

## VOICES AND PERSPECTIVES

# The view from under the mushroom cloud: The *Chugoku Shimbun* newspaper and the Hiroshima Peace Media Center

**Tomomitsu Miyazaki**

Tomomitsu Miyazaki is the director of the Hiroshima Peace Media Center, a wing of the *Chugoku Shimbun* newspaper. The Peace Media Center website is dedicated to coverage of the atomic bombings, nuclear issues and peace issues in five languages.

**Keywords:** Hiroshima, atomic bomb, nuclear weapons, media.

: : : : : :

The *Chugoku Shimbun* is a daily newspaper based in Hiroshima, the city that experienced the first nuclear attack in human history. Founded in 1892, with a circulation of 620,000, the *Chugoku Shimbun* is one of Japan's leading regional newspapers.<sup>1</sup> On 6 August 1945, an atomic bomb exploded above the city and citizens of Hiroshima. The bomb's powerful blast, heat rays and radiation annihilated the city, killing more than 100,000 people, including those who had succumbed to injuries and illness by the end of 1945. Those who managed to survive lost not only loved ones but also their homes, schools and workplaces. They endured the chaos of the postwar period and rebuilt the city. The *Chugoku Shimbun* has always stood beside the people of Hiroshima as a newspaper company that also endured the tragedy, and it worked hard to support the city's reconstruction in the aftermath of the atomic bombing. Furthermore, it has long pursued a variety of distinctive efforts to help realize a world without war and nuclear weapons.



Figure 1. West End of Miyuki Bridge, 2.2 kilometres from the hypocentre. Survivors gather in front of the police station in Sendamachi to receive assistance from police officers. Photo by Yoshito Matsushige, © *Chugoku Shimbun*.

This article, illustrated with pictures taken by the newspaper's photographer, Yoshito Matsushige, will give readers insight into the experience of the *Chugoku Shimbun*'s staff on the day the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. It features the stories of three staff members, photographer Yoshito Matsushige, journalist Haruo Oshita, and Yasuo Yamamoto, manager of the paper's stenography department. It also describes the *Chugoku Shimbun*'s efforts to document the experience of Hiroshima's citizens, notably through the establishment of the Hiroshima Peace Media Center, and the newspaper's work towards a future without nuclear weapons.

### **Voices of *Chugoku Shimbun* staff on the day the atomic bomb was dropped**

More than 100 employees of the *Chugoku Shimbun*, about one third of the newspaper's work force at the time, were killed in the atomic bombing. The company's headquarters, located about 900 metres east of the hypocentre, were completely destroyed. The *Chugoku Shimbun*'s ability to print newspapers suffered a disastrous blow, with the two rotary presses destroyed by fire and the

1 Jiro Yamamoto, "Message", *Hiroshima Peace Media Center*, available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?page\\_id=25636](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?page_id=25636) (all internet references were accessed in November 2015).

communication equipment in ruins. The surviving workers suffered injuries, and many lost family members.

Below is the testimony of three of *Chugoku Shimbun*'s employees in 1945. Yoshito Matsushige was a photographer who took a handful of historic photos on the day the atomic bomb was dropped. Haruo Oshita saw the burnt ruins of the city, like a vision of hell, as he walked to the newspaper building. Yasuo Yamamoto lost his only son, 13 years old at the time, to the atomic bombing. Afterwards he made the revival of the *Chugoku Shimbun* his mission and worked tirelessly towards that end.



Figure 2. West End of Miyuki Bridge, 2.2 kilometres from the hypocentre. Survivors suffering burns receive dabs of cooking oil brought from the Hiroshima Army Provisions Depot nearby, or oil used for the transformers of the Hiroshima Electric Railway. Photo by Yoshito Matsushige, © *Chugoku Shimbun*.

## Yoshito Matsushige

One avenue that the *Chugoku Shimbun* has pursued in its efforts to realize a world without nuclear weapons is its coverage of the atomic bombing and peace issues, beginning with the five photographs taken by *Chugoku Shimbun* photographer Yoshito Matsushige (1913–2005) on the day of the bombing. There are many photos of the bomb's mushroom cloud taken from a distance that day, but only the five images captured by Mr Matsushige depict what happened to human beings under the atomic cloud. Some people were seriously injured, knocked unconscious by the blast, or trapped under collapsed buildings. Others had their clothes and bodies so severely burned that their skin peeled away, hanging down in strips. Still, those who survived somehow managed to flee from the city to outlying areas.

