

# HIROSHIMA



# NEVER AGAIN





**Setsuko Satamoto was a schoolgirl when the atom bomb was dropped on the city of Hiroshima. This is her story.**

"At 8.00 am we heard the peculiar roar of a B-29\* in the distance. Our teacher shouted, 'B-29, B-29'.

We looked up and suddenly there was a terrific flash of lightning. We were blinded for the moment, and in a daze. What did I see when I regained my senses? The whole area was in darkness. There were red flames licking towards the sky, getting bigger and bigger.

The faces of my friends with whom I had been working so hard minutes before, were burned and blistering, their clothes were in shreds. They wandered around shaking like frightened chicks. Our teacher gathered us up around him like a mother hen. Some of my classmates tried to bury their heads under his arms. His hair had turned white all of a sudden.

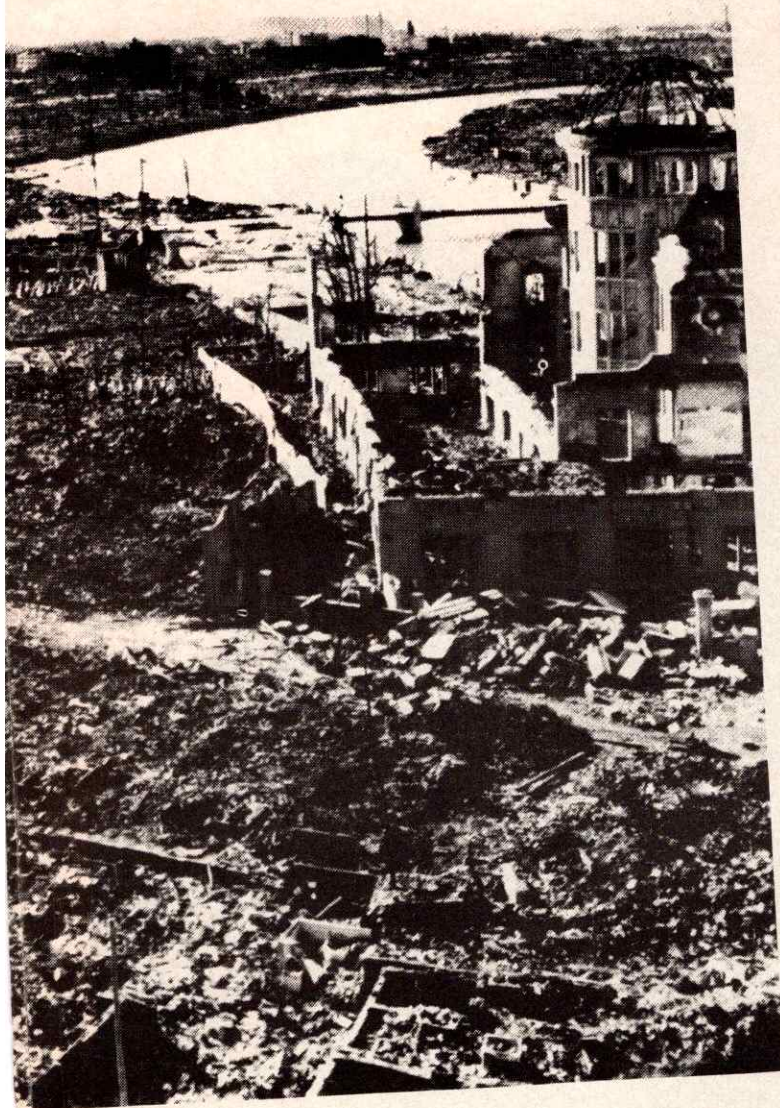
Within ten minutes I found myself standing alone in the midst of strangers. I was standing there in a daze when I heard my friends calling me, and I joined them. Some of them were sobbing over their burned faces, some were crying for their parents. Burned hand in burned hand, we went looking for our teacher.

The next thing I knew, we were jumping over tombstones to escape from the fire. The pine trees around us went up in flames with a cracking noise, and it looked as if we would be trapped. We did not know where to go. We just followed the crowd moving away from the flames.

