

Comments

TAKAHASHI Hiroko

HIROSHIMA CITY UNIVERSITY

I

Thank you very much for the really interesting and penetrating speeches. As a first step and as a researcher in Hiroshima, I have to think about how to share these views with people in Hiroshima. As a second step, I have to think on how to share what really happened in Hiroshima with visitors who come to Hiroshima from all over the world. I am a member of the Material Research Committee of Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and was one of the 23 members of the Renovation Plan Review Committee of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. I was really encouraged by these three scholars' views and I sense the responsibility to also hear these opinions as a member of these committees. I would like to explain how I was encouraged by the content of these speeches.

II

I would like to respond first to Prof. Torgovnick's statement that: "The most iconic image of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the West is the shape of the mushroom clouds." I also think that images of what occurred under the Mushroom Clouds were classified by the U.S. government and media in the West. In Japan, U.S. Occupation forces exerted strict control over the publication of all images related to the atomic bombings. For example, there is the case of the Osaka edition of the *Asahi Shimbun* on September 4, 1945, in which horrible pictures of Hibakusha appeared for the first time. However, after that, only images of the mushroom clouds were allowed to appear in the paper. Not only in the West, but also in Japan, the image of the atomic bomb became associated with the image of the Mushroom Clouds from the beginning of nuclear era. The August 6, 1952 edition of *Asahi Graph* showed images of what was under the Mushroom Clouds for the first time in a Japanese publication. More tragic pictures of people under the Mushroom Clouds gradually began to appear in Japan.

I also think that images of what was under the Mushroom cloud were not known in the United States and West at this time. On September 5, 1945, Wilfred Burchett reported in the *Daily Express*, "People are still dying, mysteriously and horribly--people who were uninjured in the cataclysm--from an unknown

something which I can only describe as the atomic plague.” However, the September 13, 1945 issue of the *New York Times* reported the following:

“Brigadier General T. F. Farrell, chief of the War Department’s atomic bomb mission, reported tonight after survey of blasted Hiroshima that the explosive power of the secret weapon was greater than its inventors’ envisaged, but he denied categorically that it produced a dangerous, lingering radioactivity in the ruins of the town or caused a form of poison gas at the moment of explosion”

Farrell intended to deny the report by Burchett. And almost immediately after John Hersey published the book *Hiroshima* (Dec. 1946), Henry Stimson contributed an article to *Harper’s Magazine* that tried to justify the dropping of the atomic Bomb. In the United States, whenever we can see some changes in the image of the atomic bomb, we can also find the emergence of a strong power which tries to whitewash the change. This is why I also feel sorry to learn of the withdrawal of the publication of *The Last Train from Hiroshima*. I feel this is really a serious issue to consider. Of course, it is better for the book to be revised following adjustment of the issues regarding the copyright of Keiji Nakazawa and other Hibakusha and the correction of the false information found in the text. But, it does not mean the entire book should be taken out of publication. Discussion of the book itself is very important for readers to know what really happened in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We must have this discussion. While we can correct the false information in the book, we cannot erase the fact that the atomic bomb was dropped in Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the decision of the President of the United States. We can’t erase the fact of what really happened in Hiroshima and Nagasaki because of the small portion of false information in the book.

But, we don’t have enough declassified documents to decide whether his book contains false facts. Many documents on the Manhattan Project are still classified for national security reason. My own inspection has found that these documents include many withdrawal sheets because of classification. Before withdrawal of the publication of this book, the U.S. government should release the classified documents.

The United States Strategic Bombing Survey (USSBS) shot color film of the medical treatment of Hibakuha in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and these were classified as military documents. In the forward of index book of USSBS, we can see how and why the USSBS was created, as follows:

The United States Strategic Bombing Survey was established by the Secretary of War on 3 November 1944, pursuant to a directive from the late President Roosevelt. It was established for the purpose of conducting an impartial and expert study of the effects of our aerial attack on Germany, to be used in connection with air attacks on Japan and to establish a basis for evaluating air power as an instrument of military strategy, for planning the future development of the United States armed forces, and for determining future economic policies with respect to the national defense. A summary report and some 200 supporting reports containing the findings of the Survey in Germany have been published.

On 15 August 1945, President Truman requested the Survey to conduct a similar study of the effects of all types of air attack in the war against Japan.

For this purpose, the USSBS was established and film was shot in Germany and Japan. The film, which shows medical aspects of the Atomic Bomb in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, was included as part of the record of the USSBS. As I have said above, the color film, which was taken by the USSBS in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, was not taken to report to the world what really happened in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but “to conduct an impartial and expert study on the United States’ aerial attack.” These films were then classified as military documents and only declassified in the 1960s. Now, these films are available at NARA. As Prof. Torgovnick told us, these films were used in *The Atomic Café* and other documentary films, including *The Last Atomic Bomb* by Robert Richter and Kathleen Sullivan (2005) and *White Light/Black Rain* by Steven Okazaki (2007). These documentary films edited the USSBS films in order to report what really happened to the people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In Japan, the 10 Feet Movement worked to get the film and returned it to this country. In 1982, Hiroko Kumagaya made a TV documentary using USSBS film that was returned to Japan by the 10 Feet Movement. She interviewed many Hibakusha who appeared on the film 38 years later. Korean Hibakusha and Hibakusha who exposed in utero also appeared in this documentary.

