

Poems of Hiroshima: Translations of Children's Poems in *When I was Small*

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## **ABSTRACT**

Poetry has long been an effective medium for survivors of extreme traumas to express their feelings and share their experiences. This is especially true for survivors of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima, Japan in 1945. There have been many famous poets of the atomic bomb, and writings about the bomb are well known around the world. However, there are still many unshared works by Hiroshima survivors, especially those who were children. This project focuses on one collection of poems by Hiroshima children, titled *When I was Small [Watashi ga chiisakatta toki ni]*. I have translated the poems in this collection into English with the hopes of making a wider variety of resources available to western learners. To highlight the need for these poems, they are compared to the works of Tōge Sankichi, one of Hiroshima's most famous poets. By contrasting the work of a professional poet to that of children, it is made clear that our current pool of resources on Hiroshima is very limited and that it is crucial to look at multiple perspectives of the bomb.

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## **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

In the United States, a significant portion of world history classes and discussions have been dedicated to the topic of World War II and the world's first use of an atomic bomb. Even if a person knows nothing about the history of the attacks on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, these events have affected and will continue to shape the discourse of peace studies. Despite the lasting effects of the atomic bomb on world peace and politics, very few people stop to study the tragic consequences on individuals. While the tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were purely results of war, we must not forget the altered lives of civilians in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Understanding the experiences of those who have lived through the bombings will help the world to build a better future, in which this kind of suffering will not happen again. It is important therefore, to acknowledge the experiences of the victims and understand the torments inflicted upon human lives.

More than 70 years have passed since the bomb dropped on Hiroshima, and many of the stories of survivors have been lost to time. Remaining survivors today are all in their senior years. In addition, the living witnesses were too young to clearly remember the events of August 6, 1945. We will soon lose all the remaining survivors and, because of this, the literature concerning the atomic bomb has become more important than ever before. Many stories of the nuclear attack are available in various mediums, such as John Hersey's *Hiroshima*, one of the first and most influential pieces of literature to tell personal accounts of Hiroshima to the audience in the United States. From the Japanese author Ibuse Masuji, we have *Black Rain*, which is praised for its storytelling techniques. It is one of the most widely read novels about the atomic bomb. Animation like *Barefoot*

*Gen* uses visuals to express the horrors of nuclear attack to a modern audience. There are even requiems written for Hiroshima: Penderecki's orchestral arrangement *Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima* and more modern tracks like the ballad *One Pencil* by Misora Hibari. Multiple mediums have connected the stories of Hiroshima to the global audience.

In the field of literature, many works have been written on the subject of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and are acknowledged as *genbaku bungaku* (atomic bomb literature). This genre includes novels, poetry, essays, diaries, and dramas. Among these fields, poetry has a strong force to appeal to the reader. As Hiroshima poet Marc Kaminsky puts it:

if I speak normal  
words in the normal  
order  
who will hear me. (Treat 155)

Poetry as a medium encourages the author to express immediate emotions and feelings. It is understandably difficult to capture such catastrophic experiences like nuclear attacks; however, authors can express their emotions without talking explicitly about their experiences through the artistic structure of poetry. In Japanese writing especially, discussing one's true feelings is rare, so this kind of emotional openness is very impactful and causes the reader to think more critically about the author's message. Because of this, poetry is an effective medium for the reader to grasp the scale of emotional and material devastation endured by the poets.

Japan's very first published book of atomic literature, Kurihara Sadako's *Black Eggs*, includes collections of poems (Treat 162). Poetry has historically been a popular

choice to share the experiences of the atomic bomb for notable poets including Hara Tamiki, Hayashi Kyoko, and Tōge Sankichi. While these poets are renowned for their artistic poems, the fame of these few does not diminish the works of other survivors. Other survivors have shared their stories as well, and those include the stories of child survivors whose works are rarely acknowledged. The current project focuses on a lesser-known work, titled *Watashi ga Chiisakatta Toki ni (When I was Small)*, an anthology of short stories and poems written by child survivors from Hiroshima. The book comes as a shortened collection of stories from *Children of the Atomic Bomb: The Appeal of Hiroshima's Young Boys and Girls (Genbaku no ko ~ Hiroshima no shōnen shōjo no uttae)* (Tanpopodon), edited by Osada Arata, who collected notes of the survivors in high schools, orphanages, and refuge centers (Wikipedia contributors).<sup>1</sup> While these children clearly carried a need to write and express their grief, it would have been impossible without the dedicated efforts of Osada, who published their voice.

Despite the uniqueness of these children's poems (or perhaps because of it), these works have not achieved even a fraction of the popularity of the poems written by professional poets. However, children's poems bring new perspectives on the atomic disasters. It is important for both types of authors' works to be available for study because of the ways in which they contrast each other. Tōge Sankichi is best known for his poetry collection, *Poems of the Atomic Bomb (Genbaku Shishū)*, which portrays a vivid picture of the pain caused by the atomic bomb. Because of the powerful messages and graphic images, the collection has been translated into many languages. The first poem of this collection is carved into stone at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, which made Tōge the leading poet of atomic bomb (Treat 172). This project compares Toge's

works to the children's poems, which provide children's perspectives so that readers can better understand the full picture of the survivors in Hiroshima.

More resources should be available so that the western reader can access multidimensional views of the atom bomb. A sufficient attempt to share the testimonies of Hiroshima's children has not been made in the west. Both Tōge's work and the poems in *When I was Small* offer accounts of the tragedy in the form of poetry. However, Tōge's poems often use a much harsher, more politicalized voice in comparison to the children's poems. Tōge's works often refer to the political environment after the bombing, especially of Japan occupied by the Allied Forces. These political themes can be found in both the way he talks about the effects of the bomb and in the way he discusses changed relationships with himself and other survivors afterwards. The differences between Tōge and the children's styles of writing does not render either poet's message as wrong or invalid. Rather, it is important to note the different themes that are emphasized by each author. Acknowledging these differences prevents the reader from falling subject to a one-dimensional way of viewing the bomb.

This project aims to share the experiences of child survivors through the translation of the poems in *When I was Small*. Comparison to Tōge's *Poems of the Atomic Bomb* shows the similarities and differences between the works of unprofessional children and those of professional poets. Through an analysis of these poems, I will further discuss the literary choices of the authors, such as how the authors' thematic suggestions and choices in wording emotionally appeal to readers and help form perceptions of the atomic bomb. This project hopes to make resources from Hiroshima's



children available to English readers, while simultaneously stressing the need for more resources like this.

## TRANSLATIONS OF POEMS

### Atomic Bomb Poem

Morihiro Mieko, 4th grade

Because I was small at the time,

I was in a baby's carriage.

All at once it went dim.

There was a bright flash all of a

sudden and

the carriage I was in

was smashed to pieces.

Mom and I were trapped underneath.

Mom came crawling right away,

and pulled my hand.

My dad

was found in the rubble of the castle

dead with the Second Troop.

### Genbaku no Shi

*Shōgakkō yonen Morihiro Mieko*

*Watakushi wa sono toki chiisakkata node*

*Ubaguruma ni notte ita*

*Suruto kyū ni usuguraku naru to*

*Sugu pikka to hikatte*

*Watashi ga notteita ubaguruma wa*

*Mecha mecha ni natte shimatta*

*Watashi to okāchan wa shitajiki ni natte*

*shimatta*

*Okāchan wa sugu moguridete*

*Watakushi no te o hippatte kudasatta*

*Otōchan wa*

*Oshiro no ato no nibutai de*

*Shinareta*

Untitled

Masunishi Masao, 6th grade

Stacking toy blocks  
in kindergarten,  
when we were playing,  
the atomic bomb fell,  
the ceiling fell,  
Yo-chan died.  
I hurt  
my  
head.

When we  
ran  
with the kindergarten teachers  
towards a mountain in Koi,  
we saw a mountain far away  
on fire.

No one  
said  
a word.

Mudai

*Shōgakkō rokunen Masunishi Masao*

*Tsumiki o tsunde  
Yōchien de  
Asondeiru to  
Genbaku ga ochite  
Tenjō ga ochite  
Yocchan wa shinda  
Boku wa  
Atama ni  
Kega o shita*

*Koi no yama ni  
Yōchien no  
Sensei to  
Nigete miru to  
Mukō no yama wa  
Moeteita*

*Minna  
Nani mo  
Imasendeshita*

Untitled

Tao Kinue, 5th grade

After the bomb dropped,

Mom

was cooking the rice we had set

aside for a special occasion,

“What are we fighting for?”

she said.