There were children screaming for their mothers and mothers trying to find their children. Burned people got into water storage tanks to escape the heat. We were all the colour of blood. I was with another girl. We had been going along with the crowd, but for some reason or other started going in the opposite direction. We ran along the river bank until we got to a small stone bridge. It was the Fujimi Bridge.

\* The B-29 is a type of American aircraft.





All the stores and trees that had lined both sides of the street to the bridge until that morning had been burned to the ground. Power poles had fallen over and the electric wires were on the ground. There was a baby lying on the ground by the wires, his little hands clenched, his eyes closed. 'Hell on earth' is the only way to describe it.

My friend was going wild from the pain of her burns and her thirst. I put her on my back after we got to the Hijiyama Bridge, and we headed for the first aid station. It was just about noon when we reached the foot of Hijayama. There were hordes of people in the shade of the trees there. They were so badly injured I could not bear to look.

Our two teachers, who in spite of their own serious injuries helped us unselfishly, died because of the atom bomb, and my forty classmates died one after the other. I was the only one in my class who survived."

**The bomb dropped on Hiroshima at 8.15am on 6th August 1945 was the most horrific weapon which has ever been used. It was no ordinary bomb. In a few moments it destroyed a whole city.**

Like many others of her age, Setsuko was not in her classroom when the bomb dropped - she was working out in the open. Many were blinded by the initial explosion, then within seconds the bomb turned into a huge fireball 200 metres across. The heat all around was intense. Buildings, trees, vehicles and people were all burned. The blast from the bomb flattened homes over a wide area. Hours after the explosion the whole city was in flames. A sea of fire covered Hiroshima.

Those like Setsuko who had not perished instantly struggled through the flames looking for help. But most of the doctors and nurses were also dead or injured. At the First Army Hospital only one person survived out of 750 staff and patients. The Hiroshima Prefecture Hospital was totally demolished. The Red Cross Hospital was still standing, but inside everything had been devastated, most of the doctors and nurses were seriously injured or dead. Soon 10,000 people, most of them dying, had gathered there seeking help.

When the atom bomb was detonated there was a blast stronger than any hurricane, intense rays of heat and a blinding light. But there was also a new deadly danger - radiation. The invisible rays penetrated into the bodies of the people of Hiroshima. It made them sick. As the weeks went by many lost the hair from their head. Skin which had been burned took a very long time to recover, because of the effects of radiation.

One 10 year old girl thought herself lucky that she had survived that day. She grew up, married and had a son and a daughter. But both her children died from leukemia, victims many years later of the atom bomb.

It is estimated that around 130,000 died on that day and in the first few weeks that followed. But the death toll rose as the years passed. By the time that 5 years had passed the total number of dead had risen to 200,000.



## THE DESTRUCTION OF NAGASAKI

Soon after the atom bomb had fallen on Hiroshima, a journalist in the city of Nagasaki was reading a top secret report which detailed the catastrophic effects of the explosion. It was 10.00 am on August 9th. One hour later he would experience for himself the horror of nuclear war.

Nagasaki was covered with cloud as the US Air Force bomber flew overhead carrying the second atom bomb. They had intended to drop it on the centre of the city but this was not visible. Instead the bomb was dropped on a secondary aiming point further North. Even so, a large part of Nagasaki was completely destroyed. Fires raged hours later. Thousands died instantly, many more died from the effects of burns and radiation.

The atom bomb exploded near Nagasaki Medical University and Hospital. Within a few seconds the buildings were devastated. Those who survived struggled up onto a nearby hill, but by dawn the next day half of them were dead. More than one thousand doctors, nurses, students and patients from the University Hospital died.

Some children had been evacuated out of the city, for fear of bombing, but many remained. 1,653 primary school children and 74 of their teachers died in Nagasaki, most of them in the suburbs within 2 kilometres of where the bomb fell. Many children who had been evacuated to the countryside returned distraught to find that their mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters had perished.

People were going about their daily routine when the bomb fell. At Ukanami Roman Catholic Cathedral 50 people were lining up for confession and 2 priests were in attendance. A short distance away a group had gathered for a Shinto wedding. There were no survivors from the Cathedral or from the wedding party.

