



**Classroom Implementation (Grades 7-12)**

**For**

**Joe O'Donnell's**

***Japan 1945: A U.S. Marine's Photographs from Ground Zero***

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*Joe O'Donnell and Images from Ground Zero*

7-12<sup>th</sup> grade

World/U.S. History and Humanities

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Joe O'Donnell's photographs of the nuclear destruction and rebuilding of Japan taken in the six months following World War II offer a key focal point for constructing lessons for history and humanities classrooms. Social studies teachers may want to include these images as part of their lessons on World II or the rebuilding of Japan following the war. They could also be used to teach about the impact of nuclear war as part of a study about any nuclear conflict. There are possible connections for government, economics, sociology and psychology classrooms, as well. These striking images can serve as a bell ringer for stimulating student interest in the subject. They can also be used as the basis for inquiry or project based learning. A teacher could also use the images as part of a final assessment. In all of these cases, the images may serve as the student's primary text or they may supplement other materials such as textbook readings, newspaper articles, teacher lecture, and *hibakusha* accounts.

**Suggested Lesson #1: "Slow Art"<sup>1</sup> Bell-Ringer Activity:**

This lesson could be a bell-ringer activity for a mini-lesson on the atomic bombing of Japan which would be embedded in a larger unit on World War II. Alternatively, it could be a stand-alone activity for teaching critical thinking and the process of image analysis.

Objectives:

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Closely observe photographs and note what they see;
2. Use information from the photograph to make conclusions; and
3. Construct historical questions based on visual data and inferences.

Length:

20-60 minutes

Standards:

Common Core State Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies

\*Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12

-Key Ideas and Details 1-2

-Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 7

Lesson Outline:

1. Prior to the lesson, hang several photographs around the room. At a minimum, there should be enough photographs for groups of four students to have their own photograph to analyze. It is not necessary to provide any captions for the photographs.

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<sup>1</sup> I first learned of the term "slow art" at a conference hosted by the Smithsonian American Art Museum

2. When students enter the room, briefly explain the origin of the photographs, including a background of Joe O'Donnell and when they were taken.
3. Have students do a gallery walk and instruct them to pick one photograph that captures their curiosity.
4. Provide students *Handout 1*. In groups of no larger than four, they should discuss each question as a group and write their responses on one handout. This lesson is called "slow art" because just like slow cooking brings out flavors over time, deeply analyzing one image for a period of time allows students to discover deeper meaning.
5. Students then present their answers.
6. At this point, the teacher has many options. The teacher can treat this as critical thinking exercise and not emphasize any right or wrong answers. The teacher would then proceed with the rest of her lesson. Alternatively, the teacher can comment after each group's presentation and clear up misunderstandings, prompt discussion, and provide important supplemental information.
7. Extensions:

Teacher PowerPoint Direct Instruction: The teacher may present a [PowerPoint presentation](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1XUxskfiGacESxj07ixnynHa31Jxa3LAEI2R4LDXxaug/present?ueb=true&slide=id.p3), created to accompany this lesson, available at: <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1XUxskfiGacESxj07ixnynHa31Jxa3LAEI2R4LDXxaug/present?ueb=true&slide=id.p3>. This PowerPoint explains the story of Joe O'Donnell, the origin of the photographs, and some of the meaning ascribed to them. It also explains the impact of the atomic bombs and the arguments for and against President Truman's decision to drop them. Many of the images and information are from the Hiroshima Peace Memorial website (see *Handout 2 –Resources for Research Paper.*)

- a. Inquiry Learning Activity: The teacher may require each student or group to pick one significant historical question raised doing this activity to research further. The teacher should explain that the question must be complex enough so that a simple Google search cannot provide the answer. The teacher may have students present their research using PowerPoint or a traditional poster-board. Another option is to have students contribute a webpage on a class website. I like to use Google Sites for making collaborative webpages. Finally, students could write a traditional research paper with their findings.
- b. Research Paper Extension: After viewing the photographs, have students research the following question: What was the impact of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki? I like to introduce this activity by using the metaphor of going under the mushroom cloud. How did the atomic bomb impact the people physically, psychologically, and economically in the short, medium and long term? Students should break this down to include children, Korean forced labor, and American POWs. What physical damage did the atomic bombs cause? *Handout 2* includes a list of useful links that you could provide for students, depending on their research abilities and time you wish to devote to this activity.
- c. Humanities extension for research paper: Have students write a first-hand narrative account based on one or more of Joe O'Donnell's photographs, research,

and *hibakusha* testimony. Students should compose historical fiction that captures the perspective of somebody impacted by the atomic bomb.

