

Losing Two Daughters in the A-bombing

Makie Fujii

● **Situation before the A-bombing**

My family lived on the river bank about 100 meters east of the Yokogawa Bridge at 1-chome in Yokogawa-cho. At that time, my family consisted of four members: my husband (Kiyoshi) and me, our three-year-old eldest daughter Kazuko, and a half-year-old youngest daughter Kiyomi.

Before the A-bombing, whenever a red alert siren went off, I would run into a pit that had been dug underground, taking my two children with me. This happened repeatedly for many days and is still vivid in my memory.

● **Damage from the A-bombing**

On the morning of August 6, my husband took the day off from work and was staying home because he had received call-up papers. Since the red alert had been canceled, my children and I were playing tag upstairs in our house.

Suddenly, a burning fireball flew into our house with a thud from a window. At that moment, my children and I started falling down like being sucked into an abyss.

My eldest daughter was shouting under my feet, “Mommy, I’m here. Mommy, I’m here.” “Kazuko-chan, mommy will get you out of there. Hang on,” I called out to her but couldn’t move even my neck because every part of my body was stuck between walls and various things in our house.

Before long, I heard my husband calling my name from above. “Makieeee, where are you? Makieeee...,” while he seemed to be walking around in search of us. After a while, I started feeling the heat. My husband was helplessly crying above, “The flames are coming so close, but I still have no idea where you are. Please know that we’ll have to give up hope, and that I have to give you up.”

“I’m here. Honey, I’m here.” Despite my desperate calls, my husband still seemed to have no idea where I was. I was pinned under the rubble holding our youngest daughter while I was listening to my husband saying that we had to give up hope, and frantically held my daughter tight. Since I was inadvertently blocking her nose and mouth, she couldn’t breathe and squealed in her struggle. I was taken aback by her squeal and shouted, “My baby’s dying!” He might have heard my shout and seemed to come back. He resumed his desperate search for us, calling, “Where are you?! Where are you?!” He made a small hole, got me out first and then pulled our daughter out. I couldn’t stand up for long due to dizziness caused by being hit on the head. But blazing fires were approaching.

After escaping for a while, I suddenly realized that our eldest daughter wasn’t with us and asked my husband where she was. He responded, “It was useless. She

wouldn't move any more. I'm so sorry."

"Kazuko-chan, I am sorry. I am sorry. Please forgive us," I kept on walking, apologizing to her in my mind.

My husband was holding our youngest daughter with one arm and supporting and dragging me with the other arm on our way to escape the disaster. Meanwhile, he kept encouraging me, "Hold yourself together. Hang on. You can do it." With my eyes dimming, I was barely able to keep up with him. With flames approaching from every direction, our house must have been completely destroyed by fire.

Holding me and our daughter in both his hands, my husband had to rest repeatedly shortly after resuming walking. On our way to escape the disaster, a woman with disheveled hair called for help, clinging to his feet, "Please help me. My daughter is crushed under a pillar. Help me get her out." But my husband turned down her plea for help, saying, "I wish I could help you. But my wife and child are in a terrible condition, please forgive me." The woman then hurriedly ran away. Repeatedly resting and walking, we finally arrived in the evening at the home of my husband's acquaintance in Shinjo.

● At the home in Shinjo

At the acquaintance's home in Shinjo, we stayed for three days. From the shock of the A-bombing, I couldn't breastfeed my baby. Since I had to lie down due to injuries to my feet, my husband went out to get some milk.

I couldn't help but wonder if our eldest daughter, who had been crushed under our collapsed house, might be saved. I couldn't hold back my tears, boiling over with anger at the thought that I was rescued while leaving our eldest daughter behind who was crying for help.

While at the acquaintance's home in Shinjo, I saw a line of many people with burns staggering about. Since I couldn't keep from crying at the sight of these people, I shut my eyes in an effort not to see them.

● Going to my parents' home in Yamaguchi

Three days after the A-bombing, train services resumed. So my husband, youngest daughter and I took a packed train from Yokogawa Station and headed for Kogushi in Yamaguchi Prefecture, where my parents' home was located. We finally arrived in Kogushi, and walked to my parents' home. Before arriving, townspeople, seeing our miserable appearances, were asking each other, "What's wrong with these people? What's going on?" It was a small town, and we had been familiar faces around there.

I was speechless, just passing them by in tears, and finally arrived at my parents' home.

From that night, I had trouble sleeping night after night from the sense of guilt over the fact that I was saved while leaving our eldest daughter behind. Seeing me in such distress, my elder sister and mother started sleeping next to me on either side, thinking I might commit suicide. However, I crept out of bed every midnight and cried out, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry. Please forgive this selfish parent." During my stay in Yamaguchi, my husband went back to Hiroshima in search of the ashes of our eldest daughter.

Also, since I couldn't yet produce milk for my baby, my mother visited other young mothers with babies in the neighborhood to get some milk. My mother told me, "You are bedridden with a crippled leg. Besides, you have a baby. So, rest well before going back home." For nearly one year after that, I stayed at my parents' home. Even today, I still have a bad leg.

● **Our youngest daughter's death**

After almost one year in Yamaguchi, I returned to Hiroshima. We were living in a house that we rented near our old house in Yokogawa.

My husband told me that one day he took our youngest daughter to a public bath. A man, seeing our daughter, told my husband that her back seemed to be swelling up a little. So I took her to a hospital, assuming she might have hit her back in the A-bombing. According to the diagnosis, four of the bones in her spinal column had formed pus. So we asked my parents to take care of her again at their home in Yamaguchi. Several years later, our daughter had come to miss us, and we took her back to Hiroshima and hospitalized her. But since we had difficulty paying the doctor's fee, I had to ask my mother to pay it for us. When we finally ran out of money, even to give to my parents, we took our daughter back to our home in Hiroshima. Despite our efforts, she died in 1952.

● **Wish for peace**

I don't want any more war. I wish for a world where everyone can hold each other's hand. We all would be very happy if we could spend every day with consideration for other people.

Narrowly Escaping Death

Jiro Shimasaki

● August 6

In those days, it took me more than one hour to commute to Mitsubishi Heavy Industries' Hiroshima Machinery Works in Minami-kanonmachi. I caught a train at Saijo and transferred to the tramway on my duty for student mobilization. I am the fourth child of five brothers and sisters: one brother, two elder sisters, me and one younger sister. My brother was in Kyushu for military service.

When I was a second-year student at Hiroshima Prefectural Hiroshima Second Middle School, all classes were canceled and I was mobilized to one factory after another. From the end of 1944, I started commuting to Mitsubishi's Kanon Factory.

On August 6, I experienced the A-bombing with several friends on our way to the factory. I believe the location was somewhere near a general sports ground in Minami-kanonmachi, which was about 4 kilometers from ground zero. If I had caught one train after the train I actually took, I would have died in the train due to direct exposure from the A-bombing. It was indeed a narrow escape from death.

At the moment of the A-bombing, I was exposed to the flash from behind. I still remember that my neck was hot. Then, after the fierce blast, I toppled to the ground and passed out. Five minutes later, I opened my eyes. Looking around, I realized that the factory had been reduced to mere steel frames with its roof blown off, despite being as far as 4 kilometers from ground zero.

What on earth happened? I thought maybe the factory where I had been mobilized might have been bombed by B-29s. But no, it would have been an explosion of a gas tank in Minami-machi more than it would a bombing by B-29s. My classmates also varied in their opinions. I was sure that the yellow alert was canceled. At 8:15 a.m., nobody was on alert. Before 8:00 a.m., a red alert was issued. It was later changed to a yellow alert and then was canceled around 8:05 a.m. I was positive I had also heard a siren cancelling the alert.

After that, an instruction was issued: "The entire city is on fire. Today, everyone here should go back home." So we headed east in a black rain that was pouring down. On my way home, I passed by Eba, Yoshijima and Senda, before crossing the Miyuki Bridge in the direction of Hijiyama. While crossing the bridge, many people yanked at my legs, demanding water and saying, "Give me water, give me water." But I simply assumed that they were injured since I had no idea what the real cause of their wounds and burns was. I was horrified by people who yanked at me demanding, "Hey you. Give me water, give me water. I've been injured and I'm thirsty...." Luckily, I didn't suffer any injuries in the A-bombing. So I had no choice but go forward, totally baffled by the sight of so many injured people.

I saw a soldier whose body was covered in red when passing by the foot of Mt. Hijiyama. He is still vivid in my memory. His skin was all hanging down from his body. He was breathing but his appearance had been brutally transformed. Spotting me, he pointed at a corpse saying, "I have to carry this on a cart. Young man, will you hold the feet?" I was too scared to do that. In the area around the foot of Mt. Hijiyama, many people were not seriously injured thanks to the location far from ground zero, and many of them were helping the soldier carry corpses. The soldier must have died within several days.

I wasn't sure what time it was but I finally arrived at a station in Kaita around midnight. Based on information that a train bound for Saijo would leave Kaita at midnight, I waited for the train for over an hour before managing to catch it. Arriving at Saijo in a train packed like sardines, I couldn't identify the faces of those who had come to meet others at the station. Since it was a period when people weren't permitted to turn on lights due to the blackout policy, and not knowing who was there for me, I just had to listen to the welcoming voices, "You must have had a tough time. I've heard how terrible it was."

● **Situation on and after the 7th**

Based on information that my uncle had experienced the A-bombing while working on Mt. Hijiyama, my aunt and I went down to Hiroshima in search of my uncle. Although my memory on whether we drove a truck to the city and how we got to the city is blurred, we left at dawn on the 7th, trusting what we'd heard that my uncle was housed in a facility somewhere in Ujina. Thanks to three years of commuting to Hiroshima Second Middle School, a map of the city was in my head. That was why I decided to go out with my aunt to be her navigator.

We found my uncle in a shelter in Ujina. I remember that the shelter was a warehouse near the harbor. I saw soldiers there lining up corpses at the connecting corridor, saying, "Oh, this guy just died. His body should be transferred to the corridor." One of the soldiers said to me, "This person is dead. Will you hold the head?" I was too scared to help him. People who had passed away were transferred to the corridor by teams of a few persons. Even a girl aged around 20 was being laid on the ground naked, for she had been burned black.

Although we were able to take my uncle back to Saijo from Ujina, he died on the 10th, three days after he returned home. He was cremated at a crematory near our house. I was there to provide help. My aunt died two years ago. She once told me that she and my uncle had been married for only 9 years.

● Life after the A-bombing

It was probably at the end of October or in November when classes of Hiroshima Second Middle School were resumed. I remember that we built a shack on the former site of Hiroshima Second Middle School in Kanon and took classes while trembling from the cold in a classroom without a heater, into which snow was blowing. It was a building without any window panes. Before the school finally returned to Kanon, they provided classes by borrowing a building from a girl's school in Kaita or a building from an elementary school that had not been broken.

Since I wanted to go on to a higher school, I had to attend classes to get the necessary credits. So I took classes while bearing the cold, thinking that I should be grateful for classes being provided even in a shack. It was a middle school under the old system. I graduated from the school in 1947 when I was a 5th-year student. After graduating from middle school, I went on to Hiroshima Industrial College in Senda-machi.

After graduating from industrial college, in the decade from 1955 to 1964, when automobiles were gradually becoming more commonplace around the world, I was hoping to establish a driving school. I started with acquaintances from building driving courses with shovels in our hands. Using credits earned at the industrial college, I was certified as an instructor for basic knowledge and practical skills. From 1960, I worked for a driving school in the city as chief instructor.