Earlier that morning, Matsuo, an 8 year old boy was playing hide and seek with six friends. Matsuo was in



Around 7 am on August 10th near Nagasaki railway station. A boy carries his younger brother on his back. His face is covered with dried blood. Their parents have probably been killed. *Photo: Yamahata Yosuke.*

the centre of the yard trying to spot the others hiding. Then the atom bomb exploded and in an instant he was killed. The other boys who had been crouching behind a wall were untouched. They crept from their hiding places and walked over to where the remains of little Matsuo's body lay on the ground. In horrified silence they stared at each other.

They were the lucky ones, or so they thought. But the invisible killer was at work. Within one week, three of the boys would be dead from radiation.

One man described the dreadful scene as he walked across the devastated city of Nagasaki. The closer he came to what must have been the bomb centre the quieter it became. On the outer edges of the circle of death, there were cries and shouts. As he moved inward, there were moans and soft groaning. As he approached the centre, there was utter silence.

The total death toll at the time was between 60,000 and 70,000 and a further 50,000 died over the next five years.



# FACTS ABOUT THE HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI BOMBS

## Why was the atom bomb used ?

The first two atom bombs were built during the second world war. They were used in August 1945. By this time the war in Europe had ended and the war against Japan was drawing to a close - the Japanese Emperor was ready to surrender.

The bomb was dropped more as a signal to Russia than to end the war. The war would have ended very soon anyway. Russia was due to enter the war against Japan on August 8th. The United States were already anticipating a future confrontation with Russia.

Some people have claimed that thousands of Allied troops would have died invading Japan, if the bomb had not been used. But their estimates of casualties were grossly exaggerated and it is unlikely that an invasion would have been needed.

While the Japanese troops committed many atrocities during the second world war, this was no moral justification for the indiscriminate killing of thousands of civilians at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

## How were the targets chosen ?

There were military facilities at both sites, large arms factories in Nagasaki, and soldiers in Hiroshima. However the cities were not chosen simply as military targets.

The Americans wanted to be able to see how destructive the atom bomb was. It was seen as an "experiment". The US Air Force chose targets where there were large numbers of houses, so they could count how many were destroyed. They selected cities which had not already been damaged by conventional bombing so they could more easily make their calculations. They selected aiming points so that each of the bombs would explode where they would completely destroy a whole city.

## Why were there two bombs ?

The bomb dropped on Hiroshima contained Uranium, the one used on Nagasaki contained Plutonium. Part of the reason for two bombs was because the Americans wanted to see the effect of both designs.



"Walking around the back of Hakushima-cho garden, I saw a child leaning against a gate, crying. When I touched him, I found he was dead. My heart ached to think he might have been my son." *Painting and words by Hiroshima survivor.*

## How much damage was done ?

In Hiroshima an area of 13 square kilometres was reduced to ashes by blast and fire. In Nagasaki the area reduced to ashes was 6.7 square kilometres. In the city of Hiroshima 52,000 houses were completely destroyed and 18,000 more were badly damaged.

## How many died ?

A total of 200,000 were killed by the bomb dropped on Hiroshima and 120,000 by the bomb dropped on Nagasaki. There were very few survivors from near where the bomb was dropped. The following figures are for Hiroshima:

Distance from atom bomb	Percentage killed
less than 500 m	99 %
600 - 1000 m	90 %
1000 - 1500 m	45 %
1600 - 2000 m	23 %

