

Remembering the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Collective memory of post-war Japan

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Abstract. This study examines the way in which Tokyo has exploited the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a symbolic means of inducing post-war Japanese collective identity. To consider an effort on Tokyo's part to integrate A-bomb memories into the country's victim consciousness rather than to overcome the past, the study compares the A-bombed cities written with different Japanese forms, the peace parks, and the peace memorials. It also analyses the news coverage by two national daily papers on the A-bomb memorial days. By doing so, the study shows how the nation has been guided in its memory by the government.

Different ways of recognising a historical fact, even if an event actually happened at a certain time and place, exist at various global, national and local levels. As it is not a factual object, history changes in the continuing process of storytelling. As Frederic C. Bartlett points out, a given fact is the result of 're-remembering' the past from a present position of 'now, here' (Bartlett 1932). A national holiday or public commemoration shapes our direct and indirect experiences through historical environments like public monuments, museums, and school textbooks. It socially constructs the collectivity of national, local or personal memory (Halbwachs 1992). In such a process of remembering, a historical site is reinvented to foster a new collective identity. In the recent trend towards globalisation, different interpretations or understandings of the past at the personal, regional and social level have brought collective memory to centre stage.

This study examines the way in which the Tokyo government has exploited the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a symbolic means of inducing post-war Japanese collective identity (Burke 1969b, 43). To consider an effort on Tokyo's part to integrate A-bomb memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki into the country's victim consciousness rather than to overcome the past, the study will begin by comparing the Japanese written forms, peace parks, and peace memorials. Comparisons of the inhabitants of Hiroshima and Nagasaki living with the atomic bomb will be followed

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by an examination of what is to be remembered, how it is to be remembered, and why it should be remembered. The special law for planning of the A-bombed cities passed in 1947 turned Hiroshima into *Heiwakinen Toshi* (Peace and Memorial City) and Nagasaki into *Kokusaibunka Toshi* (International and Cultural City). The study will end by analysing the news coverage in two national daily papers, the *Asahi Shimbun* and *Yomiuri Shimbun*, on the A-bomb memorial days and raise the question of who is supposed to be the actor in remembering ‘Hiroshima’ and ‘Nagasaki’.

Site of A-bomb memory

An act of written or spoken language embodies what is to be remembered within the social structure of a given culture and how it is to be remembered. What follows explores how the A-bombed cities have been seen as the ‘site of memory’ by which Japan throughout the Cold War era can be a war victim and play down its past aggression (Nora 1989). First, I will focus on the different ways of writing Hiroshima and Nagasaki with Japanese symbols. I will then describe how Tokyo has incorporated the A-bomb memories of the cities into a Japanese distinctiveness, while the cities have tried to preserve, through ritual their own, experience with the nuclear attack against ‘humankind’.

Print language

In Japanese written forms, there are three writing systems to represent information visually: Chinese characters called *kanji*, Japanese characters called *hiragana*, and its variant called *katakana*, which is used specifically for foreign loanwords. From their origins, pictures have been a consistent way to represent particular images and developed into picture-writing, pictographs. In time, this form became part of a system of idea-writing, an ideogram. The distinction between pictographs and ideograms derives from a difference in the relationship between the symbol and what it represents. The more concrete, picture-like symbols are pictograms, and the more abstract, conceptual symbols are ideograms. In addition, many Chinese characters are used to show the meaning of words, while Japanese characters are chosen for describing the sounds of spoken words. How have Hiroshima and Nagasaki been remembered with these different Japanese forms of writing? The A-bombed cities, when they are depicted with *kanji*, *hiragana* and *katakana*, seem to present different memories.

The two different ways of writing Hiroshima with Chinese characters show the historical discontinuity between the A-bombed military city and the present representative of world peace. Hiroshima written with the archaic Chinese characters

広島 stands for its pre-war development as a prosperous city. It calls to mind the rise of Japanese military expansionism and imperial colonialism. The city once was briefly the imperial Japanese capital, having the Meiji Emperor as its commander-in-chief during the 1894 Sino-Japanese War. As a *gunto* (military capital), Hiroshima in the early 20th century sent armed forces to the Asian continent and benefited from many of the most important military bases and harbours. Thus it became the first target of a nuclear bomb. On the contrary, Hiroshima written with the modern-day Chinese characters 広島, which is now most commonly used in Japanese, erases such negative implications. The new version merely marks the city as one of the government ordinance–designed cities in post-war Japan.

The syllabic expression with the Japanese characters ひろしま is increasingly used in the visual rhetoric of tourist posters and municipal events these days. The Japanese characters, rounded and softly curved, bring about new nostalgic images of *furusato* (hometown) (see Robertson 1991, 19–22). As this *hiragana* syllabary is the first form of writing that native speakers of Japanese acquire, this use calls up images of *furusato* and makes advertising slogans and tourist appeals open to a lost past that many Japanese can share (see Ivy 1995, 29–65).