The most well-known of the five photos are the two taken at a location 2.2 kilometres from the hypocentre of the atomic blast, just three hours after the bomb exploded. The photos show people at the west end of Miyuki Bridge after they fled from the area near the hypocentre. In his later years, Mr Matsushige described what he had seen:

I had walked for two and a half hours downtown through blood-red rubble strewn with corpses, and I never snapped my shutter once. The only pictures I took were the two on the west end of Miyuki Bridge about three hours after

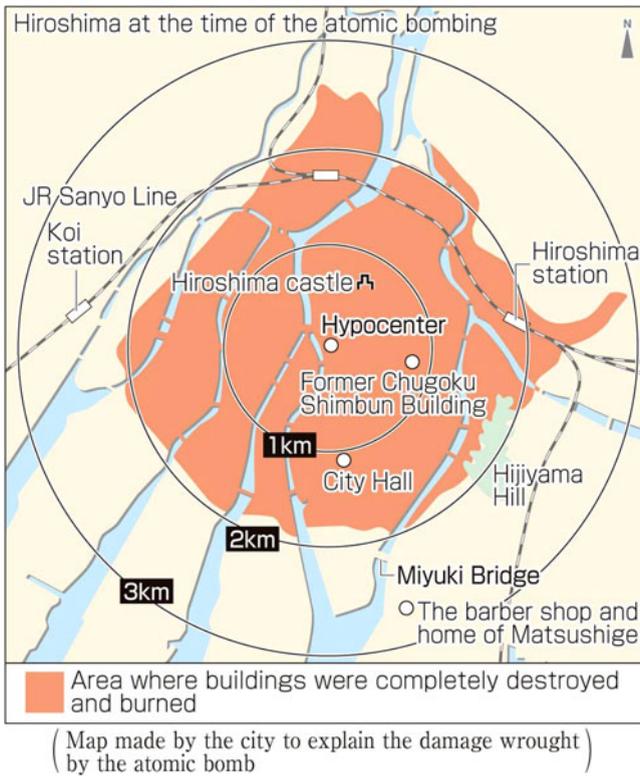


Figure 3. Map of Hiroshima at the time of the atomic bombing. © Chugoku Shimbun.

the bombing, two more of my house that afternoon before going into town, and one more that evening of a policeman issuing survivor's certificates in Minamimachi – a total of five.

When I raised the camera for a second shot, I found that the viewfinder was clouded with tears. It wasn't really anger, but I thought America had done a terrible thing. I felt sorry for the victims and it was so cruel that I cried.

I wanted to take more photos from the police branch office. I could see people treating victims. But I found it impossible to look through the viewfinder. The scene before my eyes was so gruesome. I walked closer to people, but I couldn't snap the shutter. Feeling uncomfortable, I asked no one in particular, "Isn't this terrible?"

I think it was good that I took those photos. Of course, they won't tell everything about the horror of the bombing, but I still feel I had done well to



Figure 4. The barber shop and home of Yoshito Matsushige, located 2.7 kilometres from the hypocentre. The shop was run by Mr Matsushige's sister and his wife. The blast littered the barber shop with rubble and broken glass. His wife, who appears in the scene, was pregnant at the time. Photo by Yoshito Matsushige, © *Chugoku Shimbun*.

about 8 kilometres west of Hiroshima, to go to the headquarters of the *Chugoku Shimbun*. He caught a ride on a relief truck from the Hatsukaichi Police Department, but the bridge into the Hiroshima delta had collapsed and the truck could not advance into the city. He crossed the Koi Railway Bridge, about 2.3 kilometres from the hypocentre. The railroad ties on the bridge were on fire. With raging flames blocking his path, he made his way down the road. "There was nothing but dead bodies."<sup>3</sup> When he finally made it to the newspaper building, "the presses were on fire, and the newsprint warehouse was in flames, too."<sup>4</sup> He simply sat there, dumbfounded.<sup>5</sup>

## Yasuo Yamamoto

From the day of the A-bombing most of the surviving employees of the *Chugoku Shimbun* and their families were faced with the deaths of family members. They were also struggling to learn whether others were safe ...

