

# A Memoir of the Atomic Bombing 原爆の記

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補冊

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Part VIII: *Rescue from The Hiroshima Panels* by Iri Maruki and Toshi Maruki

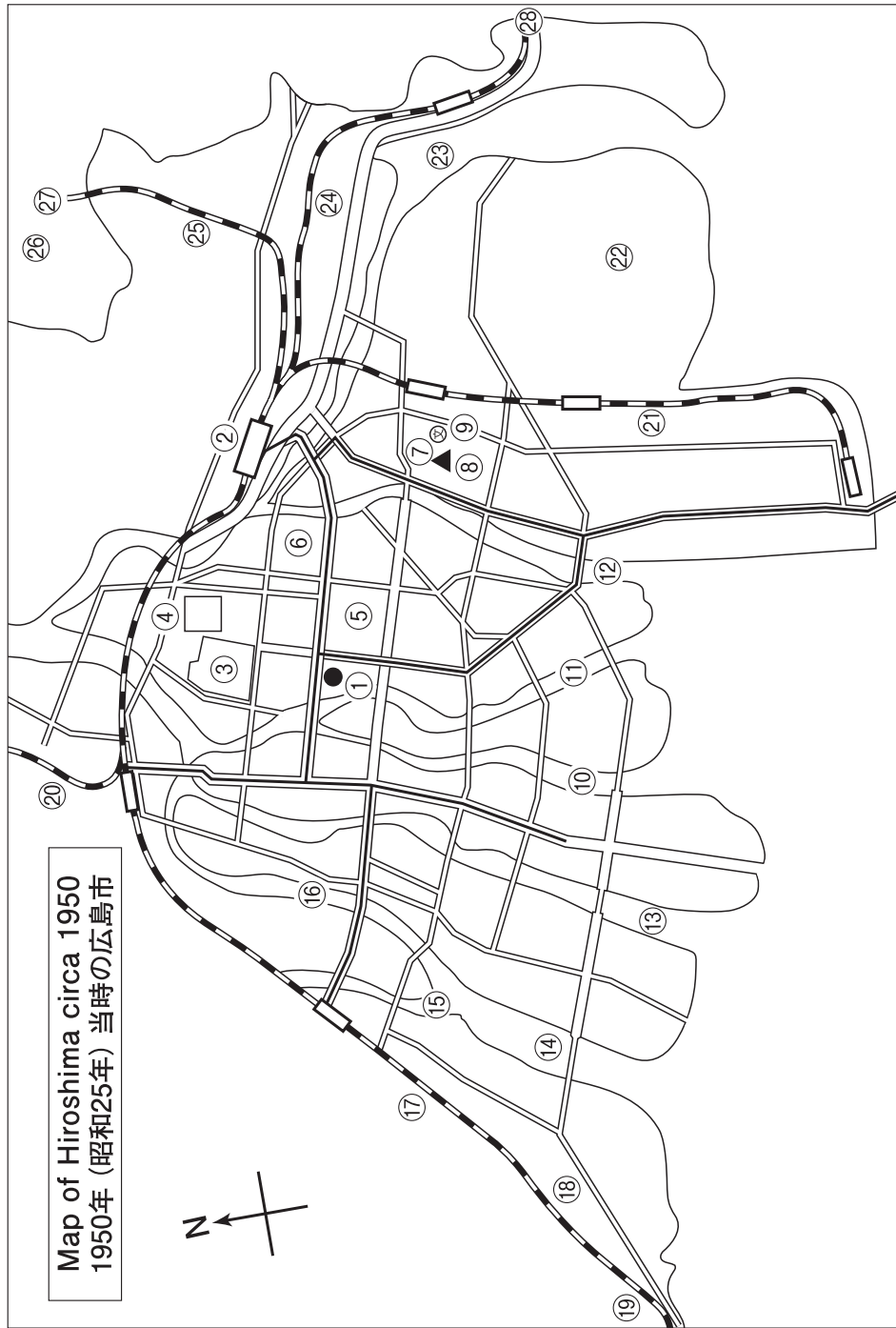
Iri Maruki (1901-1995) and Toshi Maruki (nee Toshiko Akamatsu, 1912-2000) are famous for their work depicting scenes of Hiroshima after the atomic bombing. The couple headed for Hiroshima immediately after the atomic bombing to check upon Iri's parents, and upon seeing the scene, participated in the post-bombing rescue activities. Many of their pieces are based on those experiences. The painting above is a part of their renowned work *The Hiroshima Panels* (1950-1982), a series of 15 large folding screen paintings that have been exhibited in over 20 countries around the world. The wood-block prints used in this book (pp. 121-128) are also their work, most of which are from the picture book *Pikadon* published in 1950. The couple was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1995.



丸木位里・丸木俊『原爆の図』第八部「救出」

丸木位里（1901-1995）と丸木俊（旧名・赤松俊子，1912-2000）は被爆直後の広島を描いたことで知られる画家である。広島に原爆が投下されたときに、ふたりは位里の実家の安否を確認しに広島へ向かい、救援活動に参加した。その惨状を目の当たりにした経験をもとに原爆に関する絵を描き続けた。上図は、1950年から1982年にかけて制作され、これまでに20か国以上で展示された代表作『原爆の図』15部作の一部である。また、本書に収載されている版画（121-128頁）も両画伯の合作による絵本『ピカドン』（1950年）に大部分が掲載されているものである。ふたりは1995年にノーベル平和賞の候補にもあげられた。

