

Good-Bye

On August 21, 1945, I hurried back to Nagasaki from Kokura because I was worried about my parents following the A-Bombing. My parents' house had, of course, been completely destroyed, so I moved on to look for my husband's family. On my way I learned by chance that my mother and my younger sister were at Isahaya. I went there instead.

My mother looked well but my sister Mariko was only a shadow of her former self. She had been severely burned and her skin was missing in many places. Her eyes, once large and bright, were now sealed by burns. Her breathing was very faint. She gave no sign that she knew that I was present, and thirty minutes later her life, which had hardly begun, came to a close. Memories of her often come back to me.

She would go off to work every day dressed in the traditional women's working clothes and carrying her first aid kit, ready and willing to work for her country. On the day I left for my wedding at Kokura, on her way to work she came running to the station to see me off. She made it just as the train was leaving. "Goodbye, have a nice time . . . I have to go," and so she ran off to work at full speed. We never met again. Who could have predicted that that was to be our last meeting?

As I remember them all, for I also lost my father and my brothers and sisters, I find it hard to hold back tears. One thing I can say, though, is our connections with Junshin have always been a source of great joy and hope to us all. We were all proud to be Junshin girls. My father helped to found the P. T. A. at the school and was its president when the Bomb took his life.

If now my father and sisters and brothers rest in peace with God, I'm sure, in part, it is because of the prayers and Masses that have been offered on their behalf in the chapel at Junshin. I shall always be grateful.

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