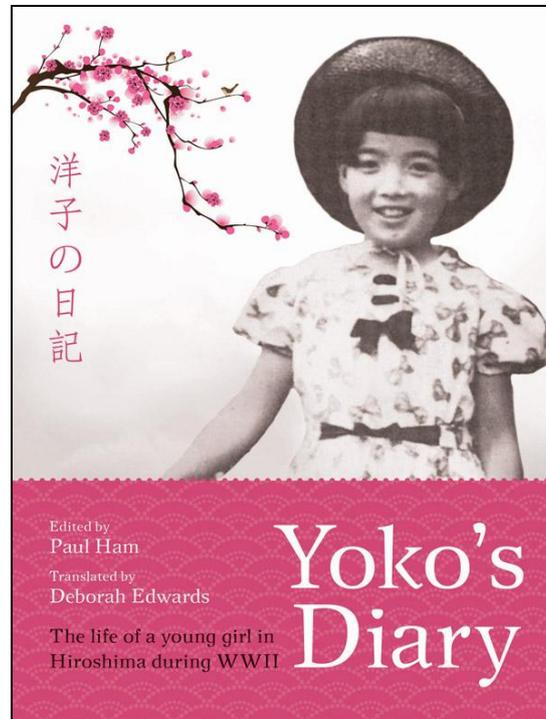


Yoko's Diary

Edited by Paul Ham, translated by Deborah Edwards

Teacher's Notes



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Introduction

'I want to try hard and do my best every day,' (p 8).

This is the diary of thirteen-year-old Yoko Moriwaki who lived not far from Hiroshima in Japan during World War Two, 'the worst war the world has ever known.' (p 4). Her parents were teachers on the beautiful island of Miyajima, although her father was at war and her step-brother was working elsewhere during much of this story, so that Yoko shared their home only with her mother. Her diary was written as a school project and records her life as war closed in on her community beginning on 6 April 1945 with her high school entrance ceremony at the First Hiroshima Prefectural Girls' High School, or Daiichikenjo ('Kenjo'), and concluding the night before the dreadful atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on 6 August 1945. Yoko and her classmates had been mobilised by the war effort and were working on a demolition site at Dobashi, just six kilometres from the epicentre of the explosion. All 277 students and their twenty teachers perished, including Yoko. Her diary was discovered by her older step-brother Kohji Hosokawa and published in Japan in 1996. This is the first English translation of this moving account of a child's experience of war.

It includes forewords by Paul Ham, Australian historian of the bombings, and by Yoko's brother Kohji Hosokawa, his daughter Miki Koroyasu, his son Hiroshi Hosokawa, his wife Kazuko Hosokawa, and Yoko's classmates Kazuko Kojima (nee Fujita) and Masako Kajiyama (nee Nakamoto). There is also an afterword by her father Ataru Moriwaki (who did not learn of her death until he was repatriated from service in China the following year) in an entry for the day she died, 6 August 1945, which is followed by a song he wrote and composed entitled 'Beloved Daughter'. The volume is concluded in Kohji's 'Epilogue by a Brother' which includes a letter by Hatsue Ueda (a housewife who tended Yoko in her dying hours) to Michiko Kigami, a friend from Miyajima, describing Yoko's death. Kohji offers a final prayer for his sister that she may rest in peace.

But despite all these heartfelt tributes, the words of Yoko are what remain with the reader. For this is a story which demonstrates that no child should be subjected to the privations of war, let alone be subjected to such a shocking death. The memories of those who survived Hiroshima will be forever testimony to the horror, but none speak as loudly as this dutiful and hard-working child who had no idea what would befall her on that terrible morning.

'These unadorned facts are passed on to the next generation, unfaded by the passage of time. This, I believe, is the mission that is demanded of us, the ones left behind.' (p 28)

About the Author

Yoko Moriwaki was a thirteen-year-old girl living on the island of Miyajima in 1945. She was no different to other children of her age, except that she seems to have been a promising student, with musical talent, and was unusually dedicated and selfless in her outlook on life. This is a candid and yet naive account of what WWII meant to countless inhabitants, and in particular of how war is experienced by children.