Map of Hiroshima circa 1950  
1950年(昭和25年)当時の広島市



## Map of Hiroshima circa 1950 : 1950年当時の広島市の地図

- |                                      |                                     |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ① Blast Center : 爆心地                 | ② Hiroshima Station : 広島駅           |
| ③ Central Park : 中央公園                | ④ Courthouse : 裁判所                  |
| ⑤ Togiya-cho : 研屋町                   | ⑥ Nagarekawa-cho : 流川町              |
| ⑦ Hiji-Yama : 比治山                    | ⑧ Hiji-Yama Park : 比治山公園            |
| ⑨ Girls' School of Commerce : 女子商業高校 | ⑩ Hon River : 本川                    |
| ⑪ Motoyasu River : 元安川               | ⑫ Kyobashi River : 京橋川              |
| ⑬ Tenma River : 天満川                  | ⑭ Ota River Drainage Canal : 太田川放水路 |
| ⑮ Yamate River : 山手川                 | ⑯ Fukushima River : 福島川             |
| ⑰ Miyajima Line : 宮島線                | ⑱ Kusatsu : 草津                      |
| ⑲ to Shimonoseki : 至下関               | ⑳ Kabe Line : 可部線                   |
| ㉑ Ujina Line : 宇品線                   | ㉒ Niho-cho : 仁保町                    |
| ㉓ Enko River : 猿猴川                   | ㉔ Sanyo Line : 山陽本線                 |
| ㉕ Geibi Line : 芸備線                   | ㉖ Aki County : 安芸郡                  |
| ㉗ to Tokaichi : 至十日市                 | ㉘ to Kobe : 至神戸                     |

Map created by Kiyoshi Tomizawa : 富沢清氏制作



## Foreword

*A Memoir of the Atomic Bombing* is a personal account of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima by Dr. Goichi Sashida, who treated victims immediately after the bombing.

To enable this valuable record to be shared worldwide, the Social Science Research Institute of International Christian University has prepared an English translation, and published this Japanese-English dual edition.

During the five years from 2003 through 2007, International Christian University conducted the project *Research and Education for Peace, Security, and Conviviality* under sponsorship of the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology's *21st Century Center of Excellence* Program. The project's accomplishments have been published in a series of nine books from Fukosha. This book is a supplementary volume to those nine books.

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to Dr. Seiro Sashida, the copyright holder; Mr. Haruo Suzuki, the Representative of the Society to Promulgate *A Memoir of the Atomic Bombing*; Mrs. Toshiko Fujikawa, the Administrative Chief of the Society; Mrs. Aya Kawato, who provided the English translation; Dr. Nobuo Sayanagi,

who edited the English translation; Mr. Kiyoshi Tomizawa, who created the map in the revived edition of the book; Ryu-Ryu Ltd., the inheritors to the estate of Mr. and Mrs. Maruki, for kindly granting permission to reuse the illustrations; and Mr. Mitsuru Inuzuka, President of Fukosha, for distributing this book.

The English translation can also be viewed at the website of the Social Science Research Institute of International Christian University (<http://subsite.icu.ac.jp/ssri/>). The English translation is the copyright of International Christian University.

Editorial Committee for *A Memoir of the Atomic Bombing*,  
Social Science Research Institute,  
International Christian University  
February 29, 2008

\* Some revisions were made to the 1969 original edition in the revived edition (Society for the Promulgation of *A Memoir of the Atomic Bombing*, 2007). This edition has further made some minor revisions to correct factual and editorial errors with permission of the copyright holder, Dr. Seiro Sashida.



## はしがき

『原爆の記』は、原爆が投下された直後に広島で被災者の診療にあたった指田吾一医師の残した記録である。

この貴重な資料をひろく、世界での閲覧に供するために、国際基督教大学社会科学研究所は英訳版を作成し、日英両語をここに刊行することとした。

国際基督教大学では2003-2007年度の間、文部科学省・21世紀COEプログラムによる研究プロジェクト「『平和・安全・共生』教育の形成と展開」を遂行し、風行社からその成果を9巻、刊行中である。本書は、その協賛企画として、同シリーズの補冊として刊行されることになった。

刊行にあたり、著作権者の指田勢郎氏、復刊本を刊行された「『原爆の記』を広める会」代表鈴木治夫氏、同事務局長藤川利子氏、英訳を作成された河東あや氏、英訳の編集校閲にあたられた佐柳信男氏、復刊の地図を作成された富沢清氏、口絵・挿絵の転載をご快諾くださった丸木画伯ご夫妻の相続人「有限会社流々」、出版をお引き受けくださった風行社犬塚満社長に心から御礼を申しあげる。

英訳部分については、国際基督教大学社会科学研究所のホームページ <http://subsite.icu.ac.jp/ssri/> でも公開している。英訳の著作権は

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2008年 2 月29日

国際基督教大学社会科学研究所  
『原爆の記』編集委員会

\*本書では復刊（指田吾一『原爆の記』を広める会・2007年発行）において、1969年の初版に加えられた修正の上に、著作権者指田勢郎氏のご了解を得て、事実関係および編集上の軽微な修正を加えている。

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# *A Memoir of the Atomic Bombing*

Goichi Sashida



## **It Was a Fine Day**

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August 6th, 1945.

It was the very day that brought an enormous change to the history of the world. On that day in Hiroshima, the midsummer sun was scorching everything far and wide under the deep blue sky. It was so quiet and the sky so blue that one almost forgot about the sweltering heat.

### **“Captain, Enemy Planes!”**

As I finished reading the Imperial Rescript on the Declaration of War from the commander’s platform erected in the schoolyard of Hiroshima Girls’ School of Commerce, Lieutenant Itoi, the discipline instructor, saluted me with his sword as required by the military code of conduct. Then all of a sudden, Lieutenant Itoi gave a cry as if to tear the blue sky into pieces.

“Captain, enemy planes!”

At the same time, air raid alarms went off near and far, as well as inside and outside the City of Hiroshima, all at once. Suddenly sensing something eerie, I looked up at the direction Itoi's sword was pointing.