In 1966, I quit the driving school. Since my brother asked me to help him run a nursing home and other institutions, I started helping his business. I'm proud of my brother, who also served as president of the medical association. The two of us closely cooperated to run the business, but my brother suddenly died due to a brain hemorrhage. I couldn't sleep for three days from the sorrow and disappointment. He would tour around facilities in Miyajima and Yuki. When traveling long distances, I would serve as his driver, since he was the hospital director. I supported him feeling that my mission was to drive for him. While my brother had devoted his life to learning, I was an athlete. We had cooperated with a singleness of purpose. Losing my brother has weighed on me as a great sorrow.

● Employment, marriage and aftereffects

My wife and I will be celebrating our golden wedding anniversary before long. When we were married, I tried not to tell her that I was an A-bomb victim. Since I was well aware that there was discrimination against A-bomb victims, I ventured to say to her, "I definitely experienced the A-bombing but from up to 5 kilometers from

ground zero at the edge of Minami-kanon, where I was working for Mitsubishi. So it was nothing and I didn't suffer any injuries." My wife seemed not to worry about my being an A-bomb victim. My son, who's a knowledgeable pharmacist, has realized that he's a second-generation A-bomb victim. When our son and daughter were born, I worried a bit about this. I secretly made sure they had no abnormalities.

On my mind as an aftereffect was a swelling that developed on the back of my neck ten years after the A-bombing. It wasn't malignant but it was a big swelling like a benign new creature. It developed in an area exposed to the flash, which had come from behind me at the time of the A-bombing. I had surgery to remove the swelling but another one grew there ten years later. Since then, though, I haven't gotten any more swelling. Another condition that may be attributed to the A-bombing was that my teeth deteriorated quicker than other people's. Some A-bomb victims experience hair loss, too. Aftereffects vary from person to person. My hair didn't fall out. One thing in common to every A-bomb victim is that they easily get tired. When I was employed, my boss usually suspected I was lazy because I'd easily get tired compared with others in the same job. My boss reprimanded me, "Other people don't get worn out with this much of work. You feel tired because you're lazy." When working, it's very disadvantageous for you to easily get tired.

● **Wish for Peace**

When conveying what the A-bombing and peace mean to younger generations, I think speakers need a little ingenuity. At the moment of the A-bombing, buildings collapsed in the blink of an eye, and people died in no time, so to convey this kind of thing, you have to be creative in how you do it. Just repeatedly saying, "It was terrible," or explaining, "I regret that I didn't give any water to people who really craved it. I just escaped from the flames approaching under the bridge" doesn't convey anything. Just saying "We have a Peace Memorial Museum in Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park. Please visit. There are peace trees" also doesn't really convey the brutal aspects of the A-bombing. These kinds of expressions could give people the idea that the A-bombing was no big deal. A tornado that occurred in Hokkaido the other day claimed many people's lives. In a video, the tornado's aftermath struck a similar image to the A-bombing. It was a strong, realistic image. Even a little child would be able to understand the real aspects of the disaster. Also in the A-bombing, buildings instantly collapsed and burst into flames, and as many as 200,000 people died just like that. So videos of real disasters would have been able to represent the real aspects of the A-bombing.

Shortly after the A-bombing, professional photographers from the Mainichi Shimbun and Asahi Shimbun went to Hiroshima and took photos of the disastrous scenes. Even for these photographers, who had visited war zones many times, no war zone was as tragic as the disaster created by the A-bombing in Hiroshima. So what is the key to conveying the tragedy? I believe there has to be a little ingenuity in how to convey it.

Lastly, I was enrolled at Hiroshima Second Middle School and lost many lower-year students in the A-bombing. Some of my surviving classmates recently passed away. I have felt lonely with the death of my only brother. Currently, I am physically disabled and am taken care of by my wife. I hope I can live at least another two years. And I would be happiest if I can talk about what happened to me to younger generations, including small children and elementary school students once a week or every other week, if possible, until I have no regrets before going to my death bed.

My Experiences of the A-bombing

Tsunematsu Tanaka

● Life in those days

In those days, I was 31 years old, working for Chugoku Haiden Corp. (present-day Chugoku Electric Power Co.) in Komachi, and lived in a rented house in Otemachi with my wife Mikie and two children (three-year-old son and seven-month-old daughter). Since I had joined Chugoku Haiden after graduating from Onomichi Middle School and had gotten my drivers' license in February 1934, I must have been 20 or 21 years old. While I was at Chugoku Haiden, I was drafted twice, from September 1937 to January 1941 and again from September 1942 to November 1943, alternating between being a draftee and a worker.

After the terrible bombardment in Kure around the end of March 1945, I saw many carrier-borne fighters flying away like a cluster of dragonflies. There was an underground air-raid shelter, which might have been dug by previous residents. Whenever an air-raid would hit, I'd run into the shelter. But it was difficult with small children like ours—only three years old and seven months old—to deal with the situation. While paying attention to one child, the other child would be trying to get out of the shelter. I decided that we couldn't take it anymore and at the end of March evacuated my wife and two children to my wife's parents' home in Mukaeda in Wada Village, Futami County (present-day Mukoueta-machi, Miyoshi City). Since it was during the war, I left all our household goods at my company's warehouse and evacuated my family without any belongings.

After evacuating, I lived temporarily in the warehouse. But at the beginning of May when I returned from my wife's parents' home after staying there on Saturday and Sunday, I found that all our household goods had been burned to ashes due to bombardment of the warehouse. Without any change of clothes, I immediately returned to Wada Village, had my wife make me a shirt and trousers out of summer kimono, and went to work on the first train on Monday. Since I had lost my temporary dwelling, I rented a room in a house in Ushita-machi through my co-worker and lived there until the A-bombing.

● Damage from the A-bombing

In those days, when a red alert was issued at night, I had to be on night watch in work clothes under orders of the municipal office, which was called "calls for guards." This duty was assigned to veterans. On the night of August 5, with a red alert issued, I went to my designated area, Yanagibashi, on night watch. Usually, the start of work the day after the night watch was delayed from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m., but that day I didn't receive any message about a delayed start. So, I arrived at my company at 8:00

a.m. on the 6th, the day after the night watch, to which I consequently attributed my survival.

Since I had 30 minutes before I had to start working, I went to the underground bathroom exclusively for staffers and started washing the work clothes I had worn the night before. I was crouching in order to do the laundry, but was suddenly blown backward by a blast coming from in front of me, and then crushed against a wall, after which I then passed out. I didn't remember anything but the flash. When I came to, it was pitch dark with excessive dust. But when I saw flames on the fourth or fifth floor, my sense of duty to do something cleared my mind. Being unable to see past my nose, I groped my way through the darkness from memory. Sometimes I bumped into something when going forward, assuming there were stairs there, and finally reached the security guards' office at the base of the building. From there, I could see the tram street. When I reached the tram street, I saw a tram car toppled over onto a private house, and thought then that this was a serious matter. There was no one who could tell me where should I escape to.

Although the grounds of Hiroshima Prefectural Hiroshima First Middle School, located south of my company, was designated as our shelter, I wasn't informed of it. I headed north along the tram street, turned right just before Shirakamisha Shrine, and then headed east along Takeya-cho street. On my way to escape the disaster, I saw a woman (age unknown) at Hiroshima Prefectural Hiroshima First Women's High School crushed under a fence that had been knocked down by the blast. She was crying for help, with only her body from the neck up visible. Unfortunately, I was barely able to escape from the disaster, myself bleeding with pieces of glass stuck in my back, which was thickly covered with blood.

I then went south down along the Takeya River and headed for the Miyuki Bridge. Despite its name, the Takeya River was just a small ditch that didn't even appear on maps of Hiroshima, running underneath Fukuya. As I was escaping, I didn't see any other fleeing people but people in a house across the Takeya River were clearing away rubble saying, "This is really serious." I had no idea what time it was, but it might have been a long time since I started escaping.

Before crossing the Miyuki Bridge, a military truck came along. I asked the driver to give me a ride to Ujina Harbor, from which I evacuated myself to Ninoshima Island by ship. On the island, the situation was difficult, with many injured people taking shelter there. There were some medics but I couldn't get any decent treatment for the pieces of glass still stuck in my back, except for simple treatment like applying bandages. I couldn't sleep with all the noise from people like madmen,

people screaming, people giving an earful to the screamers, people running around, even at night where people were sleeping, and people admonishing those who were running. I didn't eat anything on the 6th. On the morning of the 7th, I received some porridge in my pipe-shaped bamboo container, and ate it with a pickled plum, which was the only meal on Ninoshima.

The situation on the island was such that I asked a soldier to allow me to return home out of fear of dying, and returned to Ujina Harbor by ship on the morning of the 7th. Luckily, I found a truck and asked the driver where he was going. Since he answered that he was headed for city hall, I asked him for a ride there. "Hop in!" He consented immediately and drove me to the front entrance. I thanked him and got off the truck. Since my company was located in an area a little north of city hall, I went there on foot. When I arrived at my company, two staffers were at the reception desk. I told them, "Now I'm going to evacuate myself to my wife's parents' home in Miyoshi," and gave them the address. I then walked to the boarding house in Ushita-machi via Kamiya-cho and Hacchobori. I stayed there overnight, and on the 8th caught a train from Hesaka Station for Wada Village, where I had evacuated my wife and children. I hurried to my wife's parents' home, thinking she must have been worried about me. I don't recall much about what happened on my way there, except for a strong impression that many corpses were piled up at the Kohei Bridge.

● Situation after the A-bombing

When I arrived in Wada Village, pieces of glass were still stuck in my back. Every day, I went down to the river to have my wife wash my back. The blood coagulated and clung to my back like coal tar. When my wife removed the blood clots with a needle, fragments of glass came off with the clots. She removed the blood clots and pieces of glass from my back for a week or 10 days. Even when I assumed they were all removed, my back festered with remaining glass pieces during the 1950s and early '60s. I went to a surgical hospital in Sakai-machi to get all the pieces of glass removed.

A short while after I arrived in Wada Village, which was before I had all the pieces of glass removed, my father visited me from Onomichi. Since I hadn't been able to contact my relatives in Onomichi since the A-bombing, he had assumed I was dead so came to Wada Village to talk about which family should hold my funeral. When he learned I was still alive, he was very surprised and happy. My father returned to Onomichi soon after drinking only some coarse tea sitting on the open veranda.

In Wada Village, I was getting along quite well without feeling any abnormalities

with my internal organs. After around three weeks of good rest, I got back to Hiroshima at the end of August or beginning of September, and returned to work.

A short while after returning to work I had a bloody bowel discharge. It must have been mid-September because I remember that chestnuts had started falling. I went to my parents' home in Onomichi and took better care of myself. Judging from my condition, everybody—including my doctor—assumed I had come down with dysentery, and even consulted with each other over whether I should be quarantined. But my bloody bowel discharge stopped after I ate some chestnut rice, which my sister had cooked for me. It sounds pretty miraculous but I believe that my sister's chestnut rice worked well for my condition. In Onomichi, I bounced back from my stomach condition after several days of good rest with healthy meals. So, again I returned to work in Hiroshima.

● **Life after the end of the war**

When I returned to work, there were many staffers who had lost their homes. I was living together with these people on the 5th floor of my company. At first, we had to fix our own meals, but the company later hired cooks for us.

