

# SEATTLE GIRL, SAFELY AT HOME, REMEMBERS HORROR OF HIROSHIMA



TAEKO TOYOJI AND SOUVENIR  
She was happy to be back in Seattle

Fifteen-year-old Taeko Toyoji yesterday recalled soberly the horrors of the Hiroshima atomic bomb explosion which killed her only brother and then she grinned happily over being back in her native Seattle with her father, K. Toyoji, a hotel operator. He met her at the boat in San Francisco last week.

Surrounded by happy relatives in a hotel room at 520 Main St., Taeko, whose American name is June, spoke in halting English and in rapid-fire Japanese which was translated by her uncle Toshio Toyoji.

Taken by her parents to Japan to visit relatives in 1940, Taeko, her mother, brother and two sisters were marooned there by the outbreak of war. Her father had returned to this country a few weeks earlier.

#### Day Well Remembered

The fateful date, August 6, 1945, was still fresh in her mind. In the girls' grade school in Kabe, about ten miles from Hiroshima, morning classes were just beginning. It was about 8:15 o'clock.

Suddenly the building moved and the glass in the windows was shattered.

The teacher told the children, who cried for their mothers and fathers, to get under their desks. When they saw a huge reddish-orange ball of fire in the sky moving toward them from Hiroshima, everybody ran in the opposite direction.

About noon the children were permitted to leave and Taeko ran home to Midorij, a suburb of Hiroshima about five miles from the city proper. On the road she passed injured and bandaged people. At her grandparents' house, she found great confusion and grave worry about her brother, Watson, 15, a high school student in Hiroshima.

Luckily Taeko's mother had been cleaning house and all the windows and doors were open

when the bomb fell. Other houses nearby were crushed, but the blast apparently went through their house.

#### Mystified By Blast

No one knew what had caused the explosion which they called "pikadon"—"pika" means "flash" and "don" is the Japanese equivalent of the American "boom" or "bang."

About 6 o'clock in the evening, a neighbor brought word that her brother, Watson, was seriously injured but still alive. Police were keeping everyone out of Hiroshima, but after dark her mother and five or six neighbors went into the burning, devastated city and found Watson.

With other high school boys he had been helping to tear down an old building. In the summer heat, they had been working stripped to the waists. All were dead but Watson and he was horribly burned.

#### Carried Home on Plank

He was conscious and would not let them touch him. He managed to crawl onto a plank and they carried him five or six miles to home in the early morning. At 5:30 o'clock the same morning he died.

After the bomb, everyone was afraid other bombs would be dropped and everybody was happy when the war ended, Taeko said. Crippled hands due to atom-bomb burns are a common sight in Hiroshima, she said.

She came through her experiences unharmed. Her only souvenir is a packet of before-and-after photographs labeled in Japanese and with the English words: "Hiroshima and Nagasaki (city)—Destroyed by Atomic Bomb."

Because she was "papa's girl," her uncle said, Taeko was the first of the family to return to the United States after nearly a year of negotiations. Her mother and two younger sisters will come as soon as possible.