

## The Wretched Memory

Mrs. Fude Kawabata

I had been evacuated from Zenzamachi to Iwakawamachi. On the morning of August 9<sup>th</sup>, I went out to Koe in Isahaya to get some food. My husband got me a ticket at Urakami Station. Maybe he had a premonition, but my husband told me "You don't need to hurry home, why don't you stay there tonight." I wondered why he would say something like that. There is no need to stay over for going to shop at Koe.

I bought some food from someone I knew in Koe, Isahaya and I was on my way home. A wrecked train arrived and injured people were getting off from it. I asked one of the people, "What happened at Iwakawamachi?" the answer was "Not even one plant is there." I really wanted to go home but my friend told me there was nothing I could do even if I got there, so I stayed over that night.

The next morning, I got on the first train to Nagasaki. But the train only went to Michinoo Station and couldn't go any farther. At Michinoo Station, there were lots of injured people lying down on messy futon mattresses. I walked from Michinoo to Urakami. A horse was dead tethered to its wagon, and the people who were working or standing there were scorched and dead as at the moment they were exposed to the atomic bomb. All around it was still smoky from the fires and it was hot.

When I got to Iwakawamachi, there was nothing, not even a house. I had no idea where my husband and my daughter were. I went to a shelter and there were many dead bodies. I saw my niece near Ishikawa Ironworks and asked her "How's your un-

cle?" she said "I don't know." "In that case let's go to a shelter." Then we decided to stay in a shelter. Dead bodies were lined up in row along the Inasa Bridge, and there was a body with its eyes popped out. We had to walk though there to get to the shelter but I must have already gotten used to the dead bodies, as I wasn't scared at all. After that, I stayed at my friend's house by the base of Mt. Inasa.

My husband came to that friend's house. He was covered in blood and his clothes were ragged. My husband told us, the atomic bomb was dropped when he was making Zori [old Japanese sandals] at home. He was trapped under the house but he could slide out finally. He saw the lady and her child who lived next door to us when we lived at Zenzamachi, and he carried the child using gaiter string but he died on the way to Irabayashi, so he left him under the tree. He received medical treatment at Irabayashi and finally got here. Our neighbor died at Isayaha later on.

Because my husband's mouth was displaced, I said "You should have been operated on better." Then he said "This is good enough. I thought I wouldn't even be able to survive." And he also said "Eiko is dead." So I asked "Have you seen her?" he said "She must be dead by now after waiting for this long." This place was the only safe place we knew of in Nagasaki, so it was natural to think that she wasn't alive after waiting for so long.

But Eiko came back. She came from Isahaya with one bare foot and one with a shoe on. Eiko was a conductor at Urakami Station. When the atomic bomb was dropped, she immediately lay down and people lay down on top of her next to one another and she was at the bottom of the pile. Maybe that was why she had no injury. Because the whole of Nagasaki Station was

evacuated to Isahaya Station, she said she had work to do and headed back to Isahaya.

We left our friend's house and lived in a shack with only a roof and tatami by a rock near Mt. Inasa. It was brushy and a river was running close by. I wonder how I could live in such a place. If I think about it now, it would be quite impossible to live there.

My husband's health gradually started to deteriorate. His hand became rotten and he developed spots all over his face and lost his hair and beard. He said "If I die, please bury my bones on Goto Island." and he requested that Eiko come and told her "Live with your mother." Then he died on August 19<sup>th</sup>. On that same day the husband of our neighbor who died in Isahaya came to visit us. I had no idea how to bury my husband, so our neighbor's husband taught me.

First, I got a Yukata and picked up a wooden board from around the neighborhood and carried him to Inasa Primary School with everyone and burned him by myself. Because the body moves when it is cremated [like dried squid moves when you grill it], Eiko said "Father! He's moving! He's alive!"

The next day, my neighbor instructed me and I picked out the remaining bones starting from his feet and moving to his head. Eiko said her liver hurt. Her third son suddenly started bleeding from his nose; it wouldn't stop and he died in 5 days. It was an illness caused by radiation.

The past won't change no matter how many times we talk about it, but I always pray that a tragedy like this never happens again.

[Location at Bombing: Iwakawamachi]