



# Hiroshima: The Last Witnesses

## A Writer's Journey

**M. G. Sheftall**

Since 2016, cultural historian M.G. Sheftall has been asking hibakusha — survivors of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki — to share with him their memories of the worst day of their lives. In the first book to arise from this research, *Hiroshima: The Last Witnesses* (Dutton, 2024), Sheftall layers the stories of hibakusha in harrowing detail, to give a minute-by-minute report of 6 August 1945, in the leadup and aftermath of the world-changing bombing mission of Paul Tibbets, Enola Gay, and Little Boy. These survivors and witnesses, who now have an average age over ninety years old, are quite literally the last people who can still provide us with reliable and detailed testimony about life in their cities before the bombings, tell us what they experienced on the day those cities were obliterated, and give us some appreciation of what it has entailed to live with those memories and scars during the subsequent seventy-plus years.



M.G. Sheftall is a professor of modern Japanese cultural history and communication at Shizuoka University. His research focuses on the modern evolution of Japanese national identity, with particular emphasis on WWII and the lingering effects of that conflict at both collective and individual levels of Japanese consciousness. In addition to his teaching duties, he has been a research fellow at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken) in Kyoto (2012-2013), a visiting curator at WWII-related museums in Japan and the United States, and a technical consultant and commentator for numerous historical documentaries in both Western and Japanese media. He has lived and worked in Japan continuously since 1987.

This talk is organized by Sven Saaler (Professor of History, Sophia University).

**Date: May 12, 2025**

**Time: 17.30-19:00**

**Format: Hybrid**

**Venue: Room 301 (Subject to change)**

**Zoom: <https://sophia-ac-jp.zoom.us/j/98529658944>**

**Meeting-ID: 985 2965 8944**

**Passcode: bucky**

