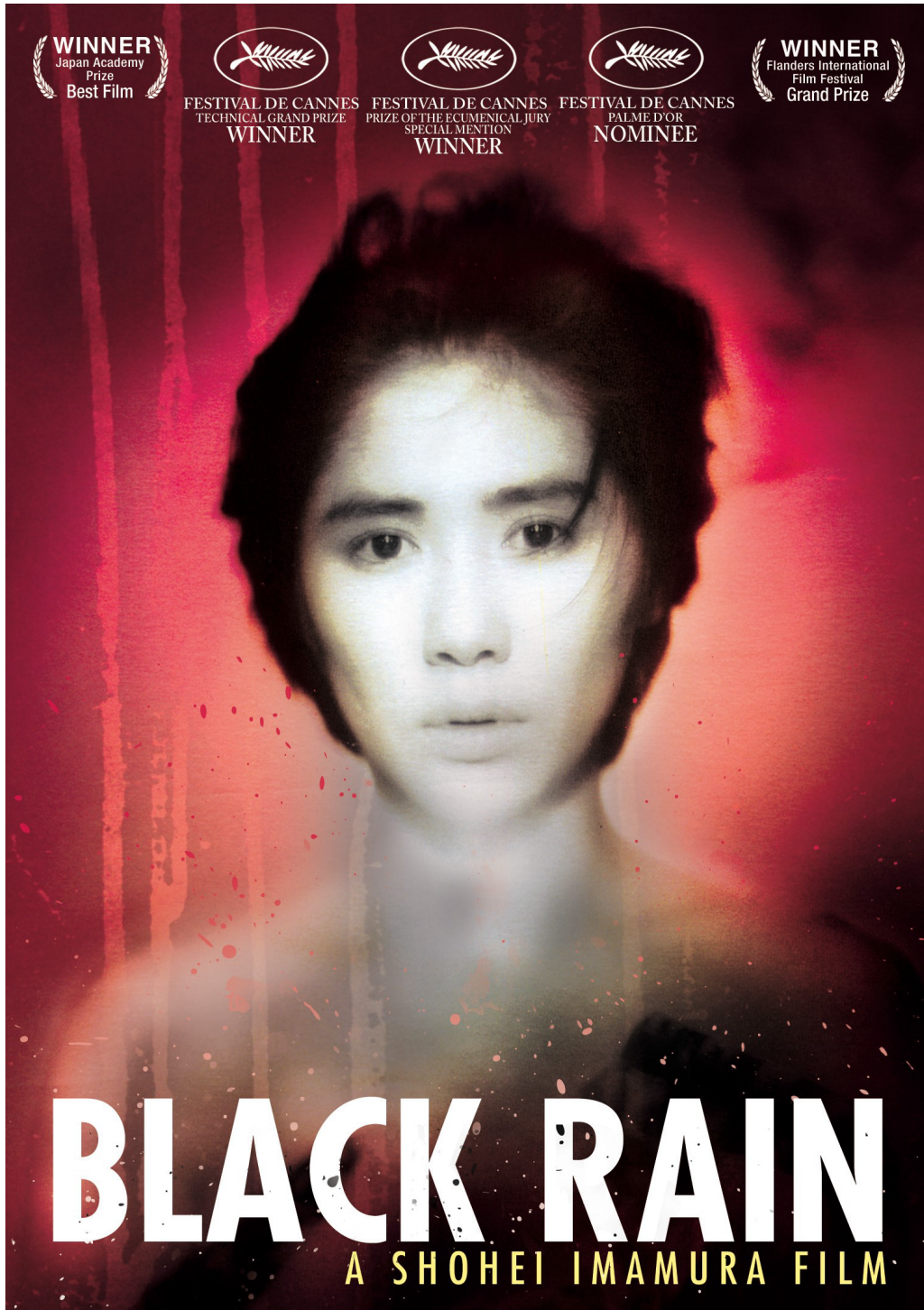
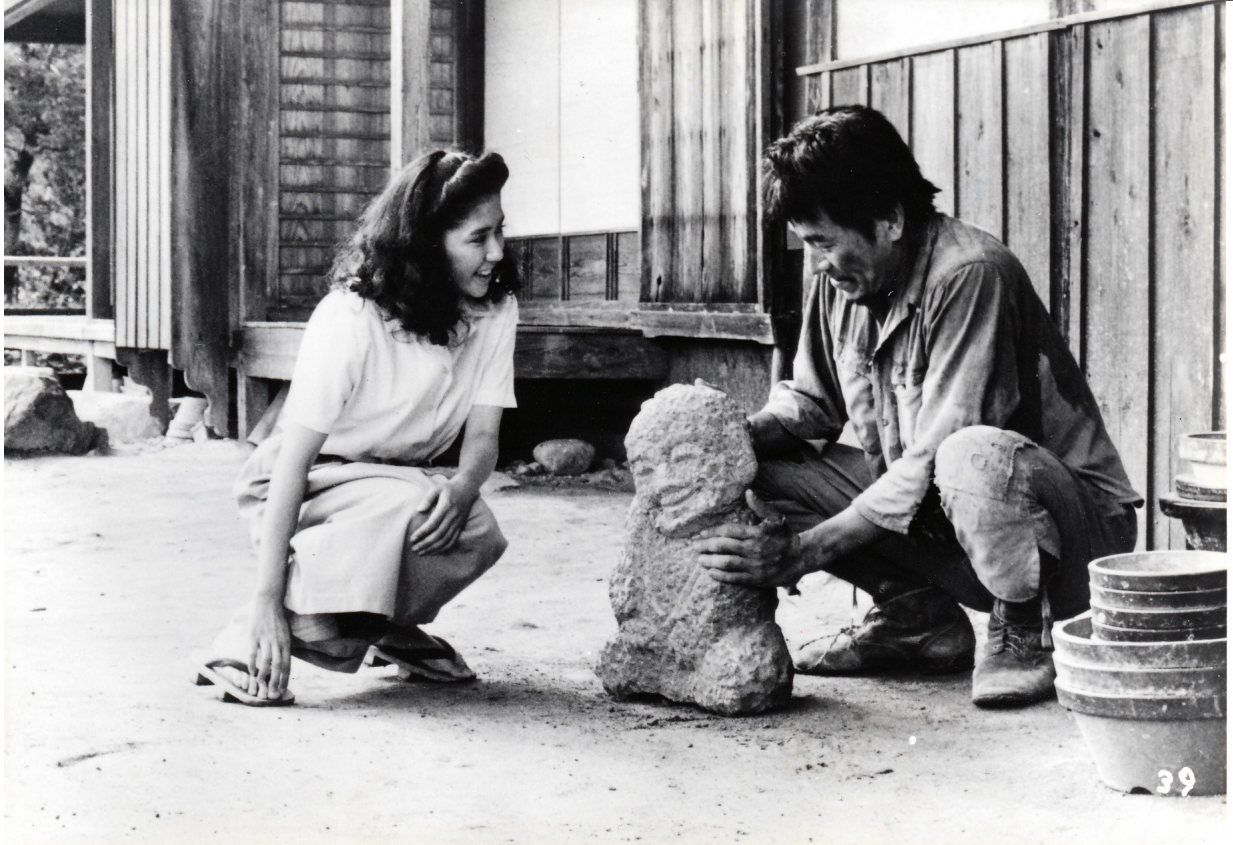