I think, these films have to be shared with people without being monopolized and controlled for military purposes. Memories and documents of the war should not be monopolized or controlled for some country’s “national interest”, or for the “justification of war.” The atomic bomb indiscriminately affected even unborn babies.

III

I think this issue links to the discussion on “Culture War” by Prof. Lisa Yoneyama. I was really impressed by Prof. Yoneyama’s words in her talk:

Rather, “culture wars” can be most productively understood as emerging out of the tension between attitudes that advocate pure and one dimensional images of self, society, and the nation, and those that aspire to the coexistence and intermingling of multiple and diverse composition of social identities.

Japan is not the only country that has suffered from nuclear weapon. During the Manhattan Project, many Native Americans were exposed to radiation when through the mining of uranium that was used for the atomic bomb. During the Manhattan Project, many workers were also exposed to radiation while preparing the atomic bomb test site. And many more people were later victimized by human experimentation during and after the Manhattan Project.

When the atomic bomb was dropped in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Korean people were also under the cloud. American POWs were under the cloud. Many people from diverse backgrounds were under the cloud.

After the Manhattan Project, the U.S. conducted the atomic bomb test called Operation Crossroads at Bikini Atoll of the Marshall Islands in 1946. The Marshall Islands were “colonized” by Japan before the U.S. “colonized” it. People who lived in Bikini Atoll were moved and lost their homes. Military personnel, who participated in the tests, were exposed to radiation from the tests.

I imagine that many more people were exposed to nuclear weapons from the process of developing them, and many were also exposed from nuclear power plant accidents. Since the influence of residual radiation is more serious than U.S. military officials insisted after the atomic bomb was dropped in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, a tremendous number of people must have been exposed to radiation in the past and will also be affected in the future.

According to the questionnaire to citizens in Hiroshima on the renovation plan of Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, many people requested the fulfillment of the exhibition on Korean Hibakusha. And many members of Renovation Plan Committee of the museum suggested the idea of Hibakusha in the world (Global Hibakusha). Although some members of the committee want “pure and one dimensional images, “ I would like to believe the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum will extend this aspect. And if not, we need to intensify our voices to demand more. To overcome the “Culture War” with visitors from all over the world in more productive ways, Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum must move away from “pure and one dimensional images.”

IV

I’ve visited the Battleship Arizona Museum in Hawaii several times. Most of the visitors were American. In tours to Hawaii that are organized in the U.S. (ex, United Tour), the Arizona Museum is always included. So, many Americans naturally visit the museum. However, in tours organized from Japan, the museum is not included in the tour, even though many Japanese visit Oahu Island in Hawaii. People have to go to the museum intentionally. I think, most of the visitors to Hawaii from Japan don’t know the history of Hawaii (not only the Pearl Harbor attack, but also the colonial history).

As Prof. McMahan pointed out, I think the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum doesn’t do a good enough job of describing the historical background of WWII. Thus, if a young guide doesn’t know the date of the Pearl Harbor attack, the visitor to the museum will find it hard to know the basics about WWII. Its main focus is on the history of Hiroshima. Only in the context of the history of Hiroshima, Japanese colonialism and WWII are described (of course, these explanations are necessary). But still for the visitor from Asian countries, they aren’t enough.

I wonder if the museum doesn’t describe the historical context of WWII and the Cold War, and doesn’t explain these wars enough. Young visitors who don’t know about WWII and the Cold War will naturally link the danger of nuclear

weapons to the dangers of a radiological terrorist attack directly and will be more easily receptive to the justifications of the so-called “war against terrorism.” It is essential that these young people can understand the context of the World War II and of the nuclear arms race of the Cold War.

After WWII, the work of the Manhattan Project still continued. The U.S. started to test nuclear weapons in 1946 at Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands which had been colonized by Japan before 1945. In 1947, the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission was established and continued to develop nuclear weapons. On Nov 18, 1946, James Forrestal sent a letter to President Harry Truman and proposed to continue to survey the damage produced by the atomic bomb in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, “Preliminary survey involve about 14,000 Japanese who were exposed to the radiation of atomic fission. It is considered that the group and others, who are yet to be identified, offer a unique opportunity which is of utmost importance to the United States.” This letter draft was written by Colonel A.W. Oughterson, Medical Corps, U.S. Army, Pacific. On March 1, 1947 the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission was established in Japan to research the long-term medical affects of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

In the 1950’s, the AEC continued to sponsor the ABCC for following reason:

The Japanese survivors make up the only group of human beings in the world who have been exposed to the atomic bomb burst. For this reason, the medical findings of the ABCC have important significance for scientists and military and civil defense planning in the United States. The findings will be reported in the scientific literature and will be made available to the Department of Defense, National Security Resources Board, U.S. Public Health Service, and other agencies, who will be responsible for defense and relief measures in the event of an atomic disaster in this country.”¹

The ABCC was also sponsored by the Japanese Government. However, its basic policy was not to help the Hibakusha but to research for AEC and help to develop the nuclear weapons. Since criticism toward the ABCC’s no treatment policy increased in the 1960’s, it was reorganized as the RERF (Radiation Effects Research Foundation) in 1975.