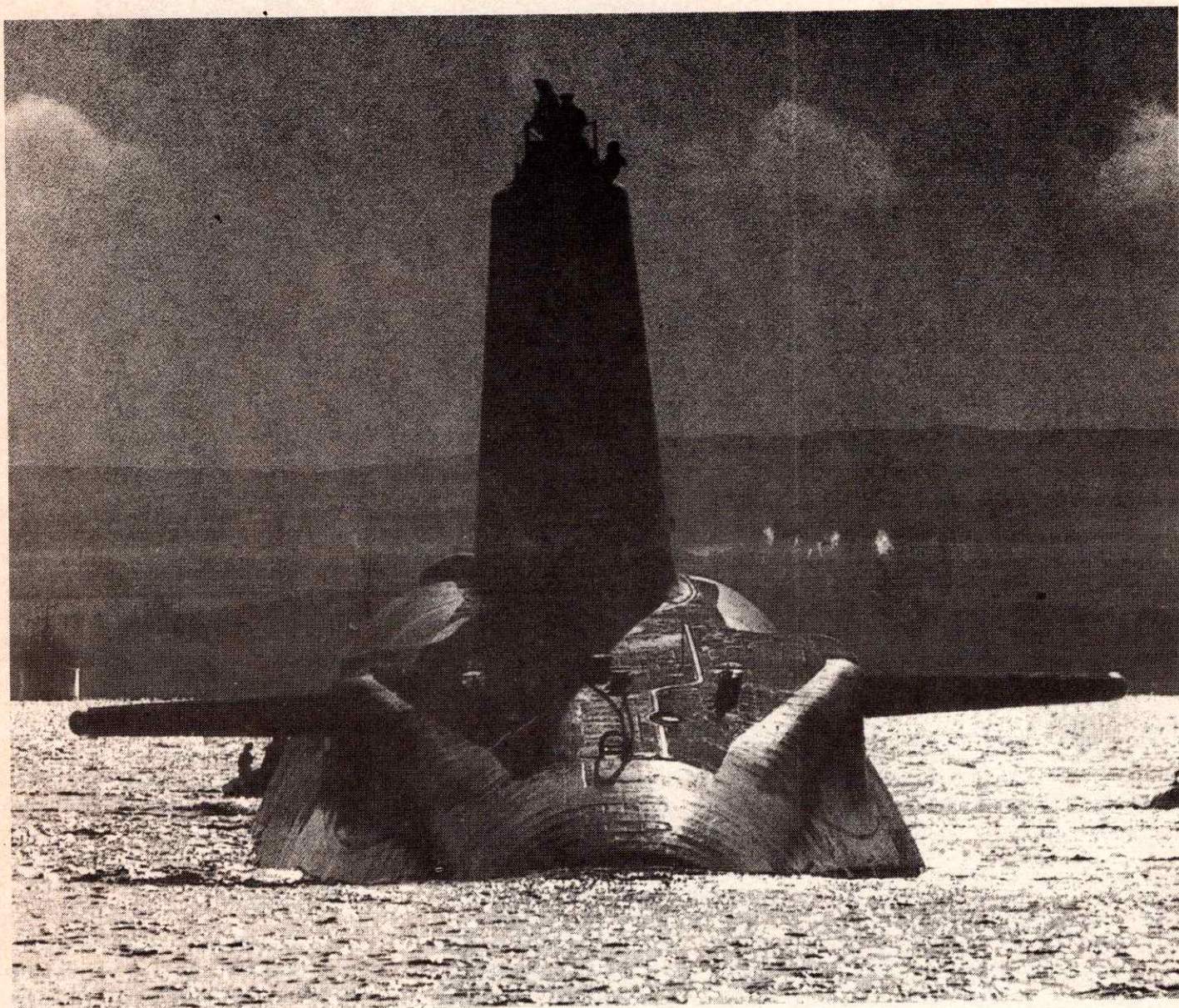
## Paper Cranes

Sadako Sasaki was an infant when the atom bomb fell on Hiroshima. When she was 12 years old she fell ill with leukemia caused by the bomb. In her hospital bed she began to fold paper into the shape of a type of bird, the crane. There is a Japanese tradition that if someone is ill they should fold one thousand paper cranes and then they will be out of danger. Soon above Sadako's hospital bed there was a web of strings on which the little cranes fluttered.

Sadly she grew too ill to carry on with her project. She died before she had completed one thousand. Her friends were moved by her loss and took it on themselves to complete the remaining paper cranes. The story of Sadako and her friends spread across Japan. Soon schoolchildren across the country were making paper cranes in memory of Sadako and the other children who died at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

This tradition continues today. Every year thousands of little hands fold sheets of coloured paper into cranes, in remembrance of the young lives which were lost.





