

## Notes on an Experience I Don't Want to Remember

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I was 51 years old and I was working for Mitsubishi Steel when the bomb hit.

On that day, I was at a factory and I noticed the metallic sound of an enemy plane coming when we were on our way to get some tools from the *Daiichi* [Number 1] Factory with my daughter who was helping. The plane was coming from the Tateyama side, which is east and before I had finished telling my daughter "It looks like an enemy plane. Get to the shelter!" the bomb had struck.

Just before it, I saw a parachute drifting down. I guess because of the southerly wind, it was drifting from the Tateyama side towards Urakami.

I had been blown over and seemed to be covered with something like a fire from industrial gas; I thought I was dying, so prayed *Hail Mary*. After a while though, I thought I was ok but then heard at a school that even if you don't have external wounds your internal organs could be damaged, so I shook my body but didn't feel pain anywhere.

After that, I went home and thought of applying some ointment to my burns, but I only had ointment for cuts, so I decided to go to The University Hospital. I tried looking around to see where I was, but I couldn't see anything. The upper half of my body, hands and face had been hideously burned within a moment.

I pushed my burned eyelids up with my fingers and finally I could see the scenery around me. I had been blown from the Steelworks to Urakami Station.

On the way to the University Hospital, holding my eyelids open with my fingers, I saw people who had been crushed, sitting there, unable to move and I thought whoa, there are many people who are worse off than me.

When I arrived at the University Hospital, the doctors and nurses were working with their hair disheveled and their white clothing covered with blood. Because the hospital had collapsed, it seemed like they couldn't do much because they were without bandages and stuff, and just seemed to be running around. Still, there were many people lined up wanting to be treated. As I was giving my place to someone who was really badly injured and needed treatment quickly, there was an announcement saying "Fire is coming, so please escape towards the mountain."

Because there was no time to go around to the road, I ran on the border of a farm. I couldn't use my hands because they were badly burned, so I climbed up towards the mountain with great difficulty. I looked down from the top of the mountain and saw that the area around my house [Just below Urakami Cathedral] was also engulfed in fire.

I looked at it and thought for a second that my family might burn to death. But I thought if they were alive, they might be in the shelter at Urakami Cathedral so I went there with the faint hope that they would be alive, but there was only one woman there. I asked her about them and she said "Not just your family but no one has come." That person was sick and she spent all her time in the shelter except when she went out to get meal. Maybe other people didn't even have time to escape to the shelter.

Next, I climbed up behind the cathedral. I could hear the sound of the church collapsing. I spent that night in a field above the

cathedral. I used a piece of summer *futon* from the ground, I don't know where it came from, and laid it in a drain at the edge of the field, and got under it to sleep.

The next morning, I was terribly thirsty when I woke up and I could hear voices all around me saying "Give me some water, give me some water." I went towards Takaomachi searching for some water and luckily, I found a well immediately. The well was full to the top because of the atomic bomb, so I bent over and drank it down in big gulps. I took a deep breath then looked around to find something I could take some water away with and found a one *sho* bottle [1.8 liters], so I filled it up with the water and tied it up around my waist with my burnt fingers.

After that, as I was thinking that none of my family would have survived, I wondered if even one of the eight of us had made it, and started calling out my wife's and childrens' names loudly but there wasn't any answer from anywhere. I was in despair and tried going to the University Hospital again but it had already collapsed and was a mountain of rubble. A lot of injured people were lying amongst the rubble. I laid out the futon, which I had picked up, on the rubble and spent 3 days there.

While I was there on top of the rubble, there was a school girl next to me. Right before the girl breathed her last breath, as she called "Father! Father!" repeatedly, she leaned toward me, but because I was quite a rigid man, I could only move my body away.

Afterwards, I thought I should have acted in her father's place and held her body in my arms. Not only her but others around me were dying, writhing in agony, one after another. Those bodies were taken to a crematory by a civil defense unit and the Nagasaki National Guard.

After a little while, I was informed by the hospital that “If we go to Togitsu, the American army will bring medicine and bandages and provide treatment, so please get into this vehicle.”

Because I had no injury on my legs, I went to Togitsu in the vehicle, but because the temple, our destination, was full, I was taken to something called a Youth Club. Even there, people were dying one after another crying out “Mother.” or “Give me some water.”

The people on both sides of me also passed away drearily, alone on their deathbeds. Everyone just had too much on their plate.

One rice ball each was provided for our meals, but because my whole face was hideously burned, when I tried to open my mouth to eat, it tore open again and was so painful that I couldn’t even taste anything. I spent a few days there but it was too swamped to even get any treatment.

Next, I heard “There is a doctor if you go to Togitsu.” and a one horse carriage came, but because I was able to walk, I walked there by myself. However, my eyes were shut because of the burns, so now and then I would open them with my fingers to make sure I was heading in the right direction. When I asked someone to help, the person ran away without a word. I wondered why but when I looked at my face later on realized it was understandable because my face looked like a monster.

I couldn’t do anything if I didn’t know the way, so I went into a house on the way to ask where the primary school was, so finally I got there but no one was there. I was at my wit’s end and had no choice but to sleep on a pile of straw that night. Then all over my body was bitten by ants.

The next day, a person who had brought a trolley told me that

Shinkouzen Primary School was being used as the headquarters of the University Hospital, so I walked there as well.

That information was true. I was treated there but because I had had to go without treatment for my burnt upper body for a few days, it was hell for me to even get out of bed.

Then, one day, I got up from bed with all my strength and went to the toilet - after I'd done my business and turned around, standing there in front of me was my father, who had long been dead. I looked hard at him wonderingly; I was actually staring at myself in the mirror. I think it was because I was longing to see anyone who was related to me - my family.

I spent a few days there thinking about my future, then I went to see my cousin who was in charge of a place that teaches craft work to officer's wives who had lost their husbands in the war, and who had raised me. I got there but I was informed that the food and daily supply system wasn't working at all.

Then I walked again from Nagasaki to Sasebo to see my son who had been adopted into my wife's younger sister's family, but he had left for Nagasaki to find me, so we missed each other. While I was spending some time in Sasebo, my sister in law was told that if you boiled *yuzu* [lemon-like citrus fruit] in hot water and drink it, the fever I had been having would abate, so she made it for me. Then, after about a month, the fever stopped and my burns got a lot better.

After that, I spent a month at my irreplaceable best friend's place in Iwojima and most of my wounds got better after soaking in the sea, then I came back to Nagasaki.

In the end, when the atomic bomb dropped, all of my family who were in Nagasaki died and I was the only survivor.

My son who was adopted and my daughter who was married

are still alive now and they both have their own families and are alive and well. These days, only my daughter visits me, sometimes.

That dreadful atomic bomb which takes everything away from people; it can never happen again.

[Location at Bombing: Morimachi]