Atomic Bomb's Survivors' Personal Narratives in Contemporary and Intercultural Contexts. Lessons Yet to Be Learned

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Abstract

The voices of A-bomb survivors are getting lost in this multimedia environment the world stage has become, and *hibakusha*'s legacy and teachings are taking the back seat in this over-informed, twenty four hours a day news cycles, twitter accounts, and online newsfeeds, in order to leave room to sensationalism and junk news. The world media has its own biased political agendas to present to the world, most of the time purposely avoiding socially relevant issues in favor of mundane topics too insignificant to dignify in any respectful media environment. I call these the politics of distraction; feed the audiences with the futile and hope they forget or do not notice what is relevant. Therefore, how can we hold on to one of the most important lessons in modern history? How can we employ the detailed recollections of hibakusha and introduce them into the global discourse against weapons of mass destruction's proliferation? How do we preserve and advance hibakusha's memories as vivid and tangible testimonies of what not to repeat? How do we involve current generations into advocating for an atomic bomb free world? In this paper, I am looking at personal narratives both inside and outside of Japan; I am listening to young and mature voices' position on this matter; I am evaluating the legacy of the Atomic bomb discourse, as it developed in A-bomb survivors' personal narratives, in a contemporary and intercultural context, to call also for more participation from all nations into the world peace movement that the city of Hiroshima has been promoting since 1945

Introduction.

On the eve on the seventieth anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, there is strong motivation both in Japan and abroad, to collect witnesses' accounts of those eventful days and leave them to posterity as lessons learned, or as lessons yet to be learned.

The voices of atomic bomb survivors (*hibakusha*) are getting lost in this multimedia environment the world stage has become, and *hibakusha*'s legacy and teachings are taking the back seat in this over-informed, twenty four hours a day news cycles, twitter accounts, and online newsfeeds, in order to leave room to sensationalism and junk news. The world media has its own biased political agendas to present to the world, most of the time purposely avoiding socially relevant issues in favor of mundane topics too insignificant to dignify in any respectful media environment. However, the many challenges associated with nuclear energy, nuclear production, and nuclear weapon proliferation still make the front pages of papers around the world, both in print and online (Hirano, 2014; Kageyama, 2014; Tabuchi, 2014).

As much as it was challenging right after World War II to have *hibakusha* sit down and recount their stories (Lifton, 1968; Ōe, 1965; Ōe, 1995), now, those same survivors feel compelled by current events to put on video, and then make public their experiences. These are people that lived through one of the most tragic events of our modern time; these are people that experienced, on their own skin, the aftermath of the very first weapon of mass destruction; these are the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

***Hibakusha's* Testimonies Available in Print, in English Translation.**

We have *hibakusha's* testimonies from the past available in English translation. John Hersey's piece in *The New Yorker* (1946) was the first one to appear in print, followed by the collected survivors' testimonies in the works by Lifton (1968), Yamazaki (1995), Hachiya (1955), Sekimori (1986), Selden & Selden (1989), Hein and Selden (1997) , Yoneyama (1999), Rizzuto (2010), Okuda (2008), and Weller (2006), just to cite a few. At a time or another, these scholars approached and interviewed atomic bomb survivors, collecting their oral histories. In most of these writings, these survivors are faceless and nameless. In 1965, Lifton published a psychological portrait of Japanese *hibakusha*; in his book, Lifton never refers to his sources by name; in his "List of survivors quoted", he refers to them as "Nagasaki hospital patient," or "seamstress (injured at fourteen)". As much as Lifton tries to humanize these atomic bomb survivors in his research study, his work falls short of providing his readers with an accurate oral history of those days, thus creating a palpable distance between the readers and the people he writes about.