**Today this British nuclear submarine, or another like it, is at sea in the North Atlantic. At any time, given only 15 minutes notice, it can cause the same kind of total destruction which was seen in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.**

If the atomic weapons on this Trident submarine were used, then children would be burned, hospitals would be destroyed and schools turned to ashes. Elderly people, pregnant women, people in wheelchairs - all would be victims. The experiences of the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki show that nuclear weapons do not spare people on grounds of age or sex.

If the missiles on this submarine were fired, then they would kill infants playing in the street, patients in their hospital beds, mothers nursing their offspring ... There would be massive fireballs which would engulf homes and shops and turn city streets to seas of fire. There would be more cries of anguish, children crying for their mothers and mothers searching for their children.

The devastation witnessed by the survivors in Hiroshima and Nagasaki left them numbed, it was beyond human comprehension, and yet the horrendous destructive power of a nuclear submarine today is on an even greater scale.

The degree of devastation is indicated in a 1985 US Intelligence Assessment

which said that with Trident Britain would be able to almost wipe out the Soviet Union as a viable society. The total population of the Soviet Union was 285 million people. The politics of Eastern Europe may have changed, but Britain's readiness to initiate the nuclear holocaust is not diminished.

The submarine shown above carries 96 atom bombs mounted on long range missiles. Each atom bomb could destroy a city, in the same way that Hiroshima and Nagasaki were turned into ashes. In fact they are even more deadly. This one submarine is carrying nuclear weapons which are the equivalent of more than 750 Hiroshima bombs.



## FACTS ABOUT TRIDENT

### What is Trident ?

Trident is a nuclear weapons system. It consists of submarines which carry missiles. On top of each missile are several atom bombs. The submarines are each powered by a nuclear reactor. The first Trident submarine went on patrol fully armed in December 1994. The Navy plan to have completed four submarines by the year 2000.

### Trident and Scotland

The Trident submarines are based in Scotland, at Faslane near Helensburgh. From here they sail out into the North Atlantic. At Faslane there is a shiplift which is used to lift a loaded submarine out of the water. The atom bombs are put onto the submarine nearby in Coulport on the shore of Loch Long. The government is replacing all other nuclear weapons with Trident. This means that by 1998 all British nuclear weapons will be based in Scotland.

### Three hundred atom bombs

The atom bombs for Trident are coming off the production line at a rate of one every eight days. The plan is to build around 300 of them. This means that by 1998 there will be three times as many nuclear warheads in Scotland as there were in 1992.

### Armageddon on the road

The atom bombs are transported by road from the South of England to the Clyde Submarine Base. Every two months a convoy of military lorries with a large armed escort travels through Southern and Central Scotland. Each convoy brings up ten atom bombs. Their route can take them near Edinburgh on the city bypass, through the centre of Glasgow on the M8 and over the Kingston Bridge, or through Stirling and along the shores of Loch Lomond.

### Trident and Hiroshima

The Trident bombs are smaller than the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki but they are far more destructive. Trident bombs are "boosted fission" designs. This means they use tritium to make the nuclear explosion more powerful. One Trident atom bomb is equivalent to 100,000 tons of TNT, or eight Hiroshima bombs.

### Who is Trident aimed at ?

Trident is designed to be used against Russia and this remains the main target. However in addition it can be used against any country, to deliver "an unmistakable message of our willingness to defend our vital interests to the utmost" according to Malcolm Rifkind, the Defence Secretary. This could include using Trident against a country which had no nuclear weapons of their own.

### How much does it cost ?

The official cost of Trident is £10 billion. But much of the true cost is hidden. The real cost to the British taxpayer is more than £33 billion.

"I heard children crying buildings collapsing, men and women screaming. I saw the bright red of blood and people with dazed expressions on their faces trying to get away. I want to call out :

people of the world, do not let what Hiroshima has experienced ever be repeated."

*Yokho Kuwahame, schoolgirl.*

This girl was 2 kilometres away from the bomb which destroyed Hiroshima. She has lost some her hair because of the effect of radiation from the bomb.