### **Suggested Lesson #2: Taniguchi Sumiteru: Painful Life of an activist:**

#### Objectives

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Explain the life story of Taniguchi Sumiteru
2. Evaluate the central political goals of *hibakusha* which is the global abolishment of nuclear weapons
3. Explain the ways *hibakusha* became politically/socially active
4. Consider ways students could become a political or social activist.

#### Length

Two class periods

#### Standards

Common Core State Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies

\*Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 7-8

\*Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12

Research to Build and Present Knowledge 7-9

#### Lesson Outline

1. Have students do a quick-write on the following prompt: Think about your **own** experiences in life. Write about any experience that has disturbed you and what you could do to make the world a better place so that these negative experiences would not happen to you or others? Encourage students to consider how they might convert a negative experience into positive action as a political or social activist. What would their cause be?
2. Display the O'Donnell photograph of Taniguchi Sumiteru. Individually, have students complete *Handout 1* or *Handout 3* to analyze the photo deeply. Briefly discuss with students their answers.
3. After students' interest is activated, give students the biography of Taniguchi Sumiteru in *Handout 4* to read. Alternatively, the teacher could explain Mr. Taniguchi's story in order to make his story more engaging, especially for unmotivated readers. Another option is to play the July 30, 2010 video of Taniguchi-san in the Nagasaki Council of A-Bomb Sufferers Meeting Room uploaded by Nagasaki Atomic History and Present. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ACu4prtWXpc> In the first 19 minutes, Mr. Taniguchi discusses his experiences.
4. Start the video discussed above at 19 minutes. This short three-minute excerpt includes a message that Mr. Taniguchi would like young people to take from the atomic bomb experience. Discuss with students whether or not he makes a persuasive case. Do his

personal experiences add credibility to his message that nuclear weapons should be abolished?

5. Have students research the political activism of *hibakusha*. Students can present their findings on poster-boards, PowerPoint, or essay format.
6. Have students reflect on the activism of *hibakusha*. The teacher may want students to go back to their initial quick-write in this lesson and ask how *hibakusha* activism might have changed their own potential for activism.

### **Suggested Lesson #3: Peacemaking and Honkawa Elementary School:**

#### Objectives

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand how the atomic bomb impacted children in Hiroshima
2. Understand how the actions of private citizens can have a large impact on others across time and space-
3. Take action toward a more peaceful world.

#### Length

Two class periods

#### Standards

Common Core State Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies

\*Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12

Key Ideas and Details, 1-3

#### Lesson Outline

4. Have all of the students examine Joe O'Donnell's aerial photograph of Hiroshima. Students should complete a photographic analysis worksheet, either *Handout 1* or *Handout 3*.
5. Debrief the worksheet. Point out that the only building still prominently standing is Honkawa Elementary School.
6. Provide students the brochure for Honkawa Elementary School. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Bp7QA7zpe89thk-FbDt0yTgBR6Ep0Uvu/view> and have them complete the worksheet questions on *Handout 5*.
7. Show movie *Pictures from a Hiroshima Schoolyard*. For more information, see <http://www.hiroshimaschoolyard.com/> The film can be purchased or streamed on Amazon at [https://www.amazon.com/Pictures-Hiroshima-Schoolyard-Bryan-Reichhardt/dp/B01GT47PSA/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1465654461&sr=8-1&keywords=hiroshima+schoolyard](https://www.amazon.com/Pictures-Hiroshima-Schoolyard-Bryan-Reichhardt/dp/B01GT47PSA/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1465654461&sr=8-1&keywords=hiroshima+schoolyard)
8. At conclusion of movie, the teacher could lead a discussion about the movie or have students write a short reflection on ideas they had while watching the movie.
9. Have students write a postcard to the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum. On one side, they should draw a picture of peace just like the Honkawa students after the atomic