“Takashi, Takashi,

come back safely!”

she said, making rice balls

in tears.

Mudai

*Shōgakkō gonen Tao Kinue*

*Bakudan ga ochita ato*

*Okāchan ga*

*Daiji ni noketoita kome o taki nagara*

*Sensō o shite*

*Nani ga omoshiroi n darō*

*To itte,*

*Takashi ya Takashi ya*

*Mame de kaette kure to*

*Itte naki nagara*

*Omusubi o tsukuru*

Untitled

Ikezaki Toshio, 4th grade

The A-bomb fell  
and put a hole in the house.  
The wind entered  
from the hole that had opened in the  
roof.  
It's cold.  
When it's cold,  
my little sister whines,  
“Cover the roof with paper”  
But mother says  
“You have to be patient”  
My sister still complained,  
“But, it's cold.”  
“Even if it's still cold,  
there's nothing we can do about it,”  
Mother  
said,  
in tears.

Mudai

*Shōgakkō yonnen Ikezaki Toshio*

*Pikadon ga ochite  
Ie ni ana ga aita  
Ana ga aiteiru tenjō kara  
Kaze ga haitte  
Samui desu  
Samui toki ni wa  
Tenjō o kami de hatte kure to  
Imōto ga iimasu ga  
Gaman shinasai to  
Okāsan wa iimasu  
Datte samui n da mono  
Soshitara  
Samukute shiyō ga nai n da to itte mo  
Shikata wa nai no da yo to  
Okāsan wa  
Naite  
Imashita*

Untitled

Satō Tomoko, fifth grade

Yoshiko

was stuck in bed

with her burns.

She said she wanted to eat

tomatoes,

So Mom

went out to buy them.

While Mom was gone,

Yoshiko

died alone.

“We only fed her potatoes

and left her to die,”

Mom

cried.

I also

cried.

Everybody

cried.

Mudai

*Shōgakkō gonen*

*Satō Tomoko*

*Yoshiko chan ga*

*Yakedo de*

*Neteite*

*Tomato ga*

*Tabetai to iu node*

*Okāchan ga*

*Kaidashi ni*

*Itteiru aida ni*

*Yoshiko chan wa*

*Shindeita*

*Imo bakkashi tabesasete*

*Koroshi chatta ne to*

*Okāchan wa*

*Naita*

*Watashi mo*

*Naita*

*Minna mo*

*Naita.*

## TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

Translating poetry comes with its own specific challenges, all of which should be considered when reading a translated work. Hasegawa defines translation as the “transformation of a text written in one language into an ‘equivalent’ text in a different language, while retaining the meaning and function of the original text” (415). While this makes translation seem rather straightforward, languages are inherently tied to the cultural background of the people that speak them. With this being the case, is it possible to create an equivalent text while completely removing the text from its cultural and linguistic environment? Translation cannot be done by simply searching for an equivalent word in the target language. Even the simplest of terms, like “table” or “person,” are subject to different nuances between languages (Wierzbicka 6). A translator’s primary goal is then to transfer the *meaning* of a text, rather than the words themselves, from one language to another.

The translation of poetry poses the challenge of transferring the structure of the poem into the target language. Because of syllable counts, differences in styles of poetry between languages, word flow and intonation, it would be nearly impossible to maintain the poetic form and the equivalent meaning of the source material. Translators have two general ways to approach this problem. The first is to change the wording of the text so that it better matches the poetic elements and flows in the target material, maintaining the overall feel and message of the source. This results in a translated poem that maintains poetic style, however some aspects of the original poem may be lost — some have even criticized this type of translated work by calling them “counterfeits” of the originals

(Barnstone, par. 8). The second option is to focus more on the meaning and feeling of the text, and forego trying to make the translated version fit into the original structure of the poem. Osimo calls this type of approach ‘philological translation’ and quotes Nabokov saying that a literal translation with notes is the only way to achieve an exact translation (par. 4).

For *When I was Small*, I have chosen to produce a more literal, philological style of translation, rather than focus on transforming the rhythm and structure of the poems into English. My translation concentrates more on the content rather than the form of the poems. I also believe that a philological type of translation will better preserve the message of the original authors while conveying the feeling of the text to an English-speaking audience.

While each poem in the series had its unique challenges, some obstacles were common in all five poems. The poems were written by children, which had to be taken into account in translation. The final English work needed to sound childlike, and at the same time convey the authors’ experiences of war and tragedy. This required more thought in certain areas, rather than just doing an exact translation into English. In early attempts, I translated simply by using what seemed to be the best equivalent word for the Japanese vocabulary. However, I soon realized that a more childlike style of writing was necessary for my translations to hold true to the voice of the originals. For example, the Japanese word *sugu* is often translated as “immediately.” However, a young child using a word like “immediately” in their poem felt rather unnatural, despite being the most literal translation. Thus, in my final translations, I disregarded the original sentence structure in order to use simpler phrases, such as “all at once” or “right away.” I find it helpful to read



works written by English speaking children, especially the works about war (*Stone Soup*).<sup>2</sup> Through my own difficulties in translating these poems with a child's vocabulary, I imagined how hard it must have been for the child survivors to find the words to express their war experiences.

The differences in grammatical structure between Japanese and English were made very clear through the translation process. The sentence word order are almost exact opposites in Japanese and English grammar. Respecting how the original authors chose to reveal information to the audience is important to me as a translator, so these grammatical differences are crucial. The Japanese language generally follows a subject-object-verb sentence structure, while English uses a subject-verb-object structure. Should the original line order be preserved despite the risk of using ungrammatical English? Or should the original line order be ignored to make the meaning more easily understandable in English? Initially, I planned to follow the original text's line order as closely as possible, so that information could be revealed as the original authors had intended. However, the initial approach created awkward phrases in English that ultimately resulted in more confusion for the reader. For example, in the following poem by Musunishi Masao, the original reads:

*Boku wa*  
*Atama ni*  
*Kega o shita. (7-9)*

If the line order were preserved, it would read something like:

*I,*  
*on my head,*

*was hurt*

While this sentence is technically not impossible for a native English speaker to understand, the strange phrasing would certainly detract from the reading experience. Bringing the reader's attention to the poem's syntax like this negatively impacts their appreciation of the poem because its rhetorical effects will have been lost. Therefore, in any Japanese-English translation, grammatical structure should be a main focus, since the word order is crucial to the reader's appreciation of poetry.

Japanese culture differs from that of English speaking countries, which had to be taken into account as well. Like any language, phrases and expressions in Japanese contain elements culturally and socially unique to Japan. Thus, literal translation ends up erasing cultural significances. The job of the translator is to find the best way to convey this information. It is important to effectively use the general translation techniques highlighted in Hasegawa's work in such cases (417-420). Each poem has its unique influence from language and the writing style of the author that should be taken into account. The next sections discuss each of the poems to address specific translation techniques that I employed.

#### MORHIRO MIEKO'S *ATOMIC BOMB POEM*

The first poem in the collection is the only one to be given a title by its author — “*Genbaku no shi (Atomic Bomb Poem)*.” This simple title highlights Mieko's experiences as a very young child at the time of the bombing. The poem includes Japanese onomatopoeia — “*pikka*” and “*mecha mecha*” — which is difficult to translate into English.

Onomatopoeia is common in Japanese. While onomatopoeia in English is used exclusively for audible sounds (such as animal cries, people's voices, or the sounds of machines), Japanese also uses onomatopoeia as mimetic words — to represent things that do not make a sound, such as emotions, form, and appearances. Onomatopoeia for audible sounds (*giongo*) is used in a very similar fashion to its English counterpart, mainly functioning as an adverb. The mimetic words (*gitaigo*), however, can function as adjectives or verbs within a sentence (Inose 99). They allow Japanese authors to explain the state of a situation more easily because Japanese verbs are generally nondescriptive (*What is Onomatopoeia? ...*, par.1). Take, for example, the Japanese verb *warau*. *Warau* is often translated as “to laugh” or “to smile,” but English has many verbs for this, including “to grin,” “to chuckle,” “to smirk,” and so on. The way that Japanese describes what type of laugh/smile the subject has is through onomatopoeia. So, in the case of *warau*, one could say *nico nico warau* to describe a friendly grin, or *kusu kusu warau* for a giggle.

