

HIBAKUSHA

1. Hibakusha is a term that means "person affected by an explosion," mainly referring to survivors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings in August 1945. It includes both those directly exposed to the blasts and individuals who later suffered health problems caused by radiation or related diseases. In Japan, 'hibakusha' carries not only medical importance but also social, cultural, and moral significance, symbolizing the human cost of nuclear warfare.
2. Despite the overwhelming challenges, the survivors demonstrated remarkable resilience.

- Severe burns and injuries
- Acute radiation syndrome
- Long-term cancers and chronic diseases
- Psychological trauma and social discrimination

3. Classification of Hibakusha (Official Recognition in Japan) –

Japan's Atomic Bomb Survivors Relief Law (1957, with later updates) recognizes four main categories –

1. Direct Exposure –

- Present within a 2km radius of the hypocenter during the bombing
- Experienced immediate impacts from heat, blast, and radiation.

2. Entry Survivors –

- It arrived in Hiroshima or Nagasaki within two weeks after the bombing.
- It was subjected to residual radiation from "black rain" and fallout.

3. Caregivers

- Those who treated or handled "victims'" bodies within two weeks, often exposed to contamination

4. In Utero Hibakusha –
 - Children are exposed in the womb if their mothers belonged to any of the categories listed above.
4. Health effects –
 - A. The immediate health effects include burns, blast injuries, and acute radiation sickness.
 - B. The long-term effects include an increased risk of leukemia and solid cancers, cataracts, infertility, and immune disorders. Mental health issues such as PTSD, depression, and survivor's guilt are also common.
5. Social Challenges –
 - A. Stigma and discrimination have caused many hibakusha to face prejudice in marriage, employment, and insurance because of fears of genetic damage.
 - B. Silence and Trauma includes some discussions where individuals talk about their experiences for decades to avoid discrimination or to cope with trauma.
6. Legal and Welfare Measures –
 - A. In 1957, the atomic bomb victim medical care law
 - B. In 1968, the law on special measures for atomic bomb victims
 - C. In 1995, the relief law (consolidating previous laws) had the following benefits
 - Free medical care for recognized illnesses
 - Monthly allowances
 - Health check-ups and medical expense subsidies
7. Global Symbolism –
 - A. Hibakusha's stories have transcended borders, serving as a global reminder of the catastrophic impact of nuclear bombs. Their accounts, shared

worldwide, include peace activists advocating for nuclear disarmament and peace education.

8. Cultural and Literary Depictions –

1. It includes memoirs and testimonies:

- Barefoot Gen (Keiji Nakazawa) is a manga/anime that depicts a survivor's childhood.
- Black Rain by Masuji Ibuse is a novel about life after the bombing.

2. Arts and films:

- Survivors' paintings are showcased in peace museums.
- Films such as Hiroshima Mon Amour illustrate the emotional aftermath.

9. Population Trends –

- A. In 1945, approximately 65,000 hibakusha were estimated.
- B. As of 2024, fewer than 1,10,000 remain, with an average age of over 85.
- C. As the Hibakusha population ages, the need to record their oral histories becomes more urgent. It is a responsibility we all share to preserve these stories for future generations.

10. International Recognition –

- A. Hibakusha testimonies played a crucial role in –
- B. Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), adopted in 2017
- C. Global awareness campaigns like Mayors for Peace
- D. In 1996, UNESCO designated the Hiroshima Peace Memorial (Genbaku Dome) as a World Heritage Site.

Hibakusha

"Person affected by an explosion"

August 6, 1945

HIROSHIMA

"Little Boy" atomic
bomb

**~140,000 deaths by
end of 1945**

August 9, 1945

NAGASAKI

"Fat Man" atomic
bomb

**~70,000 deaths by
end of 1945**

Health Effects

- Immediate: Burns, blast injuries, radiation sickness.
- Long-term: Leukemia, cancers, cataracts, infertility, immune disorders.
- Mental health: PTSD, depression, survivor's guilt.

