

LOOKING BACK ON ATOMIC BOMB

Since April 1945, I had worked for an achievement record station which was relocated to my town, Inokuchi which was in the western Hiroshima, due to the war, and enrolled the insignias of individuals who served in the war.

August 6, 1945, the moment I sat at the desk after the morning assembly and was just about to start tasks, a horrible flash sparked all around. When I ran to the window and looked out of it, what I saw was a huge blue sphere, the same color with the sun but looked 80 times as large as the sun. It emitted more intense light than the sun did and was radiating, like spokes of a wheel, all over the places as far as I could see for seven to eight seconds. The instant I looked out, the right half of my face was grilled. Then I heard officers running around and shouting to go under desks. Several seconds after sheltering under a desk, every pane shattered with a fierce explosion and a violent blast and I saw heavy document folders and other things floating in the air.

Hiroshima was destroyed by not only intense heat but also radiation. It turned into the Inferno of the fire and destruction, bringing the chaos which ever happened. Survivors were coming from the devastated area of the city to the west along the north side of the railroad, whose clothes were stained with black rain as well as torn off. The number of refugees who came along the dusty roads because of continuing clear weather was increasing continuously and dramatically. The procession of victims walking with their clothes and skin hung from their body or pulling carts with fatally injured casualties was dragging.

We built tents, where we served them with drink until sunset. Next day, 7th, the relief party of the military built tents at Inokuchi station and north side of railroads for emergency first-aid stations. One of them was 3 minutes walk from my home. We immediately started to give first aid to people who are injured. The skins of the victims in long lines dangled while there was only white ointment. We picked up innumerable fragments of broken glass in the wounds which looked like pomegranate, a kind of fruit with big crack, and applied medicine from early morning to night day after day. People who skipped treatment only single day had numerous maggots in their cuts; I guessed it was because of reduction of their white blood cells. When I removed maggots from deep wounds, they didn't feel

any pain. I didn't know and yet I don't know why their nerves were paralyzed.

In the morning of 6th, my mother and brother also watched the intense flash and gigantic red ball. My brother went out to find our grandmother and uncle who lived near Hiroshima University. My uncle was looking for a water tap to quench his thirst caused by heat and when he returned his house, he found it disastrously ruined and burned to ashes by heat. Nothing remained of the house.

On the information that people in critical condition were moved to Ninoshima, an island near Hiroshima, we immediately went to the island by a ship that military offered. There were a great number of people whose bodies were purplish brown as well as swollen and changed utterly. Their bodies were neglectedly laid on the floor so closely that there was hardly a place to step. Some of them cried "water, give me water, please!", while some groaned "Kill me, kill me!", and others passed away already. The sight of misery put a lump in my throat. There was not only a drop of water, much less medicine. There were many air-raid shelters in the island. We searched for my grandmother into the recesses of them but we were not able to find her, so we took ship to return. On our way home the ship passed through coastline nearby mouths of the rivers which come from the urban district, disaster area. A large number of burnt, dead people, who had looked for water to the rivers in life, were drifting in clusters among the waves. It was beyond description. Numerous sorrowful bodies were floating. Since two bombers came flying, we dropped to the small bottom of the ship. We got to Inokuchi around noon. Although my grandmother and uncle came back home a week later, they passed away from aftereffect from the Bomb.

At that time I didn't marry yet. Later I heard that when my husband's father, Hidezoh Kajiyama took a streetcar bound for urban district in Yokogawa, ten minutes ride to Ground Zero, August 6 in the morning, he greeted his acquaintance. He must have been atom-bombed in the train. He has been missing.

In retrospect, the plot to expand Japan and the invasion of East Asia came to a tragic end. Significance of appealing the disaster of Hiroshima is a message to prayer for abolition of nuclear weapons.

Wishing for world peace and friendly coexistence, I let people know about misery and sorrow accompanying war, and pray to God for peace in the hearts of the people. From Memorial Cathedral for World Peace, from the bottom of my heart, I am praying to God to bless the eternal peace. (Translator: Michiko Matsumoto)