In contrast to such nostalgic implications of discovering another Japan, Hiroshima written with the phonographic symbols ヒロシマ, which are mainly used for transliterating foreign terms, can be often used in peace and antinuclear discourses. While symbolising Japan's recovery from the defeat in the war in a national context, in a global context it characterises post-nuclear Hiroshima for the peace and antinuclear movements. For instance, the expression reminds readers of the well-known English slogan 'No More Hiroshimas' as well as the historic moment of the first use of a nuclear bomb against human beings. Another example is an important representative of A-bomb literature, *Natsu no Hana* (Summer Flowers). By inserting a poem and *katakana* into this documentary memoir of Hiroshima, the author, Hara Tamiki, tries his best to express a sense of urgency and something extraordinary. With such visual rhetoric, Hiroshima written with symbols for foreign loan words reflects the fundamental struggles between remembering and forgetting the site of nuclear atrocities. Such mixed feelings deeply seated in the minds of A-bomb–bereaved families and A-bombed survivors tend to be overlooked in highly politicised peace movements.

In the case of Nagasaki, the written expression with Chinese characters, 長崎, represents the historical development of the city as a place for international trade. Under the obligatory educational system, the post-war Japanese school textbook of *Nihonshi* (Japanese national history) explains that a large percentage of the Nagasaki population used to be Christian under the control of Catholic *daimyoo* (feudal warlords)

from the 1580s until the year 1614 when Catholicism was officially banned and all missionaries were ordered to leave. After the enforcement of this expulsion order by the Tokugawa regime, Nagasaki became one of the few windows open to contact with the Western world under its closed-door policy from 1633 to 1853. On the one hand, the city is famous for trade with the Portuguese, Dutch and British in the 16th century. On the other hand, it is infamous for its brutal prosecution of Catholics and later for its major imperial Japanese Navy base. From 1867 to 1889, after the Meiji Restoration, the growth of Nagasaki was based on the prosperity of warship building, and the city ended up being selected as the second target of a nuclear bomb. Overall, the expression 長崎 stands for both its international influence and its atomic destruction.

With international overtones, the phonetic expression ナガサキ is associated with the notion 'Atomic Wasteland', the English slogan 'Peace Begins in Nagasaki', or the Japanese slogan '*Nagasaki o Saigo no Hibakuchi ni*' (Let Nagasaki Be the Last A-bombed City). The phonetic expression replaces the hidden memory of wartime wrongdoings with the idealism of common humanity that post-nuclear Nagasaki has called for. Along with its focus on history, Nagasaki simply expressed with the Japanese syllabic characters ながさき calls to mind the same nostalgic implications as Hiroshima. The expression encourages the nostalgic notion of child-like innocence, and at the same time transforms the city's 'ordeal' into its 'redemption,' as Doctor Nagai Takashi referred to the atomic bomb in his books such as *Nagasaki no Kane* (the Bell of Nagasaki) (see also Nagasaki City 1996).

These different types of writing the names of the A-bombed cities are different ways for the cities to represent themselves in the world or to form their local, national and global identities. For the Tokyo government, by contrast, they are a symbolic means of integrating different expressions, values, beliefs, attitudes and social identities into sharing grounds of collective identity. In the national, local and personal realm of memory, how have authorities made use of the implications of the ways of writing Hiroshima or Nagasaki?

To restore national pride, Tokyo has used the different symbols of Hiroshima and Nagasaki for a softer image and less reference to Japan's war guilt. In the national news coverage, which I will provide examples of later, Hiroshima is rarely written with the archaic Chinese, but with the modern-day Chinese to whitewash the city's militaristic past. In news accounts of peace ceremonies, the print media have described the A-bombed cities as equivalent with other Japanese cities by using the common expressions 広島 and 長崎. Yet the media sometimes adopt the expressions with the phonetic symbols ヒロシマ, and ナガサキ on occasion, for headlines to emphasise the promotion of peace movements. Especially since the early 1980s, editorial coverage has made frequent use of Hiroshima written with the phonetic symbols to

remind national readers of the country's feeling against nuclear weapons. The Tokyo government has fostered Japan's victim consciousness in order to deny any role as the war aggressor, by emphasising the tragic implications of the A-bombed cities.

In addition to the different ways of writing Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japanese, spelling the names in English has another social influence and power for the Japanese. The English spelling emphasises the cities as representatives of peace and not as claimants of crimes against humanity. In occupied Japan, the US view of history prevailed: the use of the atomic bomb was not a crime against humanity, but God's plan to bring peace to the world. During the Cold War, the United States moved up as a global power and replaced Britain as the number one country without a war between the two nations. In such a global context, Japan has not opposed this view since there are economic benefits for Japan to work within this understanding. Instead, Tokyo has integrated the A-bomb memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the national feeling against nuclear weapons, which is well known as Japan's 'nuclear allergy', into a shared sense of being a *heiwaaikoo* (peace-loving) nation. As Japan grows in economic strength and national pride, the collective memory of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as symbols of peace, in short, becomes general and easy for all to accept.

Peace ceremony

To develop Japan's cultural identity, the central government focuses on the distinctiveness of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Since the 1970s, the government has disseminated the official story of the 'only A-bombed nation'. In addition, the national media have framed the cities' memorial ceremonies in a way similar to state ritual. The Shintoist framework turns them into the only nation that witnessed the dawn of the so-called atomic age. By marking a distinct *before* and *after*, the government has distinguished the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki from events elsewhere.