In the dead center of the blue sky, I saw three bright flashes. I was able to confirm that the blue-white flashes were about two meters apart from each other, positioned in an equilateral triangle, and that the light was terribly penetrating.

Immediately, my body floated in the air from an indescribable blow. Or at least, I thought it was floating. I don't know if that was what actually happened, but that's how I remember it.

I do not remember the exact time, but we had assembled at eight in the morning, and it was immediately after I had finished reading the Rescript. It was a routine that we went through every Monday, so I'm certain that it must have been around 8:10. However, there was something that I couldn't explain. Master Sergeant Nakamura, who had taken the Rescript from me and headed back to the Headquarters building, was lying beneath me. Additionally, we were about twenty meters southwest of the platform where I had been when I saw the flashes.

I sensed something moving, so lying on my stomach I stretched out my left arm and felt around, and heard a voice. It was Nakamura. So we human beings like company after all, I thought later. I felt somewhat reassured upon confirming that it was Nakamura.

Meanwhile, the hot winds of an indescribable heat wave repeatedly rolled over us. The hot winds that brushed against us felt

like feathers, only the feathers were made of wire that was heated red and orange. The red-hot wire feathers brushed against my face and everything else again and again, and I gradually regained my senses.

Nakamura was underneath my belly. I still don't know whether I was saying it to him or myself, but I shouted, "Steady on! Steady on!" repeatedly, maybe three or five times. Eventually, I recovered full consciousness, and realized that we had been hit very badly. I sensed that some tremendously powerful bomb had exploded, and thought that my unit had been wiped out. But I had to stand up. I had to go. My eyesight recovered.

A blackened yellow wind was whirling up dust.

My unit was using the schoolhouse of Hiroshima Girls' School of Commerce as temporary barracks. However, the barracks were no longer. The dormitory for the volunteer unit of girl students was also flattened. This had all happened in a single moment.

## Extinguishing the Fires with Hand-Pumps

Smoke was rising from four or five locations. Seeing this, I jumped up as if I'd gained some new strength.

"Come everybody! Those who can move, gather round!"

Nakamura, Sergeant Kimura, Private First Class Mitani, and Private First Class Yamada came running. The time was around nine in the morning. Lieutenant Itoi also came tottering. All faces were charred soot-black.

We gathered again with pumps: these were hand pumps the size

of twenty liter petroleum cans, the kind that were used to sprinkle water on train platforms. We gave every effort to put out the fires, and fortunately, with only five hand pumps, we were able to put out all of the smoldering fires around my unit and the girls' school.

At first, the blackened locations smoldered, and gradually burst into flames. Overlooking the whole city of Hiroshima, flames started appearing in several areas by the time it had passed ten o'clock. At first, we were able to see the collapsed houses through the dark smoke. Then the smoke gradually turned into flames.

We were able to put out the smoldering fires at our unit, but around us, everything visible was destroyed and crushed, and was smoldering. Then, from somewhere, a sound like deep groaning reached our ears. It didn't seem to be our imagination. My unit apparently wasn't alone.

I immediately shouted, "All who can move, gather here and await orders. You may sit down."

Upon hearing the orders, all that were able to move did their best to come, despite their burned faces and hands.

I worried about what had happened to our commanders, and ran up to the Headquarters of Shipboard Artillery Regiment Troop No. 6180 on top of Hiji-Yama.<sup>1</sup>

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**1** Hiji-Yama is a hill about 70 meters high, about two kilometers east-southeast of where the atom bomb was dropped.



## All Was Reduced to Ruins

When I reached there, I saw that everything had been demolished. Everything was crushed. I found Lieutenant Colonel Honma, our Deputy Commander, trapped between some crushed wooden pillars. His face was charred black.

“Hey Sashida, here, I’m hit!”

He seemed quite weak. I checked his pulse and told him, “You’ll be alright, sir. Hang in there.”

I had run up Hiji-Yama very hurriedly, but now I was able to see around and was shocked. The whole city of Hiroshima was covered with dark smoke. In some places, the tongues of flames were growing. What kind of a bomb could set such a wide area on fire with just one or two detonations? I sniffed the air and thought. A large amount of magnesium powder set alight at once—that would do it. Judging from the smell, I couldn’t think of any other reason than burning magnesium. I couldn’t think of how such a detonation could be enabled, but I decided that a magnesium fire caused it.

Hundreds and thousands, no, millions of tons of lumber, metal, concrete, stone, roof tiles, and brick were flattened indistinguishably on the ground. Additionally, they were randomly piled up. And smoldering. There were flames in some places.

I faintly heard from somewhere screaming voices crying.

“Help!”

“Help me!”

“Please help!”

“Please help!”

Because of the shock and the images of the blackened and burned faces of my comrades, I didn’t know what to do. Then I felt something coming back to me in my unfocused mind.

“Help!”

“Help me!”

Yes, putting out fires is important, but I’m also an Army Medic. I must save the injured who are calling for help. My mind’s focus gradually became clearer. I ran down Hiji-Yama even faster than I had come up.

## **Hiroshima Army Hospital Demolished, Too**

There were fifteen or sixteen soldiers waiting in the schoolyard, including Master Sergeant Nakamura, Sergeant Kimura, Private First Class Yamada, and Private First Class Mitani. Our Headquarters were demolished. The Medical Unit, down to the First Platoon, was in disarray. The fires were out, but our barracks were gone. All that was remaining was the schoolyard and the bomb shelter under Hiji-Yama. The Hiroshima Army Hospital, which we now needed so, was also demolished. We had no choice but to think of some other way to help the wounded people calling for help.