Mieko uses onomatopoeia twice in her short poem. First, to describe the bright light of the atomic bomb she says “*pikka to hikatte*,” with *pikka to* being the onomatopoeia to describe the verb *hikaru* (to flash). It is an adverb, making the translation relatively simple — it describes the bright flashing of light, which is easily expressed as an adverb in English as well. The second onomatopoeia, “*mecha mecha*” (disorderly, ruined) describes the disarray of her carriage. It is an adjective, but I have translated it into the verb phrase “smashed to pieces.”

Translating onomatopoeia was challenging particularly because the onomatopoeia produces a more vivid picture of the disaster than adjectives. While I was able to preserve

the grammatical function (adverb and adjective, respectively) of the onomatopoeia in both cases, Inose enumerates nine different methods of translating onomatopoeia (107-114). Many of these methods closely resemble Hasegawa's methods of general translation. However, Inose focuses on the grammatical function of onomatopoeia in translation, and shows how difficult it is to convey its nuances.

The last lines of Mieko's poem discuss the death of her father. The Japanese reads, "*Otōchan wa / Oshiro no ato no nibutai de / Shinareta*" (10-12). These lines seem simple to translate at first, but within the context of the entire poem, translating the exact nuances is challenging. The most literal translation of these lines would be to say "Dad / was behind the castle with the Second Troop, / dead". However, this straightforward translation loses much of the original implication. This part of the poem acts as a cutaway — it removes the reader from the current situation, in which Mieko and her mother are being affected by the attack. Then, it suddenly explains the state of Mieko's father. The information about her father is removed from the situation that she and her mother found themselves in because the news of her father's death is something that Mieko would have learned after the fact. The Japanese poem implies this changed setting with its sudden change in subject. In order to reflect the passing of time, I first formatted the lines in English into their own stanza, giving them slightly more separation from the events that are happening in the "now." I then changed the word order to say: "My dad / was found in the rubble of the castle / dead with the Second Troop." This translation ignores the original order of the Japanese; however, the changes made it so that the lines can be read with the same feeling of separation as the original.

## MASUNISHI MASAO'S UNTITLED POEM

The second poem, an untitled work by sixth-grader Masunishi Masao, describes the experience of fleeing with his kindergarten class. In this poem, the Japanese suffix *-chan* was difficult to translate. The suffix *-chan* conveys a close relationship between the addresser and the addressed. Attaching suffixes to a name is a crucial aspect of Japanese language and culture. The most commonly used suffix is the gender neutral *-san*, which is very often translated as Mr. or Mrs. The suffix *-chan*, however, is used to refer to children. The suffix *-chan* refers to someone to whom the speaker is very close, as it is a very casual and familiar suffix. If the suffix is used towards a young adult, it implies that the addresser sees the addressed as cute or childlike. Overall, the suffix *-chan* is used if the speaker is trying to act cute, childish, or show a higher level of familiarity with the subject.

Concerning the suffix *-chan*, I found it most suitable to use the omission technique (Hasegawa 420) when translating a name followed by *chan* (for example, Yoshiko in Tomoko's poem). In Masunishi's poem, *-chan* is used very clearly as part of a nickname for a close friend or perhaps a relative (6). The child is affectionately called "Yocchan." Similar to how a child named Michael might be called "Mikey," *Yocchan* is a nickname that most likely comes from the first letter of their name ("Yo" is one letter in the Japanese syllabary) attached to the suffix *chan*. This made the name difficult to translate into English. Because I did not know *Yocchan*'s full name and English does not have an equivalent word to express the idea of *-chan*, Hasegawa's tactics of omission or equivalence were not feasible options. Because of this, "borrowing" (Hasegawa 417) the Japanese word was the best option.

The last lines of Masao's poem proved difficult to translate as well. These powerful closing lines emphasize the dire feeling of loss. While the sentence itself is easy to understand, trying to keep the emphasis from the Japanese is very difficult in translation. The original reads "*Minna / nani mo / īmasendeshita*" (16-18, lit. "Everybody / nothing / said" — "Everybody said nothing"). I initially attempted to use modulation technique to translate the passage and shift the focus of the subject (Hasegawa 419). This would have resulted in a translation that was the most direct equivalent to the phrase in proper English — "Nobody / said / anything." However, this type of translation would lose the stress that had originally been placed on the word *everybody*. By translating the Japanese word *everybody* into *nobody* in English, I would have lost a crucial emphasis on togetherness and the sense of group in such dire times. Thus, I was torn between creating a translation that was grammatically correct yet lacking in the author's feeling, or a translation that kept the emphasis from the Japanese but sounded unnatural in the target language. I attempted to modify the lines in my translation so that the sentence could still begin with "everybody" in English. Instead of literally writing that nothing was said, I chose to write "Everybody / was / quiet." However, in the end, I felt that this phrase did not leave enough of an impact on readers. Because of this, I chose to return to a negative subject and wrote that "No one / said / a word."

#### TAO KINUE'S UNTITLED POEM

The third poem, by Tao Kinue portrays the author's mother, who is lamenting about the war and wishing for the safe return of her son Takashi. While the poem does not provide much information about Takashi, it can be reasonably assumed that he is

Kinue's older brother who is serving in the army. The third line of the poem says that the boys' mother was "cooking rice that we had kept for a special purpose." The adverb *daiji* (*ni*), which literally translated means "preciously" or "importantly," gives readers the impression that the rice was being kept for a special purpose — most likely to feed to her son Takashi when he returned home from his service. It can be seen at the end of the poem that she is using this precious rice to make rice balls even though Takashi is yet to return. Kinue is using this scene to show exactly what the bomb has done to families — because the atomic bomb caused such harsh food shortages, his mother was forced to eat the food that she had so preciously kept for her soldier son.

#### IKEZAKI TOSHIO'S UNTITLED POEM

The first word in Toshio's poem already presents an interesting challenge for translators. Instead of using the standard word for the atomic bomb — *genbaku* — Toshio chooses instead to use the colloquialism "*pikadon*." This colloquialism is based on onomatopoeia, with *pika* representing the bomb's bright, flashing light (see *pikatto* above, both are forms of the onomatopoeia *pika pika*), and *don* being the sound of the bomb exploding (*A-Bomb* para 1). To express this usage of a more colloquial name for the atomic bomb, I found it best to use the shortened phrase "a-bomb" in my translation. However, the original *pikadon* is more than simply an abbreviation of the standard word for the atom bomb — in fact the standard phrase, *genbaku*, is already the shortened version of *genshibakudan*. There is no exact English translation for *pikadon*, which is why it is important to examine it closely and look at why the author would have chosen this word over *genbaku*. *Pikadon* as an expression hits much closer to home than the

scientific-sounding *genbaku*. It was created by people who lived through the attack and it is based upon the sensory aspects of the bomb's explosion — sight and sound. This differs from *genbaku* and *genshibakudan*, which was created essentially as an exact translation of the English, with *genshi* being the Japanese word for atom and *bakudan* meaning bomb. Because of *pikadon*'s colloquial and onomatopoeic qualities, I feel that it also makes readers more aware that they are reading text created by a child.

#### SATŌ TOMOKO'S UNTITLED POEM

The fifth and final poem of the collection, by Satō Tomoko, tells about the death of a girl named Yoshiko, who is most likely the author's sister. The poem relays the experience of a child who craves tomatoes in the midst of recovering from war injuries. This detail poignantly shows that these victims are still just children with their own desires and personal tastes. When writing about the death of Yoshiko, the author uses an interesting verb form to describe the situation. Instead of using the plain past tense form of the verb, *shinda* ("died"), she uses the past tense continuous form of the verb *shinu* — *shinde ita*. This means that Tomoko was describing the continuous state of Yoshiko in the moment — "Yoshiko was (in the state of being) dead" (10). Translating this nuance is problematic because the continuous state in English does not function the same way as it does in Japanese. Under normal circumstances, if one were to write "she *was* dead," many readers would be under the impression that Yoshiko's condition had somehow changed due to the translator's use of the past tense — "Yoshiko *was* dead, but *now* she is not."