Since I could drive, I was assigned as a truck driver for the Material Section of the General Affairs' Department, and transferred materials to every power plant in Hiroshima Prefecture.

In 1946, my family returned to Hiroshima and started living with me. My co-workers built a house for us in Enomachi with pillars they collected after work. We lived in Enomachi for 30 years after that.

Despite various difficulties, we always had some food since we could get some rice from my wife's parents. But we had no clothes and bedding because these had been left in my company's warehouse and all destroyed. We started all over again by depending on other people's kindness; creating underwear out of summer kimono and asking my parents in Onomichi to send us some bedding.

● **Health**

In July 1947, our second daughter was born. Again, I worried if she'd be affected by the A-bombing. There were times when I'd see her with a nosebleed or with something different from other children her kindergarten age and jumped to the conclusion that it must have had something to do with the A-bombing.

As for myself, in 1956, I discovered I had a tuberculoma, a type of tumor, with my average white cell count reduced to 2,000 (at its lowest it dropped to 1,000). My

weight dropped by 8 kg from my previous weight of 65 kg. During the 15-month period from July 1956 to September 1957, I was admitted to a hospital in Hara, Hatsukaichi-machi (present-day Hatsukaichi City), and also took off work for two years. On the morning of July 7, the day I was hospitalized and also Tanabata, the day of the Star Festival, my second-year elementary school daughter said during breakfast, “Stars are going to meet today, but we have to split, don’t we?” Listening to my daughter saying that, everyone cried.

Since then, I was alive and kicking without suffering from any serious diseases until ten and several years ago when I started suffering from a bloody bowel discharge again. When the symptoms appear, I stay at a Red Cross Hospital till the bleeding stops or I get a shot to stop the bleeding.

When I underwent surgery for prostate cancer four years ago, I received a certificate recognizing me as an atomic bomb victim.

● **Current thoughts**

I am currently 94 years old, and thankful for the fact that I have been able to live so long. Everything I am today, I owe to my wife. My children have been very kind to me. I can never thank everybody enough for all they have done for me.

Sentiments for My Mother

Hiroko Kawaguchi

● Situation on and before August 6

At that time, we were a family of four—my mother, elder brother and sister, and me—living in a house in Kamitenma-cho. My father, Toshio Omoya, died in the war in China in 1938. Since I was a little child when my father died, I knew my father's face only from photographs. According to my family, during my childhood, whenever I saw photos of my father, I said, "My father can't come out of the photo because nobody brings his wooden clogs to him."

My mother Shizuko raised us all by herself. She was an education-minded mother, more than any other parents. Although it was during the war, she allowed me to study calligraphy and ballet. When my brother took the entrance examination for middle school, she visited one shrine 100 times every morning to pray for my brother's success in the exam. She seemed to think that after her husband's death the only thing she could give her children was education.

To that end, my mother worked hard every day from morning till night, holding several jobs concurrently. I remember when she was delivering morning papers, my elder brother and sister helped her. I was little but I walked to keep up with them.

In those days, since everyone treated their neighbors like their own relatives, while my mother was busy working day after day, we children were taken care of and helped by people around us, with my uncle's family living in our neighborhood and my grandfather's family living in Hirose-motomachi, a neighboring town.

At that time, many primary schools promoted group evacuation and evacuation to the homes of students' relatives in the countryside. I was a third-year student at Tenma Primary School, and joined a group evacuation to a temple in Yuki-cho with my elder sister Sumie, who was a sixth-year student at the same school. Despite my mother and elder brother Toshiyuki visiting us with some souvenirs such as potatoes, it was very hard for my sister and me who were still small to put up with lives without our parents. Since my mother told me that if we died we were going to die together, I asked my mother to take me home and returned to my house in Kamitenma-cho. In hindsight, all of us might have been able to survive if I had stayed at the evacuation site, because my mother and brother would have been visiting us at the time of the A-bombing.

● Situation on August 6

On August 6, since our school was out, I went out to my neighborhood with my friends.

Seeing B-29s flying overhead leaving jet trails, I instantly covered my eyes and ears with both my hands. I probably did it unconsciously because we had been trained to do so. So I didn't see the flash because I was covering my eyes.

At the moment of the A-bombing, I was lucky enough to be under the eaves of a house and didn't suffer any injuries or feel any heat, shielded behind a wall. My friend suffered only minor injuries, and so we crept out of the house through a crack all by ourselves and returned home.

When I got home, my mother, who had been injured in the A-bombing, was waiting for me. That day, my mother had gone out to get some rationed rice and experienced the A-bombing on her way home. As soon as I got home, she grabbed a first-aid bag and escaped from the disaster, taking me with her.

Looking around, I saw houses that had collapsed and the railings of a bridge burning. We crossed the bridge and headed for Koi. On our way to escape, a person who had been burned black asked for help, pleading, "Give me some water, please give me some water." But we were then so desperate to escape that we couldn't do anything for her. I still regret that I didn't even ask her name.

When we finally arrived at Koi Primary School, I realized that I was barefoot. I wondered why I didn't get hurt even when I was running through the rubble.

Every place in the school was filled with the injured, including classrooms and corridors. I had my mother get treatment there. My mother had suffered serious burns on her hands, legs and back, and minor burns on her face, plus a severe depression of her skull. My mother's treatment was only of applying a bit of ointment. Looking back, I'm not sure now if my mother really get any ointment applied.

After that, my mother and I headed for a designated shelter in Ogawachi-machi, following the direction of our town. When we arrived at the shelter, black rain began falling from the sky. We sheltered ourselves from the rain with a sheet of metal I had picked up nearby. A short while after the rain let up, my elder brother Toshiyuki came.

At the time of the A-bombing, my brother was a second-year student at Matsumoto Industrial School, and was mobilized to a factory on Kanawajima Island, off the coast of Ujina. According to him, although he himself experienced the A-bombing with his friends near the Miyuki Bridge on their way to their mobilization site, he turned around and went back home rather than heading for the site, worrying about us. Around the site of the headquarters of Hiroshima Electric Railway, since the road was impassable with both sides of the road burning, he headed for Shudo Middle School,

crossed the Motoyasu and Ota Rivers by boat, crossed a bridge, and finally arrived in Kanon-machi. On his way home, although someone asked him to help another person who was crushed under the rubble of a kindergarten building, he couldn't do it. He was in a hurry in order to make sure his family was safe as soon as possible. He told me he was sorry for them.

When he arrived home, flames were approaching almost within reach of our home. He later told me that he immediately put out the flames using a water bucket. Then after making sure there was no one in the house, he headed for Ogawachi-machi to search for us. In Ogawachi-machi, we were finally able to reunite.

According to my mother, on the morning of the 6th, my elder sister told my mother that she didn't want to go to school. But my mother wouldn't allow her to be absent from school in the hope that she would go on to Yamanaka Women's High School. My mother got my sister off to school that morning as usual, but she didn't come back home.

● Situation from the 7th

The day after the A-bombing, my brother went to Tenma Primary School in search of my sister, who had not returned home yet. Learning that she had been cleaning the principal's office at the time of the A-bombing, my brother searched around for her, but found nothing in the ruins. The school building had been flattened and everything had been reduced to ashes in the fire.

My mother, brother and I were in the shelter in Ogawachi-machi for a few days. But my mother worried so much about my sister that we decided to return home.

My mother was bedridden ever since we returned home. The only treatment she received was the ointment applied to her injuries at Koi Primary School.

Since our house was fortunately left unburned, our neighbors helped themselves too all our bedding. Learning of the situation, my aunt Sueko Omoya got angry, asking us, "What's the matter with you? You generously gave other people your bedding and put no covers on your own mother, huh?" Since my brother was only a second-year student in industrial school and I was only a third-year student in primary school, a combination of what today would be a junior high student and elementary school student, there was nothing we could really do to deal well with the situation. After my aunt came to our home, she took care of my mother and us. In my aunt's home, her husband Shigeo, my father's younger brother, who had been drafted to a military unit in Yamaguchi, returned home to Hiroshima only two days after the

A-bombing, on the grounds that his wife and daughter Nobue were in Hiroshima. If it had not been for my uncle and aunt, our family would have had great difficulties with only children and a bedridden mother.

Although my mother was happy that the burns on her face quickly healed, the serious burns on her back wouldn't heal. The skin on her back suddenly peeled off completely when I thought that it was getting better because the skin was drying up. Maggots were swarming under her skin. Before I knew it, the insects were swarming around and completely covering her back. It was impossible to completely remove all of them. When my brother and I began sleeping next to my mother, who was lying inside a mosquito net, I couldn't ignore the penetrating smell of swarming maggots.

Despite her serious injuries, my mother said nothing like, "It's painful" or "It's itchy," or craved for water. Since she just pleaded, "I'd like to eat a peach. I'd like to eat a peach," my aunt went to buy some in Iguchi. In hindsight, she must have been really thirsty.

On the morning of September 4, my mother died. I realized her death only after my aunt told me, "Hiroko! Your mother is already dead." My brother and I really didn't realize it until then. Looking back, I wonder how she could have lived as long as even a month with her head so seriously injured being cracked open. When soldiers were putting the injured onto a truck in an effort to evacuate them, my mother wouldn't leave the house no matter what until she learned about my sister's whereabouts. One person had suffered serious injuries like my mother and recovered through treatment in the suburbs. Worrying about my missing sister, my mother continued living just clinging to the hope that she would see my sister again.

We cremated our mother's body at the former site of Koseikan on the day she passed away. But no emotion of sadness nor tears welled up inside me. My emotions must have already been paralyzed. That day, it rained and my mother's body wouldn't burn to ashes so quickly.

In the city, all the buildings had collapsed and a burned plain stretched over the whole area. We could see Hiroshima Station and Ninoshima from our house. Corpses were everywhere. Corpses in the river were pulled out and cremated by soldiers. Although some corpses were left lying out on the ground for more than a month, we didn't care much about these corpses when we passed by. Since we had no idea what the A-bomb was or had anything to eat in those days, without hesitation we ate food exposed to radiation, such as potatoes grown in other people's fields and rice buried

under contaminated soil.

● **Life after the A-bombing**

Shortly after our mother died, we went to Midorii Village where we could rely on our relatives, and asked them to allow us to live in their barn. Our grandparents had already arrived there. At the time of the A-bombing, our grandfather Tomekichi Omoya and our grandmother Matsuno were safe in the living room of their own house. However, after they arrived at Midorii Village, our alive and kicking grandfather suddenly started feeling under the weather, and passed away five days after our mother's death. We hadn't heard from our uncle Shoso, who had lived with our grandparents in Hirose-motomachi, and, according to them, was at the entrance at the time of the A-bombing.

In Midorii Village, we were disoriented by many things that were quite different from what we had experienced thus far in our lives. After going to school in Midorii Village for about a year, we returned to Hirose. We all stuck together, leveled some land and built a shack to live in. Our aunt and uncle acted as foster parents and raised me and my brother as if we were their own children. I didn't have to feel emotionally lonely at all from my parents' death.

As I grew up, though, I came to miss my own parents. Seeing my cousin, with whom I was raised like a real sister, studying with a private tutor from when she was in elementary school, I envied her and felt lonely a little. I lived with my uncle's family until I got married. Since my uncle's house was a furniture manufacturer, I worked there keeping the books.