## **Cooking Oil and Cotton Swabs: Our Medical Supplies**

I gathered Nakamura and the other fifteen or so soldiers in front

of the bomb shelter on the southwest side of Hiji-Yama.

“First we need cotton swabs, and next, oil. Any kind of cooking oil will do. Of course, if there is any olive oil, bring it. Nakamura, take charge of finding them. And then we need pots, pans, washbasins, or any kind of bowls that are usable. If there are any bandages and gauzes, make them ready. You got them? Good! Now let’s start treating the patients!”

“Master Sergeant Nakamura! Check if all food supplies can be brought out of the bomb shelter.”

“Sergeant Kimura, you will be my assistant in treating the patients. All else start with setting up two tents. One will be for treating patients, the other for resting in. Lay the injured medics in front of the bomb shelter!”

“Sergeant Kimura, put zinc powder in the washbasin. Also put some cotton swabs in. No need to cut them up. Pour cooking oil on it. Now, wring the oil out of the cotton.”

Thus we had zinc oxide oil.

“Gently rub with cotton soaked in the zinc oxide oil, like this. This is the best treatment for burns. All who can move, come forward. See, doesn’t that feel better?”

The soldiers, who were starting to feel the tingling pains of their burns, were glad to receive the treatment.

## Dangling Skin

I also applied some zinc oxide oil on the back of my hand. It felt

very good.

By that time, wounded civilians had started gathering, seeking help from our Medical Training Unit of Troop No. 6180 and the Red Cross flag.

“Help me, Mr. Soldier.”

“Help me, Mr. Medical Officer.”

“Please help, Mr. Corpsman.”

“Help, Doctor.”

The wounded came in one after another. Fire and smoke had crumpled up their burns, and the skins of their eyelids were peeling off and dangling, so they could look forward only if they faced upward.

They raised their arms up straight at the height of their chests. Their skin was hanging from their fingertips as if they were inside-out gloves almost taken off.

The skin of their charred black cheeks was peeling off, and you could see the white fatty tissue underneath. Of course, their expressions were quite pale. The skin of their necks sagged like necklaces out of place, and the white fatty tissue underneath was visible.

Their lips were swollen and lower lips dangling. The skin on the tips of their noses and foreheads had fallen off. The dorsums of their feet were burned and the skin was peeling. Their hair was singed. Their clothes were also burned and charred. Over their clothes, their loose scalps and hair hung in tatters.

This was only the beginning. When I applied zinc oxide oil onto

the white fatty tissue, all of the patients said that it felt good. About half the patients left for somewhere as if they were tracing their fading memories, and the remaining patients collapsed on the spot.

As time passed, the number of severely wounded patients grew. By noontime, the wounds were getting very ugly. Their scream-like groans changed to fear and hate, and then turned into an eerie silence. A dark agony turned into a black torrent and whirled around. It was a lethargic feeling, which gradually turned into the denial of life.

Our strategy for treating patients was all but set. However, what strategy our Headquarters had in mind was uncertain. I started climbing Hiji-Yama again to confirm. Many thoughts raced around my mind as I climbed.

## Dark Smoke, Red Tongues

---

The whole city of Hiroshima was engulfed by dark gray smoke. In some places, red flames could be seen through the smoke. The plumes of dark gray smoke swirled and the flames lapped upwards eerily like the crimson red tongue of a giant beast, and stretched towards the ridges of the mountains. Their outlines shone white. Dark smoke. Gray clouds. The dark green of the mountains seemed to envelope Hiroshima from both sides—not just Hiroshima, but also the Seto Inland Sea and Japan—or rather, the whole world.

From out of nowhere, literal darkness rolled in with a groaning voice and covered everything. Is everything falling into an infinite abyss? It was almost a delusion. But yet, a light emerges through the smoke and clouds! The darkness will disappear as the clouds of a thunderstorm do. And then, I will treat the severely wounded—I mustered hope in myself as such. However, I hadn't been in touch with Headquarters. What could they be doing?

I ran up the back road of Hiji-Yama with all of my strength—but

it was in vain. The only expressions I got were those of relief to see me. They attempted to smile, but their faces quickly distorted and all they could manage was to slightly move their singed cheeks. There was nothing that could be done.

“Well I guess I have to do things on my own.”

Thus I made up my mind and started running down the front road. On both sides of the road, there were many people, fallen, dead, or sitting. The term “the entrance of Hell” must indicate this kind of scene, I thought.

One of the people seemed to recognize me and called out, “Mr. Medical Officer!” but he was so burned that I couldn’t recognize him.

I told him, “Okay, stretch out your arms, and try to help each other get to the clinic in the tent at the Girls’ School of Commerce. They are treating patients now.”

I needed to assess the situation, and looked around while continuing to run downhill. I was unable to treat him. Dark smoke and flames like the tongue of the devil had increased even more than previously. I thought to myself, “It’s the whole city. Everything. All of Japan!”

No, we survivors must help each other no matter what.

I ran frantically to the clinic tent. My face ached from the vibrations of my running. I hadn’t felt the pain until that point, but it hurt now. It was hot and painful, as if my skin was being crushed. Nevertheless, I continued running back to my unit. Many wounded had gathered. Master Sergeant Nakamura, Sergeant Kimura, Private First Class Mitani, and the others were gritting their teeth and

enduring the pain of their own burns while treating the patients.

## **“Surgery”**

I had to roll up my sleeves and attend to the wounded. Start treating patients!

Fortunately, since I was wearing white gloves when I was reading the Rescript, both my hands were unhurt. Thus I was able to freely use my hands to conduct the treatment. The “surgery” that I did was mostly extracting broken glass. Glass splinters as large as three to five centimeters were stuck in especially the fleshy areas of the body. I had to be careful because the glass easily broke, leaving pieces embedded.