Lifton's book does not contain pictures of the survivors; there are no pictures of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki either. Lifton's work, like other texts before and after it, does not contain pictorial reproductions that would recall the atomic bombings. At the time, it was not unusual for scholarly work to appear in print without pictures, especially when the topic of this scholarship was the 1945 atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

As much as words alone had to suffice to convey descriptions of these disfigured individuals discussed about in these books, the origin of this sort of self-censorship could be found in the American postwar discourse on how to approach, without hurting American people's sensibility, the aftermath of nuclear weapons' experimentation on Japanese people. In fact, immediately after the war, there was a strong movement within American military and government ranks to prevent those

pictures from ever becoming public. Some government officials recognized that by looking at the disfigured faces and bodies of Americans' former enemies, guilt in the American public could have arisen, or better yet, American people could have questioned the use of nuclear weapons on innocent individuals. President Truman and his staff could not allow for this guilt to be born, or for questions to be formulated among the public and in the media. After all, incredible efforts had gone into making sure that the dropping of the atomic bombs were justified by the Japanese war government's refusal to accept an unconditional surrender (Bix, 2000; Dower, 2010; Dower, 2012; Frank, 1999; Hasegawa, 2005; Hogan, 1996; Lifton & Mitchell, 1995; Maddox, 2007; Miscamble, 2011; Rhodes, 1986; Takaki, 1995; Toland, 1970; Walker, J. S., 1997; Walker, S., 2006; Zeiler, 2004).

Pictures of the victims of the atomic bombs were available to few after 1945 both in Japan and in the United States; it was only after the end of the American occupation of Japan in 1955 that those pictures started circulating, and caused plenty of shock to audiences worldwide. In 1955, the American censorship on material related to the atomic bombing in Japan came to an end, and the peace movement led by atomic bomb survivors started.

After 1955, *hibakusha's* voices found their way out of Japan. As challenging as it was up to the 1970s, 1980s, and even1990s to get survivors to open up about their experiences, some of them sat down to tell their stories (Yoneyama, 1999; Takayama, 2000; Okuda, 2008; Hiroshima Peace Cultural Foundation, 2009; Rizzuto, 2010).

To the above collection of witnesses' testimonies (the students, the nurses, the doctors, the housewives, the grandmothers), we must add the works by Japanese authors, famous Japanese literary figures that witnessed the aftermath of the atomic bombings, and that lived to tell their own stories as well as the stories of the citizens of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Some of these works are available in English translation, and they include narratives by Hara Tamiki(1905-1951), Ota Yoko (1906-1963), Toge Sankichi (1917-1953), Ibuse Masujii (1889-1993), Kazumi Takahashi (1931-1971), Oda Makota (1932-2007), Nagai Takashi (1908-1951), and others. Most of these authors' writings were censored during the American occupation of Japan, such as Nagai Takashi's *The Bells of Nagasaki* (1949); most of these authors were able to publish their works on the atomic bomb experience at the end of the American occupation, although the translations in English of their works appeared at much later dates (Miner, 1990; Oe, 1985; Nagai, 1984).

Therefore, what prevented Hiroshima and Nagasaki's survivors to share with the world their experiences? How is that only lately there has been this strong movement within and outside of Japan, to collect *hibakusha's* testimonies? Ōe Kenzaburo has the answer to this question. In his *Hiroshima Notes*, Ōe writes about the sense of shame *hibakusha* were affected by; *hibakusha* were ashamed not only of the way they looked, but they were also ashamed by the fact that they were left living, while relatives, friends, and neighbors had perished. Ōe calls it *ikihaji* or a deep sense of "shame for being alive" or "the shame of living with the memory of that event". As Ōe points out, it was about the "shame" associated with the experience that prevented many of the *hibakusha* to seek the spotlight and come forward (Ōe, 1965).

In order to understand the totality of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki's human tragedy, one must take into account more than the atomic devastation of the landscape; in fact, as it was reported by an editorial writer of the *Chūgoku Shinbun* in 1964, "the fervent desire of the A-bomb victims now is, on behalf of all the dead and all the survivors, to make sure that the peoples of the world fully understand the nature and the extent of

human misery, not just the destructive capacity, of an atomic bombing" (Kanai T. in Ōe, 1985, p. 68).
Today's dilemma for *hibakusha* and for those that support their cause rests on finding more effective means to spread their message of peace as it is organized and conveyed through their oral histories of those two days in August 1945. The written word by itself seems to have run its course, especially when it comes to reach young minds and expose them to this important chapter in world history.