Hiroshima has commemorated 8:15 on the morning of 6 August and Nagasaki City, 11:02 on the morning of 9 August as a 'destined moment'. The A-bombed cities have held the so-called 'peace memorial ceremony' every 6 August since 1947 and every 9 August since 1948. The year 1950, when the Korean War broke out, was the only year that both cities had to cancel each ceremony for the fear of causing political turmoil. In official notices, Hiroshima basically uses the word with Chinese characters, 記念, whereas Nagasaki continuously uses 祈念. As homophones, both words are pronounced *kinen* in Japanese. Yet the words contain the different meanings, 'to memorialise' and 'to commemorate' peace, respectively. Hiroshima called its first memorial ceremony *Heiwasai* (Peace Festival). In 1968 the city changed it into the more official sounding *Genbaku Shibotsusha Ireishiki narabini Heiwakinenshiki* (Ceremony Memorialising the A-bomb Dead and Commemorating Peace). In 1975, Hiroshima

officially announced the use of the abbreviation 平和記念式典 (*heiwakinenshikiten*: ceremony to memorialise peace) (Ubuki 1992, i, 9–26). By contrast, Nagasaki first avoided using expressions like ‘A-bomb’ and ‘peace’ in official discourse. Under the US-centred Allied occupation, the city named the first ceremony *Bunkasai* (Cultural Festival). This shows part of the Japanese self-censorship during the occupation era (1945–52). Later, Nagasaki officially titled the peace ceremony *Nagasaki Genbaku Giseisha Heiwakinenshikiten* (Ceremony Commemorating Nagasaki A-bomb Victims and Peace). Its abbreviation is written 平和祈念式 (*Heiwakinenshiki*, ceremony to commemorate peace).

The difference of a single Chinese letter, 記 and 祈, is not a mere difference of visual impressions, because each ideogram stands for its own representation. According to the Japanese *Koojien* dictionary, which has a standing equivalent to the English *Oxford English Dictionary* or *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, the term 記念, which used to be written by 紀念, consists of the verb form 記す (*shirusu*, to memorialise) and means to preserve something or someone in living memory. It also suggests a future-oriented action based on a past event. On the other hand, the term 祈念 consists of the verb form 祈る (*inoru*, to commemorate), and means to pray to God for someone or something. This implies one’s dependence on God or one’s expectation that something will come true under divine providence. Regardless of the different meanings of 記念 and 祈念, Tokyo has integrated both Hiroshima and Nagasaki into the national sites of the atomic bombing in memory/commemoration of the war’s end.

For the official title of the peace memorial ceremony, Hiroshima has used the *Genbaku Shibotsusha* (A-bomb dead) and Nagasaki the *Genbaku Giseisha* (A-bomb victims) as a term of address for those who were killed by the atomic explosion. Contrary to these municipal governments, the national government has used the term *senbotsusha* (war dead) in the nationwide *Zenkoku Senbotsusha Tsuitooshiki* (Memorial Service for the Japanese War Dead) in memory of the noon on 15 August 1945 when the recorded *Shuusen no Mikotonori* (Rescript of the War’s End) read by the Emperor Showa was broadcast to the Imperial Japanese population. The expression ‘war dead’ used from the first state-sponsored ritual in 1963 means those who died on the battlefield, including those who died of war injuries as well as war diseases. It also implies that they would be enshrined as *eirei* (heroic martyrs) in the Yasukuni Shrine. The Shintoist framework that transforms a war death into a heroic sacrifice has sustained the division between those who died for the country and those who were killed in name of the country. In post-war Japanese society, the latter has been further divided into those killed by atomic bombs, those killed by air raids, and those abandoned in the former Japanese colonial territories (Yamamoto 2005, 200–1; Ueno 2002, 6).

Under the US-centred tutelage, self-censorship and Allied censorship of A-bomb coverage prevented raising national consciousness of what had happened to Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Braw 1991). It was in the 1970s that Tokyo for the first time took action to incorporate the A-bomb memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki into the 'starting point' of post-war Japan's peace and prosperity, making a gesture of political consideration for the A-bombed survivors. By doing so, the Tokyo government aimed to underscore the country's total devastation in the aftermath of the war. This encouraged the vanquished to overlook its military expansionism and imperial colonialism. In international politics, however, this discouraged Tokyo from criticising the use of nuclear weapons as a crime against humanity and even from taking the lead in nuclear disarmament. In 1985, the Editing Committee of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki City A-bomb Disaster published a book titled *Genbaku Saigai* (A-bomb Disaster). This title represents the official view of the atomic bombing as if it were a natural disaster like an earthquake and flood. At the local level, the word 'victim' in the term 'A-bombed victims' used by Nagasaki reflects this official interpretation: there were no agents responsible for the A-bomb deaths. While the word *higaisha* (sufferer) has an antonymous expression, *kagaisha* (offenders or wrongdoers), *giseisha* (victims) has no antonym.

Overall, the Tokyo government continues to make symbolic use of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as the national memory of unforgettable tragedies, which allows Japan to deny charges of war crimes.