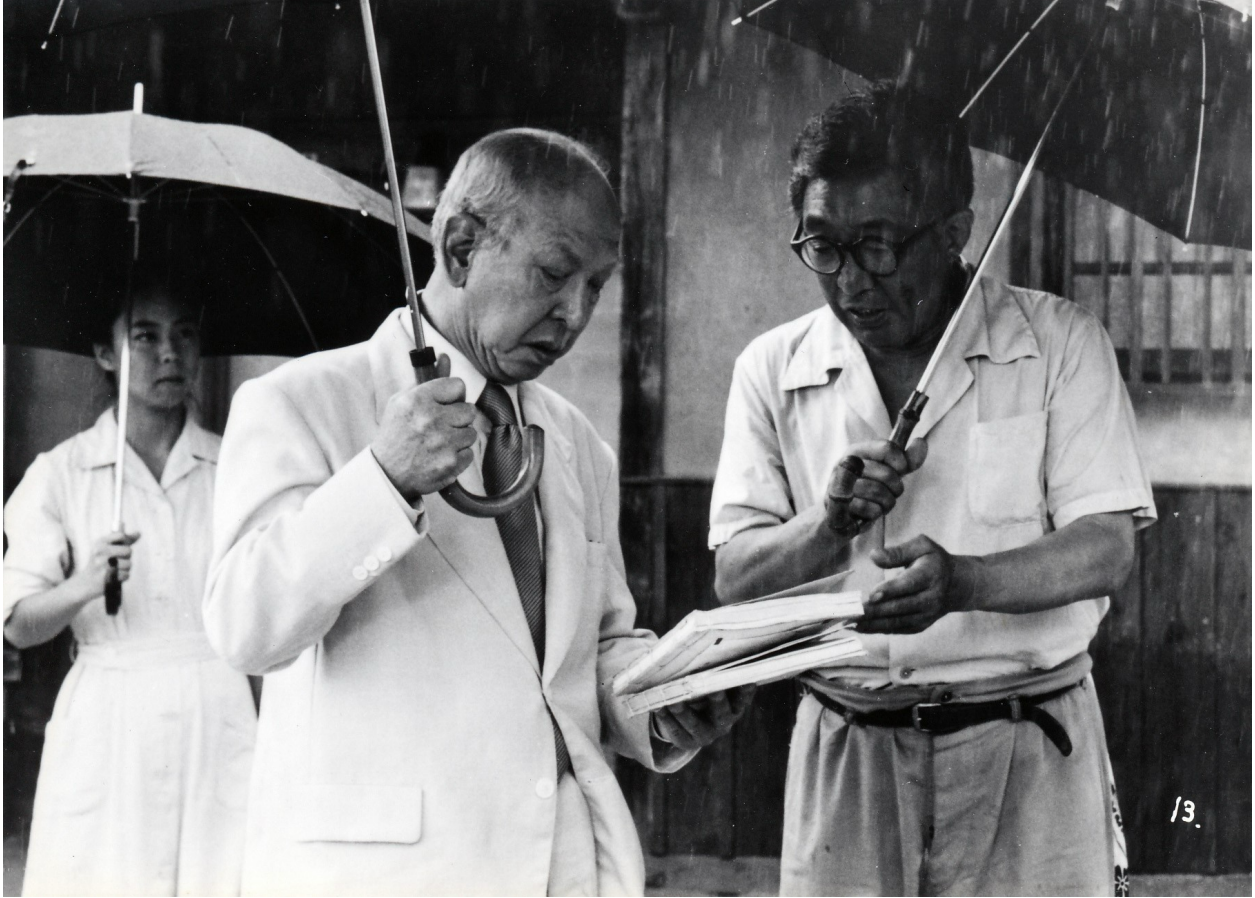
BLACK RAIN – LINER NOTES

Disclaimer: The historical and cultural information found within is compiled to the best of our abilities, and in no way represents a definitive or comprehensive history. As the quote attributed to Winston Churchill goes, "History is written by the victors." Some aspects of the history of the Pacific War are still controversial issues, even 60 years later, and any attempts at explanation have been made in the spirit of objectivity. That being said, any views and opinions herein do not represent those of AnimEigo, its Japanese affiliates and producers, or rights holders of this film. All historical accounts are, as always, subject to individual scrutiny and further research.









“Also included was the kihachijo kimono, which is said to have been worn by my great-grandmother on her wedding day. It’s a precious item.”

Kihachijo is a type of silk cloth woven exclusively on Hachijo Island, which is a small island located 300 km south of Tokyo, and which is officially part of Tokyo. The island has a rich history of silk production, from plain white silk of the Heian Period (794-1185) to the elegantly patterned “Hachijo Jima” (Hachijo Stripes) of the Edo Period. The name “kihachijo” appeared when this style was most popular, in the late Edo and early Meiji Periods (mid-19th Century).

