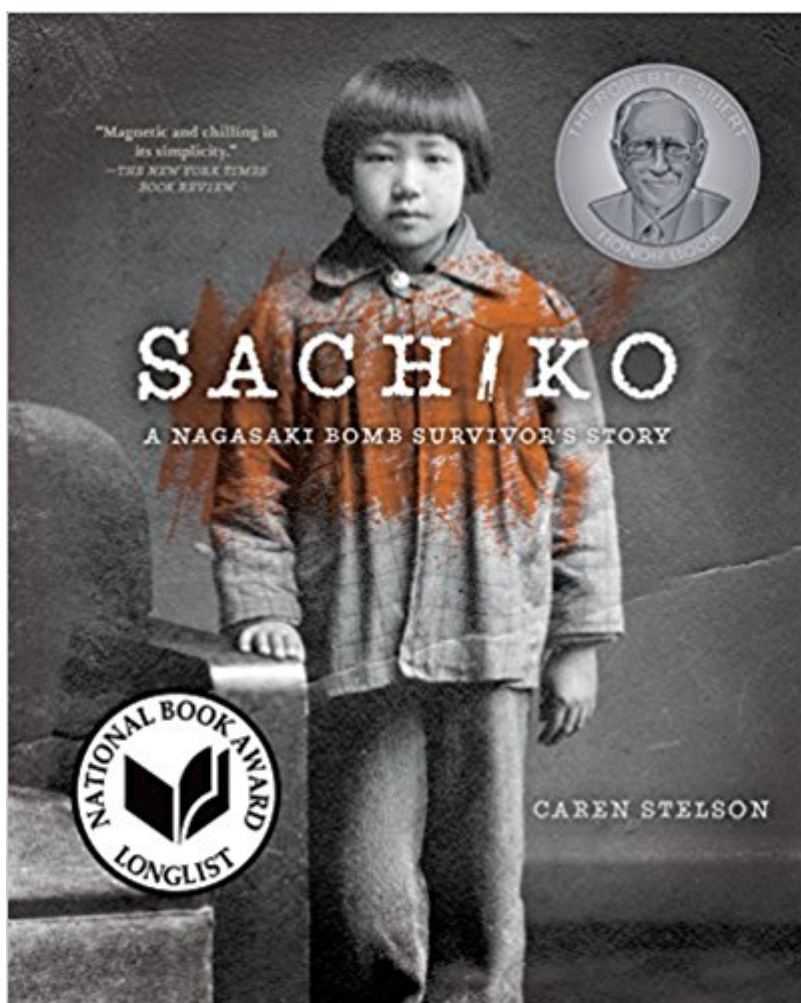


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# Sachiko: A Nagasaki Bomb Survivor's Story



## Synopsis

A Minnesota Book Award Finalist  
A Robert F. Sibert Informational Honor Book Longlisted for the 2016 National Book Award for Young People's Literature "[A] book that is both personal and universal, both thoroughly researched and real."--The New York Times Book Review This striking work of narrative nonfiction tells the true story of six-year-old Sachiko Yasui's survival of the Nagasaki atomic bomb on August 9, 1945, and the heartbreaking and lifelong aftermath. Having conducted extensive interviews with Sachiko Yasui, Caren Stelson chronicles Sachiko's trauma and loss as well as her long journey to find peace. This book offers readers a remarkable new perspective on the final moments of World War II and their aftermath. Praise for Sachiko: "Filled with powerful archival images, the book also sensitively describes the historical context."--The Washington Post "Luminous, enduring, utterly necessary."--starred, Booklist "[A]n essential addition to World War II biography collections . . ."--School Library Journal "An important perspective."--Kirkus Reviews

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 5-8 • Sachiko Yasui was just six years old when the atomic bomb was dropped on her hometown of Nagasaki. On August 9, 1945, she went from playing house with her friends to burying them. Yasui also lost a brother that day and would lose many more family members because of radiation sickness. Growing up, she was ostracized for her status as hibakusha, a bomb survivor. Despite her trauma and the bullying she faced, Yasui endured. She sought out inspiration from the likes of Helen Keller, Mohandas Gandhi, and Martin Luther King Jr. Their works allowed

her to make peace with the events in her life. Stelson recounts hearing Yasui speak at a ceremony to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This event would spark a long and intimate process in which Stelson repeatedly met with and interviewed Yasui in order to tell her story. Frequent historical notes provide context to the events happening in the narrative: Japan's role in World War II, the issue of racism in the war, President Truman's ultimatum, the effects of radiation sickness, the U.S. occupation of Japan after the war, and more. Back matter includes a glossary of Japanese terms used in the book and detailed maps of where events took place. VERDICT This sensitive and well-crafted account of a Nagasaki bomb survivor is an essential addition to World War II biography collections for middle school students. —Deidre Winterhalter, Niles Public Library, IL

"[A] story of staggering hardship and extraordinary resolve. . . . Sachiko and her story . . . are an indelible force. Luminous, enduring, utterly necessary." --starred, Booklist  
"This sensitive and well-crafted account of a Nagasaki bomb survivor is an essential addition to World War II biography collections for middle school students." --starred, School Library Journal  
"Author Caren Stelson tells Yasui's story with warmth, sympathy and the vivid details of Yasui's life before and after the bomb exploded. Filled with powerful archival images, the book also sensitively describes the historical context."--The Washington Post  
"An important perspective." --Kirkus Reviews