For shallow wounds, I just applied antiseptic, and for deep wounds, I applied antiseptic and used forceps, gently shaking them while pulling out the glass. The glass made a grating sound when getting pulled out, but the patients endured the pain very well, just slightly wincing. Whether their psychological shock was too big or the explosion had numbed their senses, I don’t know.

After treating ten to twenty patients, I gradually started to calm down.

## **Collapsed Buildings: Piles of Firewood**

We soon needed to prepare food.

“Master Sergeant Nakamura, get the rice ready. No, get the pans



first.”

Nakamura responded to my orders swiftly. On the slope by Hiji-Yama, holes 50 centimeters square were dug and five furnaces were ready in no time. There were furnaces for hot water, for broth, and for rice. There was a plentiful pile of firewood. After all, a barrack (schoolhouse) that could house a thousand had collapsed, so we had a mountain of fuel.

Private Hori was cooking rice. The back of his uniform was soaked with sweat. His face was burned and blackened, so all of the sweat glands there were clogged.

### Atomic Cloud Rising

Suddenly, the shrieking air raid alarm went off again. This time, hardly anyone even tried to move. Some hobbled towards the entrance of the air raid shelter at Hiji-Yama. The rest remained on their backsides. Most were sitting and looking up at the sky, and glaring at the rising dark cloud. The dark cloud ominously moved while keeping its distance from the mountains. It was the atomic cloud rising up and up into the sky! The skies between the atomic cloud and the mountains remained fair until the evening.

After the siren, no air raid came from the sky, but rain started falling through the clouds. I was surprised that the rain was as black as soot. It was the black rain. The rain made spots about two centimeters large on my white shirt. The number of spots increased to ten or fifteen in an uneven pattern. It felt not like rainwater, but

rather like wet black snow. Everyone seemed indifferent that their clothes were wet with the black rain, and no one bothered to change. No, it was rather that they had no clothes to change into.

Only those that have the ability to produce new skin cells can survive burns caused by sudden exposure to severe radioactivity. This is something that I realized later after I returned to Tokyo.

After the black and gray rain and during the second air raid, I realized that I wanted something cool. Apparently, everyone else did, too. Many dug holes 20 to 30 centimeters deep where they sat in the shade, got on their stomachs, and put their burned cheeks against the soil. It felt good.

This new method of treatment gradually spread among the wounded. Soon, everyone was digging the slope in the shade of Hiji-Yama, and buried their faces. I also went into the air raid shelter of Hiji-Yama, dug a hole in the lower section of it, and put my face against it. It felt very good. This was the best way.

## Barley Rice *Onigiri*<sup>2</sup>

The voices continued crying. That is, screaming.

Past noon, the patients coming in were injured even more gravely. People had heard of our emergency station and the wounded were coming in incessantly. There were no futon for them to lie

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<sup>2</sup> *Onigiri* are now usually made of only rice (and thus called “rice balls”), but during the war, rice supplies were short, and barley, a cheaper alternative, was blended with the rice.

upon. We found places under the tents and by Hiji-Yama that were in the shade and laid them down on the ground.

At around this time, I started feeling somewhat easier in my mind. My appetite was also quenched after eating a salted barley rice *onigiri*.

### At the Brink of Life and Death

In an attempt to save the wounded who had taken refuge on the path up Hiji-Yama and in the park, I filled a canteen with zinc oxide oil and took Private First Class Mitani out with me. Most of the wounded were barely alive and hardly moved. Those on their stomachs and on their sides were still breathing and still had a chance. Those who were on their back didn't respond when I nudged them, and only breathed occasionally. I turned the ones on their stomachs on their sides, and applied zinc oxide oil on their burns.

Occasionally, about one in ten or twenty of the wounded leaning against the bluff could move or walk, but the rest were all too severely wounded. We told the wounded where our medical station was, and they would start walking in the direction, but many of them fell on the way. Still, they struggled to keep walking.

For the countless people whose lives had already ceased, there was no agony tomorrow. For those still alive, agony was everything, and the agony would continue tomorrow. However, there would be no day after tomorrow.

"What am I to do?"

“What did I do to deserve this? Damn everything!”

Many died crying in vain.

I had a strange feeling. After all, I was alive and walking around.

Mitani was kind enough to ask, “Captain, shall I go and see how your family is doing?” Mitani was a monk, and was assigned as my personal assistant; a very loyal soldier he was. I had forgotten about my family, but at his words, I suddenly became anxious. I was thinking that they would be all right. Actually, it wasn’t true that I’d forgotten about them, and I had been vaguely thinking that I would get in touch with them in a couple of days.

Without second thought, I replied, “Yes, I’d greatly appreciate it if you could go check up on them in Kusatsu (west of Hiroshima).”

Thus, regardless of his own fatigue, Mitani left to find my family, even though there were no phones or automobiles.

## The Japanese Army’s Last Medical Unit

The only treatment we could give was the application of zinc oxide oil. All we had was two tents for the wounded patients, who were laid on straw mats. This probably was the last medical post of the Japanese Army.

There were far too many wounded to accommodate. We had to find some way to transport them elsewhere. First, we needed to send the patients to Ujina,<sup>3</sup> where the damage was not as extensive.

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**3** Ujina is a district in the south of Hiroshima facing the Seto Inland Sea. The Port of Hiroshima is in this district.

However, we had no stretchers or anything of the sort.

I hurried to the remains of Hiroshima Station, and had some train carriages of the Ujina Line brought to the side of Hiji-Yama to transport the wounded. Loading patients onto freight cars was a procedure that I had been familiar with since the Manchurian Incident.<sup>4</sup> The freight cars seemed sufficient for transportation. This would take care of the survivors. Now the problem was what to do with the dead. Those who had identification tags on them were not so much of a problem, because we would be able to write their names on the urns after we cremated them. However, there were so many bodies that had nothing to identify them, and thus no way of getting the remains to their next of kin.