*Ground Zero*¹

Taking advantage of A-bomb memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Tokyo sought to invent post-war Japan as an imagined community of 'war victims/sacrifice' (Anderson 1991). For that purpose, the atomic bomb sites have played an important role in retaining a few A-bomb ruins and providing a chance to see 'living history'. Hiroshima preserves Ground Zero as one unit, named *Hiroshima Heiwa Kinen Kooen* (Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park). By contrast, Nagasaki divides Ground Zero into the *Genbaku Rakkacyuushinchi Kooen* (A-bomb Hypocentre Park) in 記念 (*kinen*, memory) of the atomic bombing and the *Nagasaki Heiwa Kooen* (Nagasaki Peace Park) in 祈念 (*kinen*, commemoration) of the A-bombed victims. Whereas the former park provides a place to mark the bombing that brought us peace, the latter offers a place to hold the peace ceremony. Moreover, the Hiroshima peace park is famous for

¹ I here briefly note how events surrounding the 11 September 2001 attacks became intersected with the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by popular appropriation of the term 'ground zero' to designate the site—the rubble of the World Trade Center—along with images of ash-covered, disoriented New Yorkers.

the officially named *Hiroshima Heiwa Toshi Kinen Hi*, the so-called *Genbaku Ireihi* (A-bomb Cenotaph) (Hiroshima City Peace Commemorative Monument), designed by architect Tange Kenzo. The Nagasaki peace park is well known by the *Heiwa Kinen Zoo* (Peace Memorial Statue) sculptured by Kitamura Seibou. Each memorial is supposed to reflect on the atomic blast. Furthermore, Hiroshima has held its peace ceremony in front of the cenotaph since its completion on 6 August 1952. Nagasaki has usually held its peace ceremony in front of the peace statue since its completion on 9 August 1955. In media coverage, the central government has made the memorials symbolic of the nuclear tragedies conducive to the official story of the 'only A-bombed nation'. While enhancing ground zeros as national sites of memory, the government has transformed those who were killed by the fission bomb into those who died for their country so as to confirm post-war Japanese collective identity.

The A-bomb Cenotaph and the Peace Memorial Statue also provide a teleological meaning for A-bombed deaths. The cenotaph has been part of reiterating a sanctioned time and place for Shinto to unite, as well as divide, war deaths. In his construction plan for the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, Tange modelled the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum on the Ise Shrine and the A-bomb cenotaph on the arch-shaped stone tomb of the *Kofun* Period (from the 3rd to the 6th century). He placed those two memorial constructions symmetrically on each side of the main structure in line with the *Genbaku Dome* (A-bomb Dome) designed by an architect from Czechoslovakia, Jan Letzel. Now, visitors can see only the steel skeleton and some old brick walls of the building that escaped collapse from the bomb. As a symbolic landmark of Hiroshima, the ruin has become its most attractive tourist attraction. The central axis runs in a straight line from the dome through the 'Peace Pond' constructed in 1957 and the 'Eternal Flame of Peace' constructed in 1964 to the peace museum. Based on this straight line as the 'worshipping line' of the peace park, a Shintoist 'sanction' like the Yasukuni Shrine emerges: the A-bomb Dome turns out to be the *honden* (main building) and the A-bomb Cenotaph the *haiden* (entrance building) in the *Naikuu* (Inner Shrine), while the Peace Memorial Museum becomes the 'main building' in the *Gekuu* (Outer Shrine) (Inoue 1995; Iijima 1996; Yoneyama 1999).

The architecture designed to mark the world's first use of a nuclear bomb is similar to the *Daitooa Kensetsu Kinen Zooei Keikaku* (Commemorative Building Project for the Construction of Greater East Asia) proposed by Tange in 1942. This implicit structural continuity between the two memorial plans often fails to be recognised because of the focus of attention on the first nuclear attack. The vision restoring a Shintoist memorial zone in the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park not only turns the A-bombed dead into *martyrs* in a state-sanctioned time and place but also promotes heroic sacrifice for the country as a norm for the nation of Japan. In these regards, the

peace ceremony gives rise to the same Shintoist memorial zone as the state ritual that continues to ensure Great Imperial Japan's honour and glory.

The peace statue has been also part of creating a Shintoist memorial zone. Whereas Ground Zero in Hiroshima is surrounded by war ruins, monuments, and memorials (Sturken 1991, 118), that in Nagasaki is divided into the hypocentre of the atomic blast and the memorial park for world peace. The *Bakushinchi Kooen* memorial (Park of the Atomic Blast Hypocentre) preserves the black-stoned triangular prism engraved with the phrase *Nagasaki Genbaku Jyunnansha no Rei* (Souls of Those Killed by the Atomic Bomb in Nagasaki) and the relocated A-bombed walls from the Urakami Catholic Church. On the hill that spreads to its north, the *Heiwa Kooen* (Peace Park) contains monuments like the *Heiwa no Izumi* (Fountain of Peace) and the *Heiwa no Kane* (Bell of Nagasaki) around the peace statue. The park seems to get rid of the dark atomic bomb image. Whenever Nagasaki holds the peace ceremony in the peace park on 9 August, the white wooden pillar or triangular pyramid is placed just in front of the statue. On its face is written in Japanese calligraphy *Genbaku Giseisha no Rei* (Souls of the A-bombed Victims) parallel to the Japanese calligraphy *Senbotsusha no Rei* (Souls of the War Dead) written on the white pillar. In this way, those killed by the bomb have been placed into a sanctioned time and place for hero worship.