What not to repeat: Lessons Learned or Yet to Be Learned.
As one goes through the available testimonies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki's atomic bomb survivors, one can draw the following conclusions: atomic bombs kill people by the thousands; there is no safe atomic bomb; radiation exposure is deadly; radiation exposure might change or impact people's genetic code; exposure to high level of radiation is known to cause blood disorder (leukemia) and cancer (liver, pancreas, stomach, colon, and others), as well as birth defects; the peaceful application of nuclear energy is a myth; atomic bombing has social and cultural effects; post-traumatic stress disorder can become a lifelong illness; generalized anxiety disorder, depression, social anxiety disorder and social phobia affect atomic bomb survivors decades after the dropping of the bombs (Lifton, 1969; Okazaki, 2007; Okuda, 2008; Osada, 1981; Otake, 2011; Radiation Effect Research Foundation, 1947-2014; Selden and Selden, 1989; Sekimori, 1986; Takayama, 2000; Treat, 1995; Weller, 2006; Yamazaki, 1995).
In promoting nuclear weapons' proliferation and nuclear based energy production, is the world, as a global community of concerned citizens, ready to deal with all of the above consequences of a nuclear disaster? Apparently, we have not read enough witnesses' accounts to be convinced that a safe world can exist without nuclear weapons and its derivatives (Krieger, 2013).

The internet revolution: the visual age.
A technological revolution has taken place over the last fifteen years. *Hibakusha* are aware of these technological changes, and are using them to spread their message of peace. Keeping up with the modern times, *hibakusha* have armed themselves with laptop computers, tablets, and smartphones; Skype, Facebook, and Twitter accounts, and from these places of change and innovation are waging their war against nuclear weapons and nuclear energy production. *Hibakusha* are coming together under the sponsorship of many programs to record their voices, and to record on video their testimonies of those two days in August 1945, thus allowing technologically savvy younger generations to have access to historical records through new means.
What these new means carry are images of real people, voices that belong to human beings on a screen. These are not pictures in history books; these are people living with their own scars caused by history. Most of these *hibakusha* make themselves available to the public as well through public lectures, or through Skype arranged interview sessions. In Hiroshima and Nagasaki, one can easily attend these lectures.
Images speak louder than words (Berger, 1972). Our younger generation is known as the visual generation. They must see in order to understand. They must look with their own eyes to believe.
Therefore, how do we hold on to one of the most important lessons in modern history? How can we employ the detailed recollections of *hibakusha* and introduce them into the global discourse against weapons of mass destruction's proliferation? How do we preserve and advance *hibakusha's* memories as vivid and tangible

testimonies of what not to repeat? How do we involve current generations into advocating for a nuclear bomb free world?

Internet technology and social networking are changing the way *hibakusha* tell their oral histories, and convey their personal narratives. We have witnessed a major technological change in the way we approach witnesses' accounts, survivors' testimonies to tragedies and the like. We live in the visual age. We live at a time where everybody has an inquisitive gaze. In this new technological environment, where our younger generations thrive, we need to employ videos and images to impact their knowledge of the world around them. We can start with images and then move to the written word.

As stated above, the aftermath of the dropping of the bombs are well documented in the writings of the past, and these recollections are not short of written graphic details. What all of them miss are names and pictures. In the 1950s, especially outside of Japan, people were not ready to put faces to these vivid memories. The pictures of atomic bomb survivors released in the mid-1950s shocked American consciousness. There was a concerted effort to keep the scarred ones away from the television screens or from the printed books. Even Robert Jay Lifton book published in 1968, *Death in Life; Survivors of Hiroshima*, does not include pictures of any kind. Moreover, we have the example of the Hiroshima Maidens, those twenty five girls selected to go to the United States to have reconstructive plastic surgery. In her report, *Faces of Hiroshima*, Anne Chisholm writes about the Hiroshima Maidens. Published in 1985, it still did not contain pictures, and it did not reveal the full names of these maidens.

Hence, the written word might have worked in the past and books without pictures might have impacted audiences then too sensitive to take in the vivid images of human beings living with the scars of the first atomic bombs dropped on women, men, and children. Although the guilt that might have been created among the American readership seemed to justify the lack of tangible evidence for a crime committed by a democratic government, it is also true that pictures were collected on a regular basis in Japan, and particularly in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The Radiation Effect Research Foundation (formerly known as the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission) started collecting data in 1947. The first Americans soldiers that arrived in Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of 1945 took pictures of the locals, including those that were housed in broken down hospitals and suffering from the blast and the radiation effects of the atomic bombs (Weller, 2006). Pictures have always been available, just like atomic bomb survivors have always been available to convey their experiences.