We had to decide whether to carry the corpses to the banks of Ota River, or to cremate them on the spot. It would be best if we could cremate them, but there were far too many for us to cremate them all. We dug trenches, laid firewood across the trenches, laid the corpses atop the firewood, and cremated them. After cremation, we attached name tags to the remains. Since we had no oil or gasoline, the cremation took very much time. It was too big a task for the small group that we were. We did our best to gather even the smallest bones for the surviving families.

Thus, we treated the survivors, transported them after treatment, and then collected the corpses. But there were corpses,

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<sup>4</sup> Better known in English as the Mukden Incident, the Manchurian Incident was one of the key events that led to the Second Sino-Japanese war.

corpses, and more corpses. It seemed that the piles of corpses were endless.

## Time Passes in Vain

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If there are any people who say that they want to defend their country even if it means starting a war, I would like to show them the scenes of that day. I thought so then, and I still think so now. If a war ever happens again, it is clear that the war won't end until one side or both sides end up with the same result of that day. Only fools speak of such nonsense as war. All things are destroyed. All people die. Steel wires, cables, telephone poles, trees, rocks, tiles, dirt, and concrete are all reduced to piles of rubble mixed with piles of corpses. Everywhere, everything is turned into prehistoric conditions, a scene that is so unnatural as if it were before life began.

I'd like to show those scenes to anyone who doesn't know the consequences of a nuclear explosion. All you can feel is dismay and numbness. You have no means to resist, and you lose your awareness. The scene is nothing but an unnatural, meaningless, sinister, and indescribable representation of Hell, accompanied by total destruction, everything sinful, and everything inhumane. Things

are piled upon one another. Things are destroyed. Things crumble. All things lose their original shape. All things are reduced to primitivity.

Living beings are exterminated, green is burned gray, blue turns to black, white turns to scarlet flames, and everything is engulfed in thick black smoke. Living beings struggle to move, and living beings fall. Living beings writhe in agony, and eventually stop moving.

Tree leaves are scorched, tree leaves burn, and tree leaves lose their lives. Everything visible turns gray. Everything is reduced to lumps of primordial material: that is, death itself prevails.

Time passes. One loses his sense of time. Time passes in vain. Time has neither joy nor result. It is something that simply passes. There are waves all around. There are also waves above and below. These waves have neither sound nor motion. Then, all of a sudden they start moving, roaring as if they were ignited gunpowder or a bursting tornado. From somewhere, moaning can be heard between the roaring of men, of women, and of children; moaning and screaming, "Help! It's so painful! It's so agonizing!"

There are no words that can express the feeling. It is a curse, a prayer, and a surrender.

Time still passes.

The smoke spread all across Hiroshima, Japan, and the world. It was not as simple a matter as, "who would survive." All that existed were people that had no will or thoughts, but only suffering. It could be said that they were but hollow shells devoid of their souls.

By past noontime, we had established somewhat of a routine in



treating the wounded. First, we treated the burns with the zinc oxide oil. For those wounded by glass and other debris, we conducted surgery to extract the foreign objects. Some patients required both treatments. We had no surplus medical supplies. Disinfectant was only for open surgery.

## Long Struggle Ahead

At around that time, the rice that was being cooked was finally ready to eat. *Onigiris* with some kind of coarse salt sprinkled on them were served. They were delicious. Each of the patients and soldiers received one large *onigiri*, and happily munched on them between treatment. The *onigiris* were helpful in healing our spirits.

I thought about a name for my clinic: the Hiji-Yama Clinic? The Hiji-Yama Shipboard Artillery Regiment Clinic? The Sashida Unit Clinic? In the end, I decided that we didn't need any special name. The sign on the gate saying "Troop No. 6180 Sashida Medical Unit" was left hanging, and we added a Red Cross flag beside it.

Now, we had to think about the long struggle lying ahead of us. We must endure. We set up our "field hospital," feeling ready to continue treating the wounded even if it were to continue into eternity. At least we had shelter from the rain: we were better off than the field hospitals in Mainland China. We had tents, a furnace, and were able to cook rice. Our stomachs were full. We were able to treat patients, too. Our medical unit vowed to see the wounded through.

## Anxiety and Doubt Spreading

For some reason, it seemed that this war, despite the catastrophe it had already caused, would continue forever. The Imperial Army and Navy had declared that our destiny was at stake and that they would fight to the end. However, news had been spreading that the outlook was not in our favor. Many soldiers in the shipboard unit had been in battle on vessels that had been sunk.

There were no more valiant fighters or majestic bombers to be seen on the ground, over the sea, in Hiroshima, or in the sky. How could we win? A war cannot be fought with willpower alone. Even the commanders who were planning the strategies probably didn't fully believe that we could win. Maybe this war was a bad gamble, and we were raising the stakes just to lose even more. The clouds of anxiety and doubt gradually spread.

## A Glass Sliver Near the Eye

Our clinic was very busy. A girl with burns came. She had a nasty contusion that was worse than her burns. A closer look revealed that she had a dirty gash about three to four centimeters beside her left cheekbone. I touched the gash, which made a crunching sound.

"It's glass," I said. My assistant, Master Sergeant Nakamura brought me a sterilized pair of forceps. When I clamped the glass sliver, it made the crunching sound again, sounding dangerously as if

it would crumble. I got a better grip of the glass, and tried pulling. It was not enough. I gently shook the forceps left and right. Somewhat better. I tried shaking up and down. No, the glass will break. I patiently shook the forceps left and right, pulled, then eased pulling a little bit before pulling again. The glass moved, and started to come out. Finally, I was able to remove it. Fifteen minutes had passed. The little girl endured the pain very well.