The kihachijo fabric itself is light, tough, and lustrous, and is generally dyed with plant dyes in vertical and cross stripes, completely hand woven with threads in 2-4 colors. There are various types of stripes and combinations of colors, but the name “kihachijo” literally refers to yellow fabric.

“Did the air-raid alarm go off?”

During the night of August 5th, there were a lot of signs that an attack on Hiroshima was imminent. Waves of bombers were attacking nearby cities to the west, in the Yamaguchi Prefecture: Ube, Hikari, and Kudamatsu. After Fukuyama (on the other side of Hiroshima from Ube) was firebombed, the air-raid alarms began to sound in Hiroshima, just after midnight, and continued for the next couple hours, disrupting the sleep of anyone living in the city center. They were again disrupted by another siren shortly after seven o’clock in the morning, but once it turned out to be just an American military reconnaissance plane at a high-altitude, the all-clear was sounded 20 minutes later. People left their air-raid shelters or other refuge in relief, and began making their way to work, or eating a late breakfast, unaware of what was to come in less than an hour’s time.

“What the hell is that thing? -- I have no idea...”

At 8:15 AM, aboard an American B-29, the Enola Gay, bombardier Col. Thomas Wilson Ferebee had the T-shaped Aioi Bridge of Hiroshima in his sights, and released the four-ton bomb code-named “Little Boy”, in the first act of atomic warfare on a human population. It detonated 43 seconds later, some 2000 feet over the Shima Hospital, in a blinding flash that killed 70-80,000 civilians instantly (30% of the population), incinerating thousands so completely that no trace remained. 68% of the city's buildings were destroyed, and most of the buildings in the blast zone were shattered by the supersonic shockwave created by the explosion, which spread out at 1000 mph from the point of detonation. The blast not only knocked things down, but also shot deadly debris through the air. By detonating above ground level, the bomb maximized its destructive potential, creating a fireball that reached a diameter of 1000 feet, and a temperature of 5500-7000F directly below the explosion. The mushroom cloud slowly spread upward to about 35,000 feet, and outward to about 3 miles in diameter, and remained in the sky, darkening the city, for the next couple of hours.

“The shadows of the clock-hands are burned into the face.”

The intense heat of the atomic blast left shadows on stone and metal, behind objects that shielded a surface from the thermal radiation. The shadows, such as those of the clock-hands in the film, are actually the original color of the surface, while the area outside the shadow has been burned and thus changes color. There were even shadows of people left on steps and walls, their bodies completely incinerated. By measuring the shadow angles at various spots in the city, it became possible to pinpoint the exact location of the center of the explosion.

“No radio reception either. It's all ablaze from Otemachi to the west training grounds.”

In addition to the destructive shockwave, intense fires were instantly created over a wide area, and along with secondary fires, they combined to form an immense “firestorm”, whose effect is amplified by the intense winds caused by convection of the heated air. This firestorm devastated almost everything that remained standing in a region of about 4.4 square miles surrounding ground zero. Surrounding areas sustained progressively milder amounts of damage; glass windows were shattered up to 12 miles away.

Those directly exposed to the blast experienced “flash” burns, which were caused by the intense flux of heat and light at the very instant of the explosion. Many others received burns from the rapidly spreading fires, and still more casualties and injuries resulted from the collapse of buildings, flying debris, and the force of the shockwave. High levels of X- and gamma rays, emitted during the first moments of the explosion, inflicted radiation poisoning on many of the survivors, and the subsequent death toll from these injuries over the next few years almost equalled those who were killed instantly.

The Hiroshima bomb was equivalent to about 15 kilotons (15,000 tons) of TNT, but most U.S. nuclear weapons today average about 250 kilotons (Russian nukes average around 400 kilotons).

“Yasuko always stops by Nihon Tsu-un to say hello.”

Nihon Tsu-un was established in 1937 as a semi-governmental transportation service, and is now, under the name Nippon Express Co, a worldwide leader in logistics services. Its strong global network now spans over 80 countries, with direct operations in 33 nations, and annual revenues of over \$14 billion USD. Its head office is based in Tokyo.

“Black rain fell on us as we came here.”

Within 20-30 minutes after the blast, thick black raindrops began to fall over areas from the hypocenter of the blast to the northwest of the city. In some areas it rained heavily for an hour or more. The rain was colored black from the ash and smoke which was sucked into the rising mushroom cloud, and which mixed with cool, humid air in the upper atmosphere to form rain. Like Yasuko, no one was sure what the black rain consisted of, and many were opening their mouths to drink from the showers, too dehydrated for concern over its dangerous effects.

Unknown to them, the rain was highly radioactive, and it contaminated areas far from the hypocenter, with high levels of residual radiation remaining on the ground for over two weeks. Fish died in ponds and rivers, and thousands of people were poisoned (even those like Yasuko who did not directly experience the bomb), causing countless slow deaths over the next few years. By the end of 1945, total deaths ranged from 90,000-140,000, and some estimates were as high as 200,000 by 1950, due to chronic effects. Another study concluded that from 1950-1990, around 9% of cancer and leukemia deaths among the survivors were attributable to radiation exposure.

“If you’re Kyuzo, you should be wearing gaiters.”

Gaiters are garments worn over the lower pant leg and part of the shoe, which are used primarily for protection of a person’s legs and ankles. Gaiters were originally made of leather, but today, only horseback riding-gaiters are leather; most others are made of plasticized synthetic cloth. Gaiters are usually worn while walking, running, or hiking outdoors to provide protection from branches and thorns and also to prevent mud and snow from entering the top of the boot.

“Here’s the diagnosis sheet. With this, nothing will stand in the way of finding you a husband.”

