

It was the Saddest Day for Me

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I am one of the women who experienced the atomic bomb. On that day, there was an aerial attack in the morning and I hurriedly ate my meal before rushing to the shelter. My house was by a river which was near the center of town. After a while, the alert was called off. So I went off to Hamanomachi alone.

There were 10 people in my family and because we had moved to Urakami from Hamanomachi for safety, I was left alone.

In Japanese we say *pikadon*; there was a flash of lightning and columns of black smoke shot up into the sky. It seemed like the world went dark. And then, tongues of fire started to shoot up from here and there, and kept burning for three days and nights. It was too hot to go home and it was useless to drench ourselves in water [they quickly dried out], so I could go no farther than the prefectural office.

When I finally went back to see my home on the third day, there was nothing left but the burnt out section. Only a gate post, a bath boiler and the skeleton of a baby carriage remained. I called out for my mother and also my father but there was no answer. Because we had dug a storage hole in the garden, I looked into it and there were three cameras, some *kimono* and a bag of barley left as they were. Naked and burned corpses were piled up down by the river. I think everybody went in to escape the heat. There was no hair on the bodies and the place was full of bald, burned, black bodies.

The people like us, without any injury, carried away the people who were still breathing. There were no medicines or bandages

and many maggots were attracted to and crawling all over the burned skin. A person with a small bald patch on its head also died.

This is what a living hell is. Everyone was naked with their skin hanging down, burned red and calling out with a thin voice, "Give me some water, give me some water." Stark naked people were trudging towards town and it was impossible to tell who was who. I could hear people asking for help from all around. Back then, there was a rumor that it was good to drink tea boiled with persimmon leaves and people who did so are still well now.

There was also a rumor that no grass or trees would ever grow where the atomic bomb had hit, but now the town is beautiful with fresh, green leaves.

At that time, I was 18 and was left alone and I wished I were dead. So I thought about quickly getting married and did so when I was 19. But my body was weak and I was in a hospital for 2 years, then since then I've been living at the Genbaku home, which is a very nice place. This is something you cannot express in words.

[Location at Bombing: Yasakamachi, Nagasaki City]