2 Yoshito Matsushige, "I Couldn't Press the Shutter in Hell", *Eyewitness Testimonies: Appeals from the A Bomb Survivors*, 3rd ed., Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation, 2003, pp. 71, 80, available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=22987](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=22987). See also "Messages from A-bomb Survivors: Yoshito Matsushige, Part 1", 7 December 2010, available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=53026](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=53026).

3 Masami Nishimoto, *Special 120th Anniversary Series: The A-bombing and the Chugoku Shimbun, Part 3*, 7 April 2012, available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=24045](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=24045).

4 *Ibid.*

5 *Ibid.*

get even a few pictures under such extreme circumstances. Without those photos, nothing would tell what really happened.<sup>2</sup>

Through tearful eyes, Mr Matsushige managed to capture the horrific conditions in the aftermath of the atomic bombing. He is just one of many who have sought to convey the atomic bomb experience.

## Haruo Oshita

On the morning of 6 August, Haruo Oshita, then 42 years old, looked up and saw a column of black smoke rising into the sky above Hiroshima as he left his home in Itsukaichi,



Figure 5. The view from the barber shop window, 2.7 kilometres from the hypocentre – the fourth photograph taken that day. A man walks past the wreckage of a two-story fire station that collapsed in the blast. Photo by Yoshito Matsushige, © *Chugoku Shimbun*.

Yasuo Yamamoto, then 42 years old, was riding his bicycle to work from his home in Danbaranaka-machi (now Danbaraminiami, Minami Ward), about 2.5 kilometres from the hypocentre, when he was thrown by the blast from the A-bombing. His 13-year-old son, Masumi, a first-year student at Hiroshima No. 1 Junior High School, had been mobilized to carry out demolition work and was working near city hall at the time of the bombing. He returned home with his face burned and swollen.

Mr Yamamoto later described one of the last conversations he had with his son. “It was around 11 that night. ‘Is there really a Pure Land?’ My son asked this strange question, breathing faintly ... ‘Is there jellied bean paste there?’ My wife finally choked out an answer. ‘Yes, there’s jellied bean paste and everything there.’ Then he said, ‘Then I think I’ll die.’”<sup>6</sup>

Mr Yamamoto put his son’s body in a handcart and carried him to the crematorium. The following day, 8 August, he went to work. He described his feelings at that time in the August 1965 edition of *Shinju*, an anthology of poetry he edited. “My son was dead, and I should have had no human will, but from that moment on I believed that the recovery of the *Chugoku Shimbun* was my duty, and I began to rouse myself.”<sup>7</sup>

6 This account was included in “The Stars Are Watching,” published by the Association of Bereaved Families of Students of Hiroshima No. 1 Junior High School in 1954.

7 M. Nishimoto, above note 3.

Employees were also stricken by the acute effects of radiation. Mr Yamamoto, who was manager of the paper's stenographic department, wrote:

After 20 days my hair began to fall out in the places where I had been burned ... But I couldn't take a day off from our preparations to put out the paper, so I continued to make that long-distance round trip by bicycle with my white bandages on.<sup>8</sup>

... Some of those who had been lucky enough to escape harm began to come back to work and then got leukemia and died. I was depressed and wondered if we'd really be able to put out the paper there.<sup>9</sup>

## Documenting Hiroshima after the mushroom cloud: The Hiroshima Peace Media Center

Over the years, many other reporters from our newspaper have written articles and taken photos in a long-standing effort to document what became of the city and its people under the bomb's mushroom cloud. At the time, the city had a population of about 350,000 people, around 140,000 of whom are believed to have died by the end of 1945.<sup>10</sup> Those who survived this fate still suffered the loss of loved ones, as well as feelings of guilt because they fled for their lives while leaving behind others who were calling for help. Many people later died from the after-effects of exposure to the radiation spewed out by the bomb; still others have faced a high risk of developing cancer even decades after the attack.<sup>11</sup>

The suffering of the survivors, both physical and mental, will linger as long as they live. What happened on 6 August 1945 is not a thing of the past; seventy years later, the repercussions of that day continue to be felt. Today there are nearly 16,000 nuclear weapons on the earth.<sup>12</sup> Compared to the time of the Cold War, the number has been reduced significantly, but it is nonetheless enough to decimate the world many times over. Nuclear weapons are so inhumane that if a nuclear war were to break out, there would be no winners; there would be only the devastation of this planet and the extinction of humankind. Unless we work to realize a world without nuclear weapons or war, humanity will have no future because the possibility that nuclear weapons will be used will hang over our heads as long as these weapons exist. Should a nuclear war break out, humankind

8 Masami Nishimoto, "Printing in Nukushina", in M. Nishimoto, *Special 120th Anniversary Series: The A-bombing and the Chugoku Shimbun*, Part 5, 21 April 2012, available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=24053](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=24053).

