

The Grandchildren of Hiroshima

By Misaki Setoyama

*Developed in collaboration with the company and with the people of
Hiroshima*

Cast List

The children of Hiroshima of 1945

Hiroe (8 yrs old)
Hiroko (5yrs old)
Fumiaki (6yrs old) *played by many people
Toshiko (7yrs old)
Yoshiko (13yrs old)
Etsuko (7yrs old)
Sadao (14 yrs old)

The children of Hiroshima of 2015

Interviewers

Witnesses/Interviewees

Toshiko Tanaka (77yrs old)
Sadao Yamamoto
Hiroe Sata (78yrs old) *speech/voice only
Hiroko Menda (75yrs old) *voice only
Yoshiko Kajimoto (83yrs old) *voice only
Suzumi Aono (81yrs old) *voice only
Mireko Yoshihara(78yrs old) *voice only
Etsuko Matsura (77yrs old) *voice only
Akito Kono (88yrs old) *voice only
Etsuya Okamura *voice only
Teruko Yahata* voice only

Side characters

Hiroe's mother
Hiroko's older brother
Hiroko's younger sister
Toshiko's mother
Michiko (Toshiko's friend)
Yoshiko's friend
Fumiaki's father
Etsuko's family
Orphans (1,2,3)
American soldiers

Yoshiko's younger brothers (1,2,3)

Narrator (many people)

The ★ indicates that the interview speech/recording plays. (Or the text is being read)

The Grandchildren of Hiroshima

People make the shape of a river using cloths and so on

Narrator: Hiroshima has 6 large rivers. Enkougawa, Kyoubashigawa, Motoyasugawa, Motogawa, Tenmagawa and from there the Ota river drainage basin which, long ago, were both the Yamate river and Fukushima rivers.

People: Ships

People: Bridges

People: Sakura

People: Willow

People: Buildings.

People: The atomic bomb dome

Narrator: Many things are reflected on the river surface

People: Clouds

People: Blue sky

Narrator: I wonder if you remember what was reflected in the river that day.

People: Birds!

People: Planes!

Low and roaring sound of an airplane. The interviewer standing in the middle of the downstream of the river, takes a recorder from her pocket, switches the recorder switch on and holds it out in front.

Narrator: This project started in August 2014.

Hiroe ★: Good morning.

Interviewer: Good morning.

Narrator: These are interviews of the children of Hiroshima back then, done by the children of Hiroshima today.

Interviewer: My name is Leona Tashiro. I was born on 9th February 2004.

Hiroe ★: My name is Hiroe Sato. I was born on 28th July, 1938. I am one of the atomic bomb victims.

Interviewer: Pleased to meet you.

Hiroe ★: Pleased to meet you.

Interviewer: Would you mind telling us about your life before the atomic bomb?

Hiroe ★: Ah, that's fine. Let's see, as I just said I was born before the war began, but even when it did start, if anything it was fun.

We see children playing. Hiroe as a girl enters

Children: Hiroe-chan!

The children stop playing and whilst chanting "Hiroe-chan! Hiroe-chan!" gather at Hiroe's side. Hiroe takes a banana out of the bag he is holding.

Child: T-That is...!

Child: That is.

Child: That is, that is.

Child: That is, that is... what is it?

Hiroe: It's dried banana.

Child: Dried... banana...!

Hiroe! Hey!

The children steal the dried banana from Hiroe.

Hiroe: Now, now, calm down.

Hiroe ★: And the soldiers brought us many various things, so there wasn't really a lack of freedom for things. If I were to say why, Japan was normally militaristic back then.

Hiroe takes out candy and holds it up/out.

Child: T-That is...!

Child: That is.

Child: That is, that is.

Child: That is, that is... What is it?

Hiroe: It's grape sugar.

Child: G-grape... sugar...!
Child: Gimme!
Child: Gimme!
Child: Gimme!

The children swarm around Hiroe.

Hiroe: Ah, I guess there's no helping it.

Hiroe scatters the grape sugar. The children pick it up.

Child: We've never seen this before.
Hiroe: It's a special sweet.
Child: Ah, we're jealous.
Child: Hiroe-chan, give us more.
Hiroe: Oka-y. I'll give you as much as you want.