During the age of Japanese aristocracy, the common marriage system in Japan was known as “Muko-iri”, and a man would marry into a bride’s family to live with them and offer his labor for a certain length of time. With the rise of warriors and the feudal system around the 14th century, things began to change, as “Yome-iri” was adopted. Women were married into men’s families instead, and marriages were often used as a means of peacekeeping between feudal lords. Freedom to choose a spouse was irrelevant in the face of family interests, and all social entanglements between young men and women were heavily regulated by the parents for the benefit of the family. The “Yome-iri” system has changed drastically over the years but is still quite common in Japan, with around 30% of marriages being arranged by close friends and relatives (using a formal matchmaking system called “omiai”). But these days, the family doesn’t force a partner on anyone. Generally, prospective mates have plenty of options with the help of a trusted matchmaker.

“Aloe? -- I see... this is good for burns, but I guess it’s good for my health as well.”

Aloe is a genus containing some four hundred species of plants, but the most common, naturally, is known as aloe vera, or “true aloe.” Native to Africa, the species is frequently cultivated because it is decorative, easy to maintain, and has medicinal effects on humans which have been supported by scientific and medical research. Aloe vera has been used throughout history both internally and externally, as the gel found in the leaves is applied to minor burns, wounds, and various skin conditions, and the extracted juice is used internally to treat a variety of digestive conditions, from mild discomfort to heartburn. Though there are relatively few studies of internal aloe use, there is data that suggests anti-carcinogenic properties, such as inhibited tumor growth. However, there are still conflicting results in studies of both external and internal use, and patients have even died from the injection of aloe vera extracts to treat cancer.

“Stockholm Proclamation: An appeal against nuclear weapons”

In March 1950, The World Peace Council released the Stockholm Appeal, which called for an absolute ban on all nuclear weapons worldwide. It was initiated by the French physicist Frédéric Joliot-Curie, and resulted in petitions allegedly signed by 273,470,566 people, including the entire adult population of the U.S.S.R.. Some famous signators of the petitions included Marc Chagall, Duke Ellington, and Pablo Picasso.

The World Peace Council was formed in 1949 to promote peaceful coexistence and nuclear disarmament. From the beginning, it was alleged by the U.S. to be a front organization for the Communist Party, due to its advocacy of disarmament in Western countries, the participation and funding by the Soviet bloc, and the founding leadership of self-proclaimed communist Frédéric Joliot-Curie. The WPC admitted itself in 1989 that 90% of its funding came from the Soviet Union. The organization was involved in many demonstrations and protests from the late 1940s to the late 1980s, and was especially active in areas bordering U.S. military installations believed to house nuclear weapons. Large campaigns were waged against U.S.-led military operations, especially against the Vietnam War. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the council has

dwindled, but is still active. The headquarters moved from Finland to Greece in the 1990s, and they still hold an annual World Congress and publish a magazine called “Peace Messenger.” According to Phillip Agee, in his book *Inside the Company CIA Diary*, covert actions were taken to neutralize the WPC’s propaganda campaigns against the U.S. and its allies, with efforts to prevent meetings outside the communist bloc and other forms of harassment.

“These carp... are you raising them? -- Nah. I thought I’d drink their blood.”

Carp is a common name for various species of an oily freshwater fish native to Europe and Asia. Also known as “Koi,” this domesticated common carp variety is a popular ornamental and food fish to many people, and apparently is used for medicinal purposes as well. Though there are no major medical studies promoting the efficiency of ingesting carp blood, it has been a home remedy in China and Japan for hundreds of years. It’s used for treating pneumonia, by drinking a couple teaspoons of the fresh blood, and it is also said to reduce high fever.

“Dr. Fujita’s wife, until the day she got sick, supposedly didn’t have any symptoms. We mustn’t take chances.”

Most of the Hiroshima residents had some level of radiation poisoning, but it was generally difficult to tell how much radiation had been absorbed, and therefore how much damage had been done. Generally, the amount of time between radiation exposure and the onset of symptoms is a good indicator, as symptoms appear sooner with higher doses of exposure. The main symptoms are usually nausea and vomiting, which will occur within 2 days after exposure to mild doses of radiation, probably accompanied by headache, fatigue, and weakness. Moderate exposure will result in these symptoms appearing within 12-24 hours after exposure, along with fever, hair loss, infections, bloody vomit and stool, and poor wound healing. Severe doses will bring about these symptoms in less than 1 hour, followed by diarrhea, high fever, dizziness, and disorientation, and will result in death 50% of the time (within 30 days).

Long-term effects are difficult to determine with very mild amounts of radiation poisoning, as they may vary from person to person. As in the film, some showed no visible injuries, and months or years later suddenly began developing symptoms. Some major chronic effects are A-bomb cataracts, leukemia, and malignant tumors. Keloids may begin showing up a year after exposure, leukemia after five years, and cancers such as thyroid gland, breast, or lung cancer may take 10 or 20 years. Some cancers, such as stomach, colon, or bone marrow cancer, didn’t begin appearing until 30 years later.

“I heard the matchmaker’s an ex-soldier’s wife. I figured I’d better do things the new way.”

The matchmaker, known in Japanese as the “Nakoudo”, is the go-between who negotiates a marriage between both families. If they’re not needed, sometimes they’re selected for ceremonial purposes, like an elderly couple close to both of the families, but they often have a more pivotal role in introducing the couple. They’re expected to know a great deal about the marrying parties, so as to be an excellent judge in deciding compatibility, based on things like educational achievements, socio-economic status, and family background. The matchmaker typically arranges and attends a meeting between the man and woman, where the parents are usually present, and then the couple decides from there. As soon as the marriage proposal has been accepted by the bride’s family, there is a ceremonial exchange of drinks with the bride’s family and the matchmaker. They will also usually speak at the wedding party and wish the couple a happy marriage. Sometimes they’re given a cash gift for their work, but it’s not always necessary, as the matchmakers are usually just family friends helping out. In some cases, the matchmaker goes beyond marriage arrangements, and they play an active role in the married couple’s life together, serving as a marriage counselor during tough times.

