

Special Exhibition Commemorating the 75th Year of the Bombing

History of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum

Part 1: Building the Foundation

—Footsteps of the First Director, Shogo Nagaoka

“The damage from the atomic bomb continues unabated.

Our research and efforts will be continued and broadened.”

—HIROSHIMA

Shogo Nagaoka's remarks from a publication



Introduction

The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum recognizes its 65th anniversary this year. Since it opened, the Museum has exhibited materials with traces of the atomic bombing and conveyed the reality of the damage caused by the bombing. The museum's exhibition was founded with materials collected by one person. He entered Hiroshima City directly after the bombing and collected materials from the ashes. That person, whose name is Shogo Nagaoka, later became the first director of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. Mr. Nagaoka did not only collect materials but also carried out research and surveys on the atomic bombing, striving over his entire life to achieve a clear understanding of the reality of the bombing.

In this special exhibition we trace the footsteps of Mr. Nagaoka based on materials recently donated to the Museum by his family members, thereby introduce the path to the Museum's opening and what it was like in its early stages.

Mr. Nagaoka established the foundation for the Museum with a firm belief that the tragedy of the atomic bomb must never be repeated. As you face his passion and efforts, we hope you can realize how important it is to convey the reality of the bombing now, and in the future.

Walking Over the Scorched Earth

When the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Mr. Nagaoka, an academic working for the Hiroshima University of Literature and Science, was in Yamaguchi Prefecture on business. He was traveling to perform a geological survey with faculty members and students of a laboratory. Upon learning of the attack on Hiroshima the following day, the group cut their business trip short. Mr. Nagaoka returned to his home in Kuba-cho, Saeki County (current day Kuba, Otake City). Two days after the bombing, on August 8th, Mr. Nagaoka entered Hiroshima City heading for the Hiroshima University of Literature and Science. On his way to the University, he put his hand on the base of a stone lantern at Hiroshima Gokoku Shrine in an attempt to sit there, and he felt a sharp pain on his palm. He was shocked to learn that the melted and deformed surface of the stone had poked his palm like needles. "Even the stones are bleeding and weeping," he thought. This was the first of many days where Mr. Nagaoka would come to face the reality of the damage.



Hiroshima City just after the atomic bombing

August 7 or 8, 1945 710 m from the hypocenter
Ebisu-cho Fukuya Department Store

"Hiroshima had turned into a town of ashes. Is there such a tragic scene in the world today?
I can't believe that the entire city of Hiroshima has been destroyed by a single bomb."

Shogo Nagaoka, "Standing in the Ruins," in *Hiroshima No. 34 (Vol. 5 No. 5)* (1950 Hiroshima Railway Bureau)



Shogo Nagaoka (2nd from left) in his younger days ①

August 11, 1901 Born in Hawaii, where his parents had immigrated.

1918 Travels to mainland China, after studying at Shudo Junior High School in Hiroshima.

1921 Graduates from the geology course at Harbin School of Russian and Chinese Languages in northeastern China.

After graduating, worked at the Harbin Museum and Manchuria Mining Co., Ltd. while engaging in geological survey work.

Became known in his field as a collector of minerals and fossils in Japan and Manchuria (current northeastern China).

1944 Employed in the Department of Geology and Mineralogy at Hiroshima University of Literature and Science (current Hiroshima University). Provided guidance to students.



Inside the completely burned main building of Hiroshima University of Literature and Science

November 3, 1945
1,420 m from the hypocenter
Higashi-senda-machi

The exterior of the main building, where the laboratory was located, was still standing, but the inside was completely destroyed by fire. The rock specimens painstakingly collected by Nagaoka and others and survey tools were lost. Staff members and students had been injured and one of the international students was missing.



④

Large Torii Gate at Hiroshima Gokoku Shrine

October 1, 1945 150 m from the hypocenter Moto-machi

Nagaoka, exhausted from the terrible sights he witnessed throughout the city, put his hand on the stone pedestal for a lantern in front of the Large Torii Gate at Hiroshima Gokoku Shrine in an attempt to sit there. It was then that he noticed the change in the surface of the stone.

“I sat down on the lantern stone pedestal at the entrance. I immediately felt a pain in the palm of my hand, as if I had been stuck with a needle. Looking closely, I could see that the surface of the granite had melted. I gasped at the sight. I checked it over and over again, and the surface had definitely melted. It wasn't normal. I felt it must have been a special bomb.”

Shogo Nagaoka, “Standing in the Ruins,” in *Hiroshima No. 34 (Vol. 5 No. 5)*
(1950 Hiroshima Railway Bureau)



⑥

Stacks of metal

At that time, people collected metals from the burned ruins to exchange for cash. However, Nagaoka collected stones and roof tiles. Sometimes people laughed at Nagaoka, but moved by his conviction, not only his family but also students and shopkeepers began to help him. He began to expand the range of items that he collected.



