

# Hiroshima book report



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The book begins with descriptions of what each of the six main characters was doing the morning that the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, up to the moment of the blast and immediately after. Miss Toshiko Sasaki, a personnel clerk at the East Asia Tin Works factory, had awakened that morning of August 6, 1945, at three a. m., to catch up on housework and cooking duties for her family. She worked until seven, then left her home in the suburb of Koi for her factory in a part of town called Kannonmachi. She arrived at work, planned a former employee's funeral for later that morning, then settled at her desk. When the bomb flashed, Miss Sasaki had sat down to rest from her office work and turned to chat with her co-worker. The impact of the blast caused the bookcases behind her to fall and crush her leg. The floor above fell through on her as well, and she lost consciousness. Dr. Masakazu Fujii, a middle-aged physician, rose much earlier than usual that morning, which resulted in his life being spared. As a wealthy and pleasure-loving doctor with his own private clinic, he usually slept in until nine or nine-thirty, but he awoke at six to see a friend to the station. He returned by seven and, stripping to his underwear, relaxed on the riverside porch of his clinic to read the newspaper. The bomb's blast threw him into the river, and the remains of his clinic followed him. He was trapped by two long pieces of wood across his chest, but his head was above water. Mrs. Hatsuyo Nakamura, a tailor's widow with three young children, had spent a hectic night shuttling her family back and forth to evacuation spots because of air raid false alarms. Exhausted, the children were still resting when the bomb fell. Mrs. Nakamura, however, was awakened at seven by another air raid siren. The all-clear signal sounded at eight o'clock and the relieved Mrs. Nakamura began studying her next-door neighbor tear his house down to

make way for a wider fire escape route. She was annoyed with the noise but sympathized with the man having to sacrifice his home to prepare for the American attack that everyone was expecting soon. As she watched her neighbor work, the atomic flash hit and she was thrown and covered by debris. After freeing herself, she began digging out her youngest daughter who was crying for help. Father Wilhelm Kleinsorge, a thirty-eight year-old missionary priest, was suffering from painful diarrhea that morning. He had been generally undernourished in wartime Japan, and felt weary from the xenophobia he suffered as a German. He conducted mass at six thirty that day with only a few in attendance, and sat at breakfast with the other priests until they heard the all clear at eight o'clock. Father Kleinsorge looked to see a single weather plane flying overhead, as was customary, and felt relieved. He retired to his room and started reading in his underwear. When he saw the flash, he thought a bomb had fallen directly on him and he panicked. Somehow, he ended up in the vegetable garden, pacing aimlessly and bleeding from small cuts. Dr. Terufumi Sasaki was an idealistic, young surgeon working at the Hiroshima Red Cross Hospital. He lived with his mother two hours from the city and was treating the sick in that small town without a permit. The previous night, he had had a nightmare about being arrested for illegally treating patients, and it haunted him as he began his work at the hospital that morning. He arrived at the hospital at seven forty-five, and drew blood to be tested. He was bringing the blood specimen to the laboratory as the bomb flashed. Because he had moved one step beyond the window and had bent down at impact, he was unhurt. In the chaotic aftermath, he began to treat the wounded as the only uninjured doctor at the hospital. Soon, thousands of victims from all over the city would descend

on him, demanding help. Reverend Kiyoshi Tanimoto was a hard-working and thoughtful pastor who was focused on sparing his church's belongings from the massive B-29 raid that everyone feared was imminent. A friend had helped him move the heavier items, and in return, he was to assist his friend in hauling a daughter's dresser that morning. Mr. Tanimoto had studied theology in Atlanta and had corresponded with American friends until the war broke out. This aroused police suspicion, so to compensate he had volunteered to plan air-raid defenses as head of his neighborhood association. He was thus overworked and tired that morning. The bomb hit when he and his friend arrived at their destination. Pieces of the collapsed house fell on him, but he was largely unhurt. He assumed a bomb had fallen directly on the house.