simple dishes cooked on cast iron appeared on the streets near the hypocenter, barely escaping the devastating fires and destruction of the atomic bombing. Many of the stands were owned by women who also cooked the food. This may have been because so many women had been widowed in either the war or the atomic bombing. They started selling a dish referred to as Issen Yoshoku which had been cooked and sold at the mom-and-pop candy stores before the war. They served cheap simple dish of a wheat-flour mixed with water to make a crepe, baked on a cast-iron pan with green onion and shrimp, folded and eaten with soy sauce. Amid the food shortages in the postwar period, hungry children brought leftover vegetables or cold cooked rice from their home to Issen Yoshoku stands to have them wrapped in crepes to sate their hunger. These stands were operated like second kitchens in downtown areas and came to represent the spirit of community support among A-bomb survivors. Through trial and error, the ingredients were improved, as they were paired with the crepe, and gradually evolved into the Hiroshima-style Okonomiyaki of today.



An Okonomiyaki restaurant in Hiroshima  
(Collection of Hiroshima Prefecture)

Reconstruction in the central part of the city progressed, and stalls selling Okonomiyaki started appearing in the Shintenchu district around 1950. These stalls modified the Okonomiyaki created in the downtown stands by adding Chinese noodles and eggs (this increased the calories and richness to satisfy adults). In this way, the classic Hiroshima-style Okonomiyaki made with noodles, pork, and egg was made. At around the same time, a unique thick sauce that went fantastically with the Okonomiyaki was created. The Okonomiyaki stalls became a kind of community space for conversation and relaxation among the Hiroshima citizens after the atomic bombing.

In 1969, some of the Okonomiyaki stalls gathered in the two-story steel-frame building in Shintenchu to form the “Okonomimura (Okonomiyaki Village),” after which more and more of them continued to open. Today, there are nearly 900 Okonomiyaki restaurants in Hiroshima City (about 1,700 in Hiroshima Prefecture), attracting a vast number of travelers and students who visit Hiroshima on school field trips.

## 2. Brought up by the people of Hiroshima

Hiroshima’s professional baseball team, the Hiroshima Carp was founded in 1949. At that time, ruins of the atomic bombing remained everywhere in Hiroshima City. When Japan’s professional baseball league split into two in 1950, the Hiroshima Carp took advantage of the new opportunity to join the league. The addition of the Hiroshima Carp was approved, and its official formation was celebrated under the gaze of approximately 20,000 fans on January 15, 1950. Their first game was held on March 10. Among other reasons, the name “carp” was chosen because carp (a fish symbolic of success in life) were fished in the Ota River, and because Hiroshima Castle is nicknamed the *Rijo* (“Carp” Castle). Unlike other baseball teams, the Carp did not have a parent company. The Hiroshima Carp was born through the joint investments of the Hiroshima Prefectural Government, the City of Hiroshima, other local governments, companies and individuals in Hiroshima Prefecture. As the representative baseball team of the people of Hiroshima Prefecture, the team bears the name “Hiroshima.”

The Carp was established to encourage the people of Hiroshima City who were still suffering from the effects of the atomic bombing. In the very beginning of the history of the Carp, the team had players that were burdened by the shadows of war. Takashi Harada was experienced the atomic bombing while in Minami-machi, and Kenshi Zenimura, a Japanese-American from Hawaii, was sent to a Japanese-American internment camp during the World War II. At the beginning, though the team went through serious financial difficulties. There



Carp manager Takeshi Koba, Koji Yamamoto, and Yoshiro Sotokoba in the victory parade of the first league championship in Peace Boulevard (Courtesy of the Chugoku Shimbun)

were on-going delays in salary payments to players and the team suffered from a shortage of funds for traveling to away games. They even lacked the funds to buy uniforms for the players. The team's first manager, Shuichi Ishimoto, had to make every effort to raise funds. The team was faced with the crises of disbanded time and again. As can be expected, the people of Hiroshima started fan clubs at work to support their local team. Money was collected in Japanese sake casks (as Hiroshima is home to many sake brewers) and placed in front of the baseball stadium to save the team from distress. Reminiscing about those days, manager Ishimoto later recalled, "the citizens of Hiroshima, who suffered from the atomic bombing, found in the Carp something they could believe in" (*The Yomiuri Shimbun*, Oct. 16, 1975). In this way, fans called the Carp "our team" and had supported it so feverishly. The Hiroshima Municipal Baseball Stadium with Hiroshima's first night game facilities was constructed in July 1957 at a location facing the A-bomb Dome. The first night game was held on July 24 (and many years later the stadium was demolished due to age). Now, the home of the team is the newly-built Hiroshima Municipal Baseball Stadium, the "MAZDA Zoom-Zoom Stadium Hiroshima," (also known as "Mazda Stadium,") constructed in the vicinity of Hiroshima Station. The Hiroshima Carp came into being immediately after the atomic bombing and made progress that seemed to coincide with Hiroshima's reconstruction. The team is representative of sports in Hiroshima and has blazed a trail for community-based professional sports.