9 *Ibid.*

10 "Q. How many people died because of the atomic bombing?", City of Hiroshima website, available at: [www.city.hiroshima.lg.jp/www/contents/1319174554447/index.html](http://www.city.hiroshima.lg.jp/www/contents/1319174554447/index.html).

11 For more information, see, e.g., "Frequently Asked Questions", Radiation Effects Research Foundation, available at: [www.rerf.jp/general/qa\\_e/qa5.html](http://www.rerf.jp/general/qa_e/qa5.html). The Radiation Effects Research Foundation is a Japanese-US scientific organization dedicated to studying the health effects of A-bomb radiation.

12 See Hans M. Kristensen and Matthew McKinzie in this issue of the *Review*.



Figure 6. East End of Miyuki Bridge, 2.3 kilometres from the hypocentre. Tokuo Fujita, a police officer, writes out casualty certificates for survivors so they can receive rations of food and other provisions. The bandage on his head is for cuts he received from flying glass. Mr Fujita was at the Ujina Police Station, 4.7 kilometres from the hypocentre, at the time of the bombing. Photo by Yoshito Matsushige, © *Chugoku Shimbun*.

will face extinction and the future of our species will be lost. In other words, nuclear weapons and human beings cannot coexist. This is the message that the *Chugoku Shimbun*, together with the citizens of Hiroshima, has been conveying to the world.

However, a regional newspaper's influence extends only so far, and cannot move public opinion in Japan to the degree that the leading media outlets in Tokyo can. This challenge becomes even larger when seeking to convey our message to the wider world. As a newspaper company, reporting the news will always be our top priority. But as a newspaper based in a city that has suffered the consequences of the atomic bomb, the *Chugoku Shimbun* hopes to help the world understand the inhumanity of nuclear weapons through information and

opinions on this subject, which can contribute to the realization of a world free of nuclear weapons.

In the past, the *Chugoku Shimbun* has made a number of efforts to communicate more widely. As one example, a feature series entitled "Exposure – Victims of Radiation Speak Out", which ran from May 1989 through May 1990, reported on victims of radiation exposure at twenty-one locations in fifteen countries, including the former Soviet Union, Brazil, the United States, French Polynesia, India, Namibia and South Korea. This series, which was awarded the Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association Award in 1990, was published in book form.<sup>13</sup> This effort naturally had its limits, however. The *Chugoku Shimbun*'s reach could not extend to major bookstores in the United States.<sup>14</sup>

13 *Sekai no hibakusha*, Kodansha, Tokyo, 1991. An English-language version was published by Kodansha International in 1992.

14 "Exposure – Victims of Radiation Speak Out", *Hiroshima Peace Media Center*, available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?post\\_type=exposure&lang=en](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?post_type=exposure&lang=en).

The rise of the Internet has enabled the newspaper to more effectively reach audiences in Japan and overseas. In 2008, the *Chugoku Shimbun* established the Hiroshima Peace Media Center within the news and editorial department and launched a website dedicated to coverage of the atomic bombings, nuclear issues and peace issues.<sup>15</sup> The full range of articles, editorials and columns on these subjects that are written for the newspaper by our reporters and editorial writers are posted to this website. Some of this content is also translated into English so it can be accessed and read by non-Japanese speakers.

In 2014, one year before the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings, the Hiroshima Peace Media Center website began offering content translated into Chinese, French and Russian, with the help of Hiroshima University and other supporters. This effort was made to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombing, and the project will continue to be pursued. Although not as many articles have been translated into these languages as have been translated into English, some content from the newspaper is now conveyed to the world in a total of five languages. English, Chinese, French and Russian were chosen because these languages are spoken in the nuclear weapon States. Our hope is that the people living in the nations that speak these languages will learn what would happen to the people and cities under the mushroom cloud if nuclear weapons were used.