Again we hear the older Hiroe remembering. And during the speech the children play hopscotch and are then challenged by older children. They start playing Hana Ichi Monme (a kicking game) It slowly gets more and more passionate/excitable, and both teams get closer and closer together until it seems like the foreheads of opposing team members might hit each other

Hiroe (78) ★: Next to His Majesty the Emperor in greatness/power were the soldiers. Our house was an inn for soldiers. But despite our house being an inn for soldiers, we were pretty affluent, because my father's older brother, my uncle, he was the West Regiments vice-Commander. So he had quite a lot of influence and he was quite an important person. So, thanks to my uncle, rather than 'normal' soldiers - I wonder if you understand what I mean by commissioned officers? –soldiers with a slightly higher rank, stayed at our inn. And there was a difference in the rationed goods for normal soldiers and commissioned officers. I wonder if you know what I mean. And so there was lots left over. The people who came back from the battlefields generally brought lots of various things, like sweets. So when they did that, there were lots of things like dried bananas and grape

sugar on our bookshelves. And I'd put them into my pocket and take them outside and give them to my friends. A little selfishly, like a Commander of the kids, so to speak.

A boy is conducting another interview.

Kaishu: So Akito San, what happened then?

The scene of an eye test

Akito(88) ★: There was a physical examination [given at conscription] and they looked at your body and decided if you passed with Grade 1 or Grade 2. But, I didn't want to pass with grade 1. So, at the eye-examination, even though I could see well...

Akito(18): "I can't see! I can't see! I can't see! I can't see! It's the opposite! I can't see! I can't see! I can't see!"

Akito(18): I lied. Even though I could see, I said that [I couldn't] and slowly, slowly moved back in the line. if I think about it now, the education of that time was bad/wrong. Even though I couldn't not see, I shut my eyes even as everyone moved forward out of the line, already trying their best to pass with grade A. Continuing moving forwards and forwards.

The children, leaving Akito behind, move forward. They have invisible rifles/. Only Akito remains behind, moving backwards.

Akito (18): And there was a hibachi [T/N: a traditional Japanese heating device- a round, cylindrical or a box-shaped open-topped container, made from or lined with a heatproof material and designed to hold burning charcoal] and in the box was charcoal. And as I gradually got closer and I bumped into it. I remember thinking, "Ah! It's hot! Ah- I'm being punished!"

Akito bumps into the hibachi. The children who had taken the guns, fall in the battlefield.

Akito(88) ★ Ah. This, it was like throwing away everyone's young lives. Even the volunteers, they went to the battlefield and lost their lives and they were so young. They could have lived for much longer, but their life was lost.

Akito: I was the opposite.

Akito ★: Even for just a little bit, I had to go on living a longer life. Just for that, I told nothing but lies, that even though I could see, I said I couldn't.

●Ears

The sound of a train stopping.

Hiroe's mum: Here we are.

Hiroe is hesitating.

Mother: Hiroe. It's that elementary school over there.

Hiroe lifts her head.

Mother: When you pass through those gates, you can't be a child anymore. You'll become an elementary school student. You'll become able to do your studies.

Hiroe: Yeah...

Mother: There's nothing to worry about. The ones who will be replacing your mother and father are teachers at that school, so come to like them. The more you come to like them, the more you'll be able to hear what the teachers say.

Mother, glances sideways at Hiroe and touches his ear.

Mother: Okay? Your ears are open, aren't they? [T/N: she literally asks if her ear holes are open]

Hiroe: Yeah

Mother: If this ear (right) listens, then what you hear will always run away through this ear (left). If this ear (left) listens, then what you hear will always run away through this ear (right). But, you know, if both ears listen, another ear is created in your heart. And something that the ear of your heart hears, you will not forget.

Hiroe looks as if she's imagining the 'ear of the heart' but can't do it very well.

Mother: I have to go back to Hiroshima now. But, next time we meet, let me hear all about your school.

Her mother lets go of her hands and leaves.

•Morning

The children come out and start to line up around Hiroe. The light changes suddenly. 6th August. The scene of morning assembly (at school). The children speak Hiroe's words.

Children: The august of that year.

Children: We hadn't been at school long, that day, and were doing morning assembly.

Children: At 8:15am, the teacher climbed onto the stage and began a speech.

Children: Suddenly, a light flashed and we were told to get down.