bombing. On the other side of the postcard, they should include a message about the atomic bomb. This should be a message of peace but also provide some reflection about what happened in those cities and what they learned from studying about them. The postcard should also include the student's name, age, and city/state/country. The postcard should be oriented vertically with a hole punch at the top so the museum can display the card on a hook. You should tell students that there is a visitor room at the museum where people write postcards for display in the museum. You should encourage your students to be respectful as they will be displayed in a solemn place located near the hypocenter in Nagasaki. Once the students have completed the postcards, the teacher should send all of them in one package addressed to Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, 7-8 Hiranomachi, Nagasaki, Nagasaki Prefecture 852-8117, Japan.

10. Extension:

- a. The teacher could work with students to create a more involved peace project. It would create more student ownership if the students come up with an idea.
- b. Have students create a display in their school with messages of peace inscribed in 1000 origami cranes. The display should explain the story of Sadako and the symbolism of the crane. Some resources with the Sadako story:  
[https://www.hiroshima-is.ac.jp/?page\\_id=230](https://www.hiroshima-is.ac.jp/?page_id=230);  
[http://www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/virtual/VirtualMuseum\\_e/exhibit\\_e/exh0107\\_e/exh01071\\_e.html](http://www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/virtual/VirtualMuseum_e/exhibit_e/exh0107_e/exh01071_e.html);  
[http://www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/virtual/VirtualMuseum\\_e/exhibit\\_e/exh0107\\_e/exh01071\\_e.html](http://www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/virtual/VirtualMuseum_e/exhibit_e/exh0107_e/exh01071_e.html)
- c. Students could research contemporary US governmental policy on nuclear weapons and write letters to Congressmen and the President urging the US to issue a formal apology for dropping the bombs.
- d. Students could write letters to policy-makers urging the reduction or elimination of nuclear weapons.

**Suggested Lesson #4: Five Hats group research project**

Objectives

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Explain the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki from a variety of perspectives and disciplines
2. Do effective research to gather relevant materials to answer specific questions.
3. Present their finding in a clear manner.

Length

2-3 class periods

Standards

Common Core State Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies

\*Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12

### Key Ideas and Details 3

### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 7-9

\*Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12

Research to Build and Present Knowledge 7-9

#### Lesson Outline

1. Assign students to groups of five and provide each group with a Joe O'Donnell photograph of a nuclear landscape. Students should analyze the photograph by using either *Handout 1* or *3*. The group should analyze the photograph together.
2. Assign each student a perspective to research as it relates to the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. As part of their research, the teacher should require students to include a primary source that vividly illustrates an important point relating to their perspective. The "five hats" are the following:
  - a. **Scientist:** This person should research the medical impact of the atomic bomb. What were the health effects? They may also research the impact on the environment.
  - b. **Geographer:** This person should research why Hiroshima and Nagasaki were chosen as targets and the bombs eventually dropped where they were. They should explain the extent of the damage and how the geography impacted the final outcome.
  - c. **Sociologist/social worker:** This person should research the social impact of the bombs. How were *hibakusha* treated afterwards? How were Koreans treated afterwards? What were some of the lasting impacts on war orphans?
  - d. **Political Scientist:** This person should research the political decision-making for the U.S. decision to drop the bomb. What was going on in Japan at the time the bombs were dropped? How did the Japanese government respond?
  - e. **Economist:** This person should research the economic impact on *hibakusha* and how Hiroshima and Nagasaki were able to rebuild in the years after the war.
3. Each group can present their findings in a PowerPoint presentation or Google Sites webpage.