Examining how the central government has made rhetorical use of print languages, peace ceremonies, and ground zeros reveals its effort to obliterate from national history Japan's past military rule, national mobilisation, and emperor worship.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the national coverage

Around every 6 and 9 August, most Japanese newspapers continue to cover the A-bombed cities. The front page of their evening edition or following morning edition also highlights the peace ceremony on each memorial day. Throughout August, the highlight of media coverage is the issue of why the war broke out, what the war aimed for, or how Japan recovered from the lost war. In the photo coverage, the A-bomb Cenotaph, the A-bomb Dome, and/or the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum often has the peace park in the background, and the white triangular pyramid with the Japanese calligraphy 'Souls of the A-bombed Victims' has the Peace Memorial Statue in the background, or a few anonymous female Christians wearing veils praying for peace in the Urakami Christian Church. In these regards, Japanese journalism plays the part of a national network that sanctions a 'memorial time and place', reaches a national consensus on the 'only A-bombed nation', and confirms an imagined community of post-war Japan.

The first section of what follows will discuss how the two national newspapers *Asahi Shimbun* and *Yomiuri Shimbun* have described Hiroshima and Nagasaki in their editorials and front pages. The second section will examine how these newspapers have shaped A-bomb memories into the collective memory of post-war Japan through visual rhetoric. How have the Hiroshima and Nagasaki A-bomb memorial days been framed in the national news coverage since 1945?

Editorials

The editorials of both the *Asahi Shimbun* and the *Yomiuri Shimbun* have discussed Hiroshima in their morning editions on the A-bomb Memorial Day. The first editorial of the *Asahi Shimbun*, 'A "Living Shadow" Remains in Hiroshima', is the only one in which Hiroshima is written with the old-style Chinese characters, 廣島. From 1949 to 2008, the *Asahi Shimbun* issued 53 editorial articles. The editorial coverage is characterised by supporting the renunciation of the atomic and hydrogen bomb in the 1950s, voicing concern about the split in the movements against nuclear weapons in the 1960s, demanding nuclear disarmament in the 1970s, promoting antinuclear movements in the 1980s, calling for antinuclear principles in the 1990s, and reflecting the starting point of Hiroshima at the beginning of the new century. It was 1972 when Hiroshima with *katakana* ヒロシマ appeared for the first time in the editorial text. This signalled a shift from peace and an antinuclear tone to a self-reflective discourse, particularly in the 1991 editorial 'Time to Say Hiroshima'. This editorial refers to the Hiroshima Peace Declaration that for the first time mentions imperial Japanese aggression. The editorial notes that now Japan is in the 'double bind of being a victim and an aggressor' in the war.

Over fifty-eight years, the *Yomiuri Shimbun* has carried thirty-eight editorial articles since the 6 August 1950 'Sunday Reading: Fifth Anniversary of the Atomic Bombing' by Tsuji Jirou. The editorial trend is towards praying for peace in the 1950s and 1960s, preserving A-bomb memories in the 1970s, appealing for nuclear disarmament in the 1980s and 1990s, and calling for a new framework for collective security at the beginning of the 21st century. It was five years earlier than the *Asahi Shimbun* that the phonetic written expression Hiroshima appeared in its editorial coverage, the 1967 editorial titled 'On the A-bomb Memorial Day: Hiroshima is One'. Moreover, the 1990 editorial 'Reflecting in Another "A-bomb Summer"' refers to the Nagasaki Peace Declaration demanding that the national government must apologise to the A-bomb survivors living in North and South Korea. In spite of its nationalistic tendency, the *Yomiuri* editorial takes a liberal position that supports human rights and moral judgment from a contemporary perspective.

In contrast to the Hiroshima A-bomb Memorial Day, the editorials of the *Asahi Shimbun* and the *Yomiuri Shimbun* have seldom discussed the Nagasaki A-bomb Memorial Day on 9 August.² In front-page coverage, however, both newspapers have placed news stories about the Nagasaki Peace Ceremony as often as those about the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony. The *Asahi Shimbun* has reported thirty-eight accounts of the peace ceremony since the article ‘Silent Anger against Atomic and Hydrogen Bomb: After 12 Years, “Peace Ceremony” Held in Nagasaki Today’ in the 9 August 1957 evening edition. Forty-two front-page news reports on the ceremony have been in the *Yomiuri Shimbun* since the article ‘Twentieth Anniversary of the Atomic Bombing in Nagasaki: Pledge to Peace in Front of the Souls of the A-bombed Victims’ in the 9 August 1965 evening edition. Overall, both national newspapers have integrated the editorial comments on Hiroshima and Nagasaki into their editorials of August 6, and then connected those A-bomb memorial days to the national *Shuusen Kinenbi* (Memorial Day for the War’s End) on August 15.

The news coverage of the peace ceremonies, however, displays conflict between Hiroshima and Nagasaki. First, both the *Asahi Shimbun* and the *Yomiuri Shimbun* started to carry news stories about Hiroshima on their front pages ten years earlier than they did about Nagasaki. Since the 7 August 1947 morning edition in which the first report ‘Mourning and Praying for Peace: “Peace Festival” in the City of Hiroshima Yesterday Morning’ appeared, the *Asahi Shimbun* has given an account of Hiroshima every year except 1948, 1950, 1952, 1953, 1956 and 1958. Since 1955, the *Yomiuri Shimbun* has focused on Hiroshima every year except 1956, 1958 and 1967. Hence Hiroshima has become more famous for showing the dangers of nuclear war than Nagasaki.