The children go into a stance which protects their eyes and eardrums and stop in that position. Hiroko's older brother, Hiroko and Hiroko's younger sister arrive. Hiroko's house. The three of them look at the sky.

Hiroko: Ah, it's a B!

H's brother: Where?

H's sister: Where?

Hiroko: Over there! It flashed!

H's brother: Ah, that?!

H's sister: Where is it?

Hiroko: It's over there! It's a B!

The three of them stop whilst pointing at the sky. Toshiko and Toshiko's mother appear. The entrance hall of Toshiko's house.

T's mother: Do you have your air-raid hood?

Toshiko: Yeah.

T's mother: Micchan hasn't come this morning, has she? Maybe because there was an air-raid alarm.

Toshiko: If I wait by the cherry blossom trees she'll come. Okay, I'm off!

Toshiko starts walking. She waits for Michiko underneath the cherry blossom trees.

Toshiko: It's so hot.

Michiko: Toshiko-chaaaaan!

Toshiko's friend comes from far away.

Toshiko: Micchan!

Michiko: Toshiko-chaaan!

Toshiko: Micchaaan!

Michiko: Toshiko-chaaan!

Toshiko: Yeah, I can hear you!

Michiko: B has come!

Toshiko: Eh?

Toshiko looks up at the sky and stops in that position.. The low sound of a plane. A flash. Blackout. A women's voice...

Teruko: ★: I think of it all as one tree. Spring comes, and shoots sprout from that tree. Summer comes, and everything blooms lushly green. Autumn comes, and the colour changes to yellow, Winter comes, and the dead leaves fall here and there, Then they become fertiliser, and spring comes again... sprouts appear. For me, children are the new sprouts of new leaves. And, I am the dead leaf that stuck to the tree, slowly, the colour changes, and soon, one day, it'll fall to the ground, and then, it

will become fertiliser, and new sprouts will be born, And it will repeat over and over again. When I see the new sprouts, the new leaves, that is what I think.

Lights fade up

The low sound of a plane. A flash. Blackout.

Narrator: At 8:15 and 17 seconds am on the 6th August 1945, the American B29 bomber plane “Enra Gay” dropped the atomic bomb. The target point was Aioi bridge over the Ota river which connects two places, because the T-shaped bridge was easy to identify from the sky. Enra Gay dropped the atomic bomb called “Little boy” which held a concentrated 50 kilograms of uranium, from 9,600 metres in the air onto the residents of Hiroshima before leaving. 43 seconds after the drop, the nuclear fission explosion happened 600 metres above ground.

A light shines on a collapsed girl. Toshiko.

Toshiko: It seemed like thousands of flashes had all come together. But, right after that it was pitch black. In that moment, I didn’t know pain. The shock wave/bomb blast blew over us. Sand was gritty in my mouth.

A light shines on a boy. Sadao.

Sadao: There was this huge sound, and a hot wind – so hot it was like you’d burn instantly. It blew through the field. When we stood and looked, between where the bomb had fallen and I was, there was a straight line to Hiroshima station. We could see that the station was a sea of fire.

A light shines on a trapped girl, Yoshiko. An older women reads Yoshiko’s testimony.

Yoshiko(83): The building had collapsed, and when I opened my eyes/regained consciousness, the right side of my chest hurt

and hurt and I realised I'd been injured, but I also knew I was alive thanks to the pain. From there, with my friend who was also trapped, we dug and dug until we reached the middle of the factory, but at that point I couldn't get my leg out. It was caught in the rubble between the timber. But we knew we had leave here quickly or we'd burn. Our teacher always, always told us, every day, that if there was a fire in the factory, because fire was used in it, it would definitely become a conflagration. Because we'd been told that every day, when the building collapsed we knew we had to get out quickly else we'd be burnt to death.

Sadao: The bomb didn't just come in one blast. Because so many [bombs] fell, when the next airplane came we were told to run. So, alongside many of my friends, we ran to the nearby shrine, because in the mountains we couldn't be seen by the planes.