At first, it seemed that the most natural way to write this line in English would be to simply say that “Yoshiko died” while her mother was gone. However, ignoring the original’s use of this continuous state removes much of the nuance explaining the actual situation. Because of the use of the continuous *te iru* form of the verb, Tomoko is telling readers that her mother was the first to realize that Yoshiko was dead, when she returned home. If Tomoko had said “While mom was gone, / Yoshiko / died” [*Itte iru aida ni / Yoshiko chan ha / Shinda*] (8-10), the poet would have implied that Yoshiko had died during her mother’s absence and that fact had been noticed by Tomoko or someone else in the room. But, in saying that Yoshiko “died alone” while her mother was gone, the author is explaining that Yoshiko died at some point during the mother’s absence, yet that fact went unnoticed until the mother’s return. This small nuance in verb conjugation makes a very large difference in what message is being portrayed to the audience — the message of grief and guilt that is conveyed by the poem is much stronger when the reader understands the circumstances surrounding Yoshiko’s death.

## TŌGE'S WORKS IN COMPARISON

Tōge's works contain many notable differences from *When I was Small*, despite both texts containing poems about the atomic bomb. Tōge's poems often had much heavier political themes and served a dual purpose of trying to influence the reader's political stance while expressing the horrors of the bomb. The poems in *When I was Small*, however, were written for the purpose of expressing the emotions that these children felt in the aftermath of the atomic bomb. The writing styles of each reflect the authors' objectives, and it is important to note that such variability exists within atomic bomb literature. Both perspectives are necessary for a reader to understand the horrors of the bomb: the children's poems, free from any ideology or politics, capture how the horrors of the atomic bomb forever altered the lives of ordinary people. On the other hand, Tōge's poems give an adult response by focusing on explicit scenes and the political effects of the bomb.

Tōge came from a politically radical family. All of his siblings held radical political stances, while two of them were also official members of the Communist Party. All of the children, including Tōge, had been arrested at least once. When the bomb was dropped, he was inside his house in Hiroshima, about three kilometers from Ground Zero. He survived with just bruises, cuts from the broken glass, and the radiation poisoning (atomic bomb sickness) that would set in (Tōge, *Poems...* 367).

Unlike his siblings, Tōge was uninvolved in political activities until the end of the war. He was a Catholic, baptized in 1942, and loved literature. His friends thought of him as a simple lyric poet (Minear 278, 280). It was after the war when Tōge emerged with his poems on the atomic bomb that made him famous for his aggressive style with direct

expressions, graphically depicting tormented victims. Living through the aftermath of the bomb caused Tōge to be actively involved in political discourses on antiwar and communist ideals. He joined the Communist Party in April of 1949, four years after the bomb dropped. Despite his strong belief in Communism, he did not denounce religion. Contrary to the standard Communist ideology, Tōge claimed that Christian and Communist ideas strongly supported each other.

As an active member of the Japanese Communist Party, Tōge became associated with a number of Communist writing organizations – namely the Hiroshima Poets Society (*Hiroshima shijin kyōkai*), the New Japan Literature Association (*Shin Nihon bungaku kai*), and The Our Poetry Association (*Warera no shi no kai*). He was also involved in the Communist sponsored Culture Circle (*Bunka sākuru*) in Hiroshima. Tōge was very active within these groups, and took many leadership positions. The U.S. occupation's Red Purge drastically reduced political activities by members and sympathizers of the Communist Party, however Tōge's activities continued (Treat 176, 177). Because of his involvement in political circles like these, Tōge began publishing poems more politically charged than he ever had before.

The Japan Steel Hiroshima incident in June of 1949 highlighted Tōge's career as a political activist. One third of the Hiroshima steel company's factory workers were fired by the GHQ, which yielded massive street protests in which Tōge played an active part. The strikes inspired Tōge to create one of his first political poems, titled *Song of Rage* (See Appendix 1). This poem was read aloud at protests against the firings and received great praise from the crowds. He wrote a poem as a fight song to support the striking workers (Masuoka 239). The last stanza shows this rallying spirit especially well:

Our numbers increasing moment by moment, we surround the  
factory. Amid fluttering union flags:  
our rage that becomes a song  
our tears that become a hymn  
In the shade of the trees, as dusk gathers, Japan Steel workers,  
prostrate, sleep:  
sleeping giants. (lines 13-19)

Tōge paints a militant picture of the increasing number of rioters who “surround the factory” and proudly wave their flags. The poem calls Japan Steel by name, rather than using metaphors. The focus on the strikers’ “rage that becomes a song” is also highly stressed, and the title of the poem indeed comes from this line. Straightforward and provocative agitation makes it extremely political, as it condemns an act of authority by American occupation. The stress on labor issues and workers’ rights that was key in these protests also tied into Tōge’s communist ideology. He continues this in his poem, through the amount of power he attribute to the workers, whom he calls “sleeping giants.” While this was before *Poems of the Atomic Bomb*, which was mainly written in 1951, *Song of Rage* marked the beginning of Tōge’s shift to political poetry.

In contrast to his early career in poetry, Tōge gained more public recognition as a poet because of this kind of political involvement. His activism, coupled with his rage as a victim, made his works appealing to readers. Tōge himself noted that his poems were never “received with joy by the hearts of the people” until he had “changed the esthetics of his poems in practice” like he did with the addition of such clear political messages in *Song of Rage* (quoted in Minear, 285). Tōge’s zealous political involvement allowed him

to meet new people and expand his ways of thinking. He would meet important cultural figures who shared his political views and he gained the support of many students and labor movement activists. Minear claims that Tōge's political activism – and the relationships that it resulted in – earned him more acknowledgement than other authors of atomic bomb such as Hara Tamiki or Ōta Yōko (283).

Tōge wrote many of the works in *Poems of the Atomic Bomb* during the Korean War (1950-53) as a direct response to the threats of nuclear war. Most of the poems in the collection were written between January and April of 1951, while Tōge was in the hospital awaiting a critical operation. Although Tōge was in extremely poor health during this time, he was actively composing poems. He worked even late into the night despite serious warnings by doctors and nurses (Minear 286). All of the poems are free verse, with no set structure for the number of stanzas, lines, or syllable counts. This is completely different from his prewar poems – thousands of *tanka* and *haiku* that have strict rules for syllable and line counts – *tanka* are strictly five lines with a 5/7/5/7/7 syllable count, and *haiku* are even shorter poems with just a 5/7/5 count.

By 1951, Tōge had gained considerable recognition for his poems and activism. His supporters even ran national campaigns to raise money for hospital expenses and requested blood transfusion donors while he was in the hospital (Minear 286). While this popularity was mainly among his personal political and literary circles, Tōge received praise on his emotionally moving depictions of the bomb from notable atomic bomb writers such as Ōta Yōko.

Within his poems, Tōge is quick to blame specific governmental agencies for waging the war and the bombing that resulted from it. Almost every poem in *Poems of*

*the Atomic Bomb* stresses the fact that the attacks were executed by the United States, even if this is not directly stated. As he puts it in *When Will That Day Come?*:

Ah, that was no accident, no act of God.

With unprecedented precision, with insatiable ambition,

the world's first atomic bombs

were dropped on the Japanese archipelago, on Hiroshima

and Nagasaki,

and you died,

one of the 400,000 who died horrible deaths. (*Poems... 362*)<sup>3</sup>

Interestingly, Tōge never says “the United States” or “America” outright, but it is understood throughout *Poems of the Atomic Bomb*, just as it is above, that the United States is the cause of the attacks. Instead, Tōge relies on subtext and other references to American occupation to make his anger and almost anti-American sentiments clear (Minear 295-297). He mentions General MacArthur by name twice in the collection (In *Grave Marker* and *When Will That Day Come?*, *Poems... 334* and *362*) – both times commenting on the irony of places and events in Hiroshima being named after the American official:

*Grave Marker* lines 25-32

Behind a row of false-fronted  
buildings—  
A. B. Advertising,  
C. D. Scooters,  
and a huge billboard  
for Hiroshima Peace City Construction  
Company, Inc. —  
on the corner of the road that leads  
to the MacArthur Cup Tennis  
Courts,  
painted green;

*When Will That Day Come* lines 168-171

And could you have thought  
that the street leading to this square in  
our beloved Hiroshima  
would be widened out,  
renamed MacArthur Boulevard?