I would like to talk about the current situation of the RERF. The medical data of the Hibakusha were actually used for war again, as the medical data collected by the USSBS and the ABCC were used for the Cold War.

In November, 2008, The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of the National Institutes of Health, announced to provide fund for research on “Medical Countermeasure Against Radiological and Nuclear Threats,” and the RERF applied for this funding. As a member of Local Liaison Council of RERF, Motofumi Asai, director of the Hiroshima Peace Institute, Hiroshima City University, noticed the purpose of the funding. Although he distributed the original documents that describe the funding and a translation of them to the members of the Council, the majority of the members couldn’t grasp the meaning or didnt make a thing of the matter.

However, five main Hibakusha groups in Nagasaki Prefecture and one Hibakusha group in Hiroshima prefecture requested that the RERF withdraw from collaboration with the NIAID.

In October, the RERF explained that the “RERF has confirmed in a pledge attached to the contract that NIAID acknowledges RERF’s mission and status and agrees the studies will be for basic immunological research and that the results will be used only for peaceful purposes sought by A-bomb survivors.”

On Nov. 12, 2009, the NIAID announced a “New award to study the effects of radiation and aging on the human immune system” as follows:

“We will gain valuable information that will benefit not only the general public but also patients undergoing radiation for cancer treatment and those who could be exposed to radiation from an industrial accident or even terrorist attack, “says Daniel Rotrosen, M.D., director of NIAID’s Division of Allergy, Immunology, and Transplantation, who oversees this award. This collaboration complements NIAID’s program to develop medical countermeasures against radiological and nuclear threats.”²

From my point of view, it’s really hard to understand that this is for peaceful purposes. NIAID, RERF, and most of the members of Local Liaison Council of RERF, however, interpreted the development of “medical countermeasure against radiological and nuclear threat” as “the peaceful purposes.” Medical data from Hibakusha were again used for the United State’s national security.

During the Cold War, “medical data” from the Hibakusha were used for “the war against communism.” Now, “medical data” from the Hibakusha are being used for the “war against terrorism”, on how to survive from a terrorist attack,” and “medical countermeasures against radiological and nuclear threats.”

I think and hope that the medical data obtained from studying the Hibakusha should not be used in preparing for nuclear war and “how to survive a nuclear attack” as in the 1950’s Civil Defense program in the US. I strongly oppose that the medical information obtained from studying the Hibakusha are now going to be used to prepare for the “war against terrorism.”

V

To close, I would like to read a poem written by Sadako Kurihara,

“When we say Hiroshima.” by Sadako Kurihara

When we say “Hiroshima,”
Do people answer, gently,
“Ah, Hiroshima”?
Say “Hiroshima,” and hear “Pearl Harbor.”
Say “Hiroshima,” and hear “Rape of Nanjing.”
Say “Hiroshima,” and hear of women and children in Manila
Thrown into trenches, doused with gasoline,

and burned alive.
 Say "Hiroshima,"
 And hear echoes of blood and fire

Say "Hiroshima,"
 and we don't hear, gentry,
 "Ah, Hiroshima."
 In chorus, Asia's dead and hear voiceless masses
 Spit out the anger
 of all those we made victims.
 That we may say "Hiroshima,"
 and hear in reply, gently,
 "Ah, Hiroshima,"
 we must in fact lay down³
 the arms we supposed to lay down.
 We must get rid of all foreign bases.
 Until that day Hiroshima
 will be a city of cruelty and bitter bad faith.
 And we will be pariahs
 burning with remnant radioactivity.

That we may say "Hiroshima"
 And hear in reply, gently,
 "Ah, Hiroshima,"
 We first must wash the blood
 Off our own hands.

-May 1972

This poem was written in 1972, 38 years ago, during the Vietnam War. However, we still can't hear "Ah, Hiroshima" gently. Instead, we hear the voice of victimized people being used under the name of the "war against terrorism." We still hear echoes of blood and fire.

Notes

1. Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission to Continue Studies of Japanese Atomic Bomb Survivors, June 18, 1950, Record of the Office of Public Information Copies of Speeches of AEC Officials, 1947-1974, Entry 24, Record Group 326, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.
2. NIAID Announces New Award to Study the Effects of Radiation and Aging on the Human Immune System: <http://www3.niaid.nih.gov/news/newsreleases/2009/RERF.htm> (accessed on 13 September 2010)
3. Sadako Kurihara, translated by Richard H. Minear, *Black Eggs: Poems by Kurihara Sadako* (Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1994) 226-227