● **Marriage and illness**

In the old days, many people hid their identity as A-bomb victims. Many women especially did not even apply for the atomic bomb victim's handbooks, hiding the fact that they were A-bomb victims, in order to attain their goal of getting married. Although I am currently grateful for the handbook, it took me a while to actually apply for it. Regarding marriage, I believed that I would marry someone whom my aunt and uncle would find for me. I eventually got married through a marriage interview. Fortunately, my new husband didn't care about my being an A-bomb victim.

After getting married, I worried about my future children. I suffer from thyroid cancer. My elder brother and cousin also suffer from cancer. My daughter has an

acoustic nerve tumor. I wonder if my daughter's illness can be attributed to the A-bombing.

● **Wish for peace**

I often tell my story of the A-bombing to my children. I have also taken them to the Peace Memorial Museum and told them about the situation at the time of the A-bombing.

Though in those days I was so pressed for time in my daily life that I had no time to even visit my family grave, now I frequently do that and talk with our old neighbors there for a little while before returning home. If my mother were alive, I would do things to please her and let her know how much I cared. So, whenever I meet someone around my mother's age, I can't leave them alone from a desire to do something to please them as much as I could have done for my own mother.

With so many lives sacrificed in the A-bombing, I am truly grateful for my current health. Also, thinking about my deceased mother, I would like to live a long, vigorous life for my own children.

Unforgettable Event That Summer

Chiyoko Shimotake

● Life during the war

I was born in 1921 in Tonoga Village (later changed to Kake-cho, and present-day Akiota-cho), Yamagata County, Hiroshima Prefecture.

Around 1940 or 1941, I left my parents' house and took lessons in tea ceremony, flower arrangement and etiquette from a teacher of manners who was well-known for her strict instruction, at her house in Tsutsuga Village (present-day Akiota-cho) on a live-in basis. This greatly helped me in my life afterward. Several years later, after the teacher passed away, I was asked by the superintendent of education of Tsutsuga Village to fill the teacher's position and teach the students. I was able to make money from the lecture fees provided by the village.

Through this, I came to know Hisashi Kawamoto, a nephew of the chief of Tonoga Village, and married him in May 1944. Our marriage was due to a personal connection of my father, who worked for the Tonoga Village Office. After the marriage, we lived with my husband's parents (father-in-law Kamesaburo and mother-in-law Sekiyo) near the Tsurumi Bridge in Hijiyama-honmachi, Hiroshima City. Although my husband ran a watch business, he had to go out of business due to pressure to close because multiple stores of the same business type in one neighborhood weren't needed. In the difficult war situation, which dictated that two full-time housewives were not needed for a single household and that women should work too, starting next month of my marriage I went to work for the military arsenal in Kasumi-cho, where my father-in-law also worked.

● Before the A-bombing

My parents-in-law's hometown was also Tonoga Village. My mother-in-law was planning to visit Tonoga Village from August 3, but suddenly changed her mind that morning and told me, "You go first. I'll visit there during *Obon* and stay for about 10 days." So I went to my parents' home in Tonoga Village from August 3 to August 5. While I was crossing the Tsurumi Bridge, my mother-in-law ran after me and gave me a parasol in good condition, saying, "Leave this at your parents' home because if we keep it in Hiroshima, we're not sure what would happen to it, with the air-raids." She continued, "Say hello to your father and mother, and be sure to come back on the 5th." Those were the last words my mother-in-law spoke. I was listening to her without the slightest idea that they would be her last words to me. When staying at my parents' home, I always wanted to be there as long as possible and relax, so decided to return home on the last bus leaving the night of the 5th. But when I tried to return home, I was refused entry to the bus and had to go back to my parents' home.

Learning that I hadn't returned home, my father scolded me, saying, "Someone who can't keep her word is a failure. I can't apologize enough to Mr. and Mrs. Kawamoto for your lie!" He also sent the Kawamoto's a telegram conveying the message, "I will make sure Chiyoko returns home tomorrow by all means."

● From August 6 to August 9

The next day (August 6), I still lingered at my parents' home despite the fact that it was already past the day I promised and that I should have left early in the morning. If I had left there early in the morning, though, I would have experienced the A-bombing at a place much closer to ground zero. Then, 8:15 a.m. came. After a sensation of something flashing, there came a boom like the rumbling of the Earth. Over time, countless pieces of torn or scorched paper with words "Hiroshima City" in Japanese came drifting through the air. Seeing these, I thought something happened in Hiroshima. After a while, we were informed that something very serious did seem to have happened in Hiroshima. I tried to return to Hiroshima, but people said that the route to the city was in no condition for women and children to be able to walk along. So my father went to Hiroshima City on foot to check things out first. According to him, he first reached a house in Hijiyama-honmachi where we lived and saw everything burned down. In the ruins of a fire, he found a message board that read, "We are at a dormitory in the arsenal." He went there and met my husband and parents-in-law. My mother-in-law was suffering from serious burns and was already at death's door. After checking the conditions of my husband and parents-in-law, my father went to check on my uncle in Higashi-Hakushima-cho. With his house having been completely collapsed, my uncle evacuated to the area around Koi. My cousin, who was engaged in building demolition operations under the student mobilization, was dead.

After walking about checking the area, my father returned to Tonoga Village. Informed that my family including my husband were at a dormitory in the arsenal, I entered Hiroshima on the morning of August 8 by changing from a bus to a train (Kabe Line). On my way there, there were many injured people who were breathing feebly, laid out in a plaza in front of Kabe Station. Each of them had only one can by their bedside. Even when people who came to find their families peeped into the victims' faces, calling the names of their loved ones, none of them was vigorous enough to answer. Seeing many injured persons, I became terribly worried about my own family

My train stopped around the area of Mitaki Station, and the passengers were asked

to get off. From that point I headed toward the arsenal dormitory, carrying foods such as pickled plums and rice that I had received from my parents. However, I didn't know which direction I should go over the expanse of burned plain. I had to walk around without any of the landmarks I previously expected to find. Then I saw a fire. Assuming someone would be there, I came near the fire to ask my way and found that the fire was being used for cremating corpses. Be it on a bridge, on the side of a street or in a rice field, corpses were being cremated just about anywhere. Even when seeing the corpses being cremated, I felt nothing or thought nothing of the smell. My feelings must have been paralyzed.

Late at night on the 9th, at 3:00 a.m., I finally reached the arsenal dormitory. Although my mother-in-law had already died, her body was still lying nearby because it was only a few hours after her death. Since my mother-in-law was in a crop field at the time of the A-bombing, she was in a horrible condition, suffering burns all over her body, with her chin and breasts completely burned. According to my father-in-law, he lit some candles when he couldn't hear her groan anymore and found that she had passed away. The next day, my father-in-law built a wooden box, put my mother-in-law in it, and cremated the box in a potato field.

● **My husband's death**

Since my husband was at home, he didn't suffer any burns or visible injuries. He told me that hearing my mother-in-law's screams while she was working in the field, he went outside to rescue her.

On August 15, I woke up at 5:00 a.m. Although my husband told me that I didn't have to get up so early, I made dumplings to offer to my mother-in-law's spirit because it was the seventh day after her death—the day we were supposed to hold a memorial service. I also prepared rice porridge for the three of us. When I tried to feed the rice porridge to my husband, who was lying on the floor with my father-in-law in a three-tatami-mat room, he didn't respond. He had passed away before my father-in-law even realized it. Since flies were now swarming to my husband's body, in order to cremate it as soon as possible I reported to the local government office that my husband had died on the 14th (even though he had actually died on the 15th), and cremated his body on the day he died. My father-in-law built a wooden box again, this time for my husband. We put my husband in the box and cremated it. Since setting the fire for my mother-in-law's cremation seemed to have been very difficult for my father-in-law to bear, he asked me to take that role in cremating my husband. I also had a strong reluctance to setting fire to someone who

was breathing just that morning, but it was my responsibility and I lit the fire. But I couldn't stay there once the body began burning. I tried to leave, only to learn that I couldn't stand up, with my feet tottering. So I had no choice but to crawl home. With corpses being cremated here and there, I suffered burns on my palms, knees and feet from crawling on the still-hot ground.

The next day, I went out to pick up my husband's bones and wondered why a red alert siren hadn't gone off with enemy planes flying just overhead. I didn't find out till later that the war had already ended.

● **Cyanide for committing suicide**

At the arsenal, all the women had received cyanide. We were told to take it in case we were raped by American soldiers, which was a shame to Japanese. When my husband died, I tried to take the cyanide, feeling like I was useless. While my father-in-law went out to report my husband's death to the local government office, I even drank water to take the cyanide. But at that moment, the thought flitted through my mind of what my father-in-law would think if he found on returning home that I was also dead. So I decided not to take the cyanide, thinking that dying was not my option and that I had a duty to take care of my father-in-law. I cut my long hair and cremated it with my husband's body, talking to my husband's spirit, "I'm sorry, my dear. I can't go there with you. This is my feeling for you." If it had not been for my father-in-law, I would have taken the cyanide.

After returning to Tonoga Village, I still treasured the cyanide. One of my brothers found it and burned it, saying that I might commit suicide if I kept it handy. I had no words to describe the smell of the chemical burning.

● **My father-in-law's death**

My father-in-law experienced the A-bombing while he was at the arsenal and suffered serious burns on his back. That's why he always had to lie face-down when sleeping. After my husband's death, I was planning to go to Tonoga Village with my father-in-law. But on August 25, he passed away. I was only 24 years old and suddenly all alone in Hiroshima, having lost my husband and both parents-in-law. I thought I was prepared to die. But I couldn't, filled with a sense of duty that I was responsible for bringing the ashes of the three of them to my parents-in-law's hometown and delivering them to the family there.

● **Returning to Tonoga Village**

I finally returned to Tonoga Village on September 6, bringing the ashes of my husband and parents-in-law with me. My husband's relatives held a funeral for my family at their home. Since I was very skinny and feeling under the weather in those days, all of my parents and brothers were there to protect me. I am still alive today thanks to them. Having parents and brothers is always a great thing. Their appetite for food was so contagious that I could eat as well. At a time when we were always short of food, I would force myself to eat even when I didn't really want to, out of a feeling that eating nothing would be detrimental. I think that that really helped me.

After returning to Tonoga Village, I went to Hiroshima City several times with my father. One day, a foreigner who had been a prisoner of war chased after us in the city. We were already exhausted from walking around the area, even having to wade through an area without any roads after the Makurazaki typhoon. Although we managed to escape from him by running desperately, I still can't forget the fear I felt from that memory.

● **Second marriage**

In 1957 I married again to a man with 3 children when his youngest child was two years old. At first, I intended to decline the marriage offer because I had never experienced child-rearing. However, once I met his children, they were so adorable that I changed my mind and decided to marry him, thinking I could be happy raising these children with little hope of having my own.

● **Health status**

There have been many times when I was worried about my physical condition. Currently, I have to see all types of doctors. When I go to a local dentist to have a tooth pulled out, the dentist asks me to bring a physician with me because my blood doesn't clot normally.

In 2001, about 7 years ago, I underwent an operation for ovarian cancer. Since my cancer had spread to my intestines, it was such a major operation that as much as 50 cm of my intestines had to be removed. Ovarian cancer is a disease difficult to cure and had spread to my intestines. So, it's a wonder I could survive.

When I was suffering from ovarian cancer, I had a bitter sensation with foods. I started feeling the same lately so visited a hospital to see a doctor. At the hospital, I was diagnosed with an intestinal obstruction and had to be hospitalized.