Second, the time when the news stories about the people of Hiroshima living with the consequences of the atomic bomb expanded into other sections was earlier and the amount was larger than those about Nagasaki. The *Asahi Shimbun* began to develop its news coverage of Hiroshima in the 6 August 1963 evening edition, and the *Yomiuri Shimbun* started in the 6 August 1965 evening edition. In addition, the headlines for the Hiroshima peace ceremony show the city’s active participation in foreign affairs, while those for Nagasaki are most often the same *Nagasaki Genbakuki* (Nagasaki A-bomb Memorial Day). About half of the headlines about Hiroshima include the ending form of Japanese verbs like *uttau* or *uttaeru* (to appeal), *chikau* (to

² The *Asahi Shimbun* carried two editorials ‘In Deference to the Demilitarized Zone’ in 1966 and ‘Memorials in the Summer of 2001: Distance Between the *Heiwa no Ishiji* (the Cornerstone of Peace in Okinawa) and Yasukuni Shrine’ in 2001. Four editorials—‘About the Cultural Nation-state’ in 1946, ‘One Year Since the Partial Test Ban Treaty and Japanese Diplomacy’ in 1964, ‘Viewpoint Crucial to Peace and Disarmament’ in 1985, and ‘Japan’s Role in the Rise of a New Nuclear Anxiety’ in 1998—appeared in the *Yomiuri Shimbun*.

pledge), *inoru* (to pray), and *negau* (to hope), or the imperative form like *mezase* (to aim at), *musube* (to connect), and *sukue* (to save). Most of them are also quotations from the peace declaration of that year. This has left an impression that Hiroshima is more symbolic of a nuclear-free world than Nagasaki.

Last, the *Asahi Shimbun* and the *Yomiuri Shimbun* started to carry photo reports about the Hiroshima peace ceremony almost ten years earlier than that about Nagasaki. In the 7 August 1949 morning edition of the *Asahi Shimbun*, the photo ‘Citizens of Hiroshima Gather around the Peace Tower, Reporting from Hiroshima’ appeared in the right top corner. The first photo caption of the *Yomiuri Shimbun* was ‘Site of the Tenth Anniversary of the Atomic Bombing, from Yomiuri 101 Plane (report from Hiroshima)’ in 9 August 1955. In contrast, the first photo coverage about the Nagasaki peace ceremony was, ‘Peace Ceremony in the Nagasaki Peace Park, Taken from the Plane Asakaze’ in the evening edition of the *Asahi Shimbun* on 9 August 1957 and ‘People Paying a Visit to the Memorial for the A-bombed Victims, Doves Soaring’ in the evening edition of the *Yomiuri Shimbun* on 9 August 1965. In general, Hiroshima has been selected more than Nagasaki to be part of justifying the country’s cultural amnesia.

In Japanese newspapers, while Nagasaki has been seen as a symbol of peace, Hiroshima has been symbolic of resurrection because it reminds the country of the A-bomb Dome. As a site of A-bomb memory, the dome stands for the scourge of war as well as the rise from the ruins of war. In fact, the Tokyo government has made the best of that image to make a sharp contrast between *before* and *after* the birth of the atomic bomb. In doing so, the government has diminished the possibilities of agents, and even their responsibility for what occurred. Moreover, Hiroshima was the first target of the nuclear bomb against human beings. Also, its geographical factors caused a larger range of destruction, a larger number of casualties, and greater aftereffects than in Nagasaki. As the print coverage has consistently focused on Hiroshima rather than Nagasaki, the association between Hiroshima and the national feeling against nuclear weapons has become a familiar rhetorical pattern in post-war Japan.

Photo coverage

The notion of ‘framing effects’ of news coverage proposed by communication scholar Shanto Iyengar shows a shift from the thematic (issue-oriented) to the episodic (event-oriented) news frame in the photo coverage of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony.³ Both the *Asahi Shimbun* and the *Yomiuri Shimbun* focused

³ According to Iyengar, most political news formats take either an episodic or a thematic frame. While the episodic form focuses on specific events or particular cases, the thematic form places general issues in broad contexts (1991, 11–6).

on the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, the A-bomb Cenotaph, or the A-bomb Dome as a symbol of the post-nuclear world in the photographs until the 1990s. The only exception is the photo 'Prime Minister Sato Bowing his Head in Front of the A-bomb Cenotaph' on the front page of the 6 August 1971 evening edition of the *Asahi Shimbun*. Sato Eisaku, later awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, was the first serving head of state to participate in the peace ceremony. Since then, the Tokyo government has made the best of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as the premise of the 'only A-bombed nation' official discourse.