Sadly, for years the Carp continued losing games and were considered "a burden on the league," finishing dead last. In October 1974, Joe Lutz, who had coaching experience in the Major Leagues, became their manager—the first American manager of a Japanese professional baseball. He changed the color of the caps and helmets to red, which he called a "fighting color." As drastic trading of players and position changes had much success, the Carp made a splash in the pennant race with their red helmets the following year. On October 15, they won the league championship under their new manager Takeshi Koba, who took over the team after Lutz. The Hiroshima Carp won the long-cherished pennant (26 years after they were founded) and it was a time when their playing style, built upon for long time, blossomed.

### Conclusion

The Hiroshima Carp (officially named the "Hiroshima Toyo Carp"), Okonomiyaki, and the World Heritage Sites; the A-bomb Dome and Miyajima (Itsukushima Shrine) are just the beginning of Hiroshima's attractions. In terms of sports and culture, together with the Hiroshima Carp, the Sanfrece Hiroshima Football Club and the Hiroshima Symphony Orchestra with over 50-years of history form the three well-known top professional organizations. The other flavors of Hiroshima cuisine are also rich in variety, and include oysters, small sardines, Momiji manju (maple leaf-shaped steamed bun with bean jam), lemon (Hiroshima Prefecture ranks first in the production of lemons in Japan), Japanese sake, and more. The city's well-developed transportation network makes travel comfortable for visitors. There are the streetcars that resumed service immediately after the bombing, plus buses, railways, and ships. After overcoming numerous challenges and enormous hardships through its tireless efforts, Hiroshima, an A-bombed city, has been reborn as a city of international peace.

(Hitoshi Nagai)

## column 2

## Yoko and Sadako:

### Children under the mushroom cloud

#### Introduction

In August 1945, the war took a drastic turn for the worse for Japan. The Japanese people were doing their best just to get by in the midst of a scorching Hiroshima summer. Like other cities in Japan, even the local children were unable to escape having their lives impacted by war, and clung to the small passing joys of their everyday lives. Thirteen-year-old Yoko Moriwaki loved her school sewing lessons, while two-year-old little Sadako Sasaki played with her elder brother Masahiro on the riverbanks near their house. The incident that occurred on the morning of August 6 instantly changed their lives forever.

#### 1. August 5—A final diary entry

Yoko Moriwaki was born in June 1932. Her father worked as an elementary music teacher, which led her to fall in love with piano, singing, and other forms of music. In April 1945, Yoko entered her dream school, the Hiroshima Prefectural First Girls' High School. However, the war cast a dark shadow over her life there. The girls had to do farm work at the school to increase food production and build air-raid shelters. They also worked to demolish buildings; dismantle standing buildings and homes to create firebreaks with the purpose of preventing the spread of fires caused by the air raids. The girls worked hard to fulfill their duties, despite their poor physical health due to malnutrition from the severe food shortages.



Yoko Moriwaki (Courtesy of Koji Hosokawa)

Due to their military duties, their time for studying was limited, but the girls were able to capture small moments of joy and fun during wartime. Yoko's diary describes her everyday life at school and at home in her beautiful handwriting. For example, she wrote about how her biology teacher always cracked jokes to make the class laugh; and she had fond memories of making a summer dress at the school sewing lessons with her school friends and practicing the famous song "Natsu wa Kinu (Summer has come)" with the choir. She wrote, "someday, we will all be mothers," and "I worked hard because one day, I will have to take care of my own children" (Diary entry for May 2, 1945). When the girls studied how to take care of their little brothers and sisters, every one of them must have been imagining their future lives. Her diary goes on, "yesterday, my uncle came to visit us. Everyone was so happy to see him," and "I wish we could live this way every day." Her diary dated August 5, 1945 ends with the line, "starting tomorrow, we will work on the building demolition site."

I will do my best.” Yoko would never write in her diary again.