⑤

Nagaoka gazing at the gravel at Hiroshima Gokoku Shrine

Nagaoka went to the burned ruins and began collecting materials. He occasionally suffered from high fever and diarrhea, probably because he entered the city immediately after the bombing. He sold geology books to pay for transportation expenses from his home to Hiroshima City center, and continued collecting materials.

“We helped collect roof tiles, melted and deformed glass bottles, galvanized iron, and bricks from burnt fields, put them in rucksacks and large cloth bags, and then carried them to Nagaoka's home using wooden racks on the back.”

Testimony of Masatsuyo Matsumoto, a student at the time who helped collect materials



⑦

Lump of melted plates



⑧

Deformed beer bottle



⑨

Roof tile exposed to the heat rays



⑩

Participating with a survey team from the Ministry of Education

October 16, 1945 Hypocenter of Nagasaki

On September 14, the Special Committee for the Investigation of A-bomb Damages was established in the Ministry of Education's Scientific Research Council. Nagaoka participated in the Geoscience Group of the Physics, Chemistry, and Geoscience Department Meeting, and conducted surveys in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in October. He walked on the scorched earth, collected and studied stones and roof tiles that had been exposed to heat rays, and tried to clarify the effects of the atomic bomb. This photo was taken when he went to Nagasaki for a survey. Nagaoka is standing on the right in a white coat.



⑬

Lines for estimating the hypocenter

Nagaoka drew lines on a map in the directions that he measured from multiple survey points, to find the hypocenter at the point where the lines intersect.

Hypocenter and point of the A-bomb explosion, determined by Nagaoka

The hypocenter was Shima Hospital. The atomic bomb exploded at a point 570 meters above the ground.

*Later, while Nagaoka was the Director of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, he re-evaluated the data, and the point of explosion was corrected to 606 meters above the ground. Currently, the atomic bomb is estimated to have exploded 600 meters above Shima Hospital.



⑪

Nagaoka pointing at a shadow on the stone steps of the bank

260 m from the hypocenter Kamiya-cho

Sumitomo Bank, Hiroshima Branch

During detailed surveys, researchers thought that the shadows left on stones by heat rays could reveal the point of explosion of the atomic bomb. Even after his work with the survey team was complete, Nagaoka continuously made an effort to identify the point of explosion and the hypocenter directly beneath it. He investigated more than 6,000 shadows that had been left on gravestones and buildings throughout the city, and determined the point of explosion and hypocenter.



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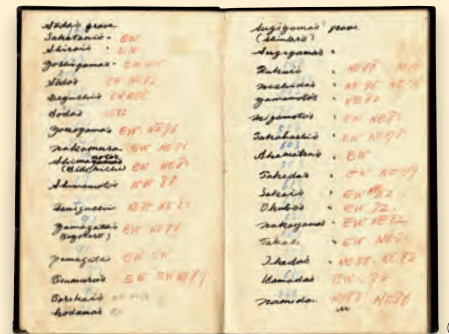
Measuring direction

Surface areas of granite exposed to the heat rays from the atomic bomb had peeled off and became whitish, while shaded areas retained their original colors like shadows. Using a measuring instrument called a clinometer, Nagaoka measured angles to find the point of explosion and directions to find the hypocenter.



⑭

Clinometer



⑮

Notebook of the directions of shadows on gravestones

Displaying the Collected Materials to the Public

Word of Mr. Nagaoka, who steadily continued to collect materials exposed to the atomic bombing, eventually reached Shinzo Hamai, who was mayor of Hiroshima at that time. Mr. Nagaoka, who had retired from his post at the Hiroshima University of Literature and Science, was hired by the City of Hiroshima in 1948 as a specialist to collect and survey materials on the atomic bombing. At the same time, Mr. Nagaoka provided the materials he had stored at his home to the City.

Using those materials, the A-bomb Reference Material Display Room was opened in a room of the Hiroshima City Central Community Hall on September 25th, 1949. Then, on August 6th, 1950, the Atomic Bomb Memorial Hall was opened, neighboring the Hiroshima City Central Community Hall to the north. Mr. Nagaoka worked alone with a small budget. With the help of his family and his friends, he gathered materials and created exhibitions; even models and captions they made themselves. Mr. Nagaoka also carried out various surveys to understand the full scope of the damage and published the content thereof in booklets; he continuously strived to convey the damage accurately.



Shinzo Hamai, Mayor of Hiroshima City (center)

Brooklyn Stadium, New York, USA

Mayor Shinzo Hamai, who also experienced the atomic bombing, won his first election in April 1947 and moved forward with the reconstruction project for Hiroshima City. Deeply concerned that over time all traces of the atomic bombing would disappear and that materials would be scattered lost, he thought that collecting materials from the citizens was necessary.