Sachiko is a heartfelt and sensitive story about a life journey from despair to hope. It tells the story we don't know of the aftermath of the atomic bombing of Japan. Six-year old Sachiko Yusui was playing when her life was suddenly turned upside down. Her entire family suffered instant death, death by radiation poisoning or a lifelong struggle with cancer. She herself was bullied and ostracized because of her radiation exposure. But Sachiko was resilient. Her father was her guiding light and through him she learned about the non-violent philosophy of Gandhi. Inspired by the example of Helen Keller she regains her voice that she lost due to thyroid cancer. Eventually she emerges with the strength to become a tireless advocate for peace. An inspiring saga for young and old alike. Longlisted for the National Book Award for Young People's Literature.

A true tale told from the perspective of a survivor of the Nagasaki Atomic bombing. The book balanced injecting information that would allow the reader to understand the history surrounding the time period in an effort to help understand how this bombing occurred. While I was hopeful the narrator would remain a child, the story takes us through her lifetime and what ultimately leads her

to tell her story. I thought this was well done with a good balance of background information. While truthful, it never turned gory nor did it preach to who was right or wrong, but left an understanding of why something like this should never purposely happen again.

An expose with details and personal elements that keep the reader entertained. Reality that impacts the heart.

Do not order the kindle version of the book. I cannot download this on my paperwhite, and the format on my icloud kindle app is not readable - the print is way too small and not adjustable.

Don't fault this reviewer for terming the atomic massacre of the civilians of Nagasaki, " a holocaust largely ignored. Prior to the imposition, beginning in the late 1960s, of an exclusive, proprietary relationship between the word "holocaust" and the suffering of Judaic people in World War II, "holocaust" was freely employed to describe any mass death by fire, which is indeed the dictionary-definition. Since when has Orwellian Newspeak invalidated a person's right to use a word from the dictionary? All holocausts should be commemorated. What the US government did to Nagasaki after Hiroshima was a horror of unprecedented proportions. There are a few important books on Nagasaki, including "A Song for Nagasaki: The Story of Takashi Nagai-Scientist, Convert, and Survivor of the Atomic Bomb. What is special and remarkable about "Sachiko: A Nagasaki Bomb Survivor's Story" is that its intended audience is young people, yet in its Zen-like simplicity it makes for compelling reading for adults. The directness of the prose and illustrations makes for a personal account of this great evil that is both clear and poignant. To anticipate the standard alibi concerning the supposed "necessity" of burning alive the people of Japan: Japan had been wanting to surrender from 1943. I am a former reporter for the Associated Press and my colleague in the media, the distinguished journalist Walter Trohan, informed me that he could not report that fact in the Chicago Tribune, due to war-time censorship. He gleaned the fact about the Japanese surrender offer from FDR's chief of staff, Admiral Leahy. It was published in the Tribune days after the war ended. Japan had sought a conditional surrender. Mr. Truman atomic bombed Japan to impose an unconditional surrender. As for the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor: it was aggressive warfare, and therefore a crime, but it was an attack on a military base, not an American city. In the face of Nagasaki, we should learn humility and the lesson of this and every

holocaust: may we never let it happen again. Remembrance is the hinge upon which that pledge depends, and this book assists both us and our youth to remember the horrors of "The Good War" which, in our chauvinism, we too often like to forget.

This book is absolutely heartbreaking and beautiful, and such an important story to share. After reading *Bomb: The Race to Build and Steal the World's Most Dangerous Weapon* by Steve Sheinkin with my 12 year old, I wanted to read something from the point of view of the Japanese who were victimized by the bomb, and this was the perfect follow-up book for that purpose. That said, my 12 year old had a very hard time reading about the events that transpire in the first few chapters of the book, and asked me if I would stop reading it to him. He said it made him sick to his stomach. So of course I set it aside. The story of what happens to Sachiko and her family following the dropping of the bomb is very disturbing. I hope in the future my son will feel ready to finish the book. I think it's essential that we inform ourselves about what happened to families like Sachiko's, and what is really at stake when we talk about nuclear weapons and war.

How does one write a book review with tears in their eyes? Those tears are the strongest recommendation I can give to the book, *Sachiko* written by Caren Stelson. The story of one surviving girl/woman from the atomic bombing of Nagasaki will touch your heart and mind. The author weaves grey marked history pages through Sachiko's story making sure that the young reader has the background they need to understand the story. Normally, when that is done, it gets in the way of the story. But someone did a masterful layout so a section of story finishes and you turn the page to the necessary history for understanding. Then you can go on with the story, your mind enlightened, and yet without any loss of the story. This book is perfect for Middle School World History, US History or Language Arts curriculum. Paired with *Farewell to Manzanar*, the book will tell the WWII story of Japanese on both sides of the Pacific Ocean. Paired with the *Diary of Anne Frank*, the book will illuminate the courage of young people and the focus on peace that is so necessary in our modern world. Combined with Sachiko's heroes Gandhi, Helen Keller and Martin Luther King, the book is practically a full curriculum!

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