

The Day I won't Forget

Mrs. Hide Nagasa

I was born in Kawajirimachi, Kumamoto Prefecture. Because my father passed away when I was 6 years old, I came to Nagasaki, which was my mother's home town. When the atomic bomb was dropped, I was living at my husband's sister's rented house. I was married to my husband when I was 28 years old and just the two of us were living together, with no children. I heard a rumor that a hugely powerful bomb had been dropped in Hiroshima on August 6th, but I surely didn't think it would happen to me.

August 9th 11:02, after I sent my husband off as usual, I did the cleaning and had a break and when I went down to the *doma* [earthen cooking area], the sky looked like a dark black ring and the moment I realized something was wrong, the door came flying and hit my face and the whole thing swelled up blue. A fragment of glass stuck into my bottom and it bled steadily when I took it out.

I lived at the top of the hill in Asahimachi back then and because I was a manager in charge of people for town distribution, I was worried about the town below and hurried down without taking anything.

What I saw there was in fact "hell on earth". A sight which was so bad that it made you want to cover your eyes just went on and on. People whose faces were burned were gathered there suffering together screaming "I want some water," "I want some water". The policemen were shouting "You will die if you drink water!" Just thinking of that sight now still makes a chill run

down my spine. But Asahimachi seemed to have suffered less deaths compared to other towns.

There is one particularly sad memory which is still stuck in my mind.

It was a boy who was about 8 years old in my neighborhood. His body had been burned badly by the atomic bomb and as he stretched out his skinny hand he said just one thing in a faint voice from deep down his throat, "Obachan Mizu". I tried to stem the flow of tears running down my face and said "Would you like some food, little boy?" "Give me a cup of water." he replied. So I gave the boy a cup of water.

A few days later, the little boy passed away. His family cremated him in their garden at his home and he was gone. If he were alive today he would be 45 and would have likely become a fine father and as I reflect on this, I keenly feel that deep sense of horror at the atomic bomb. I think that because those people died from the atomic bomb, we can live a life of ease today. Today's peace is founded in the deaths of those victims who were sacrificed.

It is coming up to my 10th year in this *genbaku* home. I feel gratitude, every day, for these peaceful days where we can chat idly about our past while we make bags from newspapers together.

[Location at Bombing: Asahimachi]