Paul Ham is the author of the highly acclaimed *Kokoda*, shortlisted for the Walkley Award for Non Fiction. He co-wrote and appeared in the ABC's two-part documentary based on this book. His second book, *Vietnam*, won the NSW Premier's History Award and was shortlisted for the Walkley Award, 'The Nib' CAL Waverley Library Award and the Queensland Premier's Award. He is the Australia correspondent of the *Sunday Times*. He was born and educated in Australia and lives in Sydney, having spent several years working in Britain as a journalist and publisher. He came across *Yoko's Diary* while doing researching for the best-selling *Hiroshima Nagasaki*

Study Notes

Themes

The **themes** and **topics** in this book include:

World War Two

Children in War

Hiroshima and the Atomic Bomb

Japanese Cultural Traditions and Beliefs

Family Inheritance and Memory

Values: Duty and Discipline

Throughout this English edition of *Yoko's Diary* there are additional informational sections included which outline aspects of social, economic, political and domestic life in Japan at that time. Any one of these section headings might be discussed further in relation to topics suggested below.

Writing Style

Interpretation and Reading Comprehension is also encouraged by this text which is enhanced by **photographs** which will stimulate both **Visual Literacy Skills** and **Creative Arts Activities**. [See also **Activities** and **Discussion Points** in **Study Notes** below.]

The following activities and discussion points relate to the **themes, writing style** and to other curriculum areas such as **Interpretation and Reading Comprehension, Visual Literacy** and **Creative Arts**.

A. Thematic Activities and Discussion Points:

- **World War Two**

Discussion Point: While Yoko's father went to war, she and her mother stayed at home and endured the fear of frequent bomb raids, growing shortages in all supplies, and the necessity to do extra work in order to survive. 'When the war came, Yoko's life changed completely. Food started running out, and by 1945 even rice, the Japanese staple diet, grew scarce. She and her family ate sweet potatoes and berries and anything they could find in the forests.' (p 5) Discuss how war affects those on the home front, rather than those who are actually fighting.

Discussion Point: Food shortages were intense and everyone had to grow food in order to support themselves 'But the Japanese were adept at squeezing organic life out of the tiniest spaces in order to survive.' (p 88) Research the food which Japanese people grew in this era, and how they managed to sustain themselves. There is some suggestion that Yoko was suffering from malnutrition, which is not surprising when you read her brief references to the food she was eating.

Discussion Point: During WWII Japanese students were told to support the Imperial war effort in thought and deed. In 1942 a new national day was declared: 'Imperial Rescript Proclamation Day to commemorate the Imperial Proclamation of the War Against Britain and America.' (p 100) But how different was so-called educational 'propaganda' in Japan to what children were taught in western countries such as Australia, Great Britain or the USA?

Activity: The Battle of Okinawa is described as 'the longest and worst of the Pacific War' (p 119). Research this battle further.

Activity: War took an immense toll on the Japanese population. 'At the time, over five million men served in the Japanese Imperial Army: most were conscripts, meaning they were called up by the government and compelled to fight.' (p 140) Of these 'almost two-and-a-half million ... would die by the end of the war.' (p 140) Compare this toll to that experienced by other combatant countries involved in WWII.

- **Children in War**

Discussion Point: 'Towards the end of the war, Yoko worked as a student labourer on one of the house demolition sites. She was one of about 7500 student workers in Hiroshima aged between twelve and eighteen.' (p 5) This would have been hard and dangerous work. Should child labour be condoned by governments in wartime?

Discussion Point: Yoko's long school days were constantly interrupted by warning sirens, by having to work in demolition teams, and were also punctuated by chores and homework. How might you have coped with a day like hers which began at 5.00am and ended generally between 9.00 and 11.00pm?

Discussion Point: ‘We learn that the children had no holidays during the war – they even had to work on Sundays, gathering food and wood, labouring, and practising home defence in case the Americans invaded. Her little routine is laid bare.’ (p 8) Yoko’s life seems very grim, but she seems a cheerful little girl. Where does her resilience stem from? Discuss.