The citizens of Hiroshima could easily understand the meaning behind these references to MacArthur's name. The readers likely felt the same distress as Tōge when they viewed the reconstructed streets of Hiroshima being named after the commanding general from the country that bombed them in the first place. He also mentions the bomb tests conducted in New Mexico, naming the state directly. So, while, the word "American" is never used outright, Tōge still points out the effects of American influence in postwar Japan and encourages his readers to think critically about the American origin of the bomb.

Tōge uses his poetry to rally readers towards political change. Minear regards Tōge's use of poetry as "a weapon, [and] a means to personal and political change" (280).

In June of 1951, Tōge's health declined to the point that he thought he would die. At this time, he whispered to his wife, "Good-bye, Yoshiko! Up the revolution! Long live our poetry!" (Minear, 286). One can see that political activism through poetry was extremely important to Tōge. Perhaps the most striking example of Tōge's political cry is in *Grave Marker*, which calls the citizens of Hiroshima to protest:

You kids,  
enough already! Enough of being silent!  
Come forth,  
eyes sparkling,  
clear voices raised in protest,  
and do battle round the world  
with the adults who would start wars.  
And  
Throwing open the arms we would all be embraced by,  
Thrusting forward the cheeks that would bring back good tears  
to all our hearts,  
come and  
throw yourselves into everyone's arms, saying:  
"We are the children,  
the children of Hiroshima!" (Tōge, *Poems...* 338)<sup>4</sup>

This poem is a clear outcry for change in the world. Tōge casts direct blame on the "adults who would start wars," which includes his anger at both the United States (*Grave Marker* is one of the poems that discusses MacArthur's influence) and Japan. It directly



addresses the children of Hiroshima by calling out “You kids!”. In fact, the main theme of earlier stanzas in the poem is the death and disfiguration of Hiroshima’s children:

there you kids stand.

Turned into an upright strip of wood, gradually rotting,

without hands,

without feet,

not wheedling,

not clamoring,

silent, silent,

you stand.

No matter how you called,

no matter how you cried,

your daddies, your mommies

couldn’t come to your aid.

Brushing aside your outstretched hands,

other daddies fled.

Heavy weights pinning you under,

the hot, hot wind blowing,

in that dark, dark, choking place,

(Ah! What could you have done to deserve this?)

your gentle hands,

your thin necks —

how easy, beneath rock and steel and old lumber,  
to make blood spurt, to crush!

In the shadow of Hijiyama,  
eyes burned like roasted marshmallows,  
a row of friends squatted, dazed;  
hearing soldiers running by, side arms clattering,  
you called out “Soldier! Please help!”  
and even then no one answered;  
when as dusk fell beside the water tank  
you pleaded, “Take us with you!”  
and pointed west,  
no one took your hands.

Then, aping the adults,  
you climbed into the water tank,  
covered your faces with compresses of leaves,  
and, still understanding not a thing,  
died.

Ah, you kids! (*Grave Marker 24-46*)

Tōge uses the deteriorating grave marker of the children of Seibi Primary School, an elementary school for the children of military officials, as an example of how the suffering caused by the bomb is being forgotten. His direct call to children highlights the voices of anonymous victims, including children and the adults in his other poems. Not

only is Tōge using the imagery of children to magnify the pain caused by the bomb, but he is also pleading these child survivors to lead the world to peace as ones who have experienced the bomb.

While *Grave Marker* does specifically call children to bring about change, the poem is also directed to push all citizens of Hiroshima forward with “clear voices raised in protest.” Throughout the poetry collection, *Poems of the Atomic Bomb*, Tōge never tells his own story of survival, like the children in *When I was Small* do. Instead, he portrays the aftermath of the atomic bomb – anonymous children dying on the streets, unnamed women crying for their lost families, and disfigurements of human bodies. Tōge’s Communist beliefs may have led to his poems presenting a collective group experience and identity. However, Tōge mainly refrained from telling his own story in order to make his poems a voice for all survivors in Hiroshima. As a spokesperson for Hiroshima, Tōge consciously wrote about more universal experiences for survivors. On the contrary, in *When I was Small* the children simply recorded their personal accounts, staying outside of political paradigm.

*When I was Small* collects poems that express children’s emotions of having lived through such a trauma. Tōge’s poems, however, speak for Hiroshima to push his political agenda. Thus, his poems must be relatable to the survivors, so that he could rally the citizens of Hiroshima together. Take, for example, the poem *In the Streets*:

Oh, the emotions!

The anger of the black-market women at the train window,

all cursing the station cop as the train pulls out;

the laughter of the painted ladies,

coquettish voices raised as they huddle in the dark;  
the sorrow of a drunk staggering along,  
blood dripping from an unbandaged wound;  
underneath it all,  
underneath it all –  
a pinprick, and it would all come gushing out –  
the emotions! (*Poems...* 352)

The topic of this poem is the collective emotions – anger and resentment – of the victims. The poem exposes various streets filled with horror and agony. In focusing on the common sights and the experiences in the city of Hiroshima, Tōge is able to identify the survivors as a group. Tōge forms a collective identity for the victims by capturing the suffering and the pleas of the dying with which all the survivors can associate. As a result, the readers in Hiroshima sympathized with his political cause.

Tōge also places a different emphasis on family relationships than the children did. He often refers to the familial status of people in the past tense. This is evident in the poem *At the Makeshift Aid Station*, in which the last two stanzas read:

You are simply thinking,  
thinking  
of those who until this morning  
were your fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters  
(would any of them know you now?)  
And of the homes in which you slept, woke, ate

(in that instant the hedgeroses were torn off; who knows  
what has become of their ashes?)

thinking, thinking –  
as you lie there among friends who one after the other  
stop moving –  
thinking  
of when you were girls,  
human beings. (*Poems... 316*)<sup>5</sup>

The lines talking about “those who until this morning / were your fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters” are of particular interest because of the way Tōge is tossing aside these familial bonds. Tōge distances the voice of the poem from the affected family members in a way that the children’s writings do not. This depersonalization highlights the victims’ loss of humanity through the bombing. This caused readers to sympathize more with Tōge and reflect on just how dehumanizing the bomb was. This poem causes readers to think about their own experiences with the bomb and how much it changed their families as well. Whether it was disfigurement from the bomb, the physical effects of radiation sickness, or the psychological changes that took place in many survivors, Tōge wants readers to focus on how their family members have changed after the atom bomb. This is another way to fuel the survivors’ anger, and lead them to support Tōge to achieve more radical political cause.

*At the Makeshift Aid Station* ends with the thoughts of the injured schoolgirls, who are “thinking / of when you were girls, / human beings” (316). This is another

statement intended for all bomb survivors to relate to. While it refers to two suffering schoolgirls in the streets of Hiroshima, the image of these girls stripped of their humanity encourages the survivors to recollect their actual experiences. The vivid descriptions at the makeshift aid station exclaims the loss of innocence by blameless victims. The poem prompts the readers to reflect on how the bomb stripped away humanity from the victims and their loved ones. *At the Makeshift Aid Station* stirs the readers here, encouraging them to fight for their lost humanity.

Finally, the poem *Appeal* exemplifies how Tōge calls the readers to protest while simultaneously acting as a voice for survivors. In doing so, Tōge effectively acted as a spokesperson for the survivors of Hiroshima, while still pushing his own political ideas on to the people. Within this poem, Tōge claims that it is “not too late” to bring about change:

It is not too late, even now;  
it is not too late to muster your true strength.  
If the scene seared onto your retinas that day pierced your heart  
so that tears drip unceasingly from the wound;  
if your body bears the marks of Hiroshima  
that still cause the bloody pus that curses war to drip steadily  
from those clefts –  
  
the true you, the you  
who abandoned your little sister as she thrashed about,  
reaching out with both hand from beneath the house the flames

were about to engulf;  
who without bothering to cover your private parts with scraps  
of burned clothing,  
with both arms bent and dangling in front of you, raw and red,  
staggering on burned bare feet,  
wandered off through a desert of glittering rubble  
on a journey that held no consolation –

it is not too late, even beginning now,  
to raise your twisted arms into the air  
and with all the other arms like yours  
to hold off the accursed sun  
that is about to fall once more;

to block, with your back that bears the brand of death,  
the tears of all those gentle people  
who hate war but simply stand around;  
to take those hands that now hang limp  
and grasp them firmly  
between your own palms, raw and red:  
no,

it is not too late, even now. (*Poems... 357*)

The poem urges the survivors to muster their strength to rise in protest against the pains of war and nuclear weapons. Tōge earnestly tells the survivors to renounce their darker “true selves,” and not to be one of “...those gentle people / who hate war but simply stand around.” The calls to activism, such as this one, all closely resemble Tōge’s life as a political activist. *Appeal* is the first poem compiled in his collection, *Poems of the Atomic Bomb*, and *Appeal* is his response to the Stockholm Appeal, a worldwide initiative for a ban on nuclear weapons (Minear 286). The poem tells readers to “hold off the accursed sun”, which certainly refers to the bright light of the atom bomb. *Appeal* asks for support for the Stockholm Appeal and other antiwar initiatives.