Yoshiko: I was trying to get out quickly. I was panicking. I couldn't get my foot out. [from where] It was trapped by timber. When I managed to get it out, I'd torn my trousers, and had really injured my foot. But, getting it out was by far better. Of course, I was bleeding, but my friend was also badly injured. I didn't know if it was my friend's hands or clothes but I desperately pulled them as we dug through the rubble to get out. Blood was flowing from my leg. I was only wearing short sleeves on my arms, so blood was slowly coming from there too. I knew I had to do something quickly else I would become unable to walk. At that time, we walked around with emergency bags which had bandages, triangle bandages, antiseptic solution and mercurochrome [T/N an antiseptic solution] and also soya as something to eat. But, because we couldn't work holding the bags, we hung them up on the walls. Along with our air-raid hoods which protected our faces. Because those two things were items which were extremely important in terms of protecting ourselves, we were always told to definitely have those if we ever had to escape. But I didn't have the time to fetch them. Though even if I got out, I had nothing that could heal me. So, the thing I thought of was my headband. Everyone

had one, a headband with the Japanese flag on it. And with it I could stop the blood. I'd learnt it from a 3rd year middle school student. About haemostasis. How to stop the blood flowing at the nearest joint. How to wrap a bandage. My friend, who was crying and shouting. Her hand was swaying to and fro, her flesh was ripped to pieces, able to see the bone, only connected by skin. I used my blouse which I ripped up and someone's headband and tied it around to hold her skin together.

The light changes completely.

Toshiko★: When I managed to return home, even though she saw me, my mother didn't realise that I was her child. I was like an old rag. My hair was burnt and all over the place, and my limbs were black. My clothes were also burnt, and torn from being blown by the blast. Totally different from when I'd left, I was practically naked.

Toshiko's mother is shocked. Eventually, she understands that Toshiko is Toshiko, and holds her tightly

●Run

A chorus tells the story of Fumiaki

On that day, I separated from my mom; she was at home and I went to school. Firstly, I wasn't wearing shoes. I'd already gone to school, and while I was doing the cleaning there was a sudden "flash" and "boom", so

There was no time even to put on shoes.

Because I would be trapped under the building otherwise, I had to escape quickly, so I went barefoot

Rocks and

Roof tiles and

Nails and so on were in the place I ran to so,

Of course my feet were covered in cuts/scratches.

The people running away were in all sorts of states... for example, skin was torn and hanging down, or eyeballs have

popped out, or covered in cuts and so on. But even though I'm talking about all of those, all I was focused on was myself getting away, so I didn't really observe other people. I just focused on escaping.

Lots and lots and lots of people died.

But I didn't think it was scary.

[I just thought] only for me to run away, I need to run away.

I don't want to die.

I just thought of surviving somehow and did my best running away.

I reached the river. A town called Hakushima. I wonder if you know it.

And I ran from Futabanosato to Hakushima, and in between those places,

The river called Kyoubashi River flowed.

In the middle of running through the river, I got out.

Already so many, many people had died, and were flowing down in the river.

There were so many.

Many, many people had died and were flowing down the river.

And on the opposite bank fires were burning.

It was so hot, so hot and slowly, slowly they came down into the river. The people.

So many, many, many people were coming into the river. And in the river there were already so many dead people flowing.

But, close to me was already burning.

Escape. Escape. I don't want to die.

I don't want to die. I need to escape.

So I ran my hardest towards the mountains.

Even so, many, many people were dying. Even my own father

My mother might have died too, but I don't know, is what I thought as I escaped.

At the bottom of the mountain, I searched my hardest for my parents. In Higashi Denteijyou [place]. I searched my hardest.

I couldn't find them.

I searched and searched but I still couldn't find them.

But I searched my very hardest.

Finally, my neighbours found me. My name is Kajiya, but anyway,
“Kajiya-san’s father and mother, all survived, but your mother is dying. She is covered in blood. She’s already dying.”
“Where are they?!”
“At the bottom of Futabayama”
was what I was told and I went there, and my mother was covered in blood,
“Noo, Noo, Noo, Noo”
She groaned
And my father, of course he had been hit by the bomb, but his physical injuries were relatively small, so he went to help the local people, and was providing relief work as best as he could. So, when I found them, it was just my mother
“Noo, Noo, Noo, Noo,”
Covered in blood, completely red, her blood still flowing, groaning.
Before her, the body of my dead older sister was placed on top of the grass with a “plop”.
My older sister was already dead.
My father was still moving about to help people.
When it started to get dark, he returned, and when he saw that I was still alive, he was happy.
“You survived” he said.
I thought “Thank goodness” that my father was still alive.
It was that kind of thing.