Discussion Point: Yoko writes that she walked 23.5 kilometres from Yoshiwa on 8 April but says of this marathon only that she was tired. Later on 6 July she walked 25 kilometres. Imagine walking that far on an ordinary school day. How would you feel?

- **Hiroshima and the Atomic Bomb**

Discussion Point: Yoko’s brother Kohji Hosokawa was a ‘*hibakusha* (‘atomic bomb survivor’), and like many he didn’t speak of the experience for many years. His wife, Kazuko lost her sister Fumiko to the bomb just as Kohji lost Yoko. Several hundred thousand survived but later suffered terrible radiation sickness, deformity and other mental and physical problems. Research the dropping of the bomb here and at Nagasaki, and the effects in its aftermath.

Discussion Point: Kohji’s son Hiroshi is what is called a second generation survivor and has suffered in a different way: ‘As I moved to different cities and schools every couple of years, I developed a strange feeling that because I was a second-generation Hiroshima survivor, and therefore hadn’t experienced the atomic bomb myself, I didn’t really belong to either world – the world of Hiroshima or the world outside. This feeling for a long time both sustained and tormented me.’ (pp 30-1) Emotional or mental distress was another outcome of survival. Discuss.

Activity: There is a poignant exhibition of the experiences of Yoko and her classmates at the website ‘The Suffering of Mobilized Students’

http://www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/virtual/VirtualMuseum_e/exhibit_e/exh0407_e/exh04075_e.html

This site records that ‘the most extreme horror was experienced by students sent out to demolish buildings in five inner city locations. Of the roughly 8,200 students mobilized for this work, over 5,900 perished.’

Read more about this terrible event in other diaries or non-fiction accounts such as *My Hiroshima* by Junko Morimoto (Viking Kestrel, 1990). Junko was thirteen, like Yoko, when the bomb was dropped but because she stayed at home from school that day with a stomach bug, she was spared. She has recently posted a video of herself supporting the Australian Red Cross campaign at:

‘Make Nuclear Weapons the Target’ at <http://vimeo.com/28699542>

Other non-fiction accounts include: *Hiroshima: The Story of the First Atom Bomb* by Clive A. Lawton (Candlewick, 2004).

Older students might read Paul Ham's *Hiroshima Nagasaki: The Real Story of the Atomic Bombings and Their Aftermath* (HarperCollins, 2011).

Visit websites which contain information about the bombing such as:

'Hiroshima Peace Site' http://www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/top_e.html

Or:

Hiroshima Day Committee

'Hiroshima and Nagasaki Bombing: Facts about the Atomic Bomb'
http://www.hiroshimacommittee.org/Facts_NagasakiAndHiroshimaBombing.htm

Discuss your findings.

Activity: Help to survivors was slow in coming and 'The answer is because the medical teams arriving with the occupying Americans were instructed to study the effects of radiation on the human body, not help the survivors.' (p 36) This is a shocking fact, which you might wish to research further.

- **Japanese Cultural Traditions and Beliefs**

Activity: 'Yet if the Japanese regime treated her death as 'lighter than a feather' – as the Samurai code of *bushido* exhorted the Japanese people to view death – it was the heaviest thing on earth for her parents.' (p 9) Read more about Japanese attitudes to death, particularly in war. eg Kamikaze pilots.

Discussion Point: The significance of *Tenchosetsu* (p 90) is described. What was this ceremony about?

Activity: Yoko's family practised the religion called 'Shinto, the ancient Japanese faith. At the heart of Shinto in the mid-twentieth century was a belief in, and worship of, the Emperor as a living god.' (p 4) Research this religion and its practices, and also the other religions practised in Japan as well.

Discussion Point: Yoko mentions the Itsukushima Shrine Kangensai Festival which is also described in a note (p 185). Read about this Shrine online at:

http://www.miyajima.or.jp/english/spot/spot_itsukushima.html

and the Kangen Festival at:

http://www.miyajima.or.jp/english/event/event_kangen.html

Discuss what you learn about this festival and shrine.