Perhaps because of the political motivations behind his writings, Tōge’s works often use much harsher, more graphic language than the children. Tōge highlights the dehumanization of victims in order to search social and political changes. The children, on the other hand, focus on familial bonds and human togetherness in their personal tragedies, and remained outside of the postwar discourse on human or political cause of the atomic bomb. In poems like *At the Makeshift Aid Station*, Tōge distances both himself and the readers from the victims’ families. In contrast, the children in *When I was Small* do the exact opposite, reinforcing the strength of their familial bonds. One of the children, Morihiro Mieko, uses honorific verbs when referring to her mother:

*Okāchan wa sugu moguridete*

*Watakushi no te o hippatte kudasatta*

[Mom came crawling right away,

and pulled my hand.] (lines 8-9)



Mieko uses the honorific *kudasatta* rather than the regular form *kureta* to describe her gratitude for her mother's actions. This level of formality shows the respect that Mieko feels for her mother and the importance of her mother's life-saving act. The other children also put great importance on familial support. Tao's poem is the shortest in the collection, but its simple message addresses the war's impact on his family: the sorrowful cries of a mother who has lost her son to the war. Tao's mother stands in the kitchen, cooking rice that had been set aside for a special occasion – presumably the return of her older son from his military service. Because of the shortage of provisions, the set aside rice had to be used to feed her youngest son. It implies that the oldest son, Takashi's whereabouts are unknown, but the family now has nothing to feed him if he were to return from war. It must have been very painful for the mother to use this rice without Takashi:

“Takashi, Takashi,  
come back safely!”  
she said and making rice balls  
in tears. (lines 7-10)

This short poem shows a strong bond between the mother and her sons. The mother's agony and sorrow can be felt throughout the poem because of the hardships of her sons. The stress on the individual family members and the use of a personal story here sharply contrasts Tōge's politically charged messages.

Tōge's accounts of the devastation in Hiroshima are well known within the field of atomic bomb literature. However, it is important to look at multiple perspectives of the

survivors, which provides a more comprehensible understanding of the atomic bomb.

Without the pressure to write for the experiences of everyone in Hiroshima, the children freely express their emotions in *When I was Small*. The children and Tōge both stress the importance of peace by sharing stories of Hiroshima in the hope that no others will have to experience such suffering. While all the poets used different approaches, they all succeeded in sharing the experiences of Hiroshima and provoking an emotional response that highlights the need for peace in the world.

## CONCLUSION

*When I was Small* allows readers to gain a broader understanding of the devastating effects of the atomic bomb on various human lives. While Tōge chose to focus on the bomb's effect to advocate his political ideologies, the children shared a more innocent perspective concerning the impacts on their lives and intimate relationships. Reading Tōge's social and political poetry next to the children's personal poetry yields an interesting contrast, which reveals great variation among the atomic bomb poets. This variation in style and message should not be dismissed. It leads to a deeper understanding of the aftermath in Hiroshima. *When I was Small* may not receive critical acclaim as art, but it should be recognized as an important work in the field of atomic bomb literature. Although the children and Tōge have distinct approaches in poetry, they both try to capture the horrors and the devastation from the morning of August 6, 1945 and the lasting torment afterward. Yet, they lace their poems with hope for peace in the future and write to cope with the immense trauma that they have lived through as well. Despite the differences in the ways that the individual authors express themselves, the foundation of these poems remains the grief and sorrow of survivors and the hope for peace.

Early poems like these are especially important because it was impossible to publish these kinds of works under occupation. As part of the Civil Censorship Detachment (CCD), GHQ banned any discussion related to the atomic bomb, enacted until 1952, the end of American occupation.<sup>6</sup> *Children of Hiroshima*, the source book for *When I was Small*, was published in the latter half of 1951. Tōge wrote many of his poems during the time of occupied Japan, but *Poems of the Atomic Bomb* was not

published until 1952.<sup>7</sup> Tōge shared his poems as early as possible, but other authors' stories must have been lost in the years immediately after the war. It was incredibly brave for the poets to speak up despite the threat of the GHQ. It is thanks to their bravery that we have such powerful poetry to educate us on the atomic bomb.

The voices of Hiroshima cannot be contained within just one author's poetry. Multiple viewpoints assist modern learners in the United States to better understand history and our place in the global realm. We should eliminate the risk of allowing a handful of voices to speak for all survivors. I initiated this translation project, the poems in *When I was Small*, with a hope to provide additional resources for those who wish to study the atomic bomb in Hiroshima.

In closing, we will look at fifth grader Tao Kinue's poem next to Tōge's most famous poem, which is carved into stone at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park:

Untitled by Tao Kinue

After the bomb dropped,  
Mom  
was cooking the rice we had set  
aside for a special occasion,  
“What are we fighting for?”  
she said.  
“Takashi, Takashi,  
come back safely!”  
she said, making rice balls  
in tears.

*Prelude* by Tōge Sankichi

Bring back the fathers! Bring  
back the mothers!  
Bring back the old people!  
Bring back the children!  
Bring me back!  
Bring back the human beings I  
had contact with!  
For as long as there are human  
beings, a world of human beings,  
bring back peace,  
unbroken peace.

These poems convey a similar message, but it is very clear that the authors express themselves differently. Both authors cry for the return of family members, but these cries are completely different in nature. Tōge uses demanding language and abrupt statements, which contrasts starkly with Kinue’s somber sounding narrative. Placing these poems next to each other allows readers to see why having various authors, all from differing backgrounds, is crucial for a fuller understanding of the same horrific experience.

Without this multiplicity of perspectives, readers’ visions would be limited.

Both Tōge and the children’s poems emotionally impact readers. I would assert that they succeed in their call to peace. When the poems reach the people of the world,

their message of peace will be shared. Further efforts should be made in the fields of atomic bomb literature and of peace studies to spread works on the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to a global audience. With the contribution of these five children's poems, I would like to emphasize the need for more translation of the atomic bomb literature.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> In my search for more information about Arata Osada, and specifically his work with Hiroshima's children, I contacted the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. Unfortunately, the museum had no additional information on Osada's works. They directed me to their Peace Database, but searching Osada's name and the title of *When I was Small* revealed little more than different ways to access *Children of Hiroshima* at the museum.

<sup>2</sup> See also: Breed.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 2 for full poem

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 3 for full poem

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix 4 for full poem

<sup>6</sup> While the laws for censorship did not explicitly state that talking about the atomic bomb was prohibited, it does proclaim that there shall be no criticism of any Allied powers, there shall be no discussion of Allied troops movements, and that nothing should be printed that may disturb the public's sense of peace or tranquility (See Appendix 5 for the full Civil Censorship Detachment). Perhaps this is why censorship enforcement regarding atomic bomb literature seems to be more lax in 1951, one year before occupation ended.

<sup>7</sup> A mimeographed version of the book was, in fact, created in 1951, a year before the occupation ended. However, mimeographed publications were generally used for books that could not or would not be published by traditional methods, as a kind of do-it-yourself form of publication. Tōge did this to avoid being caught by the GHQ and arrested for writing about the bomb. Only 500 copies were made in this manner before the book was officially published (Obinata)

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## **APPENDICIES**

**Appendix 1:**

*Song of Rage* by Tōge Sankichi

Translated by Richard H. Minear, found in *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses* pp. 285

The machines that till yesterday produced sewing machines and  
vehicles are stopped,  
the workers driven off;  
today on the roof of the locked factory,  
the hated police flag flutters.  
Seize our broken flagpoles, yes!  
and break the shackles that bind our wrists!  
Even if our blood drenches the dust,  
even if nightsticks knock us out —  
aged workers complain about pistols drawn in threat;  
wives do not leave even though the babies strapped to their backs  
sleep, heads to one side.  
Our numbers increasing moment by moment, we surround the  
factory. Amid fluttering union flags:  
our rage that becomes a song  
our tears that become a hymn  
In the shade of the trees, as dusk gathers, Japan Steel workers,  
prostrate, sleep:  
sleeping giants.