## Toward a future without nuclear weapons

Currently, the Hiroshima Peace Media Center website contains more than 23,000 articles, which cover not only the damage caused by the atomic bombing and the current state of nuclear weapons in the world, but also issues involving nuclear energy, including the accident at the Fukushima No. 1 (Daiichi) nuclear power plant,<sup>16</sup> and the suffering that Japan inflicted on the people of other nations in the past.<sup>17</sup> Numerous photographs connected to the atomic bombing of Hiroshima are also featured, as well as articles contributed by experts on nuclear issues from around the world. To date, the website has been visited over a million times by people in 200 countries and regions. Nearly 10% of these visits are from outside Japan.

Another area of focus for the *Chugoku Shimbun* involves handing down the experiences of the atomic bombing to younger generations. Central to this effort are the newspaper's "junior writers", students in Hiroshima between the sixth grade of

15 Available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?lang=en](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?lang=en).

16 The nuclear accident in Fukushima was the subject of a special series: "Fukushima and Hiroshima", *Hiroshima Peace Media Center*, available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?cat=3942](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?cat=3942). Since this series ran, the Hiroshima Peace Media Center has posted more than 700 additional articles about the accident on its website. These can be found by searching the site with the keyword "Fukushima".

17 The Hiroshima Peace Media Center website currently has no specific section on Japanese aggression during World War II, but the *Chugoku Shimbun* often touches on this issue in news articles and opinion pieces, which are also posted on the Hiroshima Peace Media Center website. Such articles can be found by searching the website with phrases like "suffering Japan inflicted".

elementary school and the third year of high school.<sup>18</sup> It is not unusual for Japanese newspapers to nurture student reporters, but the *Chugoku Shimbun* is apparently the only newspaper in Japan with student reporters who are focused on covering peace-related issues.

One of the key aspects of the junior writers' activities is the ongoing series "Survivors' Stories".<sup>19</sup> Many of the survivors are part of the generation of grandparents of these young people, and their average age has now exceeded 80. The junior writers see themselves as the last generation able to listen directly to the first-hand accounts of the survivors. Their active involvement in this programme is heartening.

Another important part of their work is the series of one-page feature articles called "Peace Seeds", which was introduced in 2015 and appears twice a month.<sup>20</sup> There are typically around forty-five junior writers, divided into five groups. Each group selects themes related in some way to the atomic bombing or peace, gathers information, and writes articles. This series has included such articles as "Hiroshima in 2045, 100 Years After the Atomic Bombing",<sup>21</sup> "Peace Declarations Convey Desire and Determination for Nuclear Abolition"<sup>22</sup> and "Children in Conflict Areas Struggle to Live Normal, Peaceful Lives".<sup>23</sup>

- 18 Articles involving the junior writers are available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?post\\_type=junior](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?post_type=junior). The "Peace Seeds" articles, a series of one-page feature articles written by the junior writers for which they select themes related to the atomic bombing or peace issues and gather information for their reports, are available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?post\\_type=seeds&lang=en](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?post_type=seeds&lang=en).
- 19 The Hiroshima Peace Media Center website contains many "Survivors' Stories": for example, Sakiko Masuda, "His Mother Told Him: 'Don't Give Up'", *Survivors' Stories*, 15 January 2013, available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=26985](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=26985), telling the story of atomic bomb orphan Mr Shoso Kawamoto, who lost six members of his family – his parents and siblings – to the bombing; Rie Nii, "Hawaiian-Born, A-bombed in Hiroshima", *Survivors' Stories*, 10 August 2012, available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=26953](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=26953), about Ms Sayoko Fujioka, who was born and raised in Hawaii, moved to her father's hometown of Hiroshima at the age of 14, and was 22 when the atomic bomb fell; Sakiko Masuda, "Crawling to Safety, Hovering between Life and Death", *Survivors' Stories*, 8 August 2012, available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=26936](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=26936), about Ms Hiroko Tokukiyo, who experienced the atomic bombing from a distance of 330 metres and still has glass fragments in her body; and Daisuke Yamamoto, "Affected by Chromosomal Abnormalities: Telling of A-bomb Experiences", *Survivors' Stories*, 3 July 2014, available at: <http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=32818>, telling the story of Mr Mitsuo Kodama, who was 870 metres from the hypocentre at the time of the atomic bombing and has suffered chromosomal abnormalities.
- 20 For examples of "Peace Seeds" articles, see Tokitsuna Kawagishi, "Okunoshima Island, Peaceful Tourist Destination, Reveals Japan's History of Aggression", *Peace Seeds: Teens in Hiroshima Sow Seeds of Peace*, 22 May 2015, available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=44665](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=44665); Arata Kouno, "Mobilized Students Worked Hard, Unable to Study or Dream", *Peace Seeds: Teens in Hiroshima Sow Seeds of Peace*, 4 June 2015, available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=45238](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=45238).
- 21 Kana Fukushima, "Hiroshima in 2045: 100 Years after the Atomic Bombing", *Peace Seeds: Teens in Hiroshima Sow Seeds of Peace*, 2 February 2015, available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?seeds=peace-seeds-teens-in-hiroshima-sow-seeds-of-peace-part-1-part-1-hiroshima-in-2045-100-years-after-the-atomic-bombing&query=hiroshima+in+2045](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?seeds=peace-seeds-teens-in-hiroshima-sow-seeds-of-peace-part-1-part-1-hiroshima-in-2045-100-years-after-the-atomic-bombing&query=hiroshima+in+2045).
- 22 Shiho Fujii, "Peace Declarations Convey Desire and Determination for Nuclear Abolition", *Peace Seeds: Teens in Hiroshima Sow Seeds of Peace*, 16 March 2015, available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=41986&query=peace+declarations+convey+desire+and+determination+for+nuclear+abolition](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=41986&query=peace+declarations+convey+desire+and+determination+for+nuclear+abolition).
- 23 Nana Kawaichi, "Children in Conflict Areas Struggle to Live Normal, Peaceful Lives", *Peace Seeds: Teens in Hiroshima Sow Seeds of Peace*, 13 April 2015, available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=43031](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=43031).



