

Hiroshima Notes

A Noiseless Flash

August 6, 1945: atomic bomb flashed above Hiroshima.

A hundred thousand people were killed by the atomic bomb.

Reverend Mr. Tanimoto

Heard of mass raids on friends in towns nearby. He was sure that Hiroshima's turn would come soon. Hiroshima had been getting such warnings almost every night for weeks. The B-29s were using Lake Biwa as a rendezvous point ("no matter what city the Americans planned to hit, the Super-fortresses streamed in over the coast near Hiroshima").

The rumor was that the Americans were going to do something special with Hiroshima.

Had his wife spend the nights in Ushida. He carried all portable things from his church to a house that belonged to a rayon manufacturer in Koi. The rayon man opened his unoccupied estate to his friends so that they could remain safe from less targeted areas.

He studied theology at Emory College and spoke excellent English. He was questioned by the police multiple times because they thought he could be a spy. (Tanaka was spreading the idea that he should not be trusted).

Decided to become the chairman of the Neighborhood Association.

They were in this big estate when they saw a tremendous flash of light cut across the sky and he felt a sudden pressure and splinters and pieces of board and fragments of tile fell on him.

Almost no one in Hiroshima recalls hearing any noise of the bomb.

Hatsuyo Nakamura

She was advised the night before the bomb dropped to go to her designated safe areas. She took her three children and walked with them to a military area where they saw the planes passed and started heading back

When they got back, they were advised to head back again and she saw how tired her children were so she decided not to.

Husband died in the Army. She was watching her neighbor tear down his house.

Dr. Masakazu Fujii

He undressed down to his underwear and went to the porch to read a paper. This porch faced away from the center of the city and the prospect of the river where he could watch.

Began turning patients away because of the bombings.

He had two patients at his house and 6 nurses. His wife and children were living outside Osaka.

Father Wilhelm Kleinsorge

Frail condition day of the bomb

He read Mass in the mission chapel

The only worshipper that day was Mr. Takemoto, Mr. Fukai, Mrs. Murata.

Was on the third floor in his underwear when the bomb went off

Dr. Terufumi Sasaki

Red Cross Hospital surgeon.

Without a permit, he began visiting patients on his own.

In the hospital when the bomb went off and was relatively unscathed helped other patients.

Toshiko Sasaki

She made food and was delivering it to this factory. The ceiling dropped on top of her suddenly and her left leg was twisted underneath her.

The Fire

Reverend Kiyoshi Tanimoto

Tanimoto took a child to his own back and helped an old woman by bringing her down the street. From the estate, he saw that Hiroshima was completely in this clouded air. Huge drops of water began to fall (condensed moisture falling from the turbulent tower of dust, heat, and fission fragments that had already risen miles into the sky above Hiroshima).

Hatsuyo Nakamura

She helped her youngest get out of the debris. She got all of her children out of the debris and took them outside. She pulled out her sewing machine -- symbol of her livelihood into the receptacle which for weeks had been her symbol of safety.

Father Wilhelm Kleinsorge

Wandering around the vegetable garden in his underwear. They helped dig out other people from the house.

Dr. Masakazu Fujii

Freed himself from the two beams that were around him and swam to the riverbank. He walked out to Kyo Bridge to see that the hospital was gone. There were many fires so they fled to the other side of the river.

Dr. Terufumi Sasaki

Since many physicians and surgeons of Hiroshima had all of their equipment scattered and their own bodies incapacitated, many citizens who could have lived ended up dying. Of a hundred and fifty doctors in the city, 65 were dead and the rest were wounded. In the biggest hospital only 6 doctors out of 30 were able to function and only 10 nurses out of 200. Sasaki was the only one not harmed. He worked without method taking those who were nearest him first.

In a city of 245,000, nearly 100,000 people had been killed or doomed at one blow. 10,000 people made their way to this hospital that only had 600 beds.

Toshiko Sasaki

She was unconscious for 3 hours and then was stuck underneath a pile of rubble and cried out for help.

Tanimoto made his way back to the city to find his family and church. He found that many houses were on fire and that he could not get through this. He ran several miles into the city and by some luck ran into his wife and their infant child. They parted ways casually after their conversation and started helping others. He started delivering water to burn victims.

Tanimoto asked where Fukai was and Father Kleinsorge said he ran back. Miss Sasaki heard voices and she was able to communicate that she was stuck and she cannot move. She was stuck beneath a bookcase.

Yoshida said that there would be no fire to ever come to Nobori-cho neighborhood and he had been calling out for help when Father Kleinsorge and Mr. Fukai passed but they could not hear him and he ended up freeing himself from where he was because he was terrified of the fire closing in.

Dr. Fujii

Stood in the river up to his neck to avoid the heat of the fire. He examined Dr. Machii's daughter's burns and then later decided to go to his parental house.
He pondered: "Could a Molotov flower basket have done all this?"

People went to Asano Park

Believed that the Americans would only bomb buildings and Mrs. Nakamura and her children were the first to arrive and they settled in the bamboo grove near the river. They drank the river water and began to commit (strong odor of ionization, an "electric smell" given off by the bomb's fission).

Tanimoto ended up there, Father Kleinsorge was there as well. He ended up taking a boat from dead people and helping those who were wounded, but alive over the river. He could pack ten or twelve into the boat for each crossing

Each trip took a very long time because the water got too deep in the middle.

In the afternoon, the fire swept into the woods of Asano Park.