Activity: The delicate art of Japanese house construction is discussed (p 137). Read other books which explore Japanese architectural and cultural traditions such as *Miss Happiness and Miss Flower* by Rumer Godden (HarperCollins, 2002, 1961).

- **Family Inheritance and Memory**

Discussion Point: Yoko's family members have each been marked by the bombing in losing loved ones and becoming survivors. But the bonds between them are also happy ones. Her father was a music teacher and wanted Yoko to become a musician. Her niece Miki took up music as did Kazuko who later married her music teacher's son, Kohji. Their various memories of Yoko's childhood and the aftermath of her death also provide bonds which give them strength. Discuss.

- **Values such as Duty and Discipline**

Discussion Point: 'Today for the first time ever I planted rice. It was awful as my feet kept sinking deep down into the oozy mud. But who cares about that, compared to the benefit that this rice will be to our country?' (p 158) Yoko has a charming way of describing the difficulties of her life and then offering them up for the greater good of her country. Discuss the theme of self-sacrifice in her diary.

Discussion Point: Japanese culture teaches young people to be dutiful and disciplined in study and work. Did you find Yoko's attitudes surprising? Would you have been so obedient or accepting in such a situation?

B. Writing Style Activities and Discussion Points:

- **Diary Writing and Memoir Writing**

Activity: Discuss the writing of a diary and the ways in which such writing reveals the personality of the writer and the nature of the family and society in which the writer lives. Invite students to write a diary of a week in their lives.

Discussion Point: One of the delightfully personal aspects of Yoko's diary are the little notes at the head of each section recording when she got up, went to bed, how long she studied for and what chores she did. This reveals a personality which was very ordered and disciplined. It also gives readers an insight into how life was lived by children like Yoko at that time and in that place. What did you learn from these notes?

Discussion Point: Memoirs are different to diaries. They allow a writer time for reflection on what happened and why, and its aftermath. (Included in this edition of *Yoko's Diary* there are various other written accounts by people who were close to her and which are more like memoirs.) Read Junko Morimoto's *My Hiroshima* (1997), a picture book about the writer/illustrator's survival of Hiroshima. Discuss the differences between diaries and memoirs.

Discussion Point: A story can be written in first or third person, or less commonly, in second. Yoko writes her diary in first person. The various pieces of commentary included in this publication of her diary are written variously in both first and third person. Discuss the effect of the choice of narrative person on the telling of a story.

- **Haiku Poems**

Activity: Write a 'haiku' poem exploring some feeling expressed by Yoko in her diary. For some guidance, visit:

'How to Write a Haiku Poem' <http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Haiku-Poem>

- **Japanese Words and Meanings**

Activity: Make a list of all the words which are not familiar to you in this text. Create an alphabetical glossary of Japanese words included in the text, along with their meanings. eg Bento Box.

C. Interpretation and Reading Comprehension Activities and Discussion Points:

- ◆ **Characters**

Activity: Choose any one of the characters mentioned in the diary and write a brief description of how they appear in the descriptions in Yoko's diary.

- **Comprehension Quiz**

Activity: Answer the following questions after reading the text carefully.

1. What does 'Sensei' mean?
2. What was the name of Yoko's new school?
3. Who were the 'Big Six'?
4. How did Yoko travel to school each day?
5. How does Yoko learn multiplication in class?
6. What did they do with the pine roots they dug up?
7. What work did Yoko and her classmates largely do?
8. What toys does Yoko make?
9. When Kohji comes home from Kyushu to live, he goes to work where?
10. Where was Yoko when the bomb fell?