#### **Other short classroom activities promoting critical thinking and engagement:**

1. **Photograph Analysis Worksheet.** Use *Handout 3* to analyze any photograph. This activity can be integrated into any lesson on the atomic bomb and/or the rebuilding of Japan. The goal is to have students understand that photographs can be analyzed for historical meaning just like any other text based primary document.
2. **Create a Title.** Provide each student or group with a photograph and have them create a title for it. Have them explain the reason for the title.
3. **Ranking.** Create a category like "photographs that best explain the emotional impact of the bomb" or "photographs that best show perseverance" and have them rank the top three among O'Donnell's photographs. Alternatively, have the students pick one image that should have been included in their textbook. Have them explain their reasoning for their choices.

4. **Text Connections.** Hang multiple photographs up around the room and leave a big piece of paper for students to write their comments on, for each photograph. On each piece of paper include a category for text to text connections (connections or ideas that connect a photograph with another photograph in the display), text to self-connections (connections between a photograph and the student's personal experiences), and text to world connections (connections between a photograph and a current event or other topic studied in class).
5. **Spoken picture.** Have students pick one photograph and then write a story about that image. What happened just before and just after the photo was taken? If there are people in the photograph, what would they say? If the student walked through the scene shown in the photograph, what would she be thinking? This writing activity can be done as a quick write and share activity or be part of a more developed creative writing activity that requires students to understand the Japanese perspective of these events.
6. **In Joe O'Donnell's shoes.** Have students pick a photograph or assign a photo to them. Students should imagine they are Joe O'Donnell taking the picture. Write a short piece of historical fiction which explains how he got the picture. What was he feeling? How did he relate with the subject of the photograph? How did he get the cooperation of others? What technical things did he have to go through to get the image? Remember that all of the images in this exhibition were taken with his personal camera, not his official one.
7. **Joe O'Donnell's obituary.** After learning about Joe O'Donnell and looking at his images write an obituary which highlights the contributions of Joe O'Donnell to our understanding of atomic bombing of Japan and its rebuilding. Make sure students refer to at least one photograph in detail. Since obituaries are available online, it is important to restrict student access to the internet during this activity.
8. **Gallery Poem.** Display about ten photographs around the room. On their own individual paper, have each student describe each photograph. They may include emotions, descriptions and analysis. After they are finished, explain that they are to compose a poem about the atomic bomb experience by taking one line from their description of each photograph. Therefore, if the teacher displayed ten photographs, the student poem would be ten lines in length.
9. **Emotional Intelligence.** Have each student observe a photograph for 20 seconds. Then have students turn away from the photograph and explain to a classmate the feelings this photograph gave them.
10. **The Smithsonian Institution National Portrait Gallery's reading portrait activities<sup>2</sup>.** These activities were designed to encourage students to visually analyze portraiture. They promote critical thinking skills and can be adapted to use for analyzing Joe O'Donnell's photographs
  - a. **Thirty-Second Look:** Have students in groups look at a photograph for 30 seconds without talking. Then have them turn away from the image and lead a discussion about what they saw. Ask open-ended questions to spur discussion.

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<sup>2</sup> "'Reading' Portraiture Guide for Educators." Produced by the National Portrait Gallery Education Department, 2009.

- b. The Object Race: Find a photograph that contains a lot of visual information. Prepare a list of objects contained in the photograph for students to find. The “winner” is the first to identify all of the objects.
- c. Puzzles: Print a digital image of one of the photographs in the exhibition. Cut the copy into eight or more pieces and have groups of students piece the puzzle back together.

## **Handout 1**

### **Hiroshima/Nagasaki Image analysis**

Step 1:

**First impression:** Use three adjectives to describe your emotions while looking at the photograph.

Step 2:

**Slow looking:** Spend time looking at each part of the image. What do you see? Be objective and factual. At this step, don't interpret the meaning of the image

Step 3:

**Question:** Write three to five questions about the image. Think about what you need to know in order to better understand the image.

Step 4:

**Conclusion and meaning:** What are some lasting impressions or meanings that you can draw from the image.

## Handout 2 Resources for Research Paper

**Research Question for Hiroshima and Nagasaki Atomic Bombings:** What was life like “under the mushroom cloud?” In other words, what was the impact of the atomic bomb on the residents of Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

Resources:

### **Hiroshima and Nagasaki Atomic Bomb**

#### Background Articles

<https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/bombing-of-hiroshima-and-nagasaki>. Accessed 24 Aug. 2018.