The thematic frame of the photo coverage highlights the city's complete atomic destruction as evidence for the starting point of post-war Japan. Of forty-eight photographs on the front page of the *Asahi Shimbun*, the cenotaph can be found in thirty-eight, the dome in thirty-one, and the museum in three. Of fifty photographs in the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, the cenotaph can be found in forty-seven, the dome in thirty-six, and the museum in ten. Both newspapers have the same ranking of subjects. In addition, their photo coverage often includes the stone coffin in the cenotaph together with the dome. This issue-oriented frame brings about contrastive images between a building quite innovative for its day and what is reduced to rubble by a single bomb. Through such a visual impact, the steel skeleton of the dome stresses victim consciousness and minimises self-reflection about Japanese involvement in setting the course of history.

The photographs including the cenotaph with the dome imply another contrast of the city's past and present. The atomic bomb transformed a once logistical base for military transport into a Mecca of peace pilgrimages from all over the world. The building, now called 'A-bomb Dome', opened as the *Hiroshimaken Bussan Chinretsukan* (Hiroshima Prefectural Commercial Exhibition Hall) in August 1915. It was renamed the *Hiroshimakenritsu Shoohin Chinretsusho* (Hiroshima Prefectural Products Exhibition Hall) in 1921. In 1933, its name was changed to *Hiroshimaken Sangyoo Shooreikan* (Hiroshima Prefectural Industrial Promotion Hall) (see Hiroshima Peace Cultural Museum 1999). Regardless of its downfall from prosperity, Hiroshima has become acknowledged as a centre of world peace. Tragic images of the city and those that focus on its post-nuclear history eliminate the need for the government to justify the slogan 'only A-bombed nation'. The pictures speak for themselves.

The shift in the photo frame from general issues to specific events in the two national dailies took place surrounding the fiftieth anniversary of the war's end. As the leader of the Socialist Party as well as prime minister, Murayama Tomiichi's participation in the 1994 Hiroshima and Nagasaki peace ceremony was symbolic of this shift. The drastic change in national politics also encouraged the shift in a visual focus from general background to particular episode. The episodic photo captioned

'At the Memorial Time of the Atomic Bombing, People at the Streetcar Station Facing the A-bomb Dome while Mediating' appeared in the 6 August 1992 evening edition of the *Asahi Shimbun*. Since then, six out of eleven episodic photographs have the cenotaph in the background. One year later, the *Yomiuri Shimbun* placed a photo captioned 'Children and Citizens Offering Flowers in Front of the A-bomb Cenotaph' on its front page. Since 1993, ten out of eleven episodic photographs frame the cenotaph. Reflecting the fact that the local population living with the aftereffects of the atomic bomb has been declining with time, the newspapers have begun to focus on A-bomb-bereaved families and A-bombed survivors more than ever. Such on-the-scene coverage characteristic of tabloid journalism encourages the imagination to figure out what really happened to individuals after the explosion. The episodic photo coverage also suggests that 6 August is not merely a national *memorial day*, but also the personal *anniversary* of each one of the A-bombed dead. In a sense, the episodic photo coverage of an individual A-bombed death calls for human rights.

In a different way, the photo coverage of the Nagasaki Peace Memorial Ceremony consists of the thematic and the episodic frame.⁴ The thematic photo coverage emphasises peace by focusing on the Peace Memorial Statue, appealing for world peace, and praying for the repose of the souls of those killed by the atomic bomb. Eighteen thematic photographs on the front page of the *Asahi* and fifteen on the front page of the *Yomiuri* also frame the white pillar or pyramid with the words 'Souls of the A-bombed Victims' in front of the peace statue. With thematic framing, those photographs turn the 'A-bombed victims' into the same deities as those embodied in a Shintoist memorial zone. Hence the thematic photo coverage strengthens post-war Japanese cultural identity.

In contrast, the episodic frame personifies the rebirth of the nation. *Asahi Shimbun* has carried twelve photographs of a few women who are wearing veils and praying at the memorial service held in the Urakami Catholic Church early in the morning of 9 August. With an ideal of *Japanese womanhood*, those female figures evoke caring and innocent images like the Virgin Mary. The event-oriented coverage focusing on femininity and Catholicism implies the religious notions of ordeal and redemption. In addition, feminine representations suggest virtue, harmony and reconciliation. On the other hand, seventeen photographs on the *Yomiuri* front-page highlight the A-bomb-bereaved families, A-bombed survivors, and A-bombed succeeding generations who are playing a major role in the peace ceremony. Here the episodic photo focuses

⁴ In the photo coverage of the Nagasaki peace ceremony, the *Asahi Shimbun* has carried thirty-two photographs on its front page since the first photograph, 'Peace Ceremony in the Nagasaki Peace Park', on 9 August 1957. Thirty-six photographs have appeared in the *Yomiuri Shimbun* since the first photograph, 'People Paying a Visit to the Memorial for the A-bomb Victims, Doves Soaring', in its 9 August 1965 evening edition.

attention on the continuity and unity of the A-bombed community. In the allegory of the Holy Mother or the framework of family metaphor, the episodic photo coverage helps remove aggressive images of a fascist pre-war Japan and promote positive images of a democratic post-war Japan. To a certain extent, the national newspapers continue to associate ideals of peace with a reborn Japan.