- Rice ball

People see a rescue party come, they start to line up. A woman Reads Fumiaki’s words.

The next day, a rescue party came from various areas to help us. They brought rice balls that they had made. During that time, rice was extremely precious, so eating something like white rice was a thing that didn’t really happen, during the war, anyway. We ate grass, and while we were munching on raw potatoes, the people from the nearby town heard “Hiroshima has become

t a terrible thing” and they gathered rice, and cooked it and made it into rice balls, and brought them to the people who were suffering because of the bomb. Even in the place I had escaped to, I received a rice ball. Everyone queued up. There was a proper order to it. Even in the middle of all the chaos, the awfulness, adults and children alike queued up to receive rice balls. I was a child but I properly queued and queued and in order, people received a rice ball each. It was delicious! What a delicious thing! Was what I thought. Well, it is probably an exaggeration, but that single rice ball was delicious. To be living was amazing. I thought it was magnificent.

People take the rice balls.

Hiroe and her mother walk up.

●Fire

Hiroe puts the rice ball in her bag. Hiroe and her mother walk around whilst searching for something. Hiroe and her mother stop.

Hiroe: Here... was the place where our home was?

Mother: (nods) (older) Brother! Brothe—r! [T/N: she's calling for her son, but refers to him by his 'position' in the family]

Hiroe: Brother! Brother!. He's not here. Mother, is this really where our house was?

Mother: (Searching desperately, she doesn't hear Hiroe's question) My boy! My boy!

Hiroe discovers something

Hiroe: Ah, he might be in the air raid shelter.

Hiroe moves closer to the air-raid shelter lid

Hiroe: The lid is shut. (Touches the lid) Ach!

Hiroe wraps a hand towel around her hand and goes to open the lid.

Hiroe: Here we go. Uwah!

The lid falls off, and falls onto Hiroe's upper body.

Hiroe: Aaaahhhh!!!

Mother: Hiroe?

Hiroe: Hothothot!

Mother: (lifts the lid off her) What are you doing?!

Hiroe: But... older brother might be in there...

Mother, peers into the air raid shelter without a seconds delay

Mother: (shakes head) I heard it all happened suddenly. He probably wasn't in an air raid shelter.

Hiroe: Mom, it hurts.

Mother: It's a burn. If we cool it down, it'll heal.

Mother, rips up the hand towel around her hand with her mouth, and pours water from the canteen onto it, and then presses it to Hiroe's chest.

Mother: If we do this it'll be fine (starts walking)

Hiroe endures the pain and starts walking

Hiroe: Mum...

Her mother doesn't hear/notice Hiroe's call

Hiroe: Mum...mum...

Her mother single-mindedly searches.

Hiroe: What.

Hiroe: The burn hurts.

Mother touches the hand towel pasted to her chest.

Mother: It's already dried up.

Mother, holds some of the water in her mouth and then blows/sprays it over the towel.

Hiroe: Mother, it hurts

Mother: Just be patient.

Mother starts walking.

Hiroe ★ (78): That, for my mother, because her eldest son was no longer there, she was a lot more worried for him than for me, because I was still alive. And maybe, in that burnt area, maybe, just maybe, he was surviving somewhere. And if it was our voices, it might reach him maybe. So, we tried shouting in loud voices, frantically, like mad men. For that moment, the only thing in her head was my brother. My mother walked around the streets like that. But my burn really hurt. It festered for two days. And, when I was crying and had become unable to move, my mother took off the main towel for the first time.

Hiroe crouches [completely, looking through her knees] Her mother stops and looks at her burn.

People: When she saw me, for the first time she returned to me and held my face in her hands, crying.

People: She said "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm so sorry."

People: I see, your older brother isn't here, is he?

People: He's passed away.

People: For the first time, she accepted the death of my older brother.

Hiroe's mother holds her tightly.

Hiroe (78)★: We walked for days after that. From there, we went to Zaimokuchou and the Japanese hand towel I had been wearing and used it to pick up bones in the area. If they were small bones, I wondered if they were my older brother. Or if they might be one of my friends. If they were a little bigger they could have been my teacher's. But there was no way to know. So, as if they were all my brother's, we picked all of the bones up in one hand cloth and took them home.