On the morning of Monday, August 6, Yoko cheerfully waved goodbye to her family and left her home on Miyajima Island. As always, she ran down the stone-paved stairs on the gentle slope in front of her house. She took the ferry and then a train to reach Dobashi (the place where her group was to meet). Shortly after 8:00 a.m., the 223 students from the girls’ school must have been busy preparing for building demolitions. At 8:15 a.m., there was suddenly a blinding flash overhead followed by a gigantic blast of heat and radiation all at once. Located only 700 meters from the hypocenter, without any shade or shelter, the girls were directly exposed to the A-bomb. Most of them died that day. Yoko herself was mortally wounded and sent to a relief station on the outskirts of Hiroshima, 10 kilometers from the city. There the girl—only thirteen—breathed her last breath while eagerly waiting for her mother to take her home. Yoko Moriwaki was just one of the approximately 7,200 mobilized students that died in the atomic bombing.



Memorial Monument of the Hiroshima Prefectural First Girls’ High School Students  
(Courtesy of Koji Hosokawa)

## 2. Wishing upon a thousand paper cranes

Sadako Sasaki was born in January 1943. On the morning of August 6, 1945, she was eating breakfast with her mother, grandmother, and elder brother—her father was absent because he was serving in the army. At 8:15 a.m., the atomic bomb struck the family at home in the Kusunoki-cho, 1.6 kilometers in the north-west from the hypocenter. All the family members survived without serious injury. Sadako was blown away by the blast, but she escaped from the experience seemingly without a scratch.

After the war, in April 1949, Sadako entered Noboricho elementary school. She had always been a girl of steady character from younger age, and loved roses and music. She had good reflexes and in her 6<sup>th</sup> grade, she ran the anchor leg for the girls’ relay team at their athletic meet and helped them to win the championship. Sadako was a big fan of Hibari Misora, a popular female singer. Her dream was to become either a singer or a junior high school PE (physical education) teacher. Sadako was suddenly afflicted by illness ten years after the atomic bombing, in January 1955. Her doctor diagnosed her with lymphatic leukemia and one of the causes was the radiation from the A-bomb that she was exposed to at the age of two. The doctor gave Sadako just



Sadako Sasaki (first row center) on the 6<sup>th</sup>-grade relay team at an athletic meet  
(Courtesy of Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum)

three to twelve months to live. Her parents grieved so deeply.

Sadako was hospitalized on February 21 that year (1955) in the children's ward at the Hiroshima Red Cross Hospital. While she was there, she saw children die from late radiation effects, known as "atomic bomb disease." Although she was not told that she had leukemia, she seemed to know that her disease was incurable. The treatment for leukemia at the time must have been extremely painful, since she had to be on powerful medications and get repeated blood transfusions. Sadako fought against the disease, never complaining about her pain and suffering. She tried hard not to make her parents worry.

Around August 1955, Sadako heard an old Japanese tale that said a prayer would be granted to those who folded a thousand paper cranes. She was inspired with single-minded purpose, and began folding paper cranes together with a girl who shared her sick room. She was always folding paper cranes, even while her family or friends were visiting her. She continued folding paper cranes to pray for her early recovery and her desire to live. Unfortunately, her wish did not come true. Sadako Sasaki passed away on October 25, after eight months of fighting her cancer. Her short life was over after just twelve years. Upon her death, children in Hiroshima and other parts of Japan began a campaign to raise funds to build a memorial monument to mourn the souls of all children who died from the atomic bomb and to build lasting peace. In May 1958, Children's Peace Monument was built in the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park.



The unveiling ceremony for the Children's Peace Monument (May, 1958)  
(Courtesy of the Chugoku Shimibun)

### Conclusion

Hundreds, thousands of people died in great agony under the mushroom cloud, regardless of their age, gender, occupation and nationality. A single bomb robbed thousands of children of their lives and futures. Many of them left behind no physical remains or personal effects. Often, those who barely survived became orphans, losing all of their family members and friends. Few survived the war without severe and lasting emotional or physical scars.

The diary that Yoko left behind was published in 1996 in Japan by her elder brother, Koji Hosokawa. In 2013, the diary was translated in English. Sadako's story was introduced to the wider world by Robert Jungk, Karl Bruckner, and Eleanor Coerr. In 2013, Sadako's brother Masahiro published a biography of Sadako. As they carry on their lives with the chagrins of their sisters and pains as bereaved families, the brothers of Yoko and Sadako continue to speak out about their sisters with the hope that younger generations will take what happened in Hiroshima to heart, think about it, remember it, and respect how precious their everyday lives are while respecting one another.

