

# The Memory of That Day

Mr. Sogoro Ishizu

1945, August 9<sup>th</sup>, 11:02 am, an atomic bomb was dropped in Nagasaki. Back then, there were 4 people in my house; me, my wife, my wife's sister and her 2 month old son who is now my eldest son. About 10 minutes after the bomb, my house caught fire and started burning. The roof was blown off and the blast ran through the inside of the house. The fire gradually got worse and I ran outside when I couldn't stand the pain and the heat of the fire anymore.

The sight which was waiting outside shocked me like a punch in the head. Everything had turned to gray, and there were fires in some places. For a little while, I could only stand in amazement and even forgot about the pain in my body. One of my neighbor's limbs had been blown off and he just looked like a bloody *Daruma* [hollow, round Japanese doll], and another one was charred like coal and he was just staring my way with his eyes. Also the soldiers who had run down from Mt. Inasa were all covered in blood and were moaning desperately for some water.

We ran through that disaster into a shelter. Then it became evening and when we just about couldn't stand the hunger anymore, my wife came in with two chickens, so we cooked them and could sustain about 24 or 25 people.

The next day, some rice balls were served but it was the middle of summer so they were already going bad and weren't edible.

We could barely survive with frozen beans and mandarin from the frozen food company which was destroyed near Inasa Bridge.

On August 14<sup>th</sup>, I went on the night train to Kumamoto. I wished I could have gone earlier but the trains weren't going and it wasn't until 5 days after the bomb that I could finally get on the train. The train went through the burnt-out ruins of Nagasaki in the dark; lights from the fire were still going here and there. And then the awful hell of a town receded into the darkness.

When I arrived at Kumamoto Station, I was starving and also tired so I couldn't move even one step. Then a demobilized soldier helped me and fed me. Also, there was relatively ample food in the town I was in (Kawajiri Town), so I had the mercy of enough food for the 4 members of my family until I could finally arrive in my hometown Kumamura.

The relief was short-lived. I suffered from acute headaches and stomachaches, fallen hair, purple spots on my body, diarrhea and loss of appetite for the next half a year. During that time, I was doing needlework to make a living.

I spent that year in Kumamoto and then the next year I came back to Nagasaki. I went back to the shelter where I had taken all my stuff when there were air raids, but nothing was left behind. I gave up looking for my stuff and start from nothing in the burned out remains of my house. Back then, the stingy assistance we got from the City Office was a one off payment of 500 yen, one blanket and a mosquito net.

When I think about those days, the sight comes back clearly and my body starts to tremble. I want to shake my head to get rid of the memory, but this is something I must remember and stop others from making the same mistake for a third time; I'll be living proof of the effects of the bomb and pray for peace.

[Location at Bombing: Inasa machi]