Hiroe's mother holds Hiroe's hand tightly and they leave.

● Drops

People are walking around the burn areas. They are drinking water that is dripping from winding water ways.

Suzumi ★: Even though we were searching for my older sister, we had no idea where she was. We searched all throughout the day, but couldn't find her, and under the burning sun we were thirsty, but there was nothing we could do. There wasn't one main source of water. But, here and there, water-roads/supplies wound through here and there and dripped down. And you couldn't drink that water, but we as children didn't understand, so we followed the water supplies, drinking the water so we didn't get too hot, and continued to walk around.

● Rain

*The sound of dripping increases and becomes rain.
Black rain.*

Hiroko (75)★: Even if I'm called an atomic bomb victim, I'm actually a victim of the 'black rain'. Do you know of it? This, rain, well it fell, and even though I was in a cave, I got wet. And my older brother, he held out his hand like this, and the black raindrops fell onto his

hand with a light patter. When he saw that – my brother was a 3rd year elementary school student but anyway – he didn't think it was rain, he thought it was coal tar – because it really seemed like it, and it was sticky, too. But then he said “Ah, this, it's oil, it's oil that's been burnt in fire.” I didn't really know what he meant by it having been burnt in fire, but when he said that, I felt this sort of sense of despair. Well, I didn't know if I would die or not. I remember that sort of feeling of hopelessness.

The sound of the rain continues without pause. Eventually it becomes the sound of a river flowing. Toshiko (77) holding an umbrella appears, and gazes at the river. Present-day Etsuya appears, and speaks facing the audience on the embankment.

Etsuya★: At the time, Hiroshima had 7 rivers. Tenma, Honkawa, Motoyasu, Kyoubashi, Enkou, and from these there was the Yamete river floodway which today has become the Ota river, and also Fukushima river. The embankments of those rivers become roads.

Toshiko ★: We didn't know of radiation then, but that kind of thing happened a lot, and we slowly came to realise that the bomb hadn't been a normal one.

Narrator: In 1938, the Germans discovered nuclear fission. The following year, World War 2 broke out. A scientist called Leo Szilard - who'd fled Nazi Germany for America - counselled President of the time, Roosevelt, that the German's making an atomic bomb was possible. The letter also had Einstein's signature. In July of 1941, an English scientist produced a report that agreed the real possibility of the atomic bomb. Roosevelt, who had seen this, decided to start developing atomic bombs in October. In 1942, the plan for the production of atomic bombs started in Manhattan. At that point in time, there were a lot of voices against the atomic bomb all throughout America. There was also opposition for Szilard's advice at the beginning. But, in April of 1945, President Truman decided that the atomic bomb would be used. In May of 1945, it was Hiroshima was chosen

as the drop site. On the 16th July, the first test bomb occurred on the New Mexico River. And so...

Narrator: The main reason for the dropping of the atomic bomb was to make Japan surrender. But, there were others who said that there was one more reason. That it was also to research the injuries caused by radiation. That the dropping of the bomb was a human experiment...

Teruko: The new shoot, and the new leaves, when I see them, I think. Somehow, all of you will be a blue sky with white clouds floating, trees for a happy world. That is what I think. From the bottom of my heart, I want that kind of world. And so, and so, and so, I, too, will stick to the tree

Narrator: It's said around 140,000 people died from acute illness caused by radiation. But the radiation made its way deeper into people's bodies and continued to destroy cells. Many people died from things like cancer and leukaemia [which came from the radiation]. Even now the numbers for that isn't confirmed.

•Radio

After the bomb. Orphans are walking around the streets. The orphans cuddle close together and sleep.

Etsuko (77): There were lots of orphans without parents. Even people in the same year group as me. Their mother for father had died, and/or they didn't know where they'd died, these so-called waifs, these children without parents, they all flocked together.

The orphans wake up and start walking.

Etsuko (77): Everyone, every single day, in the middle of the burnt areas, wandering around here and there. And on trees near where it seemed one's house might have been, people wrote down that they were alive, or the names of those who had died, and where to contact them next, and there were many of these on trees.

The orphans write their names on a tree.

Etsuko (77): The four members of my family hadn't died, but we didn't have a house because it had burnt down. So we relied on acquaintances, asking them to let us sleep here for the day, or to let us rest here for the evening.