(Hitoshi Nagai)

## A City that Rebuilt, A City that Remembers

### Introduction

Once known as a military capital, Hiroshima was annihilated by a single atomic bomb. Still, in the hopes of creating a city of peace, the citizens rebuilt the city from the ruins and altered the cityscape forever. Still, the pain and memories of that day will never vanish.

### 1. The changed cityscapes

Two parks were created in the heart of Hiroshima City after the war—the Peace Memorial Park and the Chuo Park. The Nakajima district where the Peace Memorial Park is located used to be one of the liveliest places in the city, with houses lined up, and there were even banks and movie theaters before the atomic bombing. The district was located directly beneath the epicenter and annihilated. It was then transformed into a park to commemorate lasting peace. This park is the venue for the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony held every year on August 6, the day of the atomic bombing. The park houses many monuments, including the Cenotaph for the A-bomb Victims (Memorial Monument for Hiroshima, City of Peace). The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and the Hiroshima National Peace Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims in the Park convey the reality of the atomic bombing to visitors from all over the world.

Another site that symbolizes Hiroshima's transformation is Chuo Park. It is located in the Moto-machi district virtually in the center of Hiroshima City, with the landmark Hiroshima Castle as one of its features. Before the atomic bombing, the area around Hiroshima Castle housed the headquarters of the military district and many other military facilities. When the military was dissolved after the war, emergency housing was constructed in this large area for those who lost their homes, transforming it into a living space for the people. Public facilities such as the high-rise apartment buildings in Moto-machi, a library, and a gymnasium were later located there functionally through redevelopment projects, and the area was reborn as a park in the city center.



Nakajima district about ten years before the A-bombing (Collection of Kazuo Kagawa, Courtesy of Hiroshima City Cultural Promotion Division)



A view overlooking Peace Memorial Park and Chuo Park from the south (Courtesy of Hiroshima City Public Relations Division)



## 2. Passing down the memories of tragedy

In 1915, a European-style modern structure appeared on a bank of the Motoyasu River. It was the Hiroshima Prefectural Commercial Exhibition Hall, designed by the Czech architect Jan Letzel. Not only was this the base for promoting the sale of the prefecture's products, it held art exhibitions and was a famous spot in Hiroshima and a symbol of the city.

In 1944, when the name of the hall had already changed to the Hiroshima Prefectural Industrial Promotion Hall, it ceased to be used for its original purpose because of the war. It was instead used as offices for government agencies and regulation companies.

With the Aioi Bridge as its target, the atomic bomb was dropped, and exploded about 600 meters in the air above the Shima Hospital, located southeast of the bridge. The damage to the Industrial Promotion Hall, which was only 160 meters northwest of the hypocenter, was extreme. All the people inside were killed instantly, and the building was utterly destroyed and burned to the ground. However, a portion of the wall escaped collapse because the pressure from the blast came from almost directly above the building. Today, it remains a symbolic figure, together with the iron central structure. Citizens began to call it the Atomic Bomb Dome around 1950. As the reconstruction began to progress, opinions became divided on whether to preserve or demolish it; and the Hiroshima City Council unanimously decided to permanently preserve the A-bomb Dome in July of 1966. In December 1996, it was recorded as a World Heritage Site and has become a symbol of the city, recalling the horror of nuclear weapons.



Hiroshima Prefectural Industrial Promotion Hall and the Aioi Bridge before the A-bombing  
(Courtesy of Nobuo Matsui)

## Conclusion

In the city of Hiroshima was ruined by the atomic bombing, buildings that were still standing served as important guideposts for those fleeing in confusion, while bridges became important evacuation routes. These buildings became shields for preserving lives, accepting the injured and later supporting the postwar reconstruction. The reconstruction process removed much of the landscape that preserved the memory of the atomic bombing, but a portion of the buildings, bridges, and trees that were A-bombed still exist today. These markers continue to serve as quiet reminders of that day, fighting against the natural process of forgetfulness.

(Shoji Oseto and Hitoshi Nagai)



An A-bombed streetcar passing by the A-bomb Dome  
(Courtesy of Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum)

## Hiroshima in Movies

### Introduction

“You saw nothing in Hiroshima.” A line Japanese architect delivers to a French actress who has fallen in love with him in Hiroshima in the opening scene of *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959), directed by Alain Resnais. The architect cut her off just as she utters, “I saw everything.” It is one of the best internationally recognized films set in Hiroshima.

“You saw nothing in Hiroshima.” These words can be heard in other movies that capture the scenes of the city. The details of the onscreen images and the subtleties of the drama introduce the audience to an unknown Hiroshima. Below are some of the films that have remained powerful in that they renew the memories of what happened in Hiroshima.