(16)



A-bomb Reference Material Display Room opened in Hiroshima City Central Community Hall

September 1949 Moto-machi

The roof tiles and stones exposed to heat rays that were collected by Nagaoka were exhibited in the A-bomb Reference Material Display Room. Materials were placed on desks and chairs, and maps of Hiroshima City indicating the range of damage were displayed on the walls. On those maps, the location of the hypocenter had been marked by Nagaoka. It was the first facility in Hiroshima to display atomic bomb artifacts.

(17)

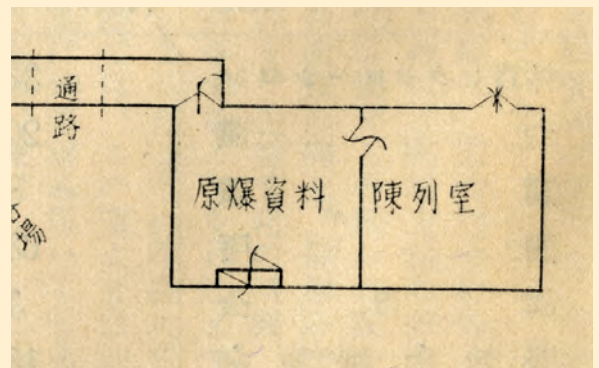


Opening of Atomic Bomb Memorial Hall

Moto-machi

On August 6th, 1950, the Atomic Bomb Memorial Hall was completed, neighboring the Hiroshima City Central Community Hall to the north. The A-bomb materials were moved from a room of the Hiroshima City Central Community Hall and put on display in the Atomic Bomb Memorial Hall.

(18)



Floor plan of Atomic Bomb Memorial Hall

The Atomic Bomb Memorial Hall was a wooden, one-story structure that was connected to the Hiroshima City Central Community Hall by a corridor. It was divided into two exhibition rooms.

(19)



(20)

Panoramic model of Hiroshima City center after the atomic bombing

September 26, 1953 Moto-machi

Upon entering the Atomic Bomb Memorial Hall, visitors could see a panoramic model of the Hiroshima City center after the atomic bombing in the center of the first exhibition room. Materials that were exhibited at the Exhibition of Atomic Bomb and Peace were used to represent the ruins within approximately one kilometer of the hypocenter.



(21)

Wall displays

August 27, 1952 Moto-machi

The walls of the exhibition room were filled with framed photos of mushroom clouds and the A-bomb Dome, materials that were scattered to the suburbs by the blast, and panels that showed the transition of the explosion of the atomic bomb. The descriptions on the photos were provided in English as well. The display cases in front of the wall displays contained roof tiles and stones that were exposed to the bombing.



(22)

Exhibition materials increased

Moto-machi

When the Atomic Bomb Memorial Hall opened, most of the exhibited materials were roof tiles and stones, which were exposed to the bombing, as well as photographs. Later, clothes that had been worn by people who experienced the bombing were provided and exhibited. The clothes were placed on hangers or attached to boards, and displayed in the other exhibition room in the back. In this photo, Nagaoka points to burnt areas on a pair of pants.



(23)

Volunteers

Moto-machi

Nagaoka was the only staff member at the Atomic Bomb Memorial Hall. He alone surveyed materials, produced exhibits, and received visitors. There was only a small operating budget of a few tens of thousands of yen per year. So, he had to cover the cost of firewood and charcoal for heating from his own pocket. Nagaoka was supported by his family, his friends, and others who had continued to volunteer their time since when they first started collecting materials.

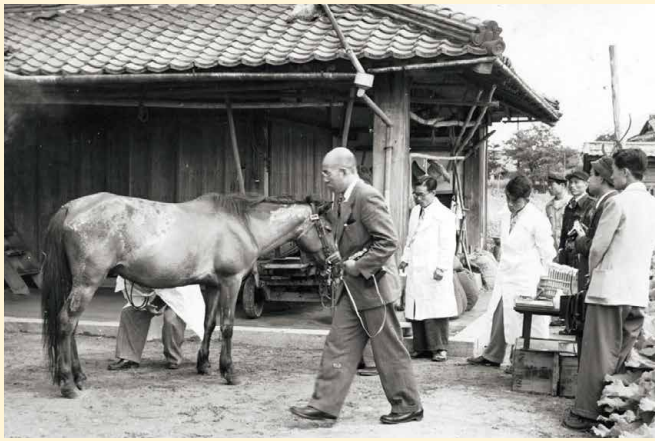


(24)

Visitors to the Atomic Bomb Memorial Hall

June 8, 1953 Moto-machi

The Atomic Bomb Memorial Hall was introduced in the *Hiroshima City Almanac* as a tourist facility. Sightseeing buses stopped there, and many visitors came from throughout Japan and other countries. According to a newspaper article, about 400 Japanese visitors and 30 foreign visitors came to the facility on average each day around 1953. This photo shows Nagaoka guiding Eleanor Roosevelt (wife of former US President Franklin Roosevelt) during her visit to the Atomic Bomb Memorial Hall.