Governments' imposed censorship and/or witnesses' self-censorship might have prevented us in the past to obtain a better rounded and accurate account of those days immediately after the bombs were dropped. Today, however, we cannot claim ignorance anymore, and we must embrace atomic bomb survivors' plights to safeguard their oral histories and, most important, to learn from them. These *hibakusha* are showing their scarred faces to the world, and burdened with illnesses and emotional turmoil are sharing their stories with us.

Today, we have a rich collection of atomic bomb survivors' accounts available also in English (subtitled most of the times when on DVD or online). Several organizations in Japan and in the United States are working painstakingly to collect *hibakusha's* accounts of August 6 and 9, 1945. Some of these organization are: the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs; Hibakusha Stories: Working Together for a Nuclear-

Free World; Ministry of Foreign Affair of Japan; Hiroshima National Peace Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims; Survivors' Voice Global Network; Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organization, *Nihon Hidankyo*; the Japan Council against Atomic and Hydrogen bombs, *Gensuikyo*; Japan Congress against A- and H-Bombs, *Gensuikin*; Asahi Shimbun, Memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; Hiroshima Peace Media Center; People's Decade for Nuclear Abolition by Soka Gakkai International; Hiroshima-Nagasaki Downloads, Memories from the Americas.

Some may argue about young children/teenagers' sensitivity to such graphic images. Indeed, these are graphic images of people still alive but missing limbs, their eyes, their jaws, their mouth, and their own skin. These are images of people still alive but looking like charcoal, or looking like skinned alive. There are images of children crying by the carbonized remains of what might be a mother or a father; there are images and videos of survivors sitting on operating tables and having their bandages changes, thus exposing raw rotting flesh. And this grotesque list goes on and on.

Can these pictures, images, and video hurt children/teenagers' sensitivity? This statement is debatable. After all, there are TV dramas, anime, and video games whose images are so graphic and disturbing to match some of the photographs dating back to 1945 from Hiroshima and Nagasaki. One of the issues under discussion is how to make our students understand the difference between reality and fiction. What some young people believe it to be a TV show creation (compare the graphic and grotesque images from the TV show *The Walking Dead*, or horror movies), it was somebody's reality at one time. TV and the movies can create horror stories from scratch; directors and screenwriters can pour into screenplays and on the screen the most graphic pictures they can come up with; makeup artists work wonders to make all of this seems real. At times, reality is more horrifying than a TV drama or a Hollywood movie. When we can get the message across that atomic bomb survivors' reality was one that no movie or TV drama has ever been able to reproduce, we might claim that we have reached into these youngsters' hearts and minds, and that we can now start a conversation on this matter.

Nuclear weapons testing and nuclear energy production after 1945; what went wrong.

Hibakusha's vivid accounts of those two days in August 1945 and the pictures available to the USA of the aftermath of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki did not stop the United States from conducting about 331atmospheric nuclear tests in the United States and in the Pacific between 1951 and 1963 (Kuran, 1995; U.S. Department of Energy, 2006). The Marshall Islands, the Bikini Atoll, the Nevada desert, New Mexico and Alaska, are some of the known places where the USA conducted nuclear testing, polluting the environment for decades to come. Most importantly, the polluted environments were places where people used to live (Jacobs, 2010). Although a stop to atmospheric nuclear testing took place in 1963 (Limited Test Ban Treaty), and both the USA and the former USSR signed this agreement, China, North Korea, and India entered into the pictures, and started to conduct their own nuclear experiments.

Nuclear power plants are a reality in many countries around the world. There have been at least three major nuclear power plant accidents from 1979 to 2011. In 1979, at Three Miles Island nuclear plant in the USA, a cooling malfunction caused a partial meltdown in reactor number two. A couple of days later, radioactive gas escaped, "but not enough to cause any dose above background levels to local residents. There were