Figure 7. “Let’s Learn about Hiroshima”, 2015, published by the *Chugoku Shimbun* in cooperation with the Hiroshima International Cultural Foundation. © *Chugoku Shimbun*.

Through their work, these young reporters are seeking to prevent the memories of the atomic bombing from fading. This distinctive effort has been positively received, and many notable figures have granted interviews to the junior writers, including United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon;<sup>24</sup> Yohei Kono, then speaker of the House of Representatives;<sup>25</sup> and Hayao Miyazaki, the well-known director of Japanese animation.<sup>26</sup>

In an effort to hand down the atomic bomb experience to the next generation, the *Chugoku Shimbun* has also been distributing “Let’s Learn about Hiroshima”, a newspaper for peace studies programmes, at high schools and junior high schools. All junior high and high school students in Hiroshima

24 Masahiro Mikoshi, Minako Iwata, Seira Furukawa and Masaya Obayashi, “A Visit to Hiroshima on August 6: Interview with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon”, *Peace Seeds*, 2010, available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/hiroshima-koku/en/special/index\\_2010082302.html](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/hiroshima-koku/en/special/index_2010082302.html).

25 Risa Kushioka, Ryota Matsuda, Miyu Sakata, Minako Iwata and Moeko Takaki, “The 7th G8 Speakers’ Meeting in Hiroshima: Interview with Lower House Speaker Yohei Kono”, *Peace Seeds*, 2008, available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/hiroshima-koku/en/special/index\\_20080428.html](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/hiroshima-koku/en/special/index_20080428.html).

26 Nao Tatsugawa, Masahiro Mikoshi and Chisa Nishida, “Interview with Hayao Miyazaki, Animation Film Director: Children Can Raise the Spirits of Adults and Change Society”, *Peace Seeds*, 2009, available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/hiroshima-koku/en/special/20090511\\_1.html](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/hiroshima-koku/en/special/20090511_1.html).



Figure 8. The offices of the *Chugoku Shimbun* before the atomic bombing. The three-storey main building, constructed with reinforced concrete, is on the left. To its right is the company's newer building, seven storeys tall. © *Chugoku Shimbun*, held by Takeyo Masui.

Prefecture have received a copy of this newspaper each year since 2013. The newspaper features the accounts of atomic bomb survivors and basic information on the harm caused by the atomic bombing.

In 2015, the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings and the end of World War II, the junior writers took on a number of challenging new tasks. Some took part in a study tour in Europe to learn about the Holocaust (Shoah) – the genocide of the

Jewish people by Nazi Germany – and others travelled to New York to cover this year's Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which takes place at UN headquarters once every five years.

