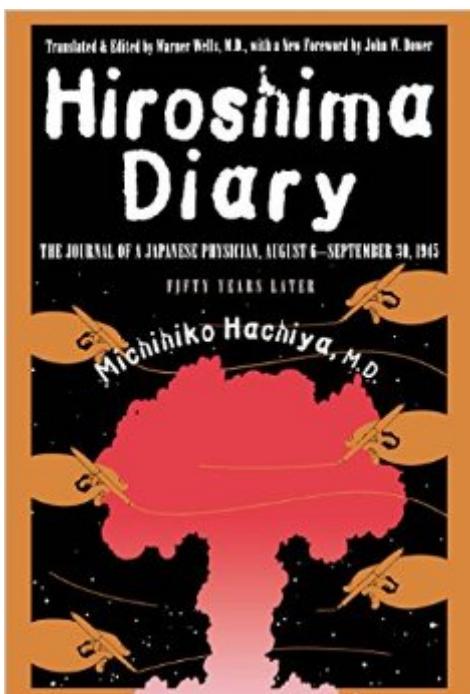


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Hiroshima Diary: The Journal Of A Japanese Physician, August 6-September 30, 1945



Synopsis

The late Dr. Michihiko Hachiya was director of the Hiroshima Communications Hospital when the world's first atomic bomb was dropped on the city. Though his responsibilities in the appalling chaos of a devastated city were awesome, he found time to record the story daily, with compassion and tenderness. His compelling diary was originally published by the UNC Press in 1955, with the help of Dr. Warner Wells of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, who was a surgical consultant to the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission and who became a friend of Dr. Hachiya. In a new foreword, John Dower reflects on the enduring importance of the diary fifty years after the bombing.

Book Information

File Size: 2173 KB

Print Length: 266 pages

Publisher: The University of North Carolina Press; 2 edition (December 1, 2011)

Publication Date: December 1, 2011

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B006SLR9O0

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #393,236 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #67 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > History > Military > Weapons & Warfare > Nuclear #79 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > Asia #99 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > Asia > Japan

Customer Reviews

I read this book when I was in college, as a chemistry/chemical engineering major. As a young scientist, I was enamored of the sheer power contained with atoms, and was intrigued by atomic/nuclear weapons. My goal was to earn a PhD in nuclear engineering and to pursue a career at a National Laboratory such as Los Alamos or Sandia, where I hoped to work in the development of these sort of weapons. This book changed my life. The personal accounts of the doctor in this book had a profound effect on me, both intellectually and emotionally. I was horrified by the effects

of this technology. I changed my career plans and now pursue the development of much more helpful materials. I highly recommend reading this book.

This is an accurate and first-hand account of the bombing of Hiroshima as well as the Japanese attitude during World War II. Although medical in nature, I did not find this book at all overwhelming or too scientifically detailed. It was a quite easy read and allowed me to relate the Japanese citizens of this traumatic period. More than a medical documentation, this was a dramatic tale of real people, real situations and real feelings. Surprisingly, it was not depressing and did not leave me riddled with guilt over being an American. I was impressed by the heroic acts of regular Japanese citizens and dumbfounded over their undying allegiance to their plight and country; AT the same time they did not express moroseness or hatred towards the incoming American soldiers- instead they welcomed them as notable colleagues and almost friends. Despite the disparity of their people and their country they were able to see past all feelings of disdain and recognize that the most important thing was family, love and friendship. In addition to it being a beautiful story, I also gained vast knowledge of the effects of radiation and the Atomic bomb-- a seemingly guarded secret amongst American history lessons.

In "Hiroshima Diary," Dr. Michihiko Hachiya recounts his experience as both a victim of the atomic bomb and a first-responder of aid. Hachiya's account graphically depicts the confusing, terrible weeks that followed the atomic attack on Hiroshima. His matter-of-fact interpretation reveals how little modern portrayals of the bombing compare with reality. The destruction wrought upon the Japanese people at Hiroshima is not to be underestimated, however, Hachiya bares facts that today seem unbelievable in light of the vast devastation. For all his suffering and all he has been witness to, Hachiya demonstrates little resentment towards the Americans who completely altered his way of life. A profound book that is both troubling in its imagery and beautiful in its language. No less poignant today than so many years ago. **REVIEW EVERY BOOK YOU READ! AUTHORS DESERVE YOUR OPINIONS!**

As a medical professional I was very captivated by what was described and what was done to care for the victims. I was of course saddened by the tragedy of the bombing and what the world viewpoints were then. To see where our care for radiation sickness patients stemmed from because of this senseless act was very interesting. To those who do read, my advice would be to skip the first forward and read from the second forward (the original) onward. The first foreword nearly put me off

from reading what was an excellent book.

In "Hiroshima Diary," Dr. Michihiko Hachiya recounts his experience as both a victim of the atomic bomb and a first-responder. Hachiya's account graphically depicts the confusing, terrible weeks that followed the atomic attack on Hiroshima. His matter-of-fact interpretation reveals how little modern portrayals of the bombing compare with reality. The destruction wrought upon the Japanese people at Hiroshima is not to be underestimated, however, Hachiya bares facts that today seem unbelievable in light of the vast devastation. For all his suffering and all he has been witness to, Hachiya demonstrates little resentment towards the Americans who completely altered his way of life. A profound book that is both troubling in its imagery and beautiful in its language. No less poignant today than so many years ago. **REVIEW EVERY BOOK YOU READ! AUTHORS DESERVE YOUR OPINIONS!**

I would give it 10 stars if I could. Every person who contemplates the possible use of a nuclear bomb should read this diary first. I spent 2 1/2 years in Japan during the Korean War and met a young woman who was in Nagasaki when it was bombed. One side of her face was normal, the other side covered with Keloid scars. She saw the flash of light when the bomb ignited, then turned her face away. I do believe that it took something as dramatic as the bomb to quickly end the war, but the A-bomb does something that regular high explosives don't do and that is to destroy everything and everyone including hospitals and doctors so hundreds of thousands of people are left horribly burned and injured with no possible help.

Dr. Hachiya was obviously a noble person. The same can be said for the staff of his hospital as they dealt with a decent approximation of the worst possible circumstances humans can face. Somehow they kept going amidst everything and managed to help those who were not too far beyond the simple measures available to them in their devastated hospital. His descriptions in his diary have the clinical detachment expected of most doctors - I work with many. But he also records his non-clinical thoughts. The presence of both sides of his personality give a vivid picture. The forward to the book makes note of the fact that Dr. Hachiya is recording observations of radiation sickness without knowing what it is. He tries to hypothesize what could be causing the symptoms they find, and at one point, for example, he suggests an atmospheric pressure etiology, due to other conditions he had seen elsewhere. The gradual discovery of the actual condition, along with observations by other doctors he mentions, is interesting. He kept his humanity and his

professionalism when it would be easy to not. His patients were the better for it. And the reader is the better for his allowing his diary to be translated and printed.

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