It was a piece of what had been a very thick sheet of glass. About three centimeters in diameter, it had been embedded horizontally beneath the girl's eye. I shuddered at the thought of what would have happened had it been three centimeters higher.

I received a message asking me to come to Minami Danbara Elementary School.<sup>5</sup> I headed over with Nakamura. It was in an even worse state. The wounded were literally piled up on each other, and there were no doctors, corpsmen, or nurses. The wounded were lying on the floor, filling up the place. It would be more accurate to say that they had all just fallen down on the floor.

All we were able to do was to apply zinc oxide oil. We quickly ran out of the five rolls of bandages that we had brought. We used towels and washcloths that the wounded had brought as substitutes. It was a pre-civilized state, indeed.

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5 Danbara is a district just east of Hiji-Yama

## For Who, and for What?

The Imperial Army, Navy, and Air Force, built up through heavy taxation after the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, were for nothing but the prosperity and happiness of the Japanese people; thus, the Japanese people should serve their country and armed forces, and readily make sacrifices—so would say Tojo, Kishi, Kaya, and Anami.

Are these leaders still going to force the people to continue fighting such an insane war? They proclaim that serving the country is the primary duty of the people, but what excuse would they have now about Hiroshima, about this dismal situation? Those disgustingly brazenfaced leaders, with their vanity and ignorance, had driven the people down a deep abyss. I do not think that Japan would have been in a worse state even if we had not recruited a single soldier.

Of course, I think that it is all right to have police forces and self-defense forces. They are always on the side of the people, and they keep the order in cooperation with the people. And the people should have a government made based on their free will. If this had been the case, the tragedy of the atom bombing of Hiroshima would not have happened. And the three and a half million casualties! They would not have died in the Pacific War.

I have a belief that no opponent is so brutal that we need to resort to war in order to protect capitalism or any other ideology. For what and for whom can such acts as dropping atom bombs on Japan or dropping napalm bombs on Vietnam be permitted? No matter what anyone says, such acts should never be permitted!

Murder should not be permitted in protecting capitalism, nor should murder be permitted in protecting socialism. We must think and act for the safety of *all* life.

### **“If You Can Move, You’ll Survive!”**

Hiji-Yama, which is usually quiet at night, was filled with the sound of moaning.

My burns ached, too. It felt like someone was trying to cut my skin with a burner. It was the first time I had experienced such pain, as if my skin had been beaten raw and torn. The surface skin was scalded and had died, while inner skin was still alive. The pain must have been coming from the inner skin pulling on the dead surface skin trying to stop it from falling off.

The exposed skin of all of the survivors on Hiji-Yama was burned black. Everyone was trembling and shivering from the excruciating pain.

It was impossible to sleep. No one was able to sleep well. Everyone was moaning that night in the midsummer heat. It was the moaning of a living hell, of the heat of the flames of the fire caused by the atom bomb. Everywhere, the moaning swelled and waned like waves of the ocean. The night itself was pitch black, but there was a faint illumination from the reflection of the flames around the city, so it was a relatively bright and very hot night. With a charred axe that was heavy and clumsy, I dug a hole in the ground and put my cheek against the soil. It was the only escape that this helpless person had.

No one tried to escape from the place. Perhaps they were thinking the same as I. Like me, no one moved from the spot.

We received a message that the 300 patients we had transported on the Ujina Line by the evening would be sent to hospitals on islands in the Seto Inland Sea and on Eta-Jima.<sup>6</sup> We still had about thirty severely wounded patients with us. The pain that these patients were going through was beyond all imagination.

I dozed off at dawn. There were fires burning all across the city of Hiroshima. They were fires that nobody was trying to extinguish, fires that people could do nothing about but flee from; they were accursed fires of hate.

The temperature didn't get any cooler at daybreak. But it didn't seem to be just because of the fires.

"Muster up your strength and hang in there! If you can move, don't worry. You'll survive!" I told my patients.

And to my unit, I said, "Those who need to get in touch with relatives may go ahead. If you need to leave, don't forget to take *onigiris*!"

## A Boy Visits Amid the Disaster

While we were preparing for breakfast, a boy came in and called, "Ojisan!"<sup>7</sup> to me. It was the son of the Togiya Inn where I had been staying. The inn also was where the shipboard unit left their personal

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**6** Eta-Jima is an island south of the Port of Hiroshima on which the Imperial Navy had a base and training facilities.

belongings when going to sea. The boy was in third grade of middle school.<sup>8</sup>

He said, “There’s fire everywhere, so I rested with some soldiers last night. I heard that you were here, ojisan, so I came to see if you were all right.”

How thoughtful of him! I gave him an *onigiri*, and told him, “When the fires around your home stop burning, I will go and see. Meanwhile, stay here for a while.”

Fortunately, he wasn’t wounded, to my relief. However, I had a sinister feeling that the rest of his family had perished. The inn was close to the blast center, so there was little hope.

To come to think of it, it was a wonder that I was alive. If the atom bomb had been dropped at 8:10 AM on any other day, I would probably have been killed. I might have burned to death in the inn; I stayed at the inn every night except Sunday.

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7 “Ojisan” is an affectionate title that children use to call adult men. The literal meaning is “uncle.”

8 Ninth grade in the western schooling system.

## A Telegram from Hiroshima

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As I thought of the miracle of my surviving, I remembered the day in April when I was reassigned to Hiroshima.

It all started when I received orders to lead the Medical Training Unit of Shipboard Artillery Regiment Troop 6180 on April 12th. I was in charge of the Medical Unit of the contingent of the Shipboard Artillery Regiment in Otaru, Hokkaido when I received a telegram from Hiroshima. The telegram ordered me to immediately return to the main unit of the Hiroshima Shipboard Artillery Regiment. It was clear that they wanted me in Hiroshima, but it was not clear why I was wanted.