Studying exposed horses

May 31, 1954

In order to see the whole picture of the A-bomb damage, Nagaoka's survey covered a wide range of subjects, including the number of A-bomb casualties and the effects on plants and animals. The horse in this photo was exposed to the bombing 1,300 meters from the hypocenter. Keloid scars developed on the burns on the right side of its body.

(25)



Measuring radiation dose

Sarugaku-cho

This photo shows radiation dose measurements being taken near the A-bomb Dome. Nagaoka also examined the radiation doses of exposed roof tiles.

(26)



(27)

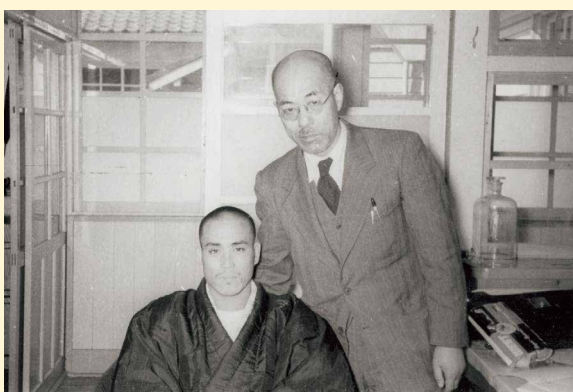
Booklet *HIROSHIMA*

Published on August 6, 1957

The first edition was published in 1954. It includes explanatory text (also translated into English) regarding *Hiroshima: Destruction Caused by the Atomic Bombing* published in 1953, as well as additional material such as a photo newly obtained by Nagaoka of the inside of a relief station. Due to a lack of budget and manpower, Masao Niide, Manager of the Hiroshima City Public Relations Division, produced the English translation on top of his normal work. Yasushi Fujii, an acquaintance of Nagaoka who owned a toy store in Sakai-machi, provided approximately 300,000 yen in funding.

“This modest report is presented with a desire to appeal to people’s hearts, based on a conscientious vow never to repeat this (atomic bombing) again. The damage from the atomic bomb continues unabated. Our research and efforts will be continued and broadened.”

—*HIROSHIMA* Shogo Nagaoka’s remarks from a publication



(28)

Yoshio Misaki, a crew member of the Fukuryu-maru No. 5 (left), with Nagaoka (right)

March 24 to 31, 1954

On March 1, 1954, the Japanese fishing boat Fukuryu-maru No. 5 (Luck Dragon) was exposed to radioactive “ashes of death” following a hydrogen bomb test conducted by the US at Bikini Atoll. Nagaoka traveled to Yaizu City, Shizuoka Prefecture, where the Fukuryu-maru No. 5 had returned, and Tokyo. He spent a week interviewing the crew members about the situation at the time of the incident, and collected photographs of researchers taking radiation measurements on the Fukuryu-maru No. 5.



(29)

Exhibition of A-bomb materials in Tokyo

November 25 to December 3, 1954 Minato Ward, Tokyo Prefecture

From November 25 to December 3, 1954, Hiroshima-Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Exhibition was held at the Japanese Red Cross Society Headquarters in Tokyo, sponsored by the Japanese Red Cross Society and the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The purpose of the exhibition was to convey the suffering of survivors that still continued nine years after the atomic bombing, and to encourage the national government to bear the cost of medical treatments. This exhibit, which included items left behind by mobilized students and descriptions of the effects of radiation, focused on conveying the damage suffered by the people. It drew a great response.

Opening the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum

As Mr. Nagaoka was devoting his days to operating the Atomic Bomb Memorial Hall and carrying out surveys on the atomic bombing, construction work of Peace Memorial Park was moving forward in the Nakajima area, near the hypocenter. In 1946, the year after the bombing, a council meeting on reconstruction was held. They decided to build a park at the hypocenter and create a facility as a memorial for the dead and a symbol of peace. In 1949, the designs for Peace Memorial Park and the buildings in the park were decided through a design competition, and construction on the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum began in 1951. Construction work was often suspended due to a lack of funding, but was eventually completed four and a half years later. The Museum that Mr. Nagaoka longed for was opened on August 24th, 1955, where he served as the first museum director.



Design model for Peace Memorial Park

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City of Hiroshima held a competition for designing Peace Memorial Park. Among the 145 proposals, the design by Kenzo Tange Group was selected for the first prize. Kenzo Tange was an assistant professor at the University of Tokyo at the time. The winning proposal had the Memorial Museum of Atomic Bombed Relics (current the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum Main Building) located in the center, with Peace Hall Main Building (current the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum East Building) and the west conference hall (current Hiroshima International Conference Center) connected by corridors. The structure is positioned in a straight line with the arched Cenotaph and the A-bomb Dome.