Analysing the editorial, news and photo coverage of the *Asahi Shimbun* and the *Yomiuri Shimbun* brings post-war Japanese collective identity into question. The print coverage of the A-bomb memorial days has helped the Tokyo government identify A-bomb memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with the collective memory of post-war Japan. In addition, the collective memory has been assumed to be natural in the national context. The first failure is an emphasis on war victimisation. The Tokyo government has imprinted the strong belief that, as the 'only A-bombed nation' in human history, Japan is different from other nations in the mind of the country. Here the government has incorporated the sites of A-bomb memories into the icons of the war catastrophes. The symbolic image of the A-bomb Dome has especially discouraged Japan from coming to terms with history and from looking critically at tension with China and South Korea.

Second, both episodic and thematic photographs turn the sanctioned time and place of the A-bomb memorial days into a Shintoist memorial zone. On the analogy of the state ritual, the central government makes use of the photo coverage to recall the war losses and to identify the victims with something that will endure long after they are gone—their willingness to sacrifice themselves for the country. In other words, the Shintoist framework transforms the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki into Japan's ordeal and redemption. Moreover, the contrast of visual rhetoric between *before* and *after* the atomic explosion reminds readers of the national effort to rebuild the war-torn country. In these regards, the government has taken advantage of the news network to foster another 'ism', nationalism that associates post-war Japanese economic growth with loyalty to the country.

Through the national newspapers, the Tokyo government has used the A-bomb memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to diminish the agent who performed the act and should take responsibility. The government has underscored not human actions (e.g. those who dropped the atomic bomb), but the bomb—the product of human activities—to highlight the *evil* means. This emphasis on the agency that the agent used reflects the government's belief that science and technology will improve the quality of life (Burke 1969a, 128, 275–86). In this pragmatic perspective, the role of the A-bombed cities has been to confirm the official claim of why Japan lost the war and has led to the pursuit of the promotion of scientific and technological advancement.

The key to the question of who is to preserve the memory of 6 and 9 August 1945 would be we who are living in the ‘widespread and bewildering experience of trauma’ in the nuclear age (Caruth 1996, 11). As those who were eyewitnesses of the atomic destruction have gone, their photographs, wills and anecdotes become more important and are kept in archives. The electronic devices to present information as a ‘living’ document enable us to replace public memorials and monuments with stocks of digital information. As ‘reality’ brings about various ‘individualistic values’ in the context of a certain situation, the direct access to such ‘living’ information does not guarantee getting the truth of history. For example, the Tokyo government has constructed the ‘reality’ of Japan as the ‘only A-bombed nation’ to disregard overseas victims of its wartime policy.

Nevertheless, in a globalising society, archives might help us discover sharing grounds Burke calls ‘consubstantiality ([con = with] + [sub = under] + [stance = to stand])’ (Burke 1969b, 20–3). The more historical records become stocked in archives and readily accessible, the less room is left to the field of historical research to create fiction. Moreover, sharing material evidence will narrow the gap in the interpretation of history. This will also provide a great opportunity not for agreeing with, but for facing other historical interpretations. From these possibilities, the act of remembering Hiroshima and Nagasaki will encourage us to develop an understanding of what the atomic bomb brings to the world.

The contemporary moment

We tend to identify ourselves with what to ‘re-member’ at the contemporary moment of here and now. A particular past that is memorialised, visualised and symbolised from a certain point of view constructs a collective memory and strengthens social membership. Hence Hiroshima and Nagasaki have been useful for the Tokyo government to represent Japan as a principled pacifistic nation. Moreover, the Japanese news media have focused on the course of history, especially the advent of nuclear weapons, with the official ‘only A-bombed nation’ phrase. In the framework of a national *media event*, the government has used the peace ceremonies to convince the nation anew that Japan is indeed special, singled out for the atomic bomb that carried peace into the world (Dayan and Katz 1992).

Hiroshima and Nagasaki have been symbolic of Japan’s defeat in World War II. The Tokyo government has called for this grief to join those who died for the country with those who were killed by the nuclear bomb, using the Japanese notion of *gisei* that implies both passive ‘victimisation’ and active ‘sacrifice’. For the Japanese, Hiroshima and Nagasaki are the starting point of post-war Japanese peace and prosperity much as another vanquished country, Germany, had no choice but to

start from the Holocaust memory represented by Auschwitz. The nuclear attack, as nowhere else, has allowed post-war Japan to identify itself not as an aggressor, but as a victim. Generally speaking, Tokyo has encouraged those who live in Japan to 're-member' the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki every 6 and 9 August, thereby legitimatising post-war Japanese cultural identity (see Sakai 1995). In this way, the Tokyo government has fashioned the Japanese nation into an imagined community of the 'only A-bombed nation' that pledges not to 'make the same mistake' and to maintain 'post-war Japan's peace and prosperity' every 15 August.

Since the 1990s, however, the national news media have changed the focus of the A-bomb memorial days from public issues to personal episodes. Until fifty years had passed since the war's end, the *Asahi Shimbun* and the *Yomiuri Shimbun* focused attention on the A-bomb Cenotaph and the Peace Memorial Statue in their front-page photo coverage. The thematic focus on the A-bomb issue helped the Tokyo government shape the collective memory of Hiroshima and Nagasaki into an 'unforgettable tragedy' of Japan. After half a century, the photo coverage began using the episodic frame to highlight the personal memory of each individual A-bombed death. This shift may well suggest the difficulty post-war generations have in experiencing what their country went through, got over, and is still living with.

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