### 1. Encounter with memories and realism

In *Hiroshima mon amour*, released in Japan under the title of *Nijuyojikan no Joji* (A Love Affair in 24 hours), is a film about an architect—who lost his family in the atomic bombing—and an actress—who was shunned by other French people for falling in love with an enemy soldier—who exchange memories of their hurtful pasts. The story was described in a delicate manner along with the scenery of Hiroshima in 1958 and it seems to show the beginnings of recapturing the memories of Hiroshima in a global context. This film uses scenes from another movie that shows the hellish scenes of Hiroshima directly after the atomic bombing. That film is *Hiroshima* (1953) by director Hideo Sekigawa.

Shortly after the press code restrictions—enforced by the Allied Force—ended in 1952, many movies about the atomic bombing were made in Japan. *Hiroshima* was one of the earliest movies depicting the bombing, made following *Genbaku no ko* (1952, Children of Hiroshima) which was directed by Kaneto Shindo. It should be mentioned that *Hiroshima* portrayed the horrible scenes of the bombing with utter realism by recruiting ninety thousand citizens from Hiroshima as extras. Its impact remains just as powerful today.



One scene in *Hiroshima*  
©Kiseki e no Jonetsu Project

### 2. Memories of the bombing during the period of reconstruction

In 1960s, movies which focused on the city as reconstruction efforts progressed and those who lived there holding memories of the A-bombing were made. Among those was director Kozaburo Yoshimura's *Sono Yoru wa Wasurenai* (1962, I Won't Forget That

Night), which does an impressive job of telling the feelings of a woman living in the entertainment district while hiding the hurt she suffered from the bombing. *Hiroshima 1966* (1966), by director Kosei Shirai, is set during the Vietnam War and unforgettably portrays the story of a woman, who lost her husband in the bombing, and her daughter as they try to remove themselves from their difficult situation with the scenery of Hiroshima at the time. Director Kinji Fukasaku's *Jingi naki Tatakai* (A fight without virtue) pentalogy, filmed in Hiroshima between 1973 and 1974, depicting the darker side of the reconstruction period through a cast of outlaws.

### Conclusion

A comparatively more recent film, Shohei Imamura's *Kuroi ame* (1989, Black Rain), was based on the novel by Masuji Ibuse and deals with the uncertainty of the diseases that came with exposure to the atomic bomb. The film deserves to be reconsidered as a work that deeply resonates with those who experienced the catastrophe that took place at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. Following this film, films about Hiroshima still continue to be made. Another film was *Hiroshima Nagasaki* (2007), which was directed by Steven Okazaki. This film shared the testimony of A-bomb survivors with the U.S.. *The Mushroom Club* (2005), which preceded *Hiroshima Nagasaki*, meticulously described those who living with the scars of the bombing in Hiroshima today. Films such as these reintroduce the tragedy that took place in Hiroshima, rekindle memories of the bombing, and serve as a precious opportunity to share the history of the reconstruction while we re-exam ourselves today.

(Nobuyuki Kakigi)

## Listening to the Voices of A-bomb Survivors

### Introduction

A-bomb survivors witnessed countless bodies of the deceased, the wounded and suffering people in Hiroshima that was annihilated by the atomic bombing. They barely survived the devastation of the A-bombing, but still struggle with physical and emotional scars. Some feel regret for being unable to reach out and lend a hand to those seeking help; some are trapped in grief and mourning the loss of their families and friends; or some suffer in agony from physical injuries or due to their uncertainty about the future. They have all tried very hard to live fulfilling lives after the war. These A-bomb survivors still advocate for the value of peace, hoping that future generations never have to suffer from what they went through. The survivors often speak out by recalling their painful memories and hardships, or compiling memoirs. There are many ways to find opportunities to listen to their voices.

### 1. Listening directly to survivors' voices

The average age of the A-bomb survivors (as of 2014) is 79, making it increasingly difficult to listen to their firsthand experiences year after year. In this situation, organizations of A-bomb survivors and other groups offer people, including children who visit Hiroshima on school field trips, opportunities to hear the testimonies of A-bomb survivors. In addition, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum (opened in 1955) also offers opportunities to listen to the survivor testimonies, and records the testimonies to preserve and open them to the public.