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People encouraging others to vote for the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law

July, 1949

Immediately after the atomic bombing, the people of Hiroshima envisioned various reconstruction plans. However, the plans did not proceed due to lack of financial resources. The Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law overcame this situation and provided motivation for reconstruction. The law passed the Diet in May 1949, and was passed by referendum on July 7 with the support of a majority of voters.



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Kenzo Tange (on the right), designer of Peace Memorial Park

June 11, 1951

Before the atomic bombing, Tange studied at Hiroshima High School and spent time in Hiroshima City. He lost his mother in air raids attacked on August 5 and 6, 1945 by the US military on his hometown of Imabari City, Ehime Prefecture. Mr. Tange thought that peace was not something that was given, but that was created through our own actions. He put this feeling into his design.

Design features of the museum

August 2, 1952

The museum is supported by pillars, based on the image of the people of the city standing up strongly from the ruins. The pillars are not cylindrical, but instead designed with curved structures to provide strength. The open space (piloti) that is created underneath the structure provides a clear view of the park.



34

Nagaoka guiding visitors

August 6, 1955

The museum's exhibition rooms were opened to the public prior to the completion of construction work on the interior. The World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs was held in Hiroshima starting on August 6, and participants from various countries also visited the museum. "It is necessary to create a museum that conveys the cruelty of this terrible tragedy not only to the people of Japan, but also to the people of the world." Nagaoka's long-held dream had finally been realized.



35

Opening of the museum

August 23, 1955

The museum was officially opened on August 24th, 1955. Exhibits were relocated from the Atomic Bomb Memorial Hall. Framed photographs and clothes were placed on easels, and there were rows of display cases containing roof tiles and stones that has been exposed to heat rays. The museum welcomed more than 600 visitors on opening day.



36

Exhibition room when the museum was opened

1955

This photo was taken of the exhibition room, facing southwest. The panoramic model of Hiroshima City center after the atomic bombing was also relocated from the Atomic Bomb Memorial Hall. No walls blocked the windows, allowing the exhibition room to be bathed in sunlight.



37

Exhibition room when the museum was opened

1955

This photo was taken of the exhibition room, facing east. Bamboos, gravestones, bicycles, and other items that were exposed to heat rays were exhibited as is.



38

Exhibition room when the museum was opened

1955

This photo was taken of the exhibition room, facing east. The second half of the exhibition featured free-standing boards with photos and panels that described the aftereffects of radiation, such as acute disorders, A-bomb cataracts, and leukemia.

Gallery when the museum was opened

1955

The north side of the museum, which is now called the gallery, was originally designed as a terrace overlooking the park. There was no glass in the windows on the terrace when the museum first opened. The gargoyle roof tiles and gravestones placed here were left exposed to the wind and rain.



39

Items exhibited in the museum in early times



Work Jacket

(40)

1,900 m from the hypocenter Nishi-kan-on-machi 2-chome
Donor's mother Kaya Hironaka (then 63) was exposed to the atomic bombing when she was outside her house. Suffering burns on much of her body, her face was so swollen that her eyes and ears were unrecognizable. Kaya passed away on August 21, begging for water.



(41)

Trousers

1,200 m from the hypocenter Zakoba-cho
Takeyoshi Nagao (then 14), a second-year student of Shudo Junior High School was exposed to the atomic bombing at his building demolition work site. He returned home together with two friends who suffered severe burns on their upper body just as he did. Four days later, the three were finally put in a relief station. Despite desperate care of Takeyoshi's mother Umeyo, the three boys passed away one after another on August 11.



(42)

Military boots

800 m from the hypocenter Moto-machi
The donor picked up this pair of boots from the burned ruins. He entered the city immediately after the atomic bombing for rescue activities. The soles contracted due to the intense heat.



(43)

Rice bowl deformed in a safe

1,100 m from the hypocenter
This bowl stored in a safe was deformed by the heat of the fire.



(44)

Wrist watch

1,250 m from the hypocenter Moto-machi
Chugoku Military District Ordnance Maintenance Station
Kaname Yatsuzuka, Director of the Chugoku Military District Ordnance Maintenance Station, was bombed at work and became trapped under the building. Although he suffered only minor injuries, 58 of his subordinates died. He went to the burned ruins every day to dig up the remains and belongings of his subordinates, and then delivered them to their bereaved families. These items that were left behind have been kept in storage. The owners have not been identified.



(45)

leather purse



(46)

Thread cutting scissors

500 m from the hypocenter Zaimoku-cho
Ogawa Itsue (then 21) used this pair of scissors regularly. Itsue was exposed to the bombing at home in Zaimoku-cho and trapped under the collapsed house. From his work place, her husband Haruzo returned to the burned-out ruins of his house on the 8th and dug out his wife's ashes and her items from the ground that was still hot.

