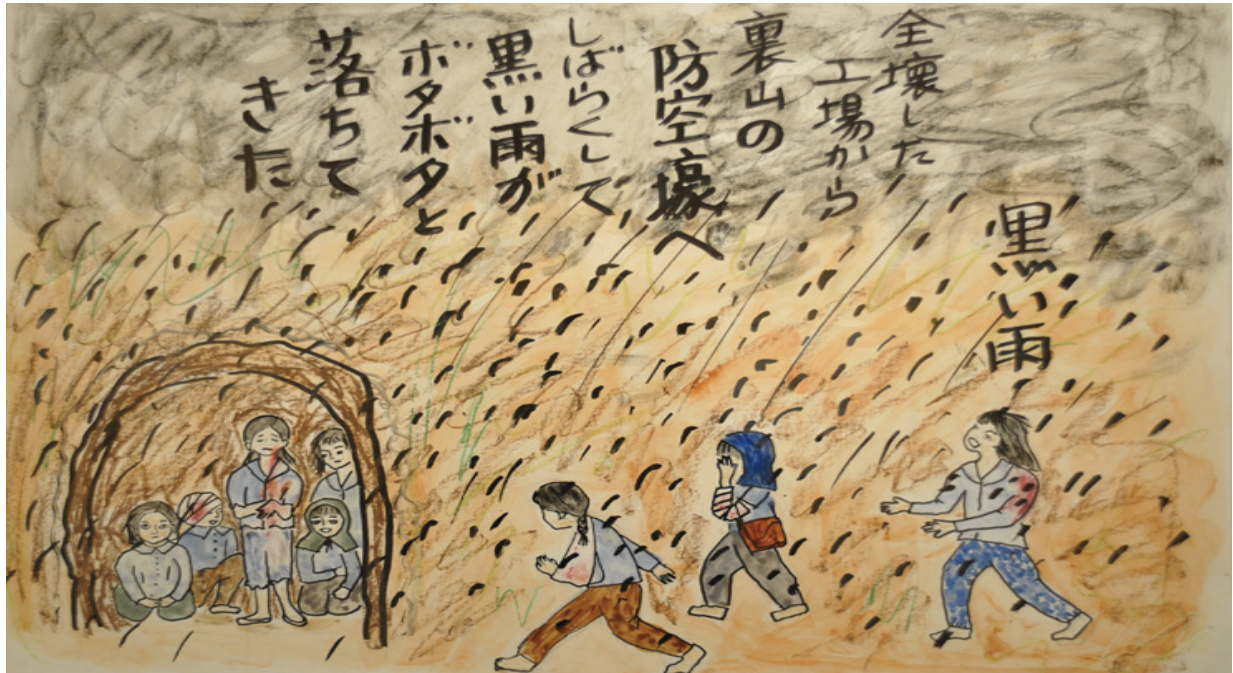


No more Hibakusha



August 6, 1945

700 m from the hypocenter

Yuko Nakamura (13 at time of bombing, 70 at time of drawing)

When washing my face with a bloody nose at a well outside, large drops of rain began splashing down. 'America sprinkled petroleum!' 'Maybe they're trying to annihilate us by setting fire on the mountains.' Our faces stiff with fear, all of us ran into air raid shelters. The rain, which had been mixed with pitch black sand, stained our bloody outer garments and bandages with black dots. It was later revealed that this black rain was a dangerous rain containing radioactivity.

Seventy years ago, on the 6th of August at 8:15, the U.S. dropped the world's first atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima. Annihilation followed the explosion as the blast along with nuclear radiation took the lives of an estimated 140,000 civilians. Three days later, the city of Nagasaki became the second victim of the atomic bomb, suffering the losses of another 74,000 people. As the world commemorates these events, the Hibakusha (survivors of the atomic bomb) remember and share, as Kenzaburo Oe wrote "the only gift that the world has received from these bombings...the wisdom of their survivors". A wisdom that can be translated as follows: Never again should a population endure such inhuman destruction.

Only four years after the bombings, on the 29th of August 1949 the world abandoned its hopes of never seeing such tremendous destructive power released yet again. Indeed, this date marks the Soviet Union's first nuclear test, code-named "RDS-1" and the start of a new era, the era of nuclear power, in which the human race had attained the intelligence necessary to destroy itself, but not the moral maturity to avoid seeking and using it as a weapon. Whether one believes that nuclear weapons can be used to deter wars or mitigate seemingly intractable problems will be irrelevant in the logic of the following paragraphs. Waltz's *laissez-faire* regarding nuclear proliferation or Mearsheimer's idea of selectiveness encompass most of the arguments advocating the necessity of existence of these weapons, yet they cast aside the very real possibility of "accidents" and "irrational actions".

Journalist Eric Schlosser's book "Command and Control: Nuclear Weapons, the Damascus Accident, and the Illusion of Safety" depicts numerous "close calls" that have filled the past 70 years and dangerously brought the world near nuclear war. Many of these accidents could have been described just as it was done by Kennedy's adviser Arthur Schlesinger, regarding the Cuban missile crisis as the most dangerous moment in history. The Black Brant scare in January 1995 is very representative of these and is proof of the continuing threat posed by nuclear arms regardless if the world finds itself in a bipolar or multipolar state. The Black Brant XII missile launched - in order to study the aurora borealis - from Norway streaked its way near Russian airspace and was mistook for a U.S. Navy submarine-launched Trident missile. As a result, fearing a high altitude nuclear attack that could blind Russian radars, Russian nuclear forces were put on high alert, and the Cheget, the nuclear weapons command suitcase was given to Russian president Boris Yeltsin. He had five minutes to decide whether or not to launch a retaliatory nuclear strike.

General Lee Butler, the former commander in chief of the Strategic Air Command - which controls nuclear weapons and strategy - has described our survival up to that time as "some combination of skill, luck, and divine intervention, and I suspect the latter in greatest proportion". Surely, after General Butler's condemnation of the Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP) and worldwide automated response systems twenty year ago have now been remodeled. However, basic problems in the nuclear arms administration persist in 2015 as the decision to destroy the world is ultimately still a decision left to the president, for most of the countries, and in a very limited

amount of time. Current systems are not perfect, and the standards set worldwide for the preservation or movement of nuclear bombs are not necessarily met, leaving a scary amount of room to data and human error.

Ultimately, there are inherent problems with having nuclear weapons, mainly being that they are handled by fragile beings, affected by a mind-numbing compression from imminent threat and subject to blinding emotions. Adding to that, areas rooted in regional instability, historical vindictiveness, and suppressed national pride, it is indeed hard to conceive that the right decision will always be made by the people in charge. Events similar to the 1995 incidents are bound to occur, their denouement however might not be as fortunate. In addition, as the number of countries possessing nuclear armament increases we can only assume that the probability of accidents occurring will too. These simple facts constitute, in my opinion, a sufficient basis for the worldwide abolition of nuclear weapons. This distant dream can be attained; it only takes everyone agreeing to do it. Political realities and national interests around the globe do collide in some part with this conclusion, however, the necessary sacrifice in order to disarm nuclear weapons is insignificant in comparison to the one the world would have to make in the instance of a nuclear war. Technology can not be reverted, losing the capacity of making nuclear weapons is impossible, but bombs can definitely be disarmed and we have a responsibility to do it.

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