A-bomb survivor testimony at Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum  
(Courtesy of Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum)

The Hiroshima National Peace Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims, newly established in the Peace Memorial Park in 2002, has put effort in collecting and introducing A-bomb memoirs, in the cooperation with Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, to pass down A-bomb experiences to the next generation. The Memorial Hall had working on introducing the A-bomb memoirs in multiple languages—translated versions have been made in total 12 languages (as of February, 2015) including French and Arabic, adding to the existing English, Chinese and Korean versions and visitors can read them on monitor displays (additional languages will be added). In addition to the exhibitions at the Hall, the Memorial Hall is working to further enhance their services, posting testimonies and memoirs from A-bomb victims on their Global Network website available in Japanese, English, Chinese, and Korean.

The voices of the A-bomb survivors can be heard through televised reports and documentary programs depicting their daily lives; and video and audio has been made public on the websites of broadcasting stations, including the NHK (Nippon Hoso

Kyokai, Japan Broadcasting Corporation), the Hiroshima Station website, which offers “Testimonies Hiroshima Nagasaki”, and RCC Broadcasting posts articles on its “PEACE project” website (a Japanese site).

Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) Hiroshima “Testimonies Hiroshima Nagasaki”  
<https://www.nhk.or.jp/archives/shogenarchives/no-more-hibakusha/en.html>  
 RCC Broadcasting Co., Ltd. “PEACE project” (in Japanese) <http://www.rcc.jp/peace/>

## 2. Reading A-bomb memoirs

A-bomb survivors have preserved their experiences in the form of memoirs. They convey not only the horrible devastation in Hiroshima immediately after the atomic bombing, but also the daily lives of ordinary citizens before the bombing, their livelihoods during and after the war, their desire for peace, and more. Many of the memoirs are privately published books, including personal histories or those compiled by community-based groups of A-bomb survivors, meaning that these publications are not sold in bookstores. However, the Hiroshima National Peace Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims has collected many A-bomb memoirs and compiled a database of more than 130,000 memoirs—which are available to the public. Those memoirs are available in multiple languages and in addition, recitation sessions of some A-bomb memoirs are held in Japanese and English. This allows the audience to be able to share in the scenes and the victims’ feelings by listening to volunteers’ readings of the memoirs.



Reference room for video testimonies in the Hiroshima National Peace Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims  
 (Courtesy of Hiroshima National Peace Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims)

National Peace Memorial Halls for the Atomic Bomb Victims in Hiroshima and Nagasaki Global Network (including A-bomb memoirs and video testimonies)  
[http://www.global-peace.go.jp/en/en/\\_index.php](http://www.global-peace.go.jp/en/en/_index.php)

Hiroshima National Peace Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims (A-bomb memoirs and video testimonies translated in multiple languages)  
<http://www.hiro-tsuitokenkan.go.jp/notice/notice.php?ID=192&PageType=0&Language=1>  
<http://www.hiro-tsuitokenkan.go.jp/notice/notice.php?ID=193&PageType=0&Language=1>

## 3. Learning from A-bomb drawings by survivors

The A-bomb drawings by survivors are records of the A-bombing by Hiroshima citizens. At the same time, they are precious testimonies that illustrate the devastation that (the possession and use of) nuclear weapons holds in store for humanity. These drawings vividly depict scenes of Hiroshima immediately after the A-bombing, which were not preserved in photographs or videos and the family ties that were severed by the bombing, with written commentaries. The Peace Memorial Museum has about 5,000 drawings, including city scenes and depictions of the livelihoods of ordinary citizens before the bombing. Exhibitions of those drawings are held both inside and outside the Museum, in addition to online.

Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum "Peace Database"  
[http://www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/database/index\\_e.html](http://www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/database/index_e.html)

### Conclusion

The number of people who died from the atomic bombing in Hiroshima by the end of December 1945 is estimated to have been around 140,000. Today, the names of about 300,000 victims, who died from the bombing, are listed in the registry. Every one of them had their own stories before and after the bombing. The extent of the devastation and severe damages of the atomic bombing become apparent after listening to their voices and sharing their stories.

(Shoji Oseto and Hitoshi Nagai)

## column 6

## Standing at the Ground Zero: The words of people who have visited Hiroshima

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### Introduction

Today, around 11.5 million people visit Hiroshima each year, about 530,000 of them come from overseas. The majority of these foreign tourists visit the Peace Memorial Park and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. The total number of visitors to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum in 2013 was around 1,380,000, with around 200,000 of these people coming from outside the country. What do these people, especially these foreign visitors, feel here? What are their thoughts?