Daily work

As the 10-year anniversary of the atomic bombing approached, there was a growing call to enhance the collection, preservation, and exhibition of A-bomb materials. The Ordinance on Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum was established by the City of Hiroshima for the opening of the museum.

The ordinance specifically indicates that the following work will be performed, and clarifies the role of the museum.

- Collect, store, and display objects, models, photographs, records, documents, and other materials related to the damage caused by the atomic bomb.
- Survey and study the damage caused by the atomic bomb.
- Prepare and distribute guidebooks, manuals, survey and study reports, etc. related to the damage caused by the atomic bomb.



(48)

Conducting a survey in Nagasaki

After starting work at the Atomic Bomb Memorial Hall, Nagaoka traveled to Nagasaki from time to time, where he assisted in the collection of A-bomb materials and developing exhibition of the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum. He helped to measure the shadows caused by the A-bomb's heat rays in the same way as in Hiroshima, to estimate the point of explosion and hypocenter in Nagasaki. The results of these measurements were announced at the 2nd Atomic Bomb Casualty Research Meeting held in Nagasaki in 1960.



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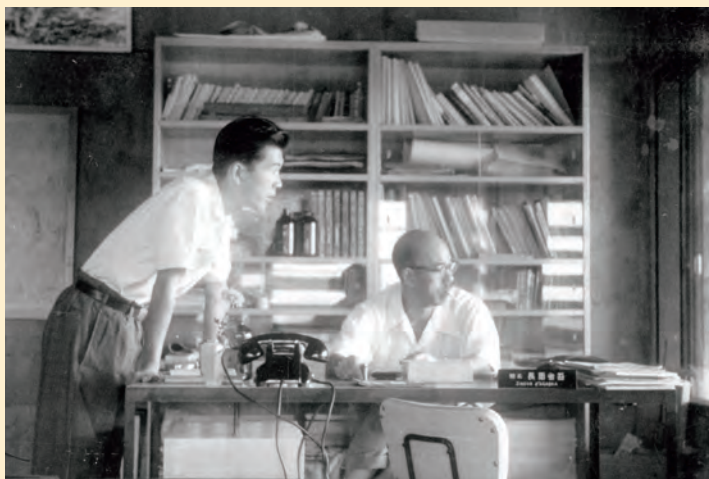
Donation of items left by the deceased

The Chugoku Shimbun newspaper dated August 5, 1955

With the opening of the museum, the number of items that had been left behind by victims of the atomic bombing gradually increased through donations. This article describes how Hajime Fukuoka's school uniform, which is still on display in the Main Building of the museum as part of the "Belongings of three junior high students" exhibit, was donated by his parents.

Storage of materials

All of the materials in the collection could not be displayed in the exhibition room. There were no repositories like we have today where the temperature and humidity could be controlled. So, the materials were kept in a storage room in one corner of the museum. In this photo, Nagaoka and two others are checking the materials in the collection.



(50)

In the Museum Director's office

1955 to 1957

The Museum Director's office was located at the top of the stairs next to the entrance to the exhibition room. After Nagaoka became Museum Director, he had fewer opportunities to go out collecting A-bomb materials. He spent his time guiding visitors and further studying the damage caused by the atomic bomb in his office. This photo shows Seinosuke Arata, a staff member who later became Museum Director, standing next to Nagaoka at his desk

Nagaoka describing a gravestone that was exposed to the heat rays

October 26, 1957

During the first year after its opening, approximately 110,000 visitors came to the museum. In 1961, when Nagaoka stepped down, this number had grown to more than 500,000 visitors. In order to help people from around the world learn the tragedy of the atomic bombing while observing the A-bomb materials, Nagaoka used a pointer while guiding visitors through the museum. In this photo, Nagaoka is guiding a group that includes the then former Vice President of Indonesia.

"I hope the materials on display here are not simply seen as burnt bottles and roof tiles, but as items left behind by victims that convey the terror of the atomic bomb."

Shogo Nagaoka, from an article in the Chugoku Shimbun dated February 1, 1962



(51)



(52)

Prospectus for A-bomb Materials Collection Support Association

September 20, 1954

Those who helped Nagaoka collect atomic bomb artifacts formed a support association from around the time the A-bomb Reference Material Display Room was opened in a room of the Hiroshima City Central Community Hall. The name of the support association was changed from A-bomb Materials Collection Support Association to A-bomb Material Preservation Society. The Society had an office in the museum. Since the museum had a small staff, the Society was a great help in collecting atomic bomb artifacts and making improvements to the exhibitions. It also operated the shop inside the museum.