Atomic Heritage Foundation, Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki-1945.

<https://www.atomicheritage.org/history/bombings-hiroshima-and-nagasaki-1945>. Accessed 24 Aug. 2018. General background of bombing

Majerol, Veronica. “The Atom Bomb.” *Upfront Magazine*, March 16, 2015, pp. 18-23.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/interactive/world-war-ii-pacific/> This is general background about the Pacific War as a lead up to the dropping of the atomic bomb.

#### Focused Sources

O’Donnell, Joe. *Japan 1945: A U.S. Marine’s Photographs from Ground Zero*, Vanderbilt University Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2005.

Hiroshima Archive [http://hiroshima.mapping.jp/index\\_en.html](http://hiroshima.mapping.jp/index_en.html) This is an excellent source which has many personal accounts organized on Google Maps which shows where each person was at the time of the explosion.

Masaya Nemoto lecture on *hibakusha*

<https://attendeegotowebinar.com/recording/7617725892673492739> This is an excellent overview.

Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum: <http://hpmuseum.jp/?lang=eng> There are many survivor accounts, exhibits, videos and articles related to the bomb. Use the “Peace” database. Take a virtual tour of the museum.

Nagasaki City Peace & Atomic Bomb Museum: <http://nagasakipeace.jp/english.html>

The A-Bomb that I Experienced, Keijiro Matsushima

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1epY6jq2WuVP23k2Dmu2AjtKbtLwl0BD1/view>

Honkawa Elementary School Peace Museum Brochure

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Bp7QA7zpe89thk-FbDt0yTgBR6Ep0Uvu/view>

My Experience with the Atomic Bomb by Yoshiro Yamawaki

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Y8wk24KxHks0iPgzm3vSv\\_mLTAK-Ev/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Y8wk24KxHks0iPgzm3vSv_mLTAK-Ev/view)

Yamaoka Michiko, "Eight Hundred Meters from the Hypocenter," in Cook Haruko Taya & Theodore F. Cook, *Japan at War: An Oral History*, 1992, pp. 384-399.

<http://hibakushastories.org/hibakusha-testimonies/>

<https://www.economist.com/news/books-and-arts/21660070-terrible-price-citizens-nagasaki-paid-atom-bomb-when-cloud-parted>

<http://factsanddetails.com/asian/ca67/sub429/item2515.html>

<http://time.com/after-the-bomb/>

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2015/08/01/japan-hiroshima-nagasaki-anniversary/30246223/>

[https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/08/11/national/social-issues/offspring-hard-time-relating-hibakusha-experience-health-fears/#.W13\\_fK6nF0x](https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/08/11/national/social-issues/offspring-hard-time-relating-hibakusha-experience-health-fears/#.W13_fK6nF0x)

Focused Article

<http://old.seattletimes.com/special/trinity/supplement/procon.html> This document presents the arguments for and against dropping the atomic bomb. For this paper, this material is general background information.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TI3\\_0D2h8BY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TI3_0D2h8BY) \_ Video of Hiroshima bombing.

<http://100photos.time.com/photos/mushroom-cloud-over-nagasaki-lieutenant-charles-levy#photograph>; <https://www.cbsnews.com/pictures/anniversary-hiroshima-nagasaki-atomic-bomb-world-war-ii/> Photos of Nagasaki Bombing

Harry Truman: Hiroshima Atomic Bomb Announcement (1945).

[https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/bomb/large/documents/index.php?documentid=59&pagenumber=1](https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/bomb/large/documents/index.php?documentid=59&pagenumber=1)

**Handout 3**  
**Worksheet for Photograph Analysis<sup>3</sup>**

1. Who took the photograph?
  
2. When was the photograph taken?
  
3. Describe facts and only the facts of the photograph. List everything you see in the photograph.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What is the photographer's point of view or perspective? Do you detect any bias?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Why do you think the photographer took this photograph?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What inferences can you make about this photograph?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. What is the historical significance of this photograph?