### 1. Dialogue Notebooks

The people from abroad who set foot in Hiroshima directly after the war were limited to the occupying forces and journalists. Foreign tourism began to increase after the peace treaty came into effect and Japan's sovereignty was restored in April, 1952. The Peace Memorial Museum opened in August 1955 and attracted over 110,000 visitors in its first year. Since then, the number of visitors has generally continued to increase and the number of visitors per year exceeded one million in the 1970s.

Notebooks are located near the exit of the main building of the Peace Memorial Museum to facilitate a dialogue with visitors or between visitors and the museum. It was first placed there in October of 1970 at the suggestion of the then director, Kaoru Ogura. People of different nationalities and ages have written their thoughts down in their own languages. The number of notebooks has reached 1,323 (as of December, 2014).

### 2. Messages from speeches and the visitor's books

Leaders from around the world have also visited Hiroshima and left behind their thoughts in written form. For instance, India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, visited the Peace Memorial Park in October, 1957 and remarked that it was a trip of worship at holy sites, and that Hiroshima was the worst possible result of violence, but also signified hope that regeneration will occur." A speech given by Pope John Paul II (from Poland) upon visiting Hiroshima in February, 1981, is also impressive. "To remember the past is to commit oneself to the future." While repeating this phrase, the Pope talked to people, "To remember Hiroshima is to commit oneself to peace. To remember what the people of this city suffered is to renew our faith in man, in his capacity to do what is good, in his freedom to choose what is right, in his determination to turn disaster into a new beginning."

Various national leaders and celebrities have also left messages in the Visitor's Books at the Peace Memorial Museum (over 2,000 people had written in 66 notebooks, as of August, 2014). For example, an Olympic gold medalist, Florence Griffith Joyner, who represented the U.S. in women's athletics at the Seoul 1988 Olympic Games, visited the museum in March, 1990 and wrote the following: "I wish in my heart that I could turn back the hands of time and not have let what happened in 1945 happen but I can't. So I will always pray that our world would learn from that disaster and fight for World Peace.

All of the world needs to come here and witness the devastation and always have Peace in their Hearts!" Mikhail Gorbachev, former President of the Soviet Union, visited in April, 1992 and left these words: "The years have not been able to ease the pain of the tragedy in Hiroshima. It shall never be repeated. We will never forget the victims of the atomic bombing." Bingu Wa Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi in Africa wrote in March, 2006, "This memorial park is a sad reminder of human beings destroying themselves through hate. I hope that never again will it make it possible for mankind to engage in such a war. We need peace on Earth. We need love, understanding, tolerance, and forgiveness." These "Messages for Peace" can be read on the museum website.



Visitor's books  
Leaders and celebrities from around the world have left their messages in them.  
(Photo by Hitoshi Ouchi, Courtesy of Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum).

### Conclusion

Naturally, these are only samples of the messages of those who have visited Hiroshima. No doubt each visitor from overseas has in their own way brought their own personal Hiroshima back to their native land. On the other hand, places of tragedy where human life has mercilessly been taken are being recreated even today, 70 years after the atomic bombing. Hiroshima rose from the ashes and was reborn as a city that longs for peace, and so it will continue to bear the historical mission of questioning "incomplete peace" on earth.

(Hitoshi Nagai)