(53)

Yosaburo Yamasaki organizing the Atomic Bomb Memorial Depository Library

April 13, 1965

The A-bomb Material Preservation Society collected documents such as atomic bomb experience reports and literary works on the subject of the atomic bomb. The Atomic Bomb Memorial Library was opened in the museum in 1965 (and later relocated to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Hall). Yosaburo Yamasaki played a central role in the collection of these documents. He was previously a teacher, who lost many students in the atomic bombing. Yamasaki was persistent in his continued efforts to collect documents to console the spirits of the people who died.

Holding expositions

After the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum was opened, it became the venue for the many expositions held in Hiroshima City.

The Atoms for Peace Exposition that was touring the country in 1956 was held at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Hall and Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum from May 27 to June 17. Two years later in 1958, the Hiroshima Restoration Exposition was held from April 1 to May 20 at three locations: in Peace Memorial Park, along Peace Boulevard, and at Hiroshima Castle.



Magic hand demonstration

During the Hiroshima Restoration Exposition, there was a magic hand exhibition in the museum. It was operated by female students in coveralls, who were working part-time during the exposition. After the Restoration Exposition ended, the magic hand was moved to the exhibition room and operated by the museum staff members.

Changes to the exhibition rooms

After the opening, the layout of the exhibition rooms underwent gradual changes. After the Hiroshima Restoration Exposition, the appearance of the exhibition rooms were changed significantly compared to when the museum was first opened, with the addition of newly produced models and exhibition materials.

Changes to panoramic model, and displays of clothes

May 25, 1958

The panoramic model of the city center after the atomic bombing, which was originally square, was changed to a circular shape. It also represented a wider area of damage, up to about two kilometers from the hypocenter. Near the panoramic model was a display of clothes that were worn by survivors. These clothes were placed in frames or displayed on mannequins.



Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, one of the venues for the Hiroshima Restoration Exposition

April 1 to May 20, 1958

As the population and industrial production of Hiroshima City exceeded prewar levels, the Hiroshima Restoration Exposition was held with the aim of introducing the current state of reconstruction, industry, culture, and tourism. Various pavilions were built in Peace Memorial Park, and the museum became the Atomic Science Pavilion.



Advance ticket of Hiroshima Restoration Exposition

“When a group of visitors such as students on a school trip came in, I was called to operate the magic hand. We didn’t have the budget to buy demonstration items, so I brought tools and newspapers from home. When I put ink in a metal ashtray, and then used it to write ‘Peace’ on a newspaper, the visitors applauded.”

Testimony of a staff member at that time



Museum supporters

When the museum was first opened, there was a total of eight staff members including full-time and temporary staff members. With so few staff members and a limited budget, the staff cooperated with each other in order to provide the best experience for the many visitors to the museum.



Museum guards

The museum had a night duty room. In addition to the normal daytime work, guards were placed on night duty every night. There were not enough guards available, so male staff members from the memorial hall and the museum also took turns on guard duty every night.

“The guards were also responsible for fixing any clothes that had fallen out of the displays, and changing the formalin solution for keloid specimens.”

Testimony of a staff member at that time



Nagaoka (left) and Itsuro Funakura (right), who served as Director of Hiroshima Peace Memorial Hall

Funakura, who served as the Director when the memorial hall opened, had been friends with Nagaoka since before the museum opened. He helped with the production of exhibits and collection of materials.

“They got mannequins at a store on Hondori, dressed them with burned and torn clothes that were exposed to the atomic bombing, and then colored the mannequins with paint. My father once went to Honkawa with Nagaoka to collect roof tiles that were exposed to the bombing. I think my father respected Nagaoka.”

Testimony of Yoshiko Funakura



Admission ticket sales

When the museum was first opened, the admission fee was 20 yen for those at or over the age of 13 and 10 yen for those under the age of 13. A desk for collecting admission fees was located at the entrance. Later, a second desk was added, and eventually they were replaced with a booth.

“The admission fee was inexpensive, but it would add up to a large amount whenever large groups visited. It was difficult to keep up.”

Testimony of a staff member at that time



Two female staff members in charge of cleaning the museum

“It was very hot because the floor of the museum was concrete. Part of their job was to open the windows and sprinkle water on the floor with a watering can.”

Testimony of a staff member at that time



The staff members of Hiroshima Peace Memorial Hall

This photo was taken in the memorial hall office. The memorial hall staff was responsible for the general affairs of the museum. The staff members of the memorial hall, the museum, and the auditorium formed a group to deepen their exchange with each other.

“We asked a cook at Hotel New Hiroshima (a hotel that was attached to Hiroshima City Auditorium) to make hors d’oeuvres, and I carried them in on a large silver tray. We all enjoyed eating and drinking together.”