When Shigematsu mentions “the new way”, he’s most likely referring to the changing nature of the omiai process. Prior to World War II, as mentioned before, the yome-iri system often involved marrying for political or economical reasons rather than love and attraction, with the couple having little say. Following the War, western traditions of romance and courtship began spreading throughout Japan, and people began to rely on “true love” rather than an arrangement by matchmakers or parents. The definition of love began to change, and so the omiai went through many small changes to become what it is today. Literally meaning “to look at each other”,

the omiai has become more and more casual, like a blind date, where friends, family, co-workers, or employers might set up the meeting. It's no more than just an introduction, and is usually made less awkward by going out as a group.

“Well, I was the one who invited her to Hiroshima. -- But that was just to get her out of forced labor.”

The women of Japan played an important role in the war effort, and in some ways, the war revolutionized the lives of many Japanese women. Because of Japan's staunch traditionalism, when the Pacific War began in 1937, it took some time to overcome cultural conventions and mobilize women as part of the war effort. Initially, some Japanese women were enrolled in volunteer associations, but there was no hard labor or factory work involved. However, by 1943, “able” women (unmarried and above age 15) were required to work in factories. A volunteer labor corps was formed and by the next year over four million women were doing “mandatory volunteer work” in industrial sectors such as aircraft manufacturing, munitions, electrical factories, pharmaceuticals, and textiles. The percentage of Japanese women who aided the war effort did not come near the amount of American women who did the same, but they experienced a similar double-edged sword of being encouraged to work in industry, but discouraged from working for wages, especially in technological jobs. And of course, the women were paid much less than their male counterparts in their new factory positions. Note: Young men who were too young to go to war were also forced into labor.

“They say there's a giant carp in here, the lord of its domain.”

Koi (carp) are very hardy fish that can live for centuries. The longest-lived koi in recorded history is a famous scarlet koi known as “Hanako” that was owned by several different individuals. Upon her death in 1977, she was reportedly 226 years old. Koi are omnivorous, intelligent (for a fish, anyway) and can be very difficult to hook, so it's probably not uncommon for a giant carp to survive for so long in a pond uncaught and seldom seen.

“Carp-blood is efficacious, but white peach is good too, when the appetite is low.”

Peaches are alkaline fruits with abundant amounts of Vitamin A, so they are known to enhance the appetite and relieve fatigue. In Eastern Medicine, peach seeds and blossoms are often used in traditional medicines for a wide variety of ailments, from removing food poisoning to reversing aging effects of the skin.

“She's forgotten that Hiroshima and Nagasaki were A-bombed. Everyone's forgotten about it.”

Following the surrender of Japan, the U.S. imposed a strict code of censorship within Japan regarding the visual evidence of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, specifically stating that “Nothing shall be printed which might, directly or by inference, disturb public tranquility.” They did so to quell emotions of grief and anger in Japanese citizens, and quite possibly to keep the specific effects of its new weapon a secret to enemies. A third (unintended?) effect of this deliberate suppression of evidence was that it kept Japan, America, and the rest of the world from questioning the use of the bomb in the first place.

The few images published in the U.S. press at the time were aerial shots or generic landscapes, and American forces attempted to confiscate all other photographs taken in Hiroshima. However, Yoshito Matsushige, a Chugoku newspaper photographer in Hiroshima the day of the blast, managed to sneak a few prints to visiting U.S. correspondents who leaked the photos, but only five of those images have survived. Several other photographs have been released from a Japanese government-ordered academic survey of the aftermath, which were taken by Kikuchi Shunkichi. But the most comprehensive visual account of post-bomb Hiroshima were from American military photographs, many of which we may never see. The very day that Japan surrendered, Truman commissioned a study of the effects of the two bombs, and a Physical Damage Division was assembled with a team of photographers. Between October and November 1945, this team would spread out across the city, tracing blast paths and analyzing the destruction of the city. Over 700 of these very photographs were discovered in 2000, in a Massachusetts curbside trash-heap.

“They've forgotten about that hellish inferno. Yet they're holding those anti-A-bomb conventions.”

Japanese public sentiment was strongly against the use of nuclear weapons following the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and even the presence of nuclear weapons on Japanese soil was controversial. Even to this day, public opinion is very anti-nuclear (nuclear weapons, that is, as 30% of Japan's power generation is nuclear).

While public opposition to nuclear proliferation was very strong in postwar Japan, the public sentiment towards atomic bomb survivors, known as hibakusha, has not been as favorable. Literally “explosion-affected people,” hibakusha are defined by the Atomic Bomb Survivors Relief Law as those who were within a few kilometers of ground zero at the time of the blast, those within 2 km of ground zero within two weeks, those who were exposed to radiation from fallout, or babies carried by pregnant women in any of these scenarios.

Though hibakusha are entitled to government support, and some receive a monthly allowance, they and their children are still subject to severe discrimination. This was due to a lack of understanding about radiation sickness, which some people believed was hereditary or contagious. Even today, behind the sympathy exhibited to the hibakusha lies a prejudiced fear which directly affects the daily life of hibakusha and their families. Today, almost 250,000 hibakusha with an average age of 75 still live in Japan and elsewhere.

“Still, one’s got to eat; I make my rounds between Fukuyama and Miyoshi... I’m a black marketer.”

Though the advent of the Korean War in 1950 put Japan on the road to economic recovery, for the several years immediately following World War II, Japanese citizens faced triple-digit inflation and severe food shortages. These problems were mostly caused by an excessively harsh postwar rationing system and a growing black market, which had begun to take form in the late 1930s. It was so tough to find food in postwar Japan that many poor citizens had to resort to trading their possessions for food on the black market, or foraging in the countryside. Those who lived through the period referred to their lives as a “bamboo shoot lifestyle” (takenoko seikatsu). It was toughest immediately following the War, in 1945, when price control, production subsidies, and rationing were at their peak. Black-market prices were extremely high compared with official prices; by the end of 1945, the average black-market price of consumer goods was 30 times higher than the official price. Sugar and soap were trading at more than 200 times the official price, rice about 140 times as high, and stockings, eggs, and turnips at about 80 times as high. To lessen the gap, billions of dollars of U.S. aid were spent on emergency food relief, and official prices were gradually increased, until prices stabilized in the early 1950s.

