



Destructive Effects

Section 2 www.AtomicBombMuseum.org/3_social.shtml

SOCIAL DAMAGES

Major population groupings

- A. Persons present in Hiroshima or Nagasaki at bombing time. Of the regular resident population, many children and older persons had been previously evacuated, while certain outsiders were working in the cities on their specific bombing days. Overall, the estimated “physically present” population of Hiroshima on August 6 was 340,000–350,000. Nagasaki’s estimated “physically present” population on August 9 was 90,000–120,000.
- B. Early entrants into both cities following the bombings, mainly firefighters, medical workers, and other helping personnel.
- C. Persons who fell victim to radioactive in the areas surrounding the two bombed cities.

Almost all persons in the above groupings, young or old, also fell into one of the following groups: (1) broken families; (2) A-bomb orphans; (3) orphaned elderly.

Hiroshima.

Of the city’s 298 medical doctors, 270 (90%) became A-bomb victims. Casualty rates among pharmacists and nurses ranged between 80% and 93%. Eighteen emergency hospitals and 32 first-aid clinics were destroyed, and most of the workers needed to restore these health facilities were killed or injured. Nearby army medical facilities were also mostly destroyed.

In sum, approximately 90% of all medical personnel were dead or disabled, and remaining medical facilities were thrown into great disrepair and confusion. All citizens faced desperate conditions; the young and old, all the more so.

Nagasaki.

In the 2-km zone of total destruction around ground zero in Nagasaki’s Urakami valley, the city’s chief medical facilities were destroyed. These included Nagasaki Medical University and its related hospital, the Urakami branch of Mitsubishi Hospital, Urakami First Hospital, and some other smaller health care institutions.

Of the 70 or so doctors in private practice in the city, twenty were dead and twenty more seriously wounded; hardly 30 were able to help the mass of A-bomb victims.

As a major port city, Nagasaki was surrounded by various naval installations. Medical personnel from several naval hospitals (Isahaya, Sasebo, Omura, and other places) came with support personnel to give assistance, making the overall situation somewhat better than in Hiroshima.

Even so, food, clothing, medicine, and other relief supplies in Nagasaki were, as in Hiroshima, extremely scarce. Moreover, heavy rains in both cities in September made the struggle to live desperately difficult and miserable.

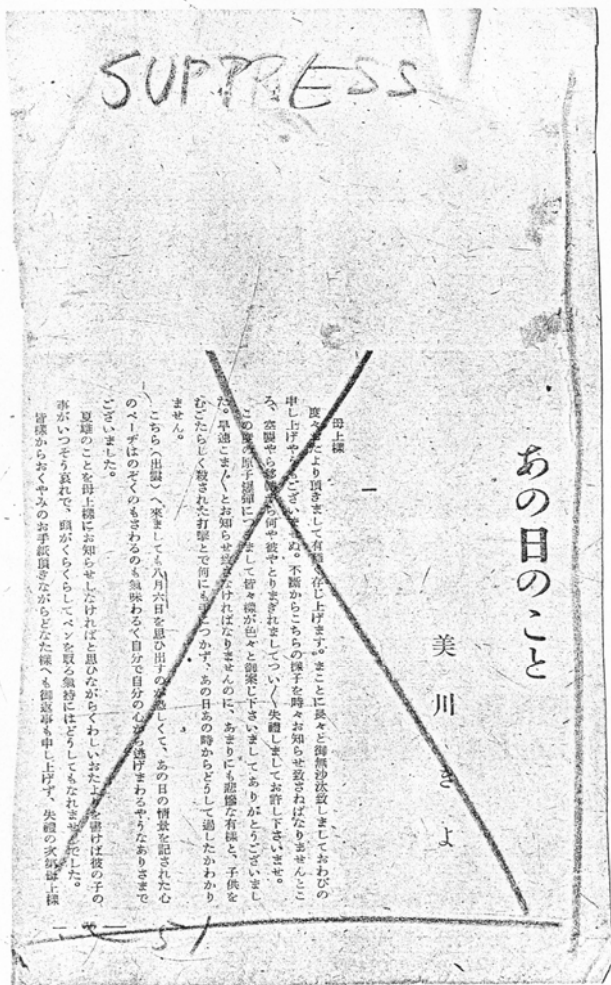


*Desperate survivors in Nagasaki (Yamahata)

Local ability to mobilize health care personnel and restore medical facilities was severely hampered by the overall loss of non-military economic wealth (65 billion yen nationwide). Of this total, Hiroshima (884 million yen) and Nagasaki (380 million yen) together suffered over 2% of the national total.

Political restraints to recovery

On top of the enormous physical, medical, and social damages imposed on Japan by the two atomic bombings, the Supreme Commander of the allied Occupation (SCAP) imposed another onerous handicap: censorship. Formally termed the Press Code, officially issued by the Occupation GHQ on September 19, 1945, it prohibited the publication of all reports and studies of A-bomb damages, including medical and scientific studies of all injuries and losses suffered by A-bomb victims in both Hiroshima and Nagasaki, whether in newspapers, magazines, scholarly journals, books, or other public means. Thus the A-bombed citizens struggled with ignorance of the many medical and social aspects of the decimated lives.



