

A Flash

Mrs. Suma Tateo

I was born on February 15th, 1903. I experienced the atomic bomb when I was 42 years old. On that day, I was at home with my son [who lives in Chiba now] and on the 2nd floor there were 4 members of the Nakamura family. We were just doing a big clean up so we had all the windows out. I think that was why we didn't get seriously injured.

Before noon, I was cleaning the radio in the closet when suddenly a blue light flashed, then the shoji screen [paper screens] and glassware in the kitchen fell down and broke. I hastily put a blanket over me and my 5 year old son and kept us out of harm's way.

One of my daughters was working for Mitsubishi Munitions in Michinoo then, so I was about to go look for her right away but Nakamura san told me "You must eat lunch before you leave, if you leave now you will be in danger." So I ate a rice ball, then left. The street was crowded with people running naked and covered in blood. Before I got to Michinoo, I found my daughter who had broken glass stuck on her from her face to shoulder and was covered in blood with rags. We hugged each other in joy and told each other we were "Glad that you are safe." My daughter's injury was healed with iodine which was given to us by Nakamura san, but a few years later, she went into Hayashida Hospital in Shindaiku and she died 2 months after because of the illness caused by the atomic bomb.

On August 10th, I went looking for my brother who was on a business trip to Matsuyama. When I got to Ohashi there was an air

raid alarm so I jumped into a shelter by the river. The river was packed full with floating dead bodies that looked like they were sleeping on the water. The alert was called off so I hurried on my way, then I heard “water..., give me some water...” everywhere on the street. I put my hands together apologetically and said sorry in my heart as I heard that as I moved over the hundreds and thousands of dead bodies and rubble.

Just after noon, I found a body which seemed like my brother’s and asked his factory manager to confirm. He was dead and his whole body was black and even inside his mouth was carbonized and his gold tooth had melted away. I cremated him there and went home.

I had an aunt who visited a different relative’s home each week. She had just got to her own home in Ohashi the day before the atomic bomb and was killed by it. Her body was never found.

My daughter who lives in Osaka now went to nurse the injured the day after the bomb. But there was no one to corroborate this so she hasn’t been granted an atomic bomb victims’ record book yet.

[Location at Bombing: Yokoomachi]