

Hiroshima survivors' art held in UK to be returned to Japan

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The works were painted by students of Hiroshima's Methodist Girls' High School

Paintings by pupils who survived a World War Two atomic attack are to be returned to Japan by the man who looked after them "for many decades".

The works were given to a Manchester teacher by a Hiroshima school principal in the 1950s, who passed them to art education supervisor Michael Stevenson.

They were used as teaching aids and were shown at the House of Lords on the 70th anniversary of the attack in 2015.

Mr Stevenson said Japan was now "the right place" for them.

The paintings were created by teenage students of the Methodist Girls' High School in the early 1950s.

The school, which was destroyed in August 1945, reopened in a different location less than three months later and is believed to be the first to have resumed teaching after the bomb.



One of the paintings depicts the Hiroshima Genbaku Dome, which famously survived the attack

They were taken to the US by Dr Takuo Matsumoto, who gifted them to Prue Wallis-Myers.

On returning to the UK, Miss Wallis-Myers gave them to Mr Stevenson, who was responsible for art education in her borough.

He said after he "became convinced the paintings should be returned to Japan", he put in "almost five years of work" to make it happen.

"I believe the paintings should be appreciated not simply as beautiful objects, but for the lessons they contain about the wonderful resilience of the human spirit expressed in art by young people.

"For that reason, they deserve to be conserved for future generations to appreciate, and Hiroshima is the right place for that to happen, since that is where they were made."



The works were used as teaching aids in the North West for several decades

The Lord Mayor of Manchester, Carl Austin-Behan, said the collection had "managed to inspire hundreds of teachers and students with their message of harmony and co-operation".

"I'm delighted they can now be returned to their original home as a tribute to the artists who created them along with our message of thanks, appreciation and friendship."