“You should have them measure the blood-cell sedimentation rate once a week.”

The blood-cell sedimentation rate, more commonly referred to as the Biernacki Reaction or ESR (Erythrocyte Sedimentation Rate), is the rate at which red blood cells precipitate in a period of 1 hour. It's a common blood test used to measure inflammatory activity in the body, which can indicate the presence of a number of diseases. The test, invented in 1897 by Polish doctor Edmund Biernacki, is somewhat limited by its low sensitivity and specificity as a screening test, but is still frequently used for making specific diagnoses.

“They say women exposed to the flash can’t bear children.”

Radiation exposure does result in infertility, but only if exposed to high doses. Severe radiation poisoning, which is fatal at least 50% of the time, will definitely cause permanent sterility in both men and women, while moderate radiation poisoning will cause temporary sterility and suppress menstruation for 2-3 years. Mild radiation poisoning doesn't always result in sterility, but men seem to be more sensitive to this type of low-level radiation; even the smallest amount of radiation exposure can cause low sperm count for up to a year.

“There’s also a rumor that she was at ground zero.”

Ground zero of Hiroshima was considered the epicenter of the explosion, which was right over Shima hospital. When the bomb went off, anyone in the immediate vicinity of ground zero died instantly, their bodies incinerated or turned to black char. Over 90% of the people within a half-mile of ground zero died in minutes. While “ground zero” generally refers to the exact center of the blast, it more generally refers to the mile-wide area encircling the epicenter, or in this instance, most likely the 4.4 square mile area engulfed by the firestorm.

“Perhaps it was reckless of me to have led my wife and niece into that scorching heat.”

Shigematsu may have unnecessarily exposed his wife and niece to radioactive fallout by leading them directly through the blast area, but he wasn't the only one. Many blast victims gathered in central areas, and outsiders entered the city looking for families and relatives. The Army Marine Regiment Headquarters (commonly called the Akatsuki Corps) was just outside the hypocenter and only slightly damaged, so they immediately went into the central part of the city to begin rescue operations. Also, many rescue workers traveled to the city from the nearby towns and villages, unaware of radioactive fallout because they were not told that the bomb was atomic until much later. All of these rescue workers were exposed to residual radiation and suffered from the same A-bomb diseases as those directly exposed. These people are referred to as “entry survivors.” Much like the 9/11 first responders unaware of the deadly toxins in the air, the brave few who ventured into ground zero paid a heavy price for their selfless acts.

“Shin-shu, Zen-shu, Nichiren-shu; it doesn't matter which.”

Within Buddhism, there are many different divisions, but the two major ones are Mahayana and Vajrayana. Within the Mahayana Buddhist division, there are even more subdivisions, known as sects ('shu' = sect). All three of the above sects are a part of Mahayana Buddhism, which emerged from early Buddhist schools, and was originally founded in India.

Shin Buddhism (a.k.a. Jodo Shinshu, lit. “True Pure Land School”) is considered the most widely-practiced branch of Buddhism in Japan. Shin Buddhism is also considered the “Easy Path” because esoteric practices are not required to attain higher mental states.

Zen Buddhism is well-known in the West, and originally came from China. The main difference in Zen Buddhism is that it de-emphasizes reliance on religious texts and discourse and encourages an introspective approach (through meditation) to seek answers, and ultimately enlightenment.

Nichiren Buddhism is based on the teachings of the 13th Century Japanese monk Nichiren and is generally noted for its focus on the Lotus Sutra (chanted by the spiritualist in the film), and the belief that all people are capable of attaining enlightenment in their current form and lifetime. It is a stark contrast to Shin and Zen Buddhism, which Nichiren saw as deviating from the original orthodoxy of Mahayana Buddhism.

“...have decided that extraordinary measures are required to effect a settlement, and hereby announce to our loyal citizens that we have ordered our Government to communicate to the Governments of the United States, Great Britain, China, and the Soviet Union, that our Empire accepts the provisions of their joint Declaration.”

The radio broadcast in which Emperor Hirohito read out the “Imperial Rescript on the Termination of the War” is known as the Gyokuon-hoso (lit. “Jewel Voice Broadcast”). In it, Hirohito announced that the Japanese Government had accepted the Potsdam Declaration demanding Japan's unconditional surrender. This announcement marked the first time in history that an Emperor of Japan had spoken to the common people, and though it wasn't live, it was broadcast at noon Japan standard time on August 15, 1945. The speech was delivered in the formal language of the old Imperial Court, and made no direct reference to surrender, which confused many listeners unable to tell if he was advocating surrender or continued resistance. The poor audio quality only added to the confusion, so at the conclusion of the speech, an announcer clarified that the Emperor's message did indeed mean that Japan was surrendering.

The speech itself was pre-recorded by phonograph on either August 13 or 14, and was challenged by many elements of the Japanese military who were extremely upset at the dishonorable prospect of surrender. As many as 1000 officers attempted a raid on the Imperial Palace on August 14 to destroy the recording, but it was successfully smuggled out of the palace in a laundry basket of women's underwear, and broadcast the following day. For more information on the events of this day, check out another classic AnimEigo release, Japan's Longest Day.

“He’s a veteran of the suicide squads that dove under tanks carrying bombs.”

Besides airborne Kamikaze (“Divine Wind”), Japan utilized a wide variety of suicide squads (a.k.a. special attack units). These squads used such things as motorboats (“Shinyo,” lit. “Sea Quake”), submarines (“Kairyu,” lit. “Sea Dragon”), and human-guided torpedoes (“Kaiten,” lit. “Change the World”). When vehicles were scarce, the squads resorted to using themselves as human mines, either swimmers who would carry explosive charges beneath a ship (“Fukuryu,” lit. “Crouching dragons”) or soldiers with explosives strapped to their bodies (“Nikaku,” lit. “Binuclear”). The latter is where Yuichi fits in, and this technique was developed in the Philippines and in Okinawa by soldiers who would crawl between the treads with explosives. Their motto was “One man-one tank.”

“The horrors he witnessed sets him off each time he hears an engine.”