● **Exposure to the A-bomb radiation**

Although I didn't suffer any burns by being directly exposed to the A-bomb radiation, flies laid eggs all over my body, including my hands, feet and back before countless maggots crawled out of my skin. It was a stabbing pain like being stung by a horsefly. I still have lots of marks those maggots left on my back then, so I don't want to go to any public bath, including hot springs.

Hospital doctors asked me what happened when they see my back. I answer them that it was due to the A-bombing. Some doctors also asked me if my back was exposed at the time of the A-bombing, but it wasn't like that.

Peace is very important. I believe that waging war is the wrong thing to do. Even when you have troubles in your home, you aren't happy. So, we should control ourselves so as not to cause any troubles.

Lucky You

Toshio Miyachi

● Life in those days

I was born in 1917 in Nakanosho Village, Mitsugi County (present-day Innoshima-Nakanosho-cho, Onomichi City). While my father worked for Nakanosho Post Office, my mother, a full-time housewife, farmed a small crop field. Two years after I was born as the eldest brother following three sisters, my younger brother was born. My younger sister died in 1924, shortly after she was born. After that, my mother also passed away. Since then, I lived alone with my father.

In 1939, I was drafted and assigned to the 5th Division, Field Artillery, 5th Regiment. As a squad leader, I moved from place to place in Vietnam and China for three years. After retiring, I worked at the Hikari Branch of Marukashi Department Store that was run by my cousin. In 1943, I changed jobs and worked at the Hikari Branch office of Miyaji Steel Manufacturing Co. that was run by my paternal grandfather. The reason for changing jobs was that the location of the new company's headquarters was closer to my father's place, which I thought would be convenient for taking care of him. I got married around the time I changed jobs. My eldest son was born in April 1944.

In April 1945, I received draft papers for the second time. This time, I evacuated my wife and child to Innoshima. I was assigned again to Field Artillery, 5th Regiment, but this time I worked for the regimental headquarters as a military register keeper. With the main troops being dispatched to various places across the country to defend the mainland, the number of soldiers who stayed at headquarters was very limited. Among those soldiers, my main tasks as a military register keeper were to create a military register and distribute military pocketbooks. I didn't even have to undergo military maneuvers.

Sergeant Okada, my superior officer, who came from Kobatake Village, Jinseki County (present-day Jinsekikogen-cho Jinseki County), was an outstanding man. Because just the two of us worked in the same room, he favored me very much.

In June 1945, the name of my troops was changed to the Chugoku Military District Artillery Reserves (Chugoku 111st Unit). The unit was on the west side of Hiroshima Castle. Several two-story military barracks were built to surround the moat where four batteries had been stationed.

● Situation before the A-bombing

After being discharged from the military, I intended to return to work at my previous office. My company also seemed to be planning the same for me. A letter from the president was delivered to the battery to convey a message asking me if I

could visit Hikari City to attend an important meeting. However, I felt too constrained to ask for permission to go out, hating to be judged by my comrade that I had left my station on the pretext of business because my previous workplace was run by my relatives. While I was wavering, it was very considerate of Sergeant Okada to say, "Don't worry. I'll get the permission for you." Thanks to him, permission to go out was specially issued, and I was in Hikari City on August 5 (Sunday). The permission included the condition that I would catch a train scheduled to arrive at Hiroshima Station at 9:00 the next morning, August 6 (Monday) and return to my unit.

On August 6, I was up at 4:00 in the morning and caught a train from Hikari Station after breakfast. At 8:15, the time of the A-bombing, I believe my train was around the area just before Iwakuni Station. Since I could hardly hear any sound outside due to the tremendous roar of the train, I didn't hear the sound of the explosion. But all the passengers were looking up through windows on the right (in the train direction) saying, "A huge cloud of smoke like an advertising balloon was rising in the sky of Hiroshima." Without any announcement, while nobody knew what was going on, my train kept on going until it suddenly stopped at Itsukaichi Station. At that station, with previous trains also stopping, all the passengers were instructed to get off the train because we couldn't go any farther in the direction of Hiroshima. I was at a loss because I had promised to return to the unit as soon as I arrived at Hiroshima at 9:00.

In front of Itsukaichi Station, with black smoke belching out of a locomotive, it had become as dark as night so much that I could barely sense people moving. After a while, as the black smoke started clearing, I realized that a military police truck was parked nearby. They seemed to have just finished with some kind of business, and when I asked them to drive me to Hiroshima Castle in the hope of returning to my unit, they readily agreed. They were a party of two, a corporal and a sergeant. Looking very energetic without any external wounds, they wouldn't have been directly exposed to the A-bomb radiation. If they're still alive today, I'd like to express my gratitude to them in person.

● Situation in the city after the A-bombing

Although I don't remember exactly which route they took from Itsukaichi to Hiroshima, I think they drove on a direct road running through some rice paddies. Along the road was a flow of evacuees hurriedly escaping from the disaster. After entering Hiroshima City, they drove along the tram street. It seemed that everyone

had already been evacuated. The city looked deserted. We didn't even see any dogs or cats.

Although I previously asked them to drive me to Hiroshima Castle, they dropped me off just before the Aioi Bridge. My unit was within a stone's throw of the bridge, so I thought I could walk there. But actually I couldn't, with the road burning hot. I was wearing laced shoes that had been wrapped up with gaiters, but I couldn't advance even one meter and had to stop at the bridge.

About an hour must have passed while I alternated between advancing 50 cm and going back 50 cm on the Aioi Bridge. Suddenly, heavy rain started falling like needles sticking into my skin. It was black rain, which wet the area like oil was being sprinkled all over it. Yet when I wiped my wet face with my hands, I didn't feel oily at all. With no shelter from the rain on the burned plain, I got soaked to the skin and waited for the rain to let up.

After the rain stopped, there was a sudden change of temperature and it noticeably cooled off like autumn. The heated road had also cooled enough to walk on.

When I arrived at my unit, the barracks were in a pitiful condition. The site of the barracks had been cleared away as if there had been nothing there at all, with all the buildings smashed up, burned to ashes, and washed away with the rain.

Sergeant Okada was on the brink of death, suffering burns all over his body, but still breathing. Since the burns had completely changed his appearance, I didn't recognize him until he talked to me, "Miyachi, lucky you!" I temporarily left, but when I returned to that spot in the evening, I couldn't find Sergeant Okada. He must have been transferred somewhere else.

Although my memory's a bit vague, it might have been immediately after the black rain on August 6 when I met General Shunroku Hata of the 2nd Army Forces Command. I was ordered by an adjutant who was with the general, "You, carry General Hata and cross the Temma River, keeping him from getting wet!" General Hata was a small man. I followed the order to cross the river with the general on my back, but he wasn't heavy at all.

● **Rescue operations**

At the West Parade Ground, approximately 90 soldiers who had survived the A-bombing were assembled. I and the other soldiers were engaged in cremating corpses. A tremendous number of corpses had to be cremated, like 250 one day and 300 the next.

Especially memorable in that operation was two American soldiers who were lying

dead on the steps of Hiroshima Castle. They must have been two POWs from the U.S. forces who were held in a building near Hiroshima Castle in those days.

On August 6, the day of the A-bombing, with nothing to eat I took my 30 men to city hall to get some hard biscuits. At city hall, things went differently from what we expected. We argued with city hall, carrying a chip on our shoulders, and couldn't get any biscuits. That day we had no choice but to drink hot water with sugar in it in an effort to distract us from our hunger. From August 7, we were able to receive rationed rice balls and hard biscuits thanks to activities by rescue parties from outside the city.

Until the end of August, we continued our rescue operations, and slept in the open during that time.

On August 31, an order to disband all units was finally issued. When units disbanded, various supplies that had been stored in military warehouses were distributed to soldiers. I received military uniforms and blankets. Some soldiers who came from rural areas received army horses and rode them home.

On September 1, I got on board a ship from the Port of Itozaki and returned to Innoshima.

● Diseases

About two months after returning to Innoshima, while peeing in a crop field, I was surprised to release approximately 1-*sho* (about 1.8 liters) of brown urine. After that, the brown urine persisted. The next year, I was hospitalized with gastrointestinal problems. I was also later admitted to the hospital with liver failure. In 1998, I developed bladder cancer, and have been hospitalized and receiving treatment since then.

In September 1960, I received the A-Bomb Survivor's Health Book Certificate. Before receiving the certificate, I had been wondering whether or not I would accept the certificate and finally decided to get it, taking the advice of the municipal office. Subsequently, whenever I came down with a disease that seemed to be caused by the A-bombing, I felt grateful I had the certificate.

● Life after the war

After the war, I started a small general store on Innoshima. Since it was a countryside general store, we sold not only foods but also polished rice and wheat, purified oil and later dealt with home appliances. It wasn't an easy life, but I managed to put my children through university by juggling expenses.

In 1946, shortly after my eldest daughter was born, the baby and my wife passed

away. After I married my present wife in 1947, two more sons and a daughter were born. Because my children born after the war were all physically weak, I suspected it was due to the influence of my exposure to the A-bomb radiation. My wife seemed to tell our daughter not to mention that she was a second-generation A-bomb victim because her later marriage could be hindered by that fact.

● Senior officer dies in the A-bombing

If the war had continued after the A-bombing, Japan would have been in a critical situation. I believe that the current peace is based on many sacrifices.

The fact that I was able to avoid direct exposure to the A-bomb radiation and that I'm still alive today is because of Sergeant Okada's generous decision to get permission for me to go out. I lost track of the sergeant's whereabouts since that August 6 when he said to me, "Miyachi, lucky you." This weighed on my mind for a long time. "I want to convey my deepest appreciation to you, Sergeant." Understanding my hope, my children searched for information on him on the Internet, called various temples one by one asking his whereabouts, and finally found Sergeant Okada's grave for me.

In 2007, I and all my family members visited Sergeant Okada's grave. After paying our respects at his grave and expressing my appreciation to his spirit, I finally felt like a great weight had been lifted off my chest.

**Wish for Peace
for the Next Generation**

Tokio Maedoi

● Life before the A-bombing

In 1945, I lived with my mother Hisayo and two older sisters in Kusunoki-cho 1-chome. Even though I was a student in the first grade of Misasa Elementary School, Advanced Department, at that time, I worked everyday in factories and other places as a part of student mobilization, so I never attended class at school. I was mobilized, together with my 40 classmates, to the Nissan Motor Co., Ltd. factory in Misasa-honmachi 3-chome. My two older sisters also worked, with Kazue working at the Hiroshima Postal Savings Branch and Tsurue at the Army Clothing Depot, Hiroshima Branch.

● August 6

On that morning also I was working as a mobilized student at Nissan Motor Co., Ltd. My mobilized classmates and I were scattered throughout the factory, and I worked in the office where I did various tasks such as taking parts to workers when orders came from the factory floor. At that time, a request had come from the floor for some screws, so I left the office carrying two boxes in my hands and started walking towards the factory located in the back of the building. Suddenly, I was enveloped in a blue light that appeared to be like the bursting flame of a gas burner, while at the same time my field of vision was shut down and I felt as if I was floating in the air. I thought that we had been struck by a sudden bombing, although the air-raid alert had been called off and we were totally defenseless. I immediately thought, "Ohhh, I'm going to die..."

I am not really sure how many minutes passed but when I recovered consciousness, I realized that I was lying down on the ground. After a bit, as if the fog gradually cleared, my vision was regained, making me think, "I'm alive!"