**Appendix 2:**

*When Will That Day Come?* by Tōge Sankichi

Translation by Richard H. Minear, found in *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses* pp. 358-365

1

Buried under hot rubble and collapsed buildings,  
roads from three directions come together,  
intersect where a streetcar lies on its side, burned black and snarled  
in copper wires:  
the heart of Hiroshima — here in a corner of Kamiya-chō square  
you lie,  
a corpse not yet disposed of.

No sound, but evidence of a heat that penetrated every last fragment  
of tile;  
no movement, but smoke that rises brokenly  
into the dazzling August sky;  
as for the rest: a brain-numbing emptiness, everything annihilated.  
Bending at the waist, as befits a girl,  
gripping the vast earth with both hands, bird-like,  
half prostrate, you lie dead.

The other corpses are all naked and raw red;  
why is it that you alone are clothed,  
even have one shoe on?  
Above a cheek that is slightly sooty, your hair is full,  
and neither burns nor blood are to be seen—  
except that the back of your cotton culottes, only the back,  
is burned clear through,  
exposing your round bottom;  
forced out in your death agonies, a bit of excrement  
sticks there, dried;  
with shade nonexistent, the rays of the midday sun pick it out.

2

Your home is in Ujina—  
port of Hiroshima where ever since the wars with China,  
with Russia  
the young men of Japan were given guns to carry  
and slopped wine and tears into their pillows at being separated  
from loved ones;  
loaded into the holds of ships, they went to their deaths.

Deep in the squalid alley  
enveloped in the smell of gutters.

You were wife — once Mother died — to your metal-caster father,  
mother to your younger brother and sister;  
delicate, like a plant that has been forced.  
you became at last a young woman;  
but as defeat approached,  
fear and rumor became your daily fare:  
with the cities of Japan being burned out night by night,  
so many sheaves of straw,  
why hadn't Hiroshima been put to the torch?

Your beloved home was pulled down by the ropes  
of the firebreak-clearers,  
and you four rented a hut in the eastern part of town;  
you gnawed at raw soybeans that had been cached underground  
and boiled horseweed for gruel;  
you fought for bamboo life preservers for each member  
of your family  
with grown-ups frightened by rumors  
the enemy would flood the city out;  
you fled on air raid nights hand in hand,  
were knocked to the ground by the home guard standing watch  
At the bridges;  
you spent your days rushing hither and thither,

your girl's hands, girl's body  
frantic to help your neuralgic father, to defend  
your brother and sister  
against the raging forces of war.

3

And as August 6 approached,  
you did not know  
that in the jungles of the South Pacific the Japanese army  
was scattered,  
weaponless, starving, sick;  
that warships were out of oil, hiding in the lee of islands,  
unable to move;  
that the entire nation was bathed in a rain of fire;  
that the fascists still didn't know how to bring the war to an end.

You did not know  
that in the eyes of the world  
the surrender of Japan had become simply a matter of time  
once the Soviet forces that had destroyed the Nazis  
confronted Imperial Japan with the announcement  
that the nonaggression pact would not be extended.  
You did not know



that because in Berlin the Hakenkreuz had been struck  
and the Red Flag already raised,  
the day of the Soviet entry into the war—  
    set for three months thereafter—  
was already looming large.

They rushed to drop the atomic bomb.

They felt they had to destroy Japan on their own  
    before that day.

With this dark and ugly motive  
they rushed to drop the atomic bomb.

There was so little time  
between July 16— the test in New Mexico—  
and the day of the Soviet entry!

4

Late at night on the fifth, the night before, came the accurate rumor,  
spread by pamphlets dropped from the sky, that Hiroshima  
    would be burned out;  
people fled to the surrounding hills and melon patches  
    and stayed up all night;  
though still intimidated by the sirens that continued to wail,  
relieved when dawn arrived without incident, they returned home;

setting out for jobs that were ultimately useless, they began  
to fill the streets of the city.

That morning— August 6, that hour—  
you saw your father off to the factory,  
fixed lunch for your brother who had just started middle school,  
and then, as always, sending your sister to play  
at the home of relatives in a distant quarter,  
you locked the door of the rickety house  
and set off for your work site,  
mobilized labor, to be scolded today too, doing work you were  
not yet accustomed to.

Silent, hurrying, you got partway there.  
For some reason you threw yourself down  
as a blinding flash hit you from behind;  
when the dust and smoke settled and you came to,  
you still tried to struggle on to the factory;  
you fought the waves of people fleeing in the opposite direction and,  
having got here, collapsed.

Your judgement on this event sealed in your heart,  
accepting your fate, you died.

At this point, young girl,  
what could you have known for sure?  
How could your earnest brain have fathomed the atomic bomb?  
Wrists bent, leaning forward  
like a small bird fallen to earth even as it longed for the sky;  
your knees  
are tight together,  
as if embarrassed to be lying in so public a place;  
only your hair is in disarray,  
braided down the back, but now lying on the pavement.

Having grown up knowing nothing but war,  
you lost to the flames all glimmer of your modest  
and restrained dreams;  
a person so gentle  
no one ever really noticed you or what you did—  
here you lie, killed  
by the cruelest method on earth.

Ah, that was no accident, no act of God.  
With unprecedented precision, with insatiable ambition,  
the world's first atomic bombs  
were dropped on the Japanese archipelago, on Hiroshima

and Nagasaki,  
and you died,  
one of the 400,000 who died horrible deaths.

Did you think, at that moment,  
of the sunflowers along the ditch when you were a child?  
of the scent of the powder that your mother put on once a year?  
of your little sister's begging for things once the war worsened?  
of the lipstick you and your friend put on, then wiped off,  
    behind the storehouse?  
of flowered skirts you longed to wear?  
And could you have thought  
that the street leading to this square in our beloved Hiroshima  
    would be widened out,  
renamed MacArthur Boulevard?  
that the time would come when streets lined with willow trees  
    would flicker  
with the kerchiefs of Japanese women selling their bodies  
    to foreign soldiers?  
And could you have thought in your grief  
that the war would have ended in any case  
even without the atomic bomb?

No. How could you have thought such thoughts?

There are things

even the survivors still don't know the meaning of:

that the day the second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki

was the morning that the Soviet army

crossed the Manchurian border and headed south;

that several years later, when the third atomic bomb was about

to be used,

then too the target

was the race with yellow faces.

5

Ah, that was no accident, no act of God.

After precision planning, with insatiable ambition,

humanity's first atomic bomb

was dropped, a single flash,

on the archipelago in the easter sea, on the Japanese people;

you were killed,

one of 400,000 victims who died horrible deaths.

There is no one

to identify and take charge of your murdered body.

There is no one to cover over the shame of your burned pants.

And of course no one to wipe away the mark of your agony  
clinging there.

Even as you gave your all  
in the struggle of your humble life,  
always with a timid smile on your face,  
And held back the tender thoughts that rose, more and more,  
in your breast,  
you were at the age most vulnerable to embarrassment—  
now your soft bottom lies exposed to the sun,  
and from time to time people come by searching for  
a particular corpse,  
look dully at the spot of dried excrement  
and go on their way.

Is it the cruelty?

Is it the anguish?

Is it the pathos?

No, more—

the humiliation: what can be done?

You are already beyond shame,

but the humiliation seared itself onto the retinas of those

who have seen,

and with the passage of time it will penetrate their very hearts;

this is a humiliation that is no longer yours alone,  
that has engraved itself on the souls of all Japanese.

6

We must endure this humiliation,  
endure it for a long, long time.

The night when the snow drifted high atop the child run over  
by the jeep— that too we must endure.

The May when the blood of Japan's youth spouted forth  
at the hands of helmets and pistols of foreign make—  
that too we must endure.

The era when freedom is put in chains  
and this country is bound in servitude without limit of time—  
that too we must endure.