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<sup>3</sup> This worksheet is based on a SOAPSTONE analysis, which requires identification of the speaker, occasion, audience, purpose, subject and tone. This worksheet goes further and asks for students to interpret the photograph's historical meaning.

## **Handout 4 Taniguchi Sumiteru**

Born on Jan. 26, 1929, in Fukuoka.

Died at age 88 of duodenal papilla cancer in 8/2017. At the time, he was one of 165,000 remaining survivors who averaged 81 years old at the time.

### **A life worth remembering**

**Pre-bomb:** Taniguchi-San's mother died when he was just 18 months old and his father, a train operator, was sent to Manchuria right around this time. Along with his elder sister and brother, Taniguchi-San went to live in Nagasaki with his mother's parents. There, he helped supplement the family's food supply by helping plant and harvest soybeans, potatoes, cucumbers, watermelons and chrysanthemums.

"I pretty much thought that whatever adults said was correct. That the war was good, that Japan- and only Japan- was good and that Koreans, Chinese and Americans were bad. That's what adults taught me. When I grew older, I understood that these were lies."

**Bomb:** When the U.S. dropped the bomb on Nagasaki on August 9, 1945, he was 16 years old. Like most young people at the time, he was mobilized to assist in providing civilian services. Earlier that morning, he had finished his mail delivery and was lying around the post office resting when his boss requested he take an additional route. Delivering mail on his bike around 1 mile from hypocenter is when the flash appeared. He was knocked off his bike. When he looked up, all of the children he had seen minutes earlier working nearby were dead. Lying on his stomach in the middle of the road, he willed himself to stay alive. He thought, "I can't die now. I can't die now. I refuse to die."

Ever dutiful, his first thought was to collect the letters that had fallen out of his mail pouch. Then he noticed his injuries for the first time. The skin on his left arm had melted and was hanging in shreds. He felt something strange and slippery on his back, so he reached back to touch it. When he examined his fingers to see what it was, he discovered that his fingers were covered with charred, melted skin, black and slimy like grease. "I did not feel any pain, and there was not a single drop of blood."

Like a zombie, he started walking toward the mountains and finally found a tunnel owned by Mitsubishi Company, where he found a worktable on which to collapse. Soon thereafter, a rumor began that an attack was imminent, so men carried him and others out of the tunnel and laid them on a nearby hill. Unable to move or talk, he stayed there one day while the searing sun scorched his already burned skin. Later, it began to drizzle. Thirsty, he desperately strained to reach bamboo leaves where he sucked puddled raindrops to quench his overwhelming thirst.

The next day, he spotted a farmhouse below and wriggled his body down the hill in search of water. After consuming a can of water, he crawled into a shaded area and collapsed. Several times, he saw people pass by but was too weak to call out. Finally, he was discovered on the morning of 8/11, two days after the bomb was dropped. When he was rescued, his first action

was to give his rescuers a pile of letters to return to the post office. While at a train platform waiting to evacuate the city, his grandfather found him. It was at this time that he began to bleed and feel pain for the first time.

**Recovery:** Initially, the only care he received was at rudimentary relief stations in villages outside of the city. Care consisted of applications of oil mixed with ashes to his wounds.

Seeking care for the teenager, his grandfather wheeled him in a 3-wheeled wooden cart 6 miles on unpaved road to reach Shinkozen Elementary School. Here, Taniguchi-san received his first bed (*futon*) already 3 weeks after the blast. This is where Joe found him and took his gruesome photograph. In order to take the photo, Joe recalled, “I waved the flies away with a handkerchief, then carefully brushed out the maggots, careful not to touch the boy’s skin with my hand. The smell made me sick and my heart ached for his suffering, particularly because he was so young. I decided then that I would not take other pictures of burned victims unless ordered to do so.” When Taniguchi-San was moved 6 weeks later, the nurses discovered that the mat and wooden floor under where he had laid was rotted leaving a black hole about 20” in diameter.