I had fallen on a gas cylinder that had tipped over nearby and it had scraped the skin on my hand. Thinking back later, I had a shaved head and was only wearing a short-sleeved round-necked shirt and short pants at the time of the A-bombing, so I suffered terrible burns where I was exposed. But at the time I couldn't immediately grasp the extent of my injuries and didn't really feel any pain. As I couldn't see any of my classmates who I worked with, I felt concern for my family and decided to return home. When I started walking, I saw the large factory gate had been knocked over and found three persons who had been trapped underneath. With the help of some other people nearby, we were able to pull them out from the gate and afterwards everyone said "Let's go! Let's go" and fled from the factory.

● Situation after the A-bombing

The town was completely covered by collapsed buildings and walls, and I couldn't even see the roads. There was hazy smoke everywhere as if from a smoldering fire, while everyone walking in the street suffered from burns and some of them fled clutching their children. Walking on top of debris and piles of collapsed wood, a protruding nail went through the bottom of my shoe and pierced my foot but at the time I was so terrified that I couldn't feel any pain. From the wreckage under my feet I could hear moaning voices saying "Help me," but amidst that scene from hell, I had become panicked myself and without helping those crying for help, I just continued towards my home.

When I got home, I saw that our house had been completely destroyed. Although my mother and sisters were supposed to be there, I saw no signs of them. As I was still only 12 years old, I was immediately overcome with anxiety realizing that, "I am now all alone in this world." I stared at our flattened house for a while in a stupor and could only think, "This is the end." While doing so, I heard people nearby say, "The fire is spreading. Get away from here!" and I gradually worked up the resolve to flee. As I walked to the evacuation site in the suburbs that our family had decided on beforehand, I happened to run into a classmate of mine mobilized at the same factory by the name of Nakamura. He was evacuating to the home of a relative in Mitaki-cho and invited me to come with him saying, "Let's go together."

As Mitaki-cho was located on the hillside where there was very little damage, we found the house only slightly damaged with some broken windows. His aunt said to us, "Thank goodness you were saved, thank goodness." She gave us rice balls but I had no appetite and couldn't eat. Finally able to take a moment of rest, I started to feel pain in my body and realized that there was something wrong with me. I had been burnt everywhere not covered by clothes, and my body was covered with blisters so large that the water inside them moved in undulating waves. I wasn't wearing a cap, so my head had also been burnt and was throbbing with pain. Although they say you should die if one-third of your body is burnt, I think mine was burnt even more than that.

Rain started to fall some time before noon. It felt good on my burnt body, so I let the rain hit my body for a while. Looking closely at the falling rain, it shined with a sparkle like that of gasoline. Although at that time I didn't understand at all, I realize now that it was the radioactive "Black Rain".

Afterwards, I bid goodbye to Nakamura and started walking again in order to get to the school in Yasu-mura (present-day Asaminami-ku, Hiroshima City) which was our

evacuation site. My body continued to feel hot, so I got some cucumbers from a nearby field, squeezed their juice on my burns and continued walking.

When I finally reached the school, the relief station was open and filled with injured people laying in rows, side-by-side on the ground like a catch of tuna. I received medical care for the first time there and they only spread some cooking oil on my burns. The school was so overflowing with A-bombing victims that I was assigned to a new separate shelter. While moving there, I unexpectedly met my sister Tsurue. She had been at home when the A-bomb was detonated and had a bandage wrapped around her wounded head. Being able to finally meet a relative, I thought, "Ahhh, I'm not alone after all," and felt relieved. My sister told me that our mother was safe and we went to find her. My mother had been on the veranda at the time of the A-bombing, so her leg had been cut deep and she had suffered burns on her face. Afterwards, we were able to join up there with my other sister Kazue who was working at the Hiroshima Postal Savings Branch.

We stayed in Yasu-mura until the end of the war. I remember that I was engulfed with a feeling of relief realizing that I would not have to go off to war. We stayed some two weeks in Yasu-mura, and afterwards we moved to the house of some relatives in my father's hometown of Gono-mura in Takata-gun (present-day Akitakata City).

As my health continued to worsen, some around me started to say, "He doesn't have much longer." A doctor had been dispatched to Gono-mura, so I was put on a large two-wheeled cart and taken to receive medical care. It was there for the first time that my burns were treated with some white burn medicine and I was finally able to receive some actual medical care. Even with the medical attention, my burns were so severe that I couldn't remove my clothes but rather had to have them cut off with scissors. I had a high fever and could only go to the toilet with someone holding me. Despite her own injuries, my mother cared for me, her youngest child and only son. I remember my mother staying awake throughout the night, fanning me ceaselessly and saying, "It's hot, isn't it?" When my burns started to heal, I began to have frequent nosebleeds. The bleeding sometimes couldn't be stopped until the doctor gave me an injection that stopped it.

I gradually recovered and started to attend the local school. There were about three students at that school who had also transferred from Hiroshima City after suffering from the A-bombing.

Sometime in September, I became curious about what had become of Hiroshima and I took a bus by myself to Hiroshima City. Near the ruins of my house, I found my

neighbors living in some hut barracks they had constructed and was able to talk with them. There were other huts offering just enough protection from the rain that had been constructed here and there. I went to the Nissan Motor Co., Ltd. factory where I was during the A-bombing and happened to run into the plant manager. He asked me how I was and told me about what happened after the A-bombing. I felt dreadful again when he told me that the eyeballs of a woman in the office - the very same office where I had been immediately before the bombing - had popped out due to the A-bomb. Afterwards, I never again met any of my 40 classmates who had been working in the same factory and even now have never known anything about their whereabouts.

● **Rebuilding my life**

Two or three years later, I moved to Hiroshima City in order to rebuild my life because there were no jobs to be found in the countryside. As I had no academic background, it was truly difficult to find employment. However, I worked as a newspaper delivery boy, at construction sites, and just doing whatever in order to keep myself fed.

When I was 23, I decided to get married, and since I felt that I wanted my wife to know everything, I said to her that I am an A-bomb survivor. With my wife understanding everything, she consented to marry me. At the time, there was a great deal of information in the newspapers and the media about the aftereffects of A-bomb survivors but I strove not to be concerned at all. I was 27 when my first son was born and that same year my brother-in-law got me a job working at Toyo Industries Co. (present-day Mazda Motor Corporation). Until that time, I had continuously been changing jobs, but my brother-in-law encouraged me to have patience and work hard, so I started that job with the determination to try my hardest for the sake of my child.

● **Health concerns**

While talking with co-workers who shared the late-night shift with me, I found a person who was exposed to at the A-bombing while at Aioi Bridge. As he was nearly at the hypocenter of the A-bombing, I was shocked by what he told me. He had received a request from the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission to undergo a physical examination. Both of us being A-bomb survivors, we were quite interested in talking to each other. However, his physical condition declined and he was hospitalized, and although he returned once more to the workplace, he passed on when he was 50 years old. I was constantly engulfed in anxiety regarding my health,

so I think that it may be a kind of miracle that I have managed to live until now. I continued working until retirement at age 55.

● **Wish for peace**

The reason I have decided to talk about my experience of the A-bombing is that, as I get older, I can feel my physical strength weakening while my desire to tell the younger generation about my experiences becomes ever stronger. As young people today are not forced into battle as in olden times but rather are free to do what they want, I want them to understand, even if only a little bit, about the occurrences of 64 years ago that are unfathomable today, as well as the thoughts of those young people who lost their lives and the suffering of the previous generation.

Additionally, I want to encourage the younger generation to press forward with peace activities towards abolishing nuclear weapons so that what I experienced will never happen again. There would be nothing pleasant for someone having to experience that same tragedy. I would really like to see the abolition of nuclear arms while I am still alive.

The Scars of War Never Heal

Kyoko Fujie

● **Situation before the A-bombing**

At the time I was in fourth grade at Ujina Elementary School. My father, who was 41 years old then, was assigned to the Ship Headquarters, Army Department, where he had been on board a military ship overseas for nearly one year and had only come back home to our house in Ujina-machi (present-day Minami-ku, Hiroshima City) about once every six months. My mother, who was 31 years old at the time, was a midwife so, no matter how dangerous it became in the city, she couldn't evacuate because she had patients to look after. My younger sister, who was one year and five months old, and my 80-year old grandmother (on my father's side) also lived with us. We had also taken in my cousin because my uncle, who was managing a shipyard in Korea, wanted him to study in a Japanese school.

● **Memories of the evacuation of schoolchildren**

Around April 1945, children in grades three to six at Ujina Elementary School were subjected to school children evacuation. We were separated and sent to Miyoshi-cho, Sakugi-son or Funo-son (present-day Miyoshi City) in the north of the prefecture. I went to Jojun-ji Temple in Miyoshi-cho.

Food at the temple consisted almost completely of soybeans. Meals were only a bit of rice sticking to soybeans and even snacks consisted of soybeans. At one point, a rice ball disappeared from the lunchbox of the junior high school-age son of the temple priest. The teachers brought all of us to sit in the main hall of the temple and demanded: "Whoever stole the rice ball must confess right now."

Near the temple was a large bridge named Tomoe Bridge with a shrine next to it. At this shrine there was a large cherry tree that bore cherries. The older kids would climb the tree and pick cherries to eat. I didn't know anything but the older kids called me and told me to stand under the tree facing outwards to stand watch. Just as I was doing so, an old man came yelling at us and caught me. Then he looked up and yelled at the other kids, "Come down from there!" and the older kids also came down from the tree. The old man was grasping my hand and I was crying when he asked me where I was from. "Jojun-ji Temple," I said to which he replied, "OK then," and let go of my hand. Then the old man said, "I am growing onions and other things down below here. If you tread on them then they can't be eaten. You absolutely cannot do that. Stop crying." That evening, the old man brought us steamed sweet potato and other food to eat. Although scary at first, he was really very kind, I thought. I guess he thought we seemed pitiful having to steal cherries because we were so hungry.

The evacuated schoolchildren would occasionally receive sweets sent by their

parents. However, we never had the chance to taste these. My mother sent me hard candy made from soybeans but all of it was confiscated by the teachers. According to what the older kids said, all of it probably ended up in the teachers' stomachs.

There was a terrible lice infestation. We would spread out newspaper and comb them out of our hair. The lice would turn black from sucking blood and we would crush them. We would spread the shirts out we wore to dry in the sun on the temple veranda.

● August 6

Exactly one week before the dropping of the A-bomb, my father had returned from abroad, so I also hurried home to see him. I was supposed to return to the evacuation area on August 5 but I couldn't get a ticket for that day, so I got one for the 6th.

On the morning of August 6, my mother went to Hiroshima Station carrying my younger sister on her back to see me off. There was an old woman from my neighborhood who was going to visit her grandchild who had been evacuated to Miyoshi, so we boarded the train together. We boarded the Geibi Line and sat with our backs to the direction the train was headed towards Miyoshi. As we were about to enter the first tunnel, I saw three parachutes. Then, we just entered the tunnel and suddenly there was the explosion of the bomb.

There was a massive impact and a loud roaring sound echoed in my ears. Since I was sitting down I was fine but all the people standing, even the adults, were tipped over backwards and fell down. I couldn't hear well, as if my ears had been blocked with stone.

Coming out of the tunnel, the smoke from the A-bomb looked incredibly beautiful. The old woman and I just watched it, saying, "Oh my, that's amazing." Since I was only a child, I couldn't begin to imagine what had become of Hiroshima.