Etsuko and Etsuko's family lower their heads.

Etsuko (77): It was probably about October. There was a notice that told us school had started. There were all sorts of notices stuck to boards, with missing persons asking "Does anyone know about...?" or "I'm here" with the address written on them.

Etsuko looks at the bulletin board.

Etsuko (77): When I tried going, not everyone had gathered. Slowly, day by day it would increase, with the next day two or three people extra coming. But at the same time, some people stopped coming, and those had died from bomb sickness. Our homeroom teacher too, died from the bomb.

Taking a commemorative photo the year before.

Etsuko (77): So, the next year, the March before I become a second year student, only half of us were in a photo we took. At the entrance ceremony in April, another photo was taken and that was only half of the number of people from March.

Half of the children lined up leave. Etsuko listens to the radio.

Etsuko (77): Through radios, there were the missing people. On the radio, things like "This person is here", "Does anyone know this person?" "I am here" "I am okay," were all shared. So we searched using the radio, and found people, but for the time the city centre was paralysed. And when I became a 3rd year student or so, goods started to arrive from America, and in an

order children affected by the bomb received things like shoes and balls and pencils and were told “This, it came from America.”

American soldier’s jeeps arrive.

Etsuko (77): The children were scared of the Americans. They came in Jeeps. And when they found children, they scattered chocolates in their direction. At first the children were confused. They wanted to pick them up from far away, but their parents told them they couldn’t – that it might be a bomb, or that poison might be inside. And they called the American’s savages, so the parents were afraid, but in the end, the children were interested. And then the American’s showed us as they ate some of the chocolate. So we thought, ah, we can eat it then. So we would pick it up away from our parent’s eyes and eat it, and it was delicious. And then the next time the American jeeps came, people went up and raised their hands, and asked for more, swarming around the jeeps. It really happened.

The children pick up the chocolate the soldiers scatter and eat it.

Mireko ★: When we heard on the radio His Majesty the Emperor state that “The war is now over”, I remember crying “I can’t get revenge on America!”. Ever since I’d been a young child in the war I’d been taught to think America had been the enemy. Even though Japan itself had done many terrible things, for all that I knew it was America’s fault.

Teruko★: If that doesn’t happen, people don’t feel like it [settling on a decision/compromising], and they become people who grab others by the collar and kick and punch, and even between countries, if it doesn’t go well, bombs are dropped. [nowadays] it seems as if it will end up in nuclear warfare. So, even between countries, discussions have to happen and everyone needs to voice their opinion, and if we don’t find the best method for humans to move forward happily, then wars will probably happen again.

●Dreams

Yoshiko's 3 younger brothers are scrambling for a ball.

Brother 1: That's mine!
Brother 2: It's mine!
Brother 3: No, it's mine!
Brother 1: Idiot!
Brother 2: Asshole!
Brother 3: Blockhead!

The scramble turns into a fight. Yoshiko appears.

Yoshiko: What are you doing!?
Brother 1: (older) Sis, this, it's mine, isn't it.
Brother 2: You're wrong, it's mine!
Brother 3: It's mine!

The brothers begin to fight.

Yoshiko: Stooooop!

The 3 of them stop.

Yoshiko: Talk to me
Brother 1: Even if we talk they won't understand!
Yoshiko: Nope. That won't happen. Talk to me. What does everyone thing?
Brother 2: I was the one who found this!
Brother 3: You're wrong, I found it!
Brother 1: I was first!
Yoshiko: I get it. Everyone thinks they were the first one. Then, I'll take the ball!
Brothers: Whaaaat?!
Brother 1: That's wrong!
Brother 2: Exactly!
Brother 3: Unfair!
Yoshiko: Everyone wants to play with that ball, don't they?

Brothers: Yeah.
Yoshiko: Then, can't that ball be everyone's?
Brothers: What?
Yoshiko: I mean, this is a ball. If only one person has it, all you can do is throw it at a wall. But if it is everyone's, then everyone can play with it, can't they?
Brothers (Look at each other)
Yoshiko: How about it?
Brother 1: I guess that's fine by me, then.
Brother 2: Yeah.
Brother 3: Yeah.
Yoshiko: Good! Then, off you go to school!

Yoshiko sees her/his brothers off to school. The brothers go to school while tossing the ball between each other.