Now at Omura Naval Hospital, 22 miles away from Shinkozen, he began receiving appropriate medical care for the first time. He suffered from chronic diarrhea, minimal appetite, weak pulse, fever, low red blood cell count, and constant chills. His bedsores were so deep that portions of his ribs and pulsing heart were visible. The only parts of his body that he was capable of moving were his neck and right arm. He ached wherever his body touched the bed. Food became stuck in throat since he was forced to lay on his stomach for 2 years. Every day he begged his caregivers to let him die. He fell into a coma on 3 occasions. His only companion during these hard times was his grandfather though his father who he had not seen since he was 18 months old, visited him once in 1946.

In 1947, he stood up for the first time. “I had never been happier than on that day. I felt at that moment that I was resurrected.” Finally, he was discharged 3.5 years after entering the hospital, but he still suffered from fevers, nausea, diarrhea, pain, weakness and infections. He was now 20 years old.

**A Life of Activism:** Two weeks after leaving the hospital, he began a new job at the post office delivering telegrams around the city on his bicycle. At first, tried to live a “normal” life and covered his scars so he wouldn’t stick out. One day in the early 1950s, he agreed to speak to the Japan Telecommunication Workers Union about his experiences. After this talk he came to a realization about the meaning of his life. “I realized that I must live on behalf of those who died unwillingly.” He began organizing groups of *hibakusha* to talk about their experiences.

At 26, he married. After being rejected by numerous prospects, his aunt found him a potential match by never actually telling the woman the full extent of his injuries. She discovered his injuries on their wedding night. When taking a bath together, Taniguchi-san asked her to wash his back. Shocked, she cried for the next 24 hours as she contemplated her future, but soon realized that nobody would care for him if she didn’t. The next day she resolved to remain married to him. Within two weeks of the wedding, Taniguchi-san’s grandmother died, so the

new family moved into the house. Soon, the couple had a son and daughter together.

According to the Nagasaki Shimbun, Taniguchi-san appeared at 396 protests. He fought for government recognition of the special medical conditions of *hibakusha*, health care for *hibakusha*, and economic support for *hibakusha* self-reliance efforts. In these efforts, he battled Japan's national government, local governments, the US and even the UN for his causes. He was an advocate for peace and the abolition of nuclear weapons.

In 2006, Mr. Taniguchi was appointed chairman of the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Survivors Council, and in 2010 he gave a critical speech at the United Nations in New York during a meeting to consider a nonproliferation treaty. A month before he died, the United Nations adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. "He played a tremendous role," said Terumi Tanaka, secretary general of the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations.

He opposed the Japanese government's decision to attack Pearl Harbor and its failure to satisfactorily apologize for doing so. He also criticized the US for dropping the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and its failure to satisfactorily apologize for this action. He maintained, "The atomic bomb is the destroyer of peace."

"If you were to measure life with a ruler and an entire life were 30 cm long, 29.9 cm of my life were destroyed that day. That last mm... I found the strength to live within that one mm because I realized I had survived because of the support I received from so many people. So my life is not just for myself; I now have to live for other people. Even though it's excruciating, I feel that I have a responsibility to live my life to the very end."

"I am determined to keep telling the reality of nuclear war as one of the living witnesses to realize a world without wars and nuclear weapons as long as I live."

#### Works Cited

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QUESTION: Do Taniguchi-san's experiences add credibility to his message that nuclear weapons should be abolished?

**Handout 5**  
**Honkawa Elementary Peace Museum Worksheet**

1. Where is the school located?
2. How many students lost their lives as a result of the atomic bomb?
3. Why did this building remain standing while most of the surrounding buildings were completely destroyed?
4. Why has this building been preserved?
5. How did Ms. Tsutsui describe her experiences on 8/6/45?
6. Why might a museum at this location displaying some of the items in the brochure be a good place for a museum?
7. What do the efforts of students and staff to resume school after the bomb teach us about the spirit of the people of Hiroshima?
8. If you were a Honkawa student, how might the existence of such a museum on your school grounds impact your education and worldview?