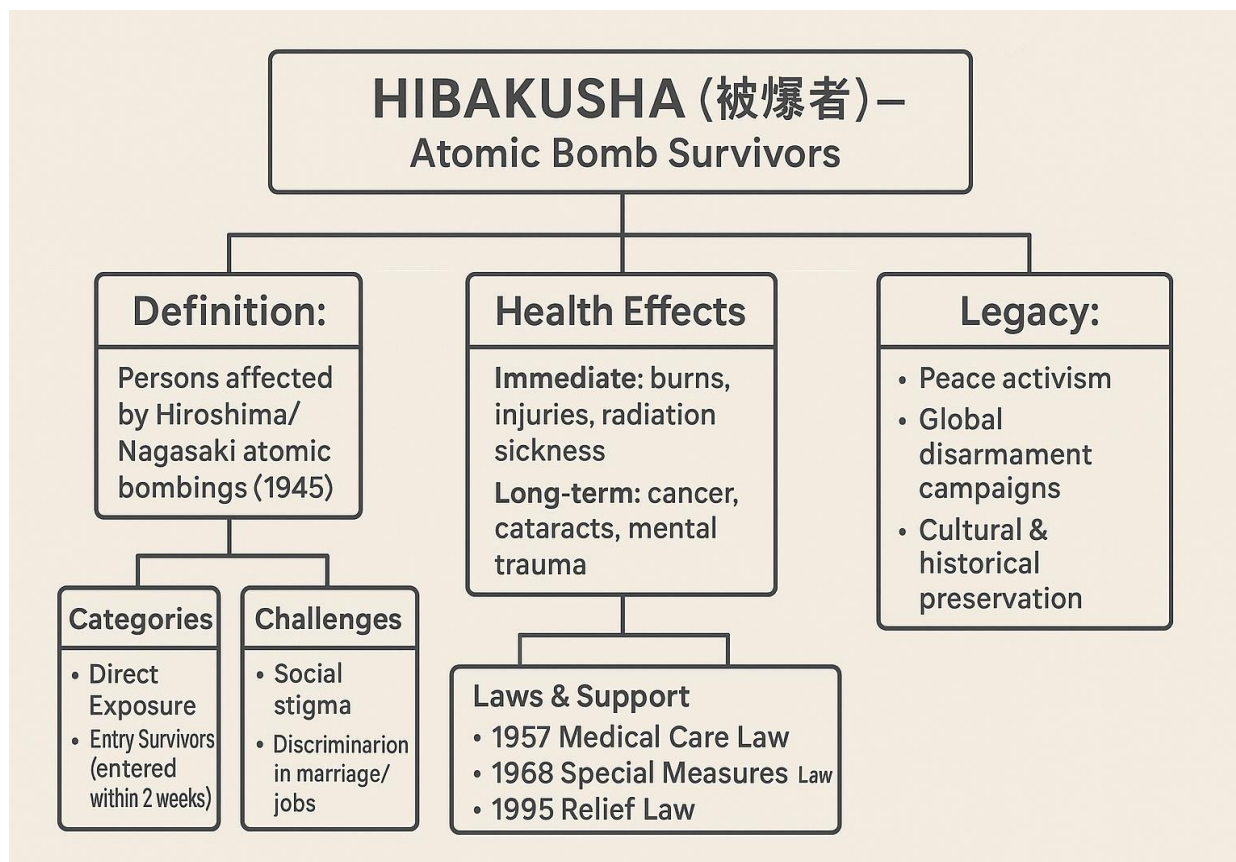
Social Challenges

- Discrimination – In marriage, jobs, insurance due to fears of genetic damage.
- Silence & Trauma – Many hid their status for decades.

Official Recognition (Japan)

Atomic Bomb Survivors Relief Law (1957, updated) – Four categories:

1. Direct Exposure – Within 2 km of blast.
2. Entry Survivors – Entered city within 2 weeks after the bombing.
3. Caregivers – Helped victims within 2 weeks.
4. In Utero Hibakusha – Unborn children of above categories.



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