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**INDEPTH: HIROSHIMA ANNIVERSARY**

## Hiroshima: City of peace

Angela Bianchi, CBC News Online | August 5, 2004

**Apart from the skeletal Atomic Bomb Dome** and a few disfigured citizens, there are few visible scars left in Hiroshima to remind us of the early morning bombing that took place Aug. 6, 1945, a day that saw the birth of the atomic age and a city of 200,000 razed by a single bomb.

Roads that once made temporary mortuaries for the countless bodies roasted by intense thermal rays have been paved over, along with the human shadows imprinted on the asphalt by the heat of the atomic bomb.

Fifty-nine years later most bombing victims have died or remain institutionalized, but for those who luckily escaped the fallout, memories of the 8:15 a.m. bombing have not faded.

Lest we forget, Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Museum, built in 1955 as a testimony to the horrors of atomic war, continues to educate, horrify and sensitize curious visitors.

Inside are photographs of victims grotesquely scarred, of bodies burned beyond recognition, and countless black-and-white photos of school children draped with tattered clothing, with skin peeling off their faces.



*An allied correspondent stands in a sea of rubble before the shell of a building that once was a movie theater in Hiroshima, Sept. 8, 1945. (AP Photo/Stanley Troutman)*

On display are war relics of sake bottles, thumb-sized kitchen utensils and metal objects melted down by the forces of heat.

Among the clumps of black hair that fell from victims after the bombing are abnormal, three-inch fingernails and human organs, blackened as a result of radiation.

Visitors, some dressed in T-shirts and shorts, others in their Sunday finest, listen carefully to the unemotional, unbiased voice on their audio cassettes explain the atrocities of atomic war and of events that followed the bombing.

**The solemnity inside the museum** is interrupted occasionally by uniformed school children on field trips, but their chatter dies down once exposed to the newspaper photos of dying children.

Visitors slowly walk through the display cases, carefully eyeing the aging photographs of oxidized streetcars and of people dying in makeshift hospitals.

The disfigured objects and a wax model of a burning woman are reminders that the intense heat destroyed more than real estate on Aug. 6, 1945.

The museum, located in the Peace Memorial Park built to commemorate the events of that historic date, is one of 60 monuments dedicated to promoting world peace.

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The memorial cenotaph, designed by Japan's famous architect, Kenzo Tange, is shaped like saddles found in ancient tombs and bears the names of those killed by the atomic explosion. Carved on the sarcophagus is an epitaph that translates into "repose ye in peace, for the error shall not be repeated."

In another corner is the Children's Peace Monument, adorned with colourful paper cranes, a symbol of peace, sent by children the world over.

This is the Hiroshima foreigners come to see. The one they've heard about.

While some locals may have grown tired of hearing the peace bell toll obediently every morning at 8:15 a.m., visitors wake up purposely early to hear the calming sound that reminds them not to forget that it took mere seconds for innocent people to lose their lives that August morning.

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