On the study tour, eight students from Hiroshima visited Poland and the Netherlands in late March and learned about the Holocaust, which symbolizes, along with the atomic bombings, the horrors of World War II. They toured the site of the former Auschwitz concentration camp, where more than a million people were killed, and the secret annex where Anne Frank and her family hid from the Nazis. They listened to survivors of the Holocaust and exchanged views with local youth. The eight participants of the tour included six university students and two junior writers who are in high school. The university students were selected by five universities in the prefecture through a process of essays and interviews.

The participants engaged in discussion with young people in the countries they visited to learn how local youth are working to pass on memories of the Holocaust, and they sought to find common ground in their efforts to hand down history. At the end of May, the Japanese students reported on their experiences of the tour with public presentations. They summarized the lessons they learned by crafting the Hiroshima Youth Appeal 2015.<sup>27</sup>

Two other junior writers were dispatched to New York to cover the 2015 NPT Review Conference. They reported on the conference proceedings as well as the activities undertaken by the Hiroshima city and prefectural governments.<sup>28</sup> They also interviewed Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida of Japan.<sup>29</sup> At the Youth Forum, which was organized by Mayors for Peace, they delivered a speech to the international community.<sup>30</sup> The membership of Mayors for Peace, for which Hiroshima Mayor Kazumi Matsui serves as president, now consists of more than 6,990 cities.<sup>31</sup>

These were the first opportunities for junior writers to travel abroad to pursue their reporting. The two projects were organized so that young people in Hiroshima could take the opportunity presented by the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings and the end of the war to think about their role and their responsibilities. People living in places that have experienced tragedy, like Hiroshima, tend to focus on their own suffering. As these young people deepened their knowledge of the tragedies that have taken place in other parts of the world,

27 See Yuji Yamamoto, "Session on 'Hiroshima and the Holocaust' Appeals for Young People to Take Action for Peace", *Junior Writers Reporting*, 3 June 2015, available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?junior=session-on-hiroshima-and-the-holocaust-appeals-for-young-people-to-take-action-for-peace](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?junior=session-on-hiroshima-and-the-holocaust-appeals-for-young-people-to-take-action-for-peace).

28 See "Junior Writers Cover NPT Review Conference: Future Without Nuclear Weapons Not a Dream", *Peace Seeds: Teens in Hiroshima Sow Seeds of Peace*, 10 May 2012, available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=44902](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=44902).

29 See "Junior Writers from Hiroshima Interview Japanese Foreign Minister in New York", *Hiroshima Peace Media Center*, 10 May 2012, available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=44055](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=44055).

30 See "Students from Japan Convey A-bomb Survivors' Suffering at Youth Forum in New York", *Hiroshima Peace Media Center*, 10 May 2012, available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=44152](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=44152). Regarding the Youth Forum, hosted by Mayors for Peace, see the Facebook post by Mayors for Peace on 28 June 2015, available at: [www.facebook.com/mayorsforpeace](https://www.facebook.com/mayorsforpeace).

31 The Mayors for Peace website is available at: [www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/index.html](http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/index.html).

recognizing the suffering of other people and seeking to find commonality, they broadened their ability to express their views and hand down the memories of these events.

#### Communicating

Hiroshima's message of nuclear abolition and world peace to other parts of Japan and other nations of the world is an effort to spread this appeal horizontally, around the world. At the same time, handing down the memories of the atomic bombing to the next generation is an effort to convey the past vertically, across time.

Both efforts are an attempt to share the hope of the atomic bomb survivors that no other people on this planet should experience the same tragedy and endure the same suffering. For a regional newspaper, these are unique and ambitious pursuits.

A question often asked is: what makes the *Chugoku Shimbun* so earnest in these efforts? The answer is very simple: along with so many in Hiroshima, this newspaper company was hit hard by the atomic bombing. Our former headquarters was located about 900 metres to the east of the hypocentre, and 114 employees, or one third of our workforce at the time, lost their lives. The reporters who covered the news of the atomic bombing were, at the same time, survivors themselves.

