

Component 4, Part 7

Personal Stories of Nagasaki and Hiroshima—Victims and Survivors

In Japan, survivors of the bombings are called *Hibakusha*. The literal English translation is explosion-afflicted people. Japan's Atomic Bomb Survivor's Relief Law defines Hibakusha as:

1. People who were within a few kilometers of the hypocenters
2. People who were within two kilometers of the hypocenters within two weeks after the bombings
3. People who were exposed to radiation from fallout
4. Babies carried by pregnant women in any of the above categories

As of March 2005, 266,598 Hibakusha were still alive. The large majority of Hibakusha live in Japan although some are in Korea and elsewhere. The average age of the atomic bomb survivor is now 72 (Atomic Bomb Survivors Affairs Division Health And Welfare Department Nagasaki Prefectural Government, 2006). It is clear that Hibakusha are aging and soon there will be few left to tell their stories. In an effort to ensure the accurate documentation of the experiences of the remaining survivors, some organizations are re-evaluating their archives of survivor-related testimonials, re-vidiotaping many of them and making special efforts to obtain additional survivor information and testimonials. One such effort has resulted in the collection of several videotaped survivor accounts of the atomic bombings (Voice of Hibakusha) and can be accessed via the following link: <http://www.inicom.com/hibakusha/>.

In Nagasaki's Museum of the Atomic Bomb, visitors can sit in front of computer screens and watch Hibakusha tell their stories. At the [Hiroshima Peace Park website \(http://www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/top_e.html\)](http://www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/top_e.html), video/audio recorded testimonies of survivors are available to the public. At the [Atomic Bomb WWW Museum \(http://atomicbombmuseum.org/1_overview.shtml\)](http://atomicbombmuseum.org/1_overview.shtml), textual [interviews of Hibakusha \(http://atomicbombmuseum.org/6_testimonies.shtml\)](http://atomicbombmuseum.org/6_testimonies.shtml) are available. Katsuji Yoshida (13 years old at the bombing), of Nagasaki, relates his personal account of the Nagasaki bombing at the Nagasaki Peace Declaration Web site at http://www1.city.nagasaki.nagasaki.jp/abm/abm_e/heiwa/yosida.html. An excellent recorded video/audio collection of the testimonies of 50 Hibakusha (edited to 20 minutes each) is available at http://www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/virtual/VirtualMuseum_e/visit_e/est_e/panel/A6/6204.htm.

Many facilities and organizations are now devoted to Hibakusha issues such as social welfare, health care, and medical treatment. Recently, several nursing homes have been constructed specifically for Hibakusha. A list of such facilities and organizations can be found in the *Hiroshima Handbook* and at <http://www.hipj.org/en/facil.html>.

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