From there, any able bodied people got water from the river to put out the fire. They gradually defeated the flames after two hours.

As the fire got closer, people drowned in the river because they were pushed into the bank of the water.

A roar of planes came and there was a theory that the Americans are dropping gasoline and they are going to set fire to them.

A whirlwind appeared and uprooted trees from the park.

After the storm, people were begging for food. Father Kleinsorge and them decided to go back into town to get some rice from the Neighborhood Association shelter. Since the change was so sudden, they had no idea where they were.

They got pumpkins and rice and came back to feed nearly a hundred people.

22 year old Kamai was crouching on the ground with her baby daughter who was dead and asked Tanimoto to locate her husband.

Details are Being Investigated

Naval hospital ship came into Hiroshima.

Best words anyone could say in 12 awful hours.

Nakamura settled her family for the night with the assurance that a doctor would come and stop their vomiting

The soldiers finally made it to the park after dark.

Tanimoto asked the remaining priests to come and rescue two children he had seen standing up to their shoulders in the river. Two young girls who had lost their family.

Tanimoto noticed that there were people who were wounded in a sandpit and he went back to rescue them after he dropped off Father Schiffer.

One of the girls he rescued kept saying she was cold even though she had crazy burns all over her and then she stopped shivering and died.

He found 20 men and women in the sandpit. They were too weak to lift themselves. When he reached out to take a woman, her skin slipped off in huge, glove-like pieces.

Naval ship never came and helped these people

By nightfall, ten thousand victims of the explosion had invaded the Red Cross Hospital. Dr. Sasaki was still binding up the worst cuts.

Patients were dying by the hundreds and nobody could carry away the corpses.

The priests ran into some officers while they were speaking German and the officer thought they were the enemy because a rumor was going around that American parachutists had landed.

Father Superior LaSalle said he felt awfully cold. The group ran into a ditch and the litter broke into two so they found a handcart to wheel him.

Thousands of people had nobody to help them. Miss Sasaki was one of them. She was stuck in the courtyard with her two other companions in which none of them exchanged a word.

Mrs. Murata kept Father Kleinsorge awake by talking to him. None of the Nakamura family were able to sleep.

Tanimoto slept and when he woke up in the morning he realized he did not carry the bodies high enough and none of them had the strength to move so they all drowned.

Broadcast happened the next day and it said "bomb had more power than twenty thousand tons of TNT. It had more than two thousand times the blast power of the British Grand Slam".

Tanimoto found an Army medical unit and asked why they did not come to Asano Park. He replied with they must save as many lives as possible and there is no hope for the heavily wounded. They will die.

Father Kleinsorge went to look for water in the morning and he filled his vessels and returned. He passed by a woman who was alive but burned from head to toe and on his second trip, he passed by her again and she was dead.

He found a group of soldiers who had their faces all burned and he gave them water.

The children had a hard time keeping a sense of tragedy.

A Japanese woman handed Father Kleinsorge tea leaves and said it will make him not feel thirsty.

Miss Sasaki was left two days and two nights underneath in that courtyard. She went without food or water and still had a completely broken leg. On the third day, some friends came to look for her thinking she was dead and later some men picked her up and carried her.

They brought her to a hospital and she had a high temperature so she was allowed to stay there.

Mr. Fukai was never seen again as he ran himself into the flames and said: "Japan is dying. If there is a real air raid here in Hiroshima, I want to die with our country".

Dr. Sasaki worked for three days straight with 1 hour of sleep and he then went back because he did not want his mother to think he was dead. He went to bed and slept for 17 hours.

Father Kleinsorge healed up and had his wounds starting to heal and he went back to the city looking for answers and found none.

August 9th, the second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki.

Tanimoto was still working at the park and felt as if he were being watched by Kamai, with her dead baby daughter in her arms.

The Jesuits took 50 refugees. Mrs. Nakamura and her children were there and her younger daughter had no appetite and ate nothing. Every time they were offered a meal, they would lose it.

August 10th

Father Kleinsorge sought out Dr. Fujii who was sitting on a chair applying compresses to his broken collarbone. Dr. Fujii said that the bomb was not a bomb and it was a powder that can only be dropped on big cities and the power lines would explode.

Tanimoto went to help Tanaka. Tanimoto read from the bible to him. He died as Tanimoto read the psalm.

August 11th

Word came that there was a large amount of military casualties and all civilian patients needed to evacuate.

Miss Sasaki was put on a large ship.

Back at the Novitiate, the Kataoka children were inconsolable. Father Cieslik got the children back to their mother and the brother.

The weapon was referred to as “genshi bakudan” or “original child bomb”.

Mrs. Nakamura went back to Hiroshima and discovered that her family were all dead. The emperor got on the radio and announced defeat.

Panic Grass and Feverfew

August 18th, 12 days after the bomb burst: Father Kleinsorge set out on foot for Hiroshima from the Novitiate.

Father Kleinsorge's wounds got worse again. They were suddenly wider and were swollen and inflamed.

Mrs. Nakamura realized that her hair was falling out in clumps until she was bald. Her son and other daughter were fine but her younger daughter and her felt extremely weak and tired.

Tanimoto came down with the same symptoms and all of them were experiencing radiation sickness without knowing what it was.

Japanese physicists worried about the lingering radiation at Hiroshima. Permanent shadows were found from the bomb. A permanent shadow thrown on the roof of the Chamber of Commerce Building. The scientists were able to determine the exact center where the bomb dropped.

Scientists announced that people could enter Hiroshima without any peril at all.