Barbara Reynolds, an American peace activist and honorary citizen of Hiroshima, made great efforts to spread the wishes of Hiroshima across the world. She has said "I, too, am a *hibakusha*",<sup>32</sup> and "The *hibakusha* are the inspiration for all my peace efforts. My heart is always with Hiroshima."<sup>33</sup> The reporters of the *Chugoku Shimbun* wholeheartedly agree with Ms Reynolds that people who understand and strive to convey the survivors' message are



Figure 9. A photograph of the *Chugoku Shimbun*'s older building in the aftermath of the atomic bomb. The newer building is visible in the background. Photo by Stanley Troutman, © *Chugoku Shimbun*, held in the collection of the US Library of Congress.

32 See "Memorial Monument for Barbara Reynolds", available at: [www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/virtual/VirtualMuseum\\_e/tour\\_e/ireihi/tour\\_57\\_e.html](http://www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/virtual/VirtualMuseum_e/tour_e/ireihi/tour_57_e.html). Barbara Reynolds founded the Peace Resource Center at Wilmington College, where her papers are kept. Its website is available at: [www.wilmington.edu/the-wilmington-difference/prc/](http://www.wilmington.edu/the-wilmington-difference/prc/). See also Tanya Maus, "The World Friendship Center's 50th Anniversary", November 2014, available at: [www.wilmington.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/IHF\\_Tanya-Maus-Trip.pdf](http://www.wilmington.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/IHF_Tanya-Maus-Trip.pdf); Charlotte Pack, "Peace Resource Center at Wilmington College (U.S.)", *Peace Museums of the World*, 9 December 2008, available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/mediacenter\\_d/w\\_museum/20081209115331627\\_en.html](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/mediacenter_d/w_museum/20081209115331627_en.html); Yoshifumi Fukushima, "NGO Activities and the Legacy of Barbara Reynolds", *History of Hiroshima: 1945–1995*, 1995, available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=27592](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=27592).

33 "Memorial Monument for Barbara Reynolds", above note 32.



Figure 10. The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park in spring. On the left is the Atomic Bomb Dome; the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum is visible in the background. The white building in the upper right corner is the *Chugoku Shimbun*'s headquarters. © *Chugoku Shimbun*.

*hibakusha* too, even if they or their parents or grandparents did not actually experience the atomic bombing.

Through listening to the experiences of the people who endured the terrible devastation on 6 August 1945, people come to understand how inhumane nuclear weapons are and begin to develop an awareness of themselves as *hibakusha*. The survivors see it as their responsibility, for the human race, to create a world free of nuclear arms and to put an end to the nuclear age that began in 1945. The spirit of Hiroshima awakens people to this responsibility.<sup>34</sup>

Because of this responsibility, the staff of the *Chugoku Shimbun* newspaper can look out at the world “from under the mushroom cloud” and feel empathy for the survivors and citizens of Hiroshima. It is with this sense of honour and obligation that we have borne such weighty responsibility. The company motto, which includes “promoting world peace”, is taken to heart as our duty and our mission.

“Have the atomic bombs come to be known for their power, or for their human tragedy?”<sup>35</sup> We, the *Chugoku Shimbun*, ask the global community to consider this question by Toshihiro Kanai, who was a chief editorial writer for the newspaper from 1971 up to the time of his death in 1974. We must maintain our perspective as human beings, and should not merely view the aftermath of the atomic bombing from above the mushroom cloud or from a distance, which is the perspective of nations. This is the nature of the *Chugoku Shimbun*'s stance in covering the atomic bombing, as well as nuclear issues and peace issues.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> See Masami Nishimoto, “Relative of the Late Toshihiro Kanai Donates 8,000 Documents to Hiroshima University”, *Hiroshima Peace Media Center*, 10 March 2010, available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=15007](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=15007).

The efforts described above will be persistently pursued beyond the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombing. After the bombing, it was said that “nothing would grow in Hiroshima for 75 years”,<sup>36</sup> but the devastated land has been revived into a lush, green city by the citizens and supporters of Hiroshima. The *Chugoku Shimbun*, rooted right here, will continue its ongoing work to promote the abolition of nuclear weapons and lasting peace in the world.

36 See Masami Nishimoto, “Fumbling Efforts to Convey A-bombing’s Effects”, *Hiroshima Peace Media Center*, 10 May 2012, available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=24059](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=24059). For more information, please refer to the Mayors for Peace website, available at: [www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/index.html](http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/index.html). See also Michiko Tanaka, “Students from Japan Convey A-bomb Survivors’ Suffering at Youth Forum in New York”, *Hiroshima Peace Media Center*, 12 May 2015, available at: [www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=44152](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=44152).