When we got to Miyoshi, the old woman told me, "The radio is saying that Hiroshima is completely destroyed." However, I still couldn't really understand what was happening, so at noon I went to school to cut the grass. There, for the first time, a truck arrived at the school carrying A-bombing victims from Hiroshima. As these severely burnt people got off from the truck one after another, I was quite shocked. A person who was trying to hold his face skin with the palm of his hand as it was drooping from the cheek; a woman whose breast was completely torn; and a man who was holding a bamboo broom upside-down, using it as a cane as he staggered along; I can still remember that scene vividly today. More than being scared, I was truly astonished.

● The A-bombing experience of my family

Some three days after the A-bombing, I received word at the temple from my family in Hiroshima. Then, on August 12 or 13, I returned to Hiroshima by train with a sixth-grade neighborhood boy named Nobu-chan. I was met by my father at Hiroshima Station and I walked home with him along a road that was alongside Hijiyama Hill. I remember that, while walking, my father told me about how our family was and said that, "Nothing will ever grow here again for 70 years."

When we got home, my mother was wrapped head to toe in sheets. She was wrapped in sheets in order to prevent maggots from breeding, because she had suffered burns over her entire body. My younger sister had suffered burns over her entire face and was burnt black. Her hands and feet were also terribly burnt, so she was also wrapped with sheets. As she was very young, she was scared of how my mother looked and cried all the time.

When the A-bomb was dropped, my mother and sister were waiting for a streetcar at Enko Bridge. About one hour earlier, when the air-raid siren had sounded, my mother had loaned her air-raid hood to an old woman from the neighborhood who said she had forgotten hers. For that reason, my mother was completely bathed in the light from the A-bomb. My sister was being carried on my mother's back, so she was burnt on the left foot and hand, and face. My mother took my sister off from her back and dipped my sister in firefighting water several times along the way as they fled to take refuge in the Eastern Drill Ground behind Hiroshima Station.

My grandmother had been at home when the A-bomb detonated. Although the house had not burnt, it was severely damaged.

My father and my cousin spent two full days walking around the city in search of my mother and sister. When they found them, the burns suffered by my mother had made her body swell so much that they couldn't tell whether she was a woman or man. On August 6, my mother had happened to be wearing clothing she had made with material that my father had sent her from abroad. My mother had taken a tiny scrap of clothing that barely escaped being burnt and tied it to my sister's hand as an identifying mark. When my father and my cousin came looking for them, my one-year old sister noticed my cousin and called out to him, "A-chan!" Then, when they saw the cloth on her hand they knew they had found both of them. My mother said, "I'm done for so just take our child and go home," but my father put them both on a large two-wheeled cart and brought them home.

● **Death of my mother**

My mother passed away on August 15. My father used an old tree to make a simple coffin without a lid for the body and we cremated her in a vacant lot behind our house. Everyone used that field to cremate bodies, so all the smell would get into the house and it was quite an unbearable foul odor.

My mother spoke her dying words to my grandmother: "Mother-in-law, I want to eat a giant potato." With the food shortage during the war, my mother would take clothes and various items to the countryside to trade for potatoes and other foods. I think my mother would eat the smaller potatoes from those for which she was able to barter. Small potatoes have a very acrid taste and they are hardly eaten today.

To pray for the repose of my mother's soul, I always participate in the *Toro Nagashi* (ceremony in which paper lanterns are floated down a river). I make an offering of large boiled potatoes. Even now, when I see a large potato, I think about how I'd like to give it to my mother to eat.

● **My town after the war**

A wide area of the riverbank above Ujina Elementary School was used as a crematory. Corpses were enclosed simply by surrounding with sheets of corrugated tin and cremated inside of these. A hole was made in the corrugated tin sheets for the head of the corpse. We children would pass nearby where they cremated the bodies on our way to swim in the sea. Sometimes I would think, "Oh, the head is burning now." I would also step on many bones as I passed by there. I think that area was a crematory until I was in sixth grade of elementary school.

Life was really wretched after the war but not just for us; everyone had to live with the same hardships.

● **My sister after the war**

My sister, who was with my mother when the A-bomb detonated, was saved. At the time, people said that it was a miracle that a small child the age of my sister was able to survive. While growing up, my sister heard all the time, "That's great that you survived. How great that you are alive."

However, my sister was left with terrible keloids on her foot and it became deformed. She couldn't wear shoes, so she had to always be wearing geta (Japanese wooden clogs). In those days there were many people who wore geta, so she didn't have big problems in her daily life but she had troubles when there was a field trip or a sports festival, as she couldn't wear geta. Nevertheless, as it could not be helped,

she wore two layers of soldier's socks.

Due to her foot, my sister was horribly teased. At the time, it was rumored that A-bomb sickness was contagious, so people would point at my sister and say things like, "My fingers are rotting," or "If you get too close to look, you'll catch the disease." Even several years after the A-bomb, when she was going to elementary school, she was treated as some kind of spectacle and people came from far to look at her.

Nevertheless, my sister never told me or our grandmother that she had been treated in such a manner. She would not complain about her pain and just say, "Grandma, was it really so great that I was able to survive?" As it was something she continued to be told ever since she was an infant, it seemed as if she was trying to make herself think, "It was great that I survived. So, even if I was burnt this badly, it is great to be alive." Recently I have taken a look at my sister's notes. Among them, I saw where she had written, "At that time, I thought I would have been better off dying," making me think once again how terribly difficult it must have been for her.

She was told that if she wanted her foot operated on that she would have to do it after turning 15. During summer vacation in senior high school, she was finally able to have the operation that she had really wanted for a long time. My sister was really looking forward to it as she always said that she wanted to be able to wear shoes when she entered high school. However, it did not become possible for her to wear shoes on her feet after all. Although they transplanted skin from her abdomen and rear to try to correct the deformity of her foot, the transplanted skin turned black and her little toe remained offset by some 3 cm. Before the operation, my sister said, "I'll be able to wear sports shoes like normal," but even now after 65 years have passed from the A-bombing, she still can't wear shoes normally.

Since her little toe would rub and start to hurt, she tried wearing sports shoes with a hole cut out for her toe but then the toe would rub against the hole and also come to cause sores. There was almost never a day that passed where her foot did not bleed. Thinking that other people would feel uncomfortable when they saw her shoes with blood, she would paint over the adhering blood using toothpaste.

When my sister entered the Atomic-bomb Survivors Hospital, she met Dr. Tomin Harada and he told her, "Don't hesitate to tell me if there's anything you want to talk about." When she graduated from senior high school, she talked with Dr. Harada, who introduced her to a Japanese minister who lived in Los Angeles. As our father had passed on before my sister had entered senior high school, money was tight in our family at that time. A senior high school teacher introduced my sister to a

part-time job where she worked hard until she was 20 years old when she had managed to save up enough for a one-way ticket to America and she set off for that country.

She was looked after by the minister and was able to get work in a laundry, which provided for her living expenses. I think she went through some rough times but she really gave her all and still lives in Los Angeles today. Although she thought she would never be able to get married normally, she married a Japanese man in America and they have been blessed with three children.

● **Happening in Osaka**

About one week after my sister had her operation, I went to go visit a friend living in Osaka. My sister said to me, "My condition is already stable, so go on and visit Osaka."

I took a local express and arrived there in the evening but since I didn't know where my friend's house was, I stopped at a police box to ask. Although he was a young policeman, he was very kind and accompanied me for nearly an hour as I looked for the address. When we found my friend's house, I told the policeman, "Thank you so much. You were very helpful." He then asked me where I was from, and I told him that I was from Hiroshima. He suddenly took a step back and said, "The Hiroshima struck by the A-bomb?" I answered, "Yes," to which he replied, "A woman from Hiroshima - that's unpleasant for me. A woman from Hiroshima who was exposed to the A-bomb." He said this with an expression as if he was going to catch some disease from me. Until that time, I didn't think that much of being exposed to the A-bomb, so I was truly shocked by this incident.

I couldn't talk to my sister about this incident. I talked about it with my friend in Osaka but she said to me, "You absolutely shouldn't tell your sister about this because it will really make her feel terrible." After that, I would never tell anyone else that I was from Hiroshima.

● **Incident at a clothing store**

This incident goes back tens of years ago when I was helping a customer at a clothing store. Some person who was completely unknown to me suddenly said my sister's name to me and asked me if I was her older sister. "Yes, that's right. Why? How do you know her?" I asked her. That person lived in Furue, and at that time, gossip about my sister still made it that far.

Due to this incident, what happened in Osaka and various other incidents, I was in

favor of my sister going to America. I thought that if she wanted to leave the bullying and discrimination in Japan, and go to a land where no one knew anything about her, my sister would probably find happiness there.

● **Wish for peace**

I think that people who haven't actually experienced the A-bombing really cannot understand the pain of the survivors. Cutting your own finger is probably the first time you experience pain but you cannot understand what it is like for someone else to be cut. For that reason, I think it is really difficult to convey what it was like to experience the A-bombing.

The war wounded us to the bottom of our hearts. Not only external wounds, but various other wounds also remain, and even after some ten years, these wounds still ache. My sister hates to talk about the war or the A-bomb such that ever since she was small, she would always just walk away whenever we talked about it. After moving to America, she would always wear a thick stocking to conceal her wounds and came to never speak about the A-bomb ever again.

War absolutely must be abolished.

I Saw Hell

Kimiko Kuwabara

● Life before the A-bombing

At that time, I was 17 years old living with my mother and older sister in Misasa-honmachi 3-chome in Hiroshima City (present-day Nishi-ku). My father had passed on, and although I had three older brothers, the oldest one had married and moved away while my other two brothers had been called up and were in Yamaguchi Prefecture.

I was working at the Hiroshima Central Broadcast Station in the General Affairs Section. The station was located in Kami-nagarekawa-cho (present-day Nobori-cho, Naka-ku), and the surrounding area had become like an open plaza due to the houses being evacuated and demolished. I remember that the station broadcasted a lot of military-related material, so the windows had been reinforced to protect against an air raid.

● August 6

On the morning of that day, the air-raid alert had been issued, so I couldn't leave the house for a while and was late for work. The alert was called off and I got to work at around 8:00 a.m. As always, my coworkers and I started to clean the offices according to our assigned responsibilities. When I entered my assigned room, the Station Manager's Office, I heard a woman in the courtyard say, "There's a B-29 flying there!" I became interested, and just as I was going to approach a window, there was suddenly a brilliant flash from outside the window. The flash was red and the same light as occurs at the moment when striking a match, but it was far more intense. I immediately covered my eyes and ears with both hands and squatted down right there. That was what, at that time, they had taught us to do if there was a bomb blast. In the darkness, it seemed like a state of weightlessness, with a crackling feeling spreading throughout my body. Not that it was painful, but it was such a bizarre sensation that I thought I must be dying. At the time I didn't notice it, but the blast had shattered the glass into very small pieces and fragments had gotten stuck in my face and left arm, leaving my body covered in blood. Even now, I still have glass shards stuck in my left cheek.

After a moment, I kept still and then faintly heard the voices of people in the hallway. The room was pitch-black and I couldn't see anything. Nonetheless, I thought that I had to get out of there, so I tried to move towards the voices in the hallway when I ran into the back of a man. So I thought, "I should escape with this man...I am still alive." I firmly grabbed his belt and followed behind him until we finally made it near the exit. People had gathered near the exit where we opened the

heavy door and managed to go outside. It was as dark as dawn, and all kinds of things that had been blasted away were falling from the sky. Looking at the people who had come out of the station, their faces were pitch black, their hair was standing on end, they were bloodstained, and their clothing was in shreds. We didn't know who each other was until we heard the people's voice.