# Timeline of the Events Related to Hiroshima's Reconstruction

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- 1589 Construction of Hiroshima Castle was started by order of Terumoto Mori
- 1871 Hiroshima Prefecture was established, in the course of abolishment of the feudal domain system and the setting up of a prefecture system
- 1888 The 5th Division Headquarters of the Imperial Japanese Army was established in Hiroshima
- 1889 A new system of municipalities was enforced and Hiroshima officially became one of the first cities in Japan ( April)  
Construction of Ujina Port was completed (November)
- 1894 The Sanyo Railroad reached Hiroshima (June)  
The First Sino-Japanese war was broke out (August). The Imperial Headquarters were moved to Hiroshima in response to the war (September)  
The Provisional Imperial Diet was held in Hiroshima (October)
- 1902 Hiroshima Higher Normal School was established (April)
- 1912 *Hiroshima Denki Kido* Company (current Hiroshima Electric Railway) started service (November)
- 1915 Hiroshima Prefectural Commercial Exhibition Hall (current the A-bomb Dome) was opened (August)
- 1929 Hiroshima's first department store, "Fukuya" opened (October)
- 1945 The Second General Army, which commanded troops in western Japan, was established in preparation for decisive battles on the mainland and its headquarters were located in Hiroshima (April)  
An atomic bomb was dropped on the city of Hiroshima (August 6, 8:15 a.m.)  
An atomic bomb was dropped on the city of Nagasaki (August 9, 11:02 a.m.)  
The Japanese government accepted the Potsdam Declaration (August 14, on the next day, August 15, the Showa Emperor's imperial edict ending the war was radio-broadcasted)
- 1946 Hiroshima Reconstruction City Planning was determined
- 1947 The Constitution of Japan was enforced (May 3)  
The 1st Peace Festival was held in Hiroshima City (August 6)
- 1949 Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law was enacted (in May, enforced on August 6)
- 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty was signed (in September. came into force on April 28, 1952)
- 1952 Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Planning was determined
- 1955 The 1st World Conference against A and H Bombs was held in Hiroshima City (August 6)  
Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum was opened (August 24)
- 1956 Hiroshima Atomic-bomb Hospital (current Hiroshima Red Cross Hospital & Atomic-bomb Survivors Hospital) was opened (September)
- 1957 Atomic Bomb Survivors Medical Care Law was enforced (April)
- 1958 Hiroshima Reconstruction Exposition was held (from April 1 through May 20)  
The Children's Peace Monument was unveiled (May 5)
- 1966 The Hiroshima City Council unanimously passed a resolution to permanently preserve the A-bomb Dome (July)
- 1968 Atomic Bomb Survivors Special Measures Law was enforced (September)
- 1969 The Moto-machi district was designated as an residential area for improvement (March)
- 1970 The first nursing home for A-bomb survivors in Japan, Funairi Mutsumi-en opened
- 1975 Sanyo Shinkansen reached Hiroshima Station (March)  
Professional baseball team, Hiroshima Toyo CARP marked its first league championship (October)

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- 1976 Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki visited the United Nations Headquarters and requested the abolition of nuclear weapons (December)
  - 1978 The Moto-machi district redevelopment project was completed (commemorative ceremony was held in October)
  - 1980 Hiroshima became Japan's tenth "government ordinance designated city" (April)
  - 1982 The World Conference of Mayors for Peace through Inter-city Solidarity (current Mayors for Peace) was established in response to the proposal by mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (June)
  - 1985 General Conference of the 1st World Conference of Mayors for Peace through Inter-city Solidarity held in Hiroshima (August), to be held once in four years
  - 1992 The 1st United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues was held in Hiroshima (June, also held in 1994, 1996, 2015 and 2017)
  - 1994 The East Building of Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum was opened (June)  
The 12th Asian Games Hiroshima 1994 was held (October)
  - 1995 Atomic Bomb Survivors Support Law was enforced (July)  
In response to a UN resolution, the International Court of Justice heard oral statements regarding the illegality of the use of nuclear weapons. The mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki gave their presentations at the Court.
  - 1996 The A-bomb Dome and Miyajima (Itsukushima Shinto Shrine) were registered on the list of the world heritage sites (December)
  - 1997 The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Chugoku International Center opened (April)
  - 2001 Hiroshima's first underground shopping mall, Kamiyacho Shareo opened (April)
  - 2002 The Hiroshima National Peace Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims opened (August)
  - 2003 United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) Hiroshima Office opened (July)
  - 2009 The new Hiroshima Municipal Baseball Stadium, "Mazda Zoom-Zoom Stadium Hiroshima" was completed (March)
  - 2010 The World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates was held in Hiroshima (November)
  - 2014 The Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPT) was held in Hiroshima, and "Hiroshima Declaration" was adopted (April)
  - 2016 G7 Hiroshima Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held in Hiroshima (April)  
President Obama of the United States visited Hiroshima (May)
  - 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted at the United Nations Headquarters in New York (July)
  - 2019 Pope Francis visited Hiroshima (November)
  - 2022 Opening of the Exhibition Hall of A-bombed Remains (March)  
Hiroshima decided as host for 2023 G7 summit (May)  
Prime Minister Kishida presented the "Hiroshima Action Plan" at the 10th NPT Review conference (August)
  - 2023 G7 Hiroshima Summit Hosted. The first G7 joint document dedicated to nuclear disarmament, "G7 Leaders' Hiroshima Vision on Nuclear Disarmament", is issued (May)
  - 2024 Former Army Clothing Depot Designated as Cultural Asset (January)  
Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the Japan Council of Atomic and Hydrogen Bomb Sufferers Organizations in 2024 (October)

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[\*] Other than those above, see references in *Leaning from Reconstruction of Hiroshima: Reborn from the Ashes* (“Hiroshima for Global Peace” Plan Joint Project Executive Committee, 2014)

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[\*] Other than those above, see websites in the columns in Part III. The website addresses on this book are as of January 2025, and subject to change without notice.

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