As for Yuichi’s anxiety, it doesn’t take a doctor to diagnosis him with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a severe and persistent emotional reaction to psychological trauma. It usually develops after exposure to traumatic events that threaten or cause extreme physical harm, like seeing someone’s death or almost dying yourself, being seriously injured, or being sexually assaulted. PTSD has been described in the past as railway spine (a 19th century diagnosis for railway crash survivors), stress syndrome, shell shock, battle fatigue, traumatic war neurosis, and post-traumatic stress syndrome. Although PTSD symptoms such as flashbacks, nightmares, anger, and insomnia have been recognized in combat veterans of various military conflicts since the 6th century, the term was coined in the 1970s, as a result of problems experienced by U.S. military veterans of the Vietnam War. The diagnosis is still a subject of some controversy because of uncertainties in objectively diagnosing the disorder, and because of a dramatic increase in Department of Veteran Affairs disability compensation claims over the last few years.

“You own over 10 cho of land. It’s a good thing that mountain-forests were not subject to the Agrarian Reform.”

The Agrarian Reform (a.k.a. Land Reform Program, a.k.a. “Nochi-kaiho,” lit. “emancipation of farming land”) was a land reform carried out in 1947 by the GHQ (General Headquarters, a.k.a. the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP), a.k.a. Gen. Douglas MacArthur) at the suggestion of the Japanese government, which had planned the reform before the defeat of the Empire. Japanese land reform actually began during the Meiji Restoration (1868-1912), when feudal fiefs and stipends were abolished, but under the supervision of U.S. occupation forces following the War, further land reform was quick and extreme. By 1949, over 80% of Japan’s tenanted land had been transferred from absentee landlords to former tenant farmers. The Land Reform Program was heralded by the U.S. for its success in the redistribution of cultivated land. In the words of the official SCAP report, its accomplishments “mark the end of the feudal land tenancy system of Japan, an economically unsound tenure arrangement which has existed since the Meiji Restoration in 1868.”

“Nothing good comes of war.”

This seems to be a dramatic understatement considering the situation, but in Japanese, it is not; it’s an expression of sincere lamentation concerning war’s horrors and futility; the literal translation cannot convey it.

“Lately, my eyes have been stinging.”

While cataracts are usually associated with the elderly, A-bomb cataracts were common among even young survivors in the years following the blast. The first case was discovered in 1948, in Hiroshima, and new cases began appearing until about ten years after exposure. Occurrence was generally related to the age of the person at the time of exposure and their distance from ground zero. Logically, severe cases began to appear earlier than mild cases. In a cataract, opaque spots begin forming on the ocular lens. A-bomb cataracts are easily detected because the opaque spots don’t follow the same pattern of regular cataracts.

“Look, those so-called spiritualists always tell you to go visit graves and stuff; it’s the way their trickery works. They take advantage of people’s misfortunes and rake in the dough; they’re con artists.”

In Japan, spirit mediums are known as “reibai,” and spirit readings are known as “seishin toutishuka.” Unlike many other cultures, Japan’s spiritualism has a tendency to overlap with the more animistic elements of Shintoism, which is considered Japan’s indigenous religion. There are five different types of Shinto expression, and this particular type is Folk Shinto (minzoku-shinto), which includes divination, spirit possession, and shamanic healing. Some of the traditions come from Taoism, Buddhism, or Confucianism, but most of the practices are derived from ancient local traditions. In this case, the spiritualist is heard chanting the Lotus Sutra from Nichiren Buddhism (Nan-myō-ho-ren-ge-kyō) as well as a Taoist spell called “Kuji” (Rin Pyō To Sha Kai Jin Retsu Zai Zen).

“Since the Agrarian Reform. She was shattered by the confiscation of land that’s been in the family for generations.”

As mentioned previously, the Agrarian Reform of 1947 shifted ownership of over 80% of Japan’s tenanted land. Many land owners lost nearly everything they owned, and as in the case of Shigematsu’s mother, it was often land that was accumulated by a family over decades and even centuries.

“Something’s been puzzling me. Why did the Americans drop the A-bombs? Even if they hadn’t done it, Japan’s defeat was already certain.”

The necessity of the atomic attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki is one of the most controversial and debatable issues in world history, even to this day. As J. Samuel Walker wrote in April 2005, “the controversy over the use of the bomb seems certain to continue.”

Supporters of the bombings generally claim that they were necessary for initiating a Japanese surrender, and that their use prevented massive casualties on both sides in the planned land invasion of Japan (known as Operation Downfall; Kyushu’s invasion was set for October 1945 and Honshu five months later). Had the land invasions begun, some estimate that over a million Allied forces would be lost (others put high estimates at 50,000), while Japanese casualties would have been in the millions.

Supporters also point to an extension of the Japanese draft which would add 28 million troops, or the August 1st Japanese War Ministry order that all Allied prisoners of war (over 100,000) would be executed if an invasion of the Japanese mainland took place. Arguments about its use on civilians are countered with Japan’s waging of a “total war” which ordered civilians to contribute to the war effort and to fight invading forces, thereby erasing any distinction between civilian and soldier. Another point from supporters is that loyalty to the Emperor combined with ancient Japanese traditions of bushido would prevent military leaders from accepting surrender, no matter what (as evidenced in Japan’s Longest Day).

In a dreadful irony, Japanese suicide attacks were in part justified by their planners as a way to convince the US that an invasion of the Japanese homeland would be too costly, and thus force a negotiated end to the conflict (as depicted in *Father of the Kamikaze*). The US, however, had another way to end the war.

On the other side of the aisle, those who oppose the bombings generally assert that the already-fierce bombing campaign would have led to surrender anyway, so the use of the A-bomb on civilians was militarily unnecessary. This was the exact conclusion of the 1946 U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey, undertaken by the U.S. Army Air Forces. This conclusion was based on the assumption that conventional fire-bombing attacks would have intensified, and was partly influenced by the statements of Prince Fumimaro Konoe, who asserted that surrender would have come in November or December 1945. Eisenhower also questioned its military necessity, as did General Douglas MacArthur, Chief of Staff Fleet Admiral William D. Leahy, Brigadier General Carter Clarke, and Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet, Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz. Some researchers have gone further by contending that the atomic bombs didn’t force the surrender, and that instead, it was the Soviet victories in Manchuria which did so.