Testimony of a staff member at that time

Unfaltering Passion

At the end of January 1962, Mr. Nagaoka donated the atomic bomb materials that he had collected himself to the City of Hiroshima and resigned as director for reasons of health. However, not once did he falter in his passion to research the damage of the atomic bombing. Even after retiring, he was encouraged by many to become involved in a survey to determine the amount of radiation released from the atomic bombing, and he walked around the city collecting materials. He was also involved in operating the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum as an advisor. In 1967, he became a member of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum Exhibition Council, revising the current exhibition and making proposals to expand medical materials and improve the exhibition environment.

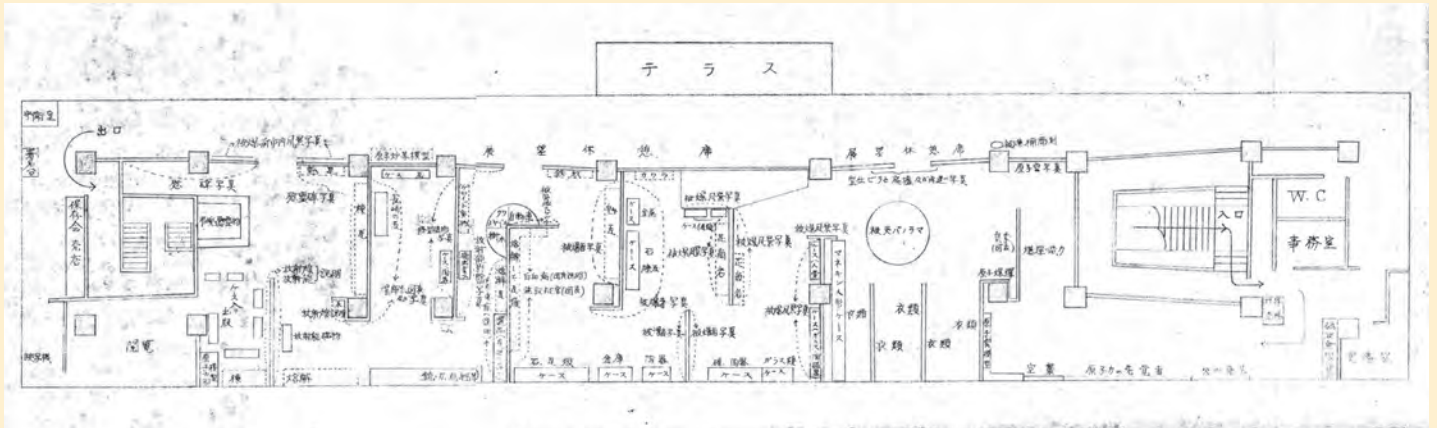


Collecting metal samples that were exposed to the atomic bombing 63

Nishi-jikata-cho

When it became clear to researchers at the University of Tokyo that it was possible to calculate the radiation dose from the A-bomb Dome's iron pieces, he began to collect metal pieces from buildings and utility poles within a radius of two kilometers from the hypocenter.

Layout of the exhibits around the time the 1st Exhibition Council meeting was held



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Toward new exhibits

May 14, 1967

At the second council meeting on April 25, 1967, the purpose of the museum and the policy for the improvement of exhibits were announced. An exhibition configuration policy was established to make improvements to the cluttered arrangement. Different display sections were made based on the phenomena, such as the heat rays, blast, radiation, and high-temperature fires from the atomic bomb. These sections were arranged according to the passage of time.

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Newspaper article reporting updates to the exhibits

The Chugoku Shimbun newspaper dated May 7, 1967

In order to create exhibits that show changes over time, a panel that describes Hiroshima City before the atomic bombing was placed at the beginning, in place of the panel introducing "people who have devoted themselves to the utilization of nuclear energy for peace." In addition, the exhibits on the utilization of nuclear power for peace, including models of nuclear ships and reactors, were removed. Gradual changes continued to be made to the exhibition room. These changes to the exhibition environment that Nagaoka expressed to the council resulted in the first large-scale renewal of the museum.

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On February 1st, 1973, Mr. Nagaoka passed away at the age of 71. He was in his 40s when he witnessed the damage wrought by the atomic bombing. From that day forward, with a determination that he must convey the reality, he spent every effort striving to clarify the whole picture of the damage, coming face-to-face with atomic bomb materials. Despite a harsh situation where he did not have a proper budget or staff, Mr. Nagaoka continued to think of exhibitions that could convey the tragedy of that day to people around the world. Always interested in new research, he carried out surveys hoping to include them in the Museum's exhibitions.

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Cover photos: Courtesy of Shizuko Fukushima (upper right), Shogo Nagaoka Collection (lower left)

Special Exhibition Commemorating the 75th Year of the Bombing
History of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum

Part 1: Building the Foundation—Footsteps of the First Director, Shogo Nagaoka

Period July 22, 2020-February 23, 2021

Place Special Exhibition Room East Building 1F, Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum
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