no injuries or adverse health effects from the Three Mile Island accident" (World Nuclear Association, 2012). In 1986, an accident took place at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in the Ukraine; it was ruled out as "flawed reactor design" operated by insufficiently trained personnel. According to the World Nuclear Association website, "The resulting steam explosion and fires released at least 5% of the radioactive reactor core into the atmosphere and downwind – some 5200 PBq (I-131 eq). Two Chernobyl plant workers died on the night of the accident, and a further 28 people died within a few weeks as a result of acute radiation poisoning. UNSCEAR says that apart from increased thyroid cancers, "there is no evidence of a major public health impact attributable to radiation exposure 20 years after the accident." Resettlement of areas from which people were relocated is ongoing" (2014). On March 11, 2011, a major earthquake hit northern Japan. A tsunami wave of about fifteen meter (49.2 feet) disabled three Fukushima Daiichi reactors causing a meltdown. Efforts were made to prevent contaminated water from leaking, but to no avail. According to the World Nuclear Association, "There have been no deaths or cases of radiation sickness from the nuclear accident, but over 100,000 people had to be evacuated... [G]overnment nervousness delays their return. Official figures show that there have been well over 1000 deaths from maintaining the evacuation" (World Nuclear Association, 2014).

The production of nuclear energy through nuclear power plants is not as safe as we were led to think. In Japan, the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant disaster revitalized the opposition movement to nuclear energy production in Japan and worldwide. There are many concerns associated with Fukushima children and their exposure to high level of radiation in the immediate hours after the nuclear plant meltdown. There are many issues involved with the Japanese government's cover up of the contaminated water leaked. As much as the debate is ongoing on this topic, Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bomb survivors have come out stronger on the Japanese and international scene to demand a stop to both nuclear weapons and nuclear energy proliferation (Tanaka, 2011; The Washington Post, 2011; Yokota, 2013).

Tanaka Terumi is a Nagasaki atomic bomb survivor. He was 13 years old when he experienced the atomic blast in Nagasaki, and he has suffered the after effects of radiation exposure ever since (Okazaki, 2007). His personal account of that day, along with many of his peers, make up a considerable amount of information that he requested to be used when demanding the Japanese "government and all the power companies [to] break away from the energy policy based on nuclear power, stop building new nuclear power plants, and shut down and decommission existing nuclear reactors one by one" (Tanaka, 2011, p. 11). Tanaka and other *hibakusha* have helped to expose "the inhumane nature of the damage done by the atomic bombings", and through medical records presented on different occasions, they have helped to establish a strong connection between "radioactive fall-out" and "internal radiation exposure" (Tanaka, 2011, p. 8). Accordingly, Tanaka, and the *hibakusha* movement in general, embrace the cause of Fukushima's citizens. The Japanese government and the power plant operator, TEPCO, are on the receiving end of criticism, and are blamed for inadequate explanations on "how infants absorb radiation into their thyroid", and how "caesium contamination in playgrounds" could have affected children's health (Tanaka, 2011, p. 8).

Armed with a personal history of radiation exposure and a strong medical record accounting for their illnesses, Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bomb survivors catapulted themselves on the national and international scene demanding to be listened.

How to preserve and advance hibakusha's memories as vivid and tangible testimonies of what not to repeat.

As I pointed out above, there are many projects underway to preserve the memories of *hibakusha*. The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs lists several organizations active in gathering and publishing atomic bomb survivors' testimonies. Whenever possible, these testimonies are available on video and are published on these organizations' websites. There is a global effort, spearheaded by the United Nations, to gather as many personal accounts as possible, thus preserving the memories of those people that first experimented the aftermath of an atomic bombing.

Some *hibakusha* themselves are leading this movement to preserve their experiences. These *hibakusha* are active worldwide in the peace movement; they make themselves available to visit schools and talk about living with the scars from an atomic bomb and radiation exposure. In a sense, this goes against what was the reality in the 1960s when *hibakusha* wanted to be left alone with their shame and their dignity (Ōe, 1995)).

What has changed since the 1960s? Those *hibakusha* that were 2, 5, 10 years old in August 1945, are today 72, 72, 80 or older. They lived with the voices of elder relatives and siblings recounting in backroom homes about these experiences, and were told to keep quiet about it. They were not supposed to share their experiences in fear of becoming pariah in their own neighborhood or city; they were told to be quiet about their life ordeals in order to ensure a discrimination free life; they were told not to share with the world what they witnessed and what they experienced in order not to bring further shame on their families, families already devastated by death, illnesses, and discrimination. The elders had to deal with the aftermath of "radiation sickness" when it was thought to be a contagious disease; the elders had to live with the fear of offspring affected by radiation illness; and the fear of birth defects in *hibakusha*'s family has always been a delicate topic of conversation.