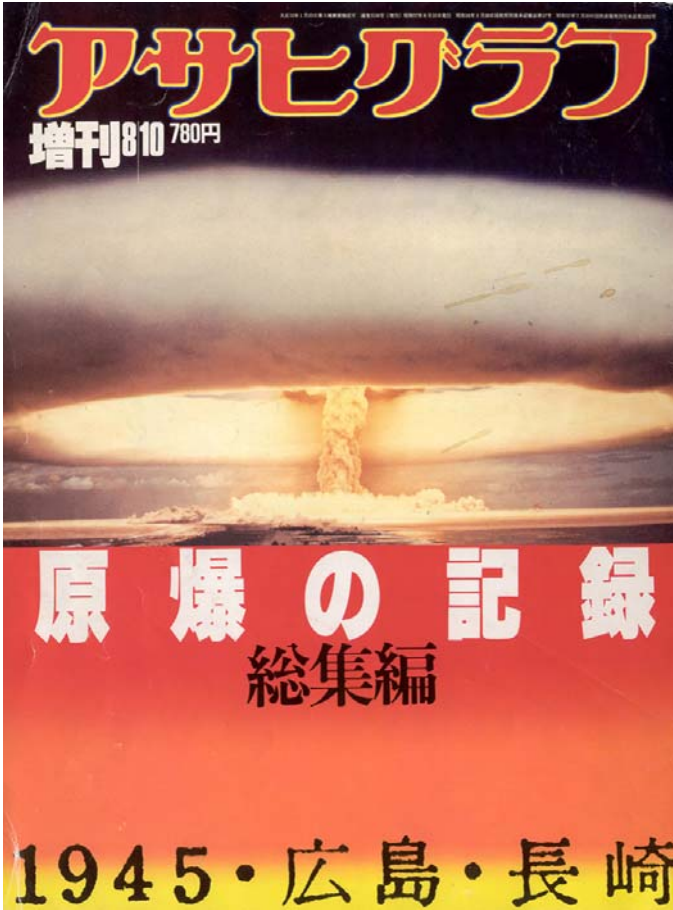
*Sample of censorship under the Occupation Press Code. This article in the July issue of *Women's Journal* is a mother's reaction to her son's tragic death in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. The entire article was suppressed so as to not "disturb public tranquility."

There were minor exceptions. The Hiroshima-based magazine, *Chugoku Bunka*, devoted its initial issue (March 10, 1946) to A-bomb damages. A Manhattan Project team published its report, *The Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki*, on June 29, 1946. And the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey Team completed its report, *The Effects of the Air Attack on the Cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki* the following day. These official documents, however, were printed in English and, in any case, did not touch deeply on the sufferings of the two A-bombed cities.

Most importantly, serious research on the extent and gravity of A-bomb damages and injuries could not be publicly printed and distributed by any Japanese persons or organizations, thus handicapping the surviving medical personnel trying to heal and assuage the thousands of A-bomb victims. The most revealing item, perhaps, is that the Japanese characters for "atomic bomb" (*genshi bakudan*, or the short form, *genbaku*) could not even be used in public print. This applied to all forms: newspapers, magazines, books, public bulletins, and of course, movies.

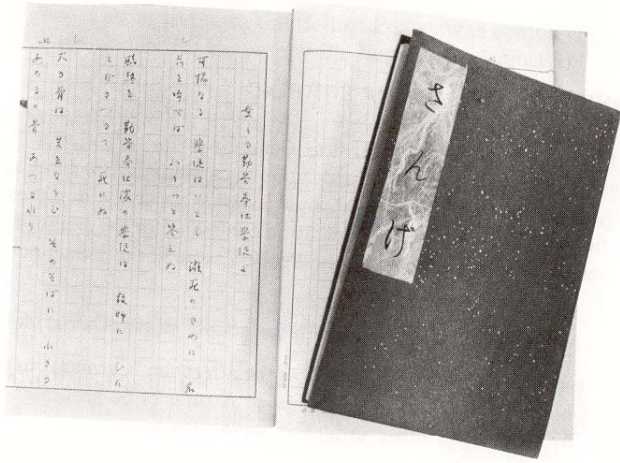
Cameramen of the Japanese movie firm Nippon Eiga-sha were arrested by American MPs in Nagasaki on October 17, 1945, and two days later the photographing of A-bomb scenes was prohibited. A formal prohibition was issued by GHQ on December 12. It would be almost seven years later until, after the Occupation ended, the weekly magazine *Asahi Gurafu* (Asahi Graph) filled an entire issue with heretofore unpublicized

photographs of A-bomb damages and victims—the first A-bomb-related photos to be published in the postwar era.



*The front cover of the initial issue of *Asahi Graph* when press censorship ended in 1952. The title reads “Record of the Atomic Bombings, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, 1945.”

One of the most moving instances of resistance to the Press Code was a small volume of *tanka* (a Japanese verse form of 31 syllables), penned by a hibakusha poet named Shinoe Shoda in Hiroshima. Titled *Sange*, it decried the cruelty of the bomb. As publication of all A-bomb-related materials was strictly banned, she took her manuscript to Tadao Nakamura, a clerk in the printing shop of a Hiroshima prison, who mimeographed 150 copies in December 1947. Shoda distributed copies to other hibakusha, all at her own expense and, of course, without SCAP permission. A hand-written copy of *Sange* was later donated to the Hiroshima Peace Cultural Foundation.



*Front cover and first page of Shoda's *Sange*. (Chugoku, *The Meaning of Survival*, 68)

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