

# The Memory of That Day

Mrs. Riki Tanaka

I was running a hotel called “Fukiya” in Iwakawamachi, which was in front of Urakami Station. But I was evacuated to Mitsuyama by enforced evacuation order. My eldest son had been drafted as a medical orderly and my eldest and second daughters were working at the headquarters of an air defense lookout unit.

One day my son’s wife got typhus and she was admitted to Nagasaki Hospital. Because she was in critical condition, my eldest daughter was with her by her bedside.

On August 9<sup>th</sup>, my son was given official leave to come visit his wife and it was as he arrived at his home in Takenkubo that the atomic bomb was dropped. My second daughter was also there to look after my son’s daughter [my granddaughter], so my son and his child and my second daughter were crushed under the house.

At the same time, my fifth son was at my eldest son’s wife’s parent’s home, which was near their own home, for some reason. When he was about to roast some beans for his brother, the bomb was dropped and he was crushed under the house like the others.

“Help me, brother!” my fifth son shouted but there was no one. Fortunately he was under the desk, so he could break the wall and crawl out on his own. My eldest son saw him and shouted to him “Help me, Mikachan [my fifth son]!”. But he couldn’t come right away.

When my eldest son was wondering what Mikachan was doing,

he saw it through a gap of broken down houses. Because the wife's parents' home was an ironworks, he was looking for a suitable iron bar to help them get out. He found an iron bar then broke through the roof tiles which were on top of them and helped them out. Then they started to walk toward Mitsuyama to take refuge. My eldest son returned to Defense Headquarters. Meanwhile, my husband and I were in Mitsuyama, and my husband had gone to the mountain to cut down a tree. When the atomic bomb fell, my husband thought that a bomb had dropped nearby so he lay down on the ground. He thought that it must have dropped directly below him because all kinds of debris from the town were being blown towards him. He became worried about our children and went down to Mitsuyama.

On his way down, he saw his second daughter who was carrying her brother's baby with puttees (strapping for soldiers boots) on her back and my fifth son, near Kawabira. All of their faces and clothes were as black as pitch but they mostly had no injuries. According to their story, they were walking along the train track, but when they got to Tetsu Bridge, one of the tracks was missing. They managed to get across the bridge, but they didn't remember how they did it.

Our second daughter, fifth son and eldest son's daughter went back to Mitsuyama. My husband kept going on to find our eldest son's wife, eldest daughter and relatives in Takenokubo, but because of the raging flames, he wasn't able to go ahead as expected. When he passed the collapsed Urakamitenshudo (cathedral) on his way, the bell was still there but on his way back it wasn't. My husband came back on that day without having seen them.

The next day, the 5 of us; me, my husband, my husband's

brother's wife, cousin and our fourth son, borrowed a *riakaa* (2 wheeled cart) and went down the mountain with *onigiri* (rice balls) and *tsukemono* (pickled vegetables). We couldn't walk on the street. There were dead bodies around and the dead horses lay on their backs with their stomachs bloated. The rubber wheels on our *riakaa* (2 wheeled cart) were burned because of the heat from the ground.

My husband said to me "You'll tire yourself out. Go back with Akio [our fourth son]" because I was recovering from an illness. So I and my fourth son went back from Ohashi.

According to my husband's story, on their way to Takenokubo, the small bridge which crosses over the passage in the steel works was broken. They couldn't remember how they crossed there with the trolley. They arrived in Takenokubo and could meet the nephews and nieces. They gave them the Onigiri to eat right away but there wasn't enough for everybody.

My eldest son's wife and my eldest daughter were evacuated from Nagasaki Hospital and were located just above a crematorium on Mt. Inasa. My eldest son was treating many people as a medical orderly and also looking for his wife and our eldest daughter. Eventually they could meet each other at the crematory.

After that, our relatives and my eldest son's wife's parents evacuated to Mitsuyama and we crammed seven people into our home at Sanjo. Fortunately, because my husband was farming, we had plenty of food.

I was looking after my grandchild. My grandchild died shortly in the same way as other people died from atomic bomb; her gums bled, her teeth fell out and her hair fell out.

[Location at Bombing: Mitsuyamamachi]