Answers: 1. 'Master or Teacher' or more literally, 'Person born before another'. 2. First Hiroshima Prefectural Girls' High School, or Daiichikenjo ('Kenjo'). 3. Six powerful men who ruled the country of Japan in 1945, despite the country's dedication to the Emperor Hirohito. 4. By ferry. 5. With a slide rule. 6. They ground them into oil for fuel. 7. They cleared demolition sites of debris. 8. A bag that hangs from the waist, and two woollen dolls. 9. Hiroshima Post and Telecommunications Bureau. 10. Working on a demolition site at Dobashi, seven hundred metres from the hypocentre (or epicentre).

- **Study Japanese Storytelling**

Activity: Read some traditional tales of Japan eg. Junko Morimoto's *Kojuro and the Bears* by (Collins, 1987) or *The Inch Boy* (Collins, 1984). Read: Ruth Manley's *The Plum-Rain Scroll* (2005, UQP, 1978) and sequels, or Lian Hearn's *Tales of the Otori* series.

Visit: 'Traditional Japanese Children's Stories' collected and translated by Tom Ray

<http://life.ou.edu/stories/>

Kids Web Japan 'Folk Legends' <http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/folk/index.html>

D. Visual Literacy and Illustration Activities and Discussion Points:

- **Book Cover**

Activity: This cover features a photograph of Yoko with a piece of cherry blossom, the traditional symbol of Japan. This symbol has many resonances relevant to this text, which you might research by visiting sites such as:

‘Cherry Blossom’ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cherry_blossom

Or

‘Cherry Blossom Festivals Hanami’

<http://gojapan.about.com/cs/cherryblossoms/a/sakurafestival.htm>

Activity: Choose some other symbol which has significance in this book and use that in your own design of a cover for this book.

- **Photographs**

Activity: Photographs are used throughout this text to illustrate key scenes. Search the internet for other photos which reveal something of this event. (Teachers may need to monitor this activity as there are some deeply disturbing images of the destruction and loss of life at Hiroshima available online.)

- **Drawing**

Activity: Respond to any entry in the diary by drawing your own interpretation of it.

Activity: Japanese artists often use comic art or ‘manga’ style to tell a story. Discuss these techniques with students and then create a storyboard for one of the incidents which Yoko describes.

See: Rod Tokeley and Dillon Naylor’s *Zap! Splat! Kapow Make Your Own Comic* (Omnibus Books, 1999) and Mike Chinn’s *Writing and Illustrating the Graphic Novel* (New Burlington Books, 2006)

Activity: Study the art of Kamishibai, the traditional art of Japanese story telling using story cards. Visit:

‘Kamishibai for Kids’ <http://www.kamishibai.com/>

Or

‘Kamishibai.org’ <http://www.kamishibai.org/history.htm>

E. Creative Arts Activities and Discussion Points:

Activity: Study Japanese crafts such as origami dolls, fans or birds. For example, make an origami lantern by visiting websites such as: 'Origami-Instructions.com'

<http://www.origami-instructions.com/origami-lantern.html>

Activity: Create a Classroom Display of some of the stories, poems and pictures you've created, inspired by this book.

Activity: Add to your display some arts and crafts which are typical of the country, and of some books you have read about it.

Activity: Create a dramatic response to the book in an improvisation, using masks. Study Japanese theatre with students by visiting teaching sites such as:

<http://japan.pppst.com/theatre.html> to inform this activity.

Activity: Celebrate International Day of Peace on 21 September

<http://www.internationaldayofpeace.org/> as a class activity.

To prepare, read: Eleanor Coerr's *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes* (Puffin Modern Classic, 2004, 1977). Then make origami paper cranes and include them in your celebration. For instruction, see websites such as:

'Origami Crane Instructions'

<http://www.origami-fun.com/origami-crane.html>

Conclusion

This book is a poignant record of the days leading up to the bombing of Hiroshima and the life which children lived during WWII in Japan. Yoko's personal diary was never meant to be read by anyone except her teacher, but due to the persistence of her step-brother it has been published for the world to witness both the tragic losses caused by war, and the devastating effects of an atomic bomb, and as a memorial for Yoko whom he and his family loved dearly. It ends with her heart-breaking final entry:

'Tomorrow I am going to clear away some houses that have been demolished. I will work hard and do my best.' (p 194)