In January 2013, I had the opportunity to attend Ms. Ogura Keiko's lecture at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. Ms. Ogura is a Hiroshima atomic bomb survivor; she was eight years old when the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. In 2003, she visited the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum in Washington and saw up close the Enola Gay, the airplane that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Her visit was documented by the Japanese press. When her pictures appeared in the front pages of the Japanese papers, her son became very upset. She explained that it was customary for children of *hibakusha* to hide their parents' struggle with the aftermath of the atomic bomb; the anxiety over birth defects caused by radiation possibly impacting people's genetic code is still a reality today. However, Ms. Ogura did not become discouraged, and she continues on her mission to spread her message of peace to the world.

How to involve current generations into advocating for an atomic bomb/nuclear power plants free world.

Mayors for Peace is a non-profit organization based out of Hiroshima. One of their programs is the so-called "2020 Vision", or the plan to rid the world of nuclear weapons by 2020. To do so they also advocate for the creation of peace study course, the "Hiroshima Nagasaki Peace Study Course". The purpose of this course is to communicate "academically the facts of atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in universities and colleges around the world" (Mayors for peace, 2014). This course

must be part of the university or college's catalogue to receive the sponsorship of the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation.
This course must stress "the universal importance of the A-bomb experience and the message of the *hibakusha*. In particular, students should come to perceive that this message has a direct bearing on the future of humankind and must be an integral part of any philosophy of human existence" (Mayors for Peace, 2014). One of the mandatory requirements for this course is the visit to Hiroshima and/or Nagasaki, thus having students on location for fieldwork. Assistance to universities is provided in the form of lectures, or venues for lectures, dispatching *hibakusha*, providing teaching material, and assisting with fieldwork.
There is a major difference between studying this topic from books only, or watching witnesses' account on a big screen in a classroom, or listening to *hibakusha*'s words through a computer. One must travel to these two cities in order to get a full understanding of the impact the atomic bombings had on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and its citizens. Students must experience firsthand the places where all this happened; they must breathe the air and immerse themselves into these two environments.
It is only through exposure to the reality of the atomic bomb and its aftermath that these students might decide to get involved directly in the world peace movement.

Conclusion

A sense of urgency can be felt in the *hibakusha* community worldwide; Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bomb survivors are getting older; their offspring might not feel comfortable to share with the world their parents' struggles of dealing with the after effects of the atomic bomb; yet, it is in these *hibakusha*'s strength and determination that lies this common goal to leave to posterity as much as possible of their memories of those days, so that the slogan "No Hiroshima" can become a reality.
This is the reason why today more than ever, *hibakusha* agree to being interviewed; they agree to visit schools and college campuses; they agree to go on television and show their faces and their scars. These are their stories. And the history of World War II is not complete without the words of those that suffered the most. Just like the Holocaust survivors went on to raise awareness about their own tragedy, the *hibakusha* had to play catch up, but they are making a major difference in the world peace movement. They are involved at every level of the debate; they are everywhere in the world; and the internet technology allows them to be present more than ever.
Hibakusha's social cause includes preserving the dignity of human kind. Their cause is supported by their motivation to spread to the world their message of peace through their vivid descriptions of what it means to survive an atomic apocalypse. Their voices are not works of fiction; their faces and their bodies are not created for the screen by makeup artists; their stories are told in their own voices, without a screenwriter next by to edit or embellish their script. Their personal accounts are not summaries of books or movies; their personal accounts are their own life stories. These stories delve deep into the everyday struggle of every atomic bomb survivor; their words question human kind's moral values; their voices and their open wounds (physical and emotional) speak louder to audiences willing to listen.
Today, Hiroshima and Nagasaki's *hibakusha* are embracing the many plights of Fukushima citizens, who were exposed to high level of radiation after the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant meltdown in March 2011. History is repeating itself in Japan, and Fukushima citizens make up a new generation of *hibakusha*, or survivors to radiation exposure. The atomic bomb survivors are at the forefront of this battle

waged against the Japanese government who is still reluctant to share with the whole world the truth about the Fukushima Daiichi meltdown. The Hiroshima and Nagasaki's *hibakusha* , however, can rely on their own lessons learned and provide informed support to Fukushima citizens. *Hibakusha*'s experiences, as lessons learned, will help a new generation of radiation exposure survivors in Japan to deal with their physical and emotional wounds, while strengthening the call for non-nuclear proliferation.

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