Yoshiko ★: I wanted to become a school teacher. I wanted to become a school teacher. My school was one that trained teachers. When I was a 4th year student I loved my teacher. But I couldn't go. There was an abolition of teacher training. After the war ended, the system changed into the 6/3/3 [T/N: 6.3.3 refers to the number of years per each school – i.e. 6 years in elementary school, 3 in middle school and 3 in high school]. Before then, female school students went to a specialist girls school in year 4. What started the women's colleges of today. Girl's schools. But, a year after the war ended, my father died. Even though my mother was really ill, she worked her hardest to let me go to school. As the school system had changed, I went for 5 years to get a graduation certificate. I got up to 1st year of today's high school. But we didn't have any money. And my mother was constantly ill after that. There wasn't a word for radiation sickness back then, but it was radiation sickness. 'This is sluggish'. 'this hurt'. She stayed in the hospital. And I have 3 younger brothers. The eldest was 13 years old. I had to do something. So I worked. I gave up my dream of becoming a teacher, and worked for 10 years. When my youngest brother was in high school, I married. Being able to live was more than enough. It was enough for my youth.

Workers erect a telephone pole

Hiroe (78)★: I don't know if it was a telephone pole for the trains or for a house, but labourers wearing military uniforms, one or two of the men carried a huge log to put up a telephone pole. They dug a hole and stood up the pole and set it up. So, the men, as they started to stand it in the bottom of the hole the women would give the order and the men would pull it upright with a "Let's go". Slowly, slowly, the telephone poles started to work. Once they had the main frame stood up, they stopped running the cables between them and buried it in the ground. I thought it was amazing, I just stood still and watched. And, then, yeah, when I did that, even though they were telephone lines, I thought they looked like a circus, it was interesting. And at one point, parts of it were tangled, and one of the men carried a bamboo ladder and came to help. There were about four people overall, who all climbed the ladder from both sides. With a heave-ho, one person came from the right, carrying the telephone cable. And on the left they climbed up the ladder. The one who carried the cable from the right held it as, a bit like a circus, they climbed the ladder with a sort of boing, boing. It was a time when we didn't have heavy machinery. Because I was a child, I wanted to watch. I thought it was amazing. And then, from then on, slowly, gradually, houses began to be built again. And then with pick-axes and shovels, various people began to work again.

The river is re-made, this time with Kimonos and lanterns.

Narrator: The river water continues to flow steadily....

He is interrupted by a child.

Maila: Before I met the survivors, I was a bit nervous. I felt that my perception of what happened would be very different from their perception

Another child speaks up

Kaishu: When I met Tanaka San, I admired her for being strong and smiling after everything she had been through.

The narrator gives up

Leona: When I talked to Sato San, I realized it was not only her lifestyle, but her thinking that had changed after the bombing.

Hibiki: Meeting Menda San made everything much more real. I felt I could ask personal questions – ones that I really wanted to find out the answers to. When I had finished talking to her, I thought about how much pain she had been through.

Maila: The interviews made us think about many things.

Kaishu: I think that fighting is part of human nature

Hibiki: But there are good fights; fights that bring people together.

Hiraku: I think it's okay to fight, but you have to sympathise and listen to other people. I think that we have to make friends with other countries and that would bring peace

Nanoka: I think that Japan could make a policy that if we found out another country is trying to wage a war with another country – that country would be fined.

Hibiki: I don't think Japan needs soldiers – just a self defence army for helping and rescuing

Kantaro: I would suggest that in return for other countries giving up nuclear weapons, Japan could offer a reward through trade agreements

Narrator: Finished?

Hibiki: For now.

Narrator: The river water continues to flow steadily. It suddenly changed

from where it had been flowing steadily, the water that had been there just before was in an instant gone. Even if I forget the water, I think I will remember. I remember what was reflected in the river that day. That is all I remember.

We hear the voice of Hiroe

Hiroe ★: Lives were stolen. But it wasn't just human life. Fish, cows, cats, rats, all lost their lives too. Even the birds in the sky. As I was looking for my older brother, I saw loads of sparrows. But what I want you to remember from this is that the atomic bomb ripped the hearts of people into shreds. Even so, humans are exceedingly strong and amazing. No matter what situation they're in, they have the power to live for tomorrow.

Interviewer: Thank you very much.

THE END