

To Carry the Wishes of the Deceased

Ms. Tsukiyo Koga

What serene days, the birds are flying and the leaves rustle in the wind. In this peaceful moment I can forget everything that happened and live each day in peaceful gratitude. I have been asked to write about my memories of the atomic bomb, but when I take up my pen, many things which I don't want to remember come to mind.

Genbaku home in Mitsuyamamachi, Nagasaki City.... I moved here in 1973, so it's been just 10 years this year. At first, I was at a loss as to what to do with myself so I did mealtime serving duty. I also volunteered for needlework projects one after another, both individually and for others in the home. I got quite good at it but I still have a ways to go.

When the new building for the home was build, 10 bolts (*tan* in Japanese) of bleached white cotton arrived (1 *tan* is about 36 cm by 11.5 meters). I sewed continually, for people in the home and myself. It was my hope to do things voluntarily when I got old. But one day, while I was out, the things I was in charge of were all taken from me. I didn't feel good about it at that time, but I accepted it because it was done in consideration of my health and I'm rather thankful now. I'm still sewing personal stuff these days but I'm already 82 years old this year and I'm really thankful for the regular meals, monthly allowance, and my pension and so on.

The memory of the atomic bomb is too painful and I don't feel like thinking, hearing or talking about it, but what is the condition of the world now? When I think of all the animals and plants

living in this awful atomic bomb era, there is nothing we can do but pray.

Personally, I got a call about my brother's wife who got injured from an air raid at Dentetsumaru in Ohato and was in the university hospital. Back then, my second son's health condition deteriorated from his physically demanding work and he was at the same hospital for medical examination. On the day the atomic bomb hit, he was in front of a pharmacy at the university and was blown over into a shelter. He told me that he crawled out from the shelter when he came to, put on a pair of *geta* (wooden sandals) he found lying around then walked around the mountain to Shinkouzen Elementary School and then came home after getting treatment. At the same time, my husband was worried about him and went down to the university hospital to meet him but on his way, he saw the town in such a state that he couldn't believe it was of this world.

After that, people were worried about the U.S. Army landing and 4 of our family, 3 children and me, moved to Ogori in Fukuoka. But my second son, Motoyoshi, showed symptoms of radiation sickness and both his legs swelled up to his thighs. We used a trailer and took him to the doctor which was about 2 km away, but we were told there was no medicine for it. So I walked through the mountain path every day to buy many bottles of milk from a family who had many cows.

For treatment, we used leeches from the Buddhist seminary. He had pools of blood about 10 cm long under his skin [ecchymoses] on his legs and we repeatedly put the leeches on them to suck out the blood and then they became just loose skin. For one of his legs, we used leeches in 3 places but rotten flesh and blood ran out like worms one after another from inside them. I

bought 1 bolt of bleached white cotton for both legs and changed them every day but by the time he was in the 2nd grade of junior high school, which is a playful age, he was walking around on his hands and feet. A year after that, we came back to Nagasaki.

I don't want to write anything about after that. I may write more if there is time for it but please imagine if you are reading this. How long he lived for after that....

My husband was interpreting for the U.S. Army and worked in a fire station in Sasebo, but he died from peritonitis at the local hospital. My second son died following his father's death. He ended his young life struggling with radiation sickness and in bad health.

Now we feel like we are living peacefully from many people's sacrifice but we shall forever hold our feelings for the deceased in our hearts.

[Location at Bombing: Senbamachi]