Regardless of its effect on Japanese surrender, the opposition’s main argument against atomic bomb use is its fundamental immorality and illegality, which renders its use a war-crime, a crime against humanity, or even an act of state-sponsored terrorism. Many scientists who played a role in the Manhattan Project or worked on the bomb itself, including Albert Einstein, Leo Szilard, and James Franck, were quick to issue statements against

its use. In 1963, the District Court of Tokyo ruled that “the attacks upon Hiroshima and Nagasaki caused such severe and indiscriminate suffering that they did violate the most basic legal principles governing the conduct of war.”

Many of the opposition point to a pattern of Japanese dehumanization to allow justification of the bombings, easily witnessed in U.S. propaganda films, and evidenced by such statements from Truman as “The only language they seem to understand is the one we have been using to bombard them. When you have to deal with a beast you have to treat him like a beast. It is most regrettable but nevertheless true.” (from an August 11 letter to Samuel McCrea Cavert, general secretary of the Federal Council of Churches).

Truman was clear in his own justification for the use of the bomb, first on his August 6, 1945 “Statement by the President Announcing the Use of the A-Bomb at Hiroshima,” when he said:

“The Japanese began the war from the air at Pearl Harbor. They have been repaid many fold. [...] If they do not now accept our terms they may expect a rain of ruin from the air, the like of which has never been seen on this earth.”

And also from his August 9, 1945 “Radio Report to the American People on the Potsdam Conference”:

“The British, Chinese, and United States Governments have given the Japanese people adequate warning of what is in store for them. We have laid down the general terms on which they can surrender. Our warning went unheeded; our terms were rejected. Since then the Japanese have seen what our atomic bomb can do. They can foresee what it will do in the future.

The world will note that the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, a military base. That was because we wished in this first attack to avoid, insofar as possible, the killing of civilians. But that attack is only a warning of things to come. If Japan does not surrender, bombs will have to be dropped on her war industries and, unfortunately, thousands of civilian lives will be lost.”

[...]

“Having found the bomb we have used it. We have used it against those who attacked us without warning at Pearl Harbor, against those who have starved and beaten and executed American prisoners of war, against those who have abandoned all pretense of obeying international laws of warfare. We have used it in order to shorten the agony of war, in order to save the lives of thousands and thousands of young Americans.

We shall continue to use it until we completely destroy Japan’s power to make war. Only a Japanese surrender will stop us.”

Truman was true to his word, as he initiated plans for several more atomic attacks in Japan. That is to say, the bombs were being prepared for use, but would not be authorized for use until Truman gave the word. Discussions in the War Department indicate that their use may have been inevitable given Japan’s continued resistance, but it may also have been subject to the success of Operation Downfall. A third atomic bomb was expected to be ready by the third week of August, with three more in September, and three in October.

“American President Truman has declared that he would consider using the atomic bomb against the Communist Chinese Army in Korea. He stated that he hoped that the atomic bomb would never be used, but the final decision about using atomic weapons would be made by the commanding officer in the field. This statement was made in a fourteen-article declaration...”

On 10:30 a.m., November 30, 1950, at President Truman’s 246th news conference, he alluded to the use of atomic bombs against North Korean forces, largely due to increased Chinese involvement in the conflict. He contradictorily implied that the commanding officer (Gen. MacArthur) would control its use, but that only the U.S. President could give authorization. He also said that its use wasn’t subject to the collective decision of the U.N. Truman did not immediately threaten atomic warfare after Chinese intervention, but only after 45 days, when the Chinese army had repelled U.N. Forces to retreat. The Chinese were largely unmoved by the nuclear

threat, and U.S. allies were very resistant to the geopolitical imbalance which could result from a full-on U.S./China war, wherein NATO and Western Europe would be defenseless to the U.S.S.R. if they were persuaded to join China.

His exact statements from the press conference in question are as follows:

TRUMAN: We will take whatever steps are necessary to meet the military situation, just as we always have.

Q: Will that include the atomic bomb ?

TRUMAN: That includes every weapon that we have.

Q: Mr. President, you said "every weapon that we have." Does that mean that there is active consideration of the use of the atomic bomb?

TRUMAN: There has always been active consideration of its use. I don't want to see it used. It is a terrible weapon, and it should not be used on innocent men, women, and children who have nothing whatever to do with this military aggression. That happens when it is used.

[...]

Q: Mr. President, I wonder if we could retrace that reference to the atom bomb? Did we understand you clearly that the use of the atomic bomb is under active consideration?

TRUMAN: Always has been. It is one of our weapons.

Q: Does that mean, Mr. President, use against military objectives, or civilian--

TRUMAN: It's a matter that the military people will have to decide. I'm not a military authority that passes on those things.

Q: Mr. President, perhaps it would be better if we are allowed to quote your remarks on that directly?

TRUMAN: I don't think--I don't think that is necessary.

Q: Mr. President, you said this depends on United Nations action. Does that mean that we wouldn't use the atomic bomb except on a United Nations authorization ?

TRUMAN: No, it doesn't mean that at all. The action against Communist China depends on the action of the United Nations. The military commander in the field will have charge of the use of the weapons, as he always has."

Later that day, the White House issued a press release clearing up his statements:

"The President wants to make it certain that there is no misinterpretation of his answers to questions at his press conference today about the use of the atom bomb. Naturally, there has been consideration of this subject since the outbreak of the hostilities in Korea, just as there is consideration of the use of all military weapons whenever our forces are in combat.

Consideration of the use of any weapon is always implicit in the very possession of that weapon.

However, it should be emphasized, that, by law, only the President can authorize the use of the atom bomb, and no such authorization has been given. If and when such authorization should be given, the military commander in the field would have charge of the tactical delivery of the weapon.

In brief, the replies to the questions at today's press conference do not represent any change in this situation."