But tell me: what shall we do if the day comes  
when we can endure it no longer?

Even should you come, hands spread bird-like,  
from the land of death

and try to calm us,

no matter how you try to hold it gently in check

in your easily embarrassed breast,  
the humiliation of your corpse, seared onto our hearts,

builds and builds like subterranean heat;  
the day will come  
when the menace of an ugly, grasping will seems about to force  
    the people once again to war;  
when a force that mothers and children and sisters  
    can hold back no longer  
turns into the wrath of a peace-loving people  
and erupts.

On that day  
your body will be covered over without shame;  
the humiliation will be cleansed by the tears of the race;  
the curses against the atomic bomb that have accumulated  
    in this world  
will begin to dissipate.  
When, oh when  
will that day come?



**Appendix 3:**

*Grave Marker* by Tōge Sankichi

Translation by Richard H. Minear, found in *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses* pp. 334-338

You kids stand together, on clump.

It is as if you had huddled together for warmth on a cold day,

been gradually compressed, squeezed into a corner,

become this small grave marker

that no one notices

any more:

“Seibi Primary School Dead”

Base surrounded by scorched bricks;

upright strip of wood less than three feet tall;

bamboo flower holder, cracked and empty, atilt.

Behind a row of false-fronted buildings—

A. B. Advertising,

C. D. Scooters,

and a huge billboard

for Hiroshima Peace City Construction Company, Inc. —

on the corner of the road that leads  
to the MacArthur Cup Tennis Courts,  
painted green;

on that corner where bits of tile and concrete, discarded, lie heaped,  
where the school gate, fallen, lies half-buried,  
where on rainy days it turns into a mudhole,  
where one always hears babies crying  
in the municipal barrack-apartments that look beyond repair,

there you kids stand.

Turned into an upright strip of wood, gradually rotting,  
without hands,  
without feet,  
not wheedling,  
not clamoring,  
silent, silent,  
you stand.

No matter how you called,  
no matter how you cried,  
your daddies, your mommies  
couldn't come to your aid.

Brushing aside your outstretched hands,  
other daddies fled.  
Heavy weights pinning you under,  
the hot, hot wind blowing,  
in that dark, dark, choking place,  
(Ah! What could you have done to deserve this?)  
your gentle hands,  
your thin necks —  
how easy, beneath rock and steel and old lumber,  
to make blood spurt, to crush!

In the shadow of Hijiyama,  
eyes burned like roasted marshmallows,  
a row of friends squatted, dazed;  
hearing soldiers running by, side arms clattering,  
you called out “Soldier! Please help!”  
and even then no one answered;  
when as dusk fell beside the water tank  
you pleaded, “Take us with you!”  
and pointed west,  
no one took your hands.  
Then, aping the adults,  
you climbed into the water tank,

covered your faces with compresses of leaves,  
and, still understanding not a thing,  
died.

Ah, you kids!

You kids who have gone to a far place  
where you can't smell apples,  
where you can't lick lollipops:  
whoever made you say  
“We can do without ...  
until victory is ours”?

“Seibi Primary School Dead”

This corner from which, as you kids stand, silent,  
your disbelieving eyes can see  
a field gun your fathers and elder brothers were forced to defend,  
rusted red, lying on its side, and,  
in a hollow green with clover,  
a foreign soldier and a girl,  
sprawled out;  
this corner across from the empty lot across which today again —  
because they said “Stop the war!” —

people are led off in chains  
to the detention center behind high new walls.

Indeed, how strange!

From under the eaves of a roof of cheap shingles  
your sharp ears

hear a radio plagued with static

elatedly pouring out news:

how many tons of bombs dropped where;

how many hundred million dollars added to the funds

for building atomic bombs;

reinforcements landing in Korea.

From deep in the horseweed that smells like grass

even rusty nails

get scavenged and sold.

Ah! You kids: even this simple grave marker

barely holding its own

will be cleared away and then forgotten,

will be buried soon in dirt and sand

as Peace City Construction builds its annex;

the grave that holds the bones

of your small hands and necks

will be lost forever  
underneath something.

“Seibi Primary School Dead”

Even though the flower tube holds no flowers,  
two butterflies chase each other about;  
the breeze blows off the ocean  
over the weatherworn strip of wood;  
the sky is as sparkling blue  
as on that fateful morning.

Kids, won't you come forth?  
Gentle arm in gentle arm,  
won't you arise?

Grammy —  
“Who would want to go to that Peace Festival shindig?” —  
waits for you still;  
Grampa too,  
unwilling to throw out your old shoes,  
has stuck them out of sight under the rose of Sharon.

The babies who sucked away that day  
at the breasts of dead mothers and survived  
are already six years old.

Your friends, too,  
who prowled rainy streets  
stealing,  
begging,  
already have the muscles of adults,  
burned brown in the sun.

“Never give in!  
Never give in!” —  
at Hiroshima Station, under the hot sun,  
Korean comrades  
collect signatures: stop the war!

“Never give in!  
Never give in!” —  
Japanese war orphans  
throw down their shoeshine kids  
and sell the newspaper that tells the truth.

You kids,  
enough already! Enough of being silent!  
Come forth,

eyes sparkling,  
clear voices raised in protest,  
and do battle round the world  
with the adults who would start wars.

And

Throwing open the arms we would all be embraced by,  
Thrusting forward the cheeks that would bring back good tears  
to all our hearts,

come and

throw yourselves into everyone's arms, saying:

“We are the children,

the children of Hiroshima!”



**Appendix 4:**

*At the Makeshift Aid Station* by Tōge Sankichi

Translation by Richard H. Minear, found in *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses* pp. 315-316

You girls—

weeping even though there is no place for tears to come from;

crying out even though you have no lips to shape the words;

reaching out even though there is no skin on your fingers

to grasp with—

you girls.

Oozing blood and greasy sweat and lymph, your limbs twitch;

puffed to slits, your eyes glitter whitely;

only the elastic bands of your panties hold in your swollen bellies;

though your private parts are exposed, you are

wholly beyond shame:

to think

that a little while ago

you were all pretty schoolgirls!

Emerging from the flames that flickered gloomily

in burned-out Hiroshima

no longer yourselves,  
you rushed out, crawled out one after the other,  
struggled along to this grassy spot,  
in agony laid your heads, bald but for a few wisps of hair,  
on the ground.

Why must you suffer like this?

*Why must you suffer like this?*

For what reason?

*For what reason?*

You girls

don't know

how desperate your condition,

how far transformed from the human.

You are simply thinking,

thinking

of those who until this morning

were your fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters

(would any of them know you now?)

And of the homes in which you slept, woke, ate

(in that instant the hedgeroses were torn off; who knows

what has become of their ashes?)

thinking, thinking –

as you lie there among friends who one after the other

stop moving –

thinking

of when you were girls,

human beings.

Appendix 5:

The Civil Censorship Detachment

From the Gordon W. Prange Collection, University of Maryland

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS  
UNITED STATES ARMY FORCES, PACIFIC  
Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2  
Civil Censorship Detachment

To RYOBO

21 Sept 1945

CODE FOR JAPANESE PRESS

In accordance with the Supreme Allied Commander's objective of establishing freedom of the press in Japan, a Press Code for Japan has been issued. This PRESS CODE, rather than being one of restrictions of the Press, is one which is designed to educate the press of the Japanese in the responsibilities and meaning of a free press. Emphasis is placed on the truth of news and the elimination of propaganda. This Press Code will cover, in addition, all publications printed in Japan.

This is the Press Code for Japan;

1. News must adhere strictly to the truth.
2. Nothing should be printed which might, directly or indirectly, disturb the public tranquility.
3. There shall be no false or destructive criticism of the Allied Powers.
4. There shall be no destructive criticism of the Allied Occupation and nothing which might invite mistrust or resentment of those troops.
5. There shall be no mention or discussion of Allied troops movements unless such movements have been officially released.
6. News stories must be factually written and completely devoid of editorial opinion.
7. News stories shall not be colored to conform with any propaganda line.
8. Minor details of a news story must not be over-emphasized to stress or develop any propaganda line.
9. No news story shall be distorted by the omission of pertinent facts or details.
10. In the make-up of the newspaper no news story shall be given undue prominence for the purpose of establishing or developing any propaganda line.