

Agony, and then Gratitude

Mrs. Hase Hatahara

In 1945, three of my sons were soldiers and my two other small children had been evacuated to Tabiracho, Kitamatsuuragun. I was living in Inasamachi. I can't forget August 9th.

An air raid warning had been called off, so I came out from a shelter then went back home. There was the roar of a plane; then it flashed. It was a dreadful light, and I got a real shock and went back to the shelter. Because my daughter and my grandchild were supposed to be there, but weren't, I went towards Mt. Inasa to look for them, and I found the burnt *boukuuzukin* (cloth helmet) which my daughter had been wearing. I assumed she was dead so was relieved to find her with some soldiers, but she had been burned on her face and body and her hair had also fallen out.

Because my husband was working at Kawanami Shipyard, he got struck by some fragments of glass. Our house was smashed to pieces. Only pots and pans were left. There was nothing to eat and I spent that night curled up in a ball.

The next day, I decided to go to Tabirocho and walked on what now could hardly be described as a road to Michinoo Station and got on the train. After that, I got really bad stomach pains and had continuous diarrhea with blood. The doctor misdiagnosed me with an infectious disease and I was told not to use the same toilet as others, so I had to have my third grade daughter take my urine and my sixth grade daughter take my feces and bury them under the ground.

My hair had all fallen out before I knew it. My eighteen year old

son, who lived in Nagasaki, was also having the same pain every day. To see a doctor, if you took some burned roof tiles, you got an examination quickly, but if you didn't, you got left for later.

My husband worried and had to go back and forth between Nagasaki and Tabiro. I cannot forget my husband who doggedly nursed our son and me, all the while wondering which one of us was going to die first. There were a lot more hardships to come. My husband is in St. Francisco Hospital now and I go there once every 2 or 3 days to wipe him down and give him a haircut in return for his kindness. He has gotten a lot better and he is now able to take a bath. I would like to do my best for my faithful husband as long as I live.

[Location at Bombing: Inasamachi]