

Memories of Hiroshima's Suffering Fade Ahead of Obama Visit

- 1) For atomic bomb survivor Sunao Tsuboi, the visit by U.S. President Barack Obama this week to Hiroshima has been a long time coming.
- 2) In 2009 when Obama took office, Tsuboi sent a letter to the White House on behalf of seven survivor organizations, inviting the president to visit the city. The invitation was declined.
- 3) With months remaining in Obama's second and final term, Tsuboi says he is just grateful that the U.S. leader will pay a visit and deliver a message calling for the world to get rid of nuclear weapons.
- 4) "I welcome him with all my heart," Tsuboi said in an interview in Hiroshima. He was 20 when the A-bomb ripped through his hometown and killed his girlfriend. Now 91, he still carries the scars riven in his body from the blast. He has received treatment for multiple illnesses throughout his life, including cancer.
- 5) The two atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the final days of World War II killed more than 120,000 people instantly, with thousands more dying and suffering in years that followed from injuries and radiation-related illnesses. Over 183,000 were registered as atomic bomb victims in 2014, but the numbers dwindle each year as the victims age.
- 6) Obama's May 27 visit to Hiroshima, the first by a sitting U.S. president, also comes as memories of the war and effects of the atomic bomb are fading even in one of Japan's most war-scarred cities.
- 7) A poll conducted by public broadcaster NHK in June last year showed that 44 percent of Hiroshima residents considered the use of the atomic bomb during World War II as "something that was inevitable," compared with 42 percent in the last poll in 2010. Less than a third thought the bomb was inevitable in a 1975 survey.
- 8) "The younger generations only see these events as history. They can't imagine that these things could actually happen," said Masako Wada, vice chairwoman of the Atomic Bomb Sufferers Association in Yokohama.
- 9) Katsuhiro Hirano, an elementary school teacher in Hiroshima, said when he asked his sixth graders whether Japan should arm itself with nuclear weapons, half of them said it was necessary to do so because of security threats from China and North Korea.
- 10) "I was stunned," the teacher said. "These are children of Hiroshima saying we should use the very weapons that caused so much pain."
- 11) Diplomatic ties between Japan and China have been strained over a territorial dispute in East China Sea, while North Korea has held two nuclear tests since Kim Jong-Un's ascendancy to power in 2011 -- the most recent test conducted in January. North Korea has urged the U.S. to recognize it as a nuclear power in future negotiations.
- 12) In Washington, the Republican's presumptive nominee Donald Trump has said that Japan and South Korea should pay more to the U.S. for American military deployments in their countries or be allowed to develop their own nuclear weapons. Japan spent about 373 billion yen (\$3.4 billion) in 2015 for U.S. military deployment, according to the Japanese Ministry of Defense.
- 13) "It's good that Obama's visiting," said Shinichi Onaka, 65, the son of atomic bomb survivors. "But the issue is whether his legacy will be upheld by the next U.S. leader. Whoever succeeds him will need to carry the same attitude towards nuclear disarmament."【May 23, 2016/Bloomberg】

long time coming: 待ち遠しい on behalf of: ~を代表して get rid of: 処分する、(好ましくないこと)から抜け出す rip through: 引き裂く rive: 引き裂かれる blast: 爆風 dwindle: だんだん小さくなる sitting: 現職の inevitable: 避けられない be stunned: 唖然とする presumptive: 推定上の ascendancy: 優勢、支配権 uphold: 支持する

☆Ice breaker for active discussion

- 1) Have you ever been to Hiroshima or Nagasaki? How was your experience?
- 2) Why do you think Obama declined the invitation to visit Hiroshima during his first term?
- 3) How can we hand down the memories of war to the next generation?
- 4) Do you think we will be able to witness a world without nuclear weapons?
- 5) Make sentences using the following words: get rid of, blast, dwindle, inevitable and uphold.

生物兵器禁止条約は 1975 年に、化学兵器禁止条約は 1997 年に発効し、対人地雷やクラスター爆弾など非人道的と言われる兵器を禁止する国際条約があるが、核兵器を禁止する国際条約はいまだ存在しない。