We thought that the station had been targeted and terribly damaged by the bombing. Nearby was the building of the Chugoku Shimbun where the Station Subscription Section had a sub-office, so I went outside of the grounds with a few women from the same General Affairs Section. That was when I realized for the first time that it wasn't only the station that had been damaged. All of the surrounding buildings had been completely flattened, and there were fires here and there. There were strong flames coming from the windows of our sub-office on the fifth and sixth floors of the Chugoku Shimbun Building. For that reason, we fled to Shukkeien Garden, which was near the station. As the flames grew near, I could hear the cries of people trapped under collapsed houses and people looking for family member but I was so desperate to escape for myself that I couldn't do anything to help them.

A great number of people had taken refuge in Shukkeien Garden. We crossed the bridge spanning the pond in the park and came to the riverbank of the Kyobashi River. The trees in the park began to burn and the flames gradually came closer to the riverbank where we were until finally a tall pine tree near the river burst into flames with a massive roar. We jumped into the river and while watching the surrounding scene in water up to our chests, Ohsuga-cho on the opposite caught on fire as the sparks from the flames started to fall on us. The heat grew intense from the fires spreading on the opposite shore and behind us, so we spent the time until evening repeatedly getting in and out of the river.

So many people were fleeing to the riverbanks that there was nowhere near us where we could sit down. The army was stationed nearby, so a lot of soldiers were there. Since they were wearing caps on their heads, they still had hair remaining in a plate-like shape, while the rest of their bodies had been completely burned and they were writhing in pain. There was a mother who just stayed there silently holding her baby, the upper half of her body was in tatters and I thought her baby had probably already died.

You could hear people who were burnt and injured ceaselessly asking, "Give me water, give me water!" and some people who said, "You mustn't drink water." There were a great number of people who, severely burned and unable to withstand the pain, jumped into the river. Most people who jumped into the river did not come back to

the surface alive but rather were just taken away by the current. Dead bodies came floating down from upriver filling the width of the river. Even while we were in the river, the dead bodies would come floating by us, so I would push them away by hand so that they would continue floating downstream. At the time, I didn't feel any fright because I was still so frantic. I was witnessing a scene even more miserable than any painting of hell.

The fire was so severe that we couldn't move anywhere, so we spent the whole day on riverbank of Shukkeien Garden. Around sunset, a small rescue boat came to look for the station employees. The station staff decided to go to the relief station at the Eastern Drill Ground and the small boat took us to the sandy shore on the opposite side of the river. I was worried about my mother who was home alone, so I told them I wanted to go home without going to the relief station. A coworker then said, "Don't be ridiculous. It's very dangerous to go back into town," and forcibly restrained me. Since my house was in Misasa-honmachi, in the western part of Hiroshima City, I would have to go straight through the center of town, which was in flames, to get there. Everyone was opposed to me going there so I seemed to reluctantly go along with them, but as soon as I had a chance, I got away from them. I heard the voices of the people who noticed that I had left them but I just said, "I'm sorry," and headed home by myself.

● The road home

After leaving my coworkers, I came to where Tokiwa Bridge crosses the Kyobashi River. There was a steady succession of injured people coming from Hakushima on the west side of the bridge but there was no one going the opposite direction. Then, I met two railroad workers who wanted to cross the bridge. They were on their way to Yokogawa Station, so I asked them to take me along with them, and they refused by saying, "We don't know if we can make it or not, so we can't take you along too. Get yourself to a relief station." However, I didn't give up, and just followed secretly four or five meters behind them. As we moved through the flames, they sometimes looked back but I would stop moving and then follow them again. Since I followed after them ceaselessly, they finally gave in and said, "OK, you can follow us. Walk where we walk." They pointed out dangerous places along the way. While avoiding the flames, we passed by the Postal Services Agency Hospital and arrived at Misasa Bridge. There were rows of injured soldiers sitting on both sides of the bridge such that there was no room to even walk. They were probably soldiers from the 104th Chugoku Unit stationed nearby and all of them were moaning in pain. We somehow

crossed the bridge, trying not to step on the injured soldiers, arriving at the railroad tracks and we walked along them until reaching Yokogawa Station. I then split up with the railroad workers who, I remember said to me, "Be careful on your way home."

● Reunion with my mother

I walked alone towards my house in Misasa. Although it was already dark all around, both sides of the road were still in flames. Where there were violent flames, I had to run to make it past. To get home, I went from Yokogawa, through Misasa and took a road facing north until I finally arrived home. Although my home had already burned down, I saw my mother standing on the street nearby. I was so happy to see her alive that I hugged her and we both started to cry.

My mother had been sitting in front of a mirror on the second floor of our house when the A-bomb was detonated. Although the rooms on the second floor had collapsed inward, my mother was in a corner room, so it somehow didn't collapse. As the stairs became impossible to use, somebody placed a ladder for her and she was able to climb down from there.

The house remained collapsed throughout the morning, and as the flames grew slowly closer, it finally caught on fire in the afternoon. Before the house caught on fire, my mother could only manage to remove the futons out from the house by tossing them outside, but these were taken by people fleeing who put them on their heads and ran off with them. A kind-of air-raid shelter had been dug in the yard of our house, in which we had stored valuable items such as kimonos but the flames reached there also and they burned. My mother had carried buckets of water from the stream in front of our house to put out the fire again and again, and although she dug out the shelter right away, most everything inside had been burnt up. Although her neighbors recommended that she flee to Mitaki, she was worried about my sister and me, so while the house burned, she only escaped to a field across the street and just waited for my sister and me to return home.

That night, my mother and I camped out in the middle of that field. People fled along the road in front of our house the whole night through while people providing rescue and relief also went back and forth. I could only gaze at this scene, wondering what was going to happen to me. In the middle of the night, some relief personnel gave us some rice balls to eat, and just as I was fading off to sleep, the sun started to come up.

● Searching for my sister

Although the flow of people did not cease on the day of the 7th, my sister Emiko did not return home. My mother was worried about my sister, saying as she cried, "What's happened to her? She might have been killed..." I couldn't bear to see my mother like that, so on the following day of the 8th, I went off with a neighborhood friend of my sister to search for her. Once more, I witnessed scenes straight from hell.

My sister worked at the Hiroshima Central Telephone Bureau in Shimonakan-cho (present-day Fukuro-machi, Naka-ku). I went from Yokogawa through Tokaichi-machi (present-day Tokaichi-machi, 1-chome, Naka-ku) and walked along the streetcar route. Nothing had been done to clean up the burnt ruins but the streetcar route was wide, so I was just barely able to make it down the street. The city was filled with dead bodies, so I had to be careful not to step on any. Near Tera-machi (present-day Naka-ku), I saw a dead horse that was all swollen up. Around Tokaichi-machi, there was a person who was standing motionless, body burnt black, with both hands outstretched. I thought it strange but when I looked closer, I realized that the person had died standing up like that. Here and there, I saw many people who had plunged their heads into fire cisterns, their dead bodies lying on top of each other in a heap. The edges of the streets were overflowing with corpses while amidst them were people still breathing, others who I could hear moaning and some who were saying, "Water, water." There wasn't a single healthy person. Everyone's clothing was burnt, and their bodies were also burnt and swollen, looking like charcoal-black dolls. I thought that if my sister had collapsed and was lying somewhere in this mess, then I would never be able to find her. Stepping over the dead bodies, I crossed Aioi Bridge and made it to Kamiya-cho (present-day Naka-ku) but we couldn't get any further, so we returned to Misasa. I thought my sister couldn't possibly be alive given these conditions.

Luckily, my sister returned home one week after the A-bombing. Although she had been severely injured at the Telephone Bureau by the bombing, she fled to Hijiyama Hill and then was taken to a relief station in Kaitaichi-cho, Aki-gun (present-day Kaita-cho) in order to receive care. She spent one week there when she heard that a truck was going to Hiroshima City to provide relief, so she asked them to take her with them. Although they denied her saying that a seriously wounded person shouldn't be riding in the truck, she had her mind set on getting home, so when she saw that she had a chance, she jumped on the back of the truck and they took her all the way to Tokaichi-machi. The clothes of my sister, who had hobbled all the way from Tokaichi-machi, were in tatters, she was covered in blood, and was wearing

different shoes on each foot. If you didn't know what had happened, you would have thought that she was not a sane person. Since our house had burned down, a friend of my mother let my sister sleep in the corner of her house. Immediately after that, she was confined to bed and hovered between life and death.

● Nursing my sister

Glass shards had gotten stuck all over my sister's back, and chunks of flesh on her arm had been torn out, split open like a pomegranate. Everyday, I used a needle to remove glass shards from her back but maggots bred in the wounds. The daughter of the woman whose house she was staying at had already passed away from the A-bombing, making us worried that we were inconveniencing her, so we returned to the burnt ruins of our house. My oldest brother came and collected burnt wood to build us a small shelter that would protect us from the rain, so we moved there to continue nursing my sister. My sister, who was bedridden, couldn't be taken to a relief station, so someone shared a little ointment with us but it wasn't sufficient to cure her completely. Her hair had completely fallen out and she coughed up blood, making us think many times that she was near the end. My mother went into the hills everyday to pick *dokudami* (a kind of a Japanese herb) leaves, boiled these in their green undried state and gave it to my sister and me to drink. This green-leaf tea smelled strongly but my mother said it would function as an antidote. Perhaps that worked though since after some three months of not being able to stand, she started to recover and later returned to work. She wore a scarf or cap to hide her head until her hair grew back. Scars from her injuries remained, so she never wore clothes without sleeves and still today her gouged arms are indented.

● Life after the war

I found out about the end of the war from someone telling me. Even though I heard that the war had ended, I couldn't quite fathom it. When I was a child, we were taught that Japan could never lose and I fully believed that. When I worked at the station also, there was only talk about winning and never a word about losing. However, when I heard that an A-bomb had also been dropped on Nagasaki, I thought that it was best that the war ended if we were to be attacked often with bombs like this.

Since the building in Kami-nagarekawa-cho could not be used, the station was moved to Toyo Industries Co. in Fuchu-cho, Aki-gun. Since I had to look after my sister, and since I would have to commute by train, as it was far to Toyo Industries, and I heard rumors that the occupying forces, who had just arrived, might treat

women roughly, I quit my job at the station. Afterwards, I worked for about a year at a nearby company and then another, to which I was introduced by a former teacher, before I got married.

Although I walked around Hiroshima on August 6th and 8th, I never suffered any major ailment from the A-bombing. Although I was told that such illness could occur at any time, but I never spoke of feeling unease about illness. If I become ill, then I would deal with it then. More than that, I always thought about what I would do in the future.

● **Wish for peace**

Until now, I didn't want to talk about the A-bombing. Although I pay my respects at the Cenotaph for the A-bomb Victims every year, I have never again returned to Shukkeien Garden, where I fled to on August 6. Shukkeien Garden is a lovely park but if I saw the round bridge that crosses the pond, I would remember the horror of that day, so I just can't go there. If I remember it, I start to cry and the words are caught in my throat.

Many of the people exposed to the A-bomb have passed away, so there are only a few who can still talk about it. Although I am also getting older, I wanted to talk about the scenes of hell that I can still clearly remember, and to fully share my experiences with young people so that nuclear weapons are never used again. My grandchild in elementary school is interested in war and peace, and has come to ask me, "Grandma, did you experience the A-bomb?" I really hope that we can create a world where nobody has to experience such hardships.