I thought, "Oh, bother! The war conditions in the Pacific are turning to the worse, and I might be assigned to the fleet in Okinawa. Just my luck. Rats!"

However, it was an Army order, so I could not protest. I reluctantly prepared to head to Hiroshima.



## From Otaru to Hiroshima, via Tanashi, Tokyo

I had held the rank of Army Medic First Lieutenant since 1938. I was a veteran, and considered myself to be quick-witted. If I were to be assigned to duty on sea, I would probably never meet my family again. Thus, I thought that I might as well go and see my family living in Tanashi, a town in Kita-Tama County, Tokyo.

I reached Tanashi on April 12th. It was just after the district in front of Tanashi Station had been razed. Ninety-six residents of the town had perished in the bombing. One-ton bombs had been dropped on the area surrounding the station. There were a great number of horrible craters caused by the bombs.

There were heaps of corpses, 96 in all. I briefly returned home, immediately discarded my jacket, removed my Army sword, and started working as an emergency medic. I treated over thirty patients on the spot. Twenty of them were hospitalized. Returning to the Regiment in Hiroshima was out of the question for now.

Luckily for me, Mr. Tsuda, the Police Chief of Tanashi, gave me a barrel of whisky to raise my spirits. I sipped the whisky as the treatment of the patients dragged on into the night.

My home was a mess, with debris from the bombing scattered everywhere. Still, all of my family was unharmed.

The 96 dead were laid down in the premises of Soji Temple, which is in the center of the town. As for the wounded survivors, I treated all of them, inpatients and outpatients alike.

Suddenly, the shrill blare of the air raid sirens went off. An air

raid when you have patients to care for means nothing but hopelessness. But thanks to the whisky, I was able to stay brave and continue treating the patients.

It was April 13th that the district around Shinjuku and the Meiji Shrine was destroyed. The Tanashi area was safe that evening. However, even the night skies of Tanashi were illuminated bright red.<sup>9</sup> There was no danger of bombs falling in our vicinity, so I stayed up all night sipping whiskey with the men on night watch.

I was able to spend the 13th feeling more like a human being and more like a doctor than the day before, because I was able to focus on treating the patients all day.

On the 14th, I received a telegram. It said, “You’ve already left Otaru, so why aren’t you in Hiroshima yet?” Oh dear, they’ve found me.

On the 15th, I hurried to Hiroshima. The train stopped several times on the way due to air raids, but at last, I safely reached Hiroshima.

“We have been waiting for you. We know of your experience, and want you to lead the Medical Training Unit of Shipboard Artillery Regiment No. 6180,” said the Commander.

I was surprised. I wasn’t expecting to lead a training unit.

My family had survived unhurt from the Tanashi air raid, but I was worried to leave them in Tanashi, so I decided to bring them to Hiroshima. I never dreamed at the time that bringing them to

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<sup>9</sup> Shinjuku, a densely populated commercial district, is about 15 kilometers east of Tanashi.

Kusatsu, Hiroshima would result in them being exposed to the radioactivity of the atom bombing. What an ironic twist of fate.

## Our Fleet Sails South

I joined the Japanese Army in 1931. In training, I was sometimes appointed drillmaster. I also served as an Infantry Private for six months. Among the Medical Cadets, I was the top of my class.

After being summoned to service in Mainland China in 1937, I served as the commander of the 3rd Medical Corps of the 6th Infantry Division. I had a healthy tan and red blood. Like the 6th Division, I was bred in Kyushu,<sup>10</sup> making me a good fit for the 3rd Medical Corps. I felt like there was nothing I couldn't do.

I was stationed on the continental front, including Manchuria, Peking, and Central China, and later was deployed to the campaign in the Southern Seas. I worked on transport fleets and with the Special Attack Forces<sup>11</sup> before being stationed in Otaru, an important fortress in defending the north of the country. I was wounded in battle a number of times. Among my surviving comrades, I was one of the more experienced soldiers.

I was the chief officer of the medics aboard the Transport Fleet in the Leyte Special Attack Mission. However, our whole fleet of thirteen vessels was destroyed before reaching the Gulf of Leyte in

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**10** The 6th Infantry Division was based in Kumamoto, a city near the author's hometown on the southern island of Kyushu.

**11** "Special Attack" was the term used for organized suicide missions.

the Philippines. The ship that I was on, the Awobasan-Mar, exploded and sunk in Lingayen Gulf off San Fernando along with 2,700 shipmates. None of us were able to land on Leyte Island. Neither did any of the battleships make it to the destination.

The transport ships, warships, landing crafts, troops, weapons, food provisions, parachutes, horses, and automobiles were sunk to the bottom of the ocean. It is very rare that a military force suffers such a heavy defeat. It was a defeat worthy of being called a thorough thrashing.

### A Speech from His Excellence the Commander

The commanders of the Shipboard Artillery Regiment had rated me as highly experienced, and apparently that had led to my appointment as the leader of the training unit at the end of the war. I shall now reflect upon my experience during that defeat.

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Our fleet was put together with the five 10,000-ton transport vessels remaining in Japan, the Awobasan-Mar that I boarded, the Seria-Mar, the Shinshu-Mar, the Kibitsu-Mar, and the Hyuga-Mar.

The cruiser Hosho, which was assigned to escort the fleet, was armed very heavily. It had two aircraft standing by on its catapults, facing the sky westward and seemingly ready to fight any enemy.

There were also three destroyers and four coast defense ships, also all armed like porcupines. When we departed from Moji,<sup>12</sup> the commander gave us this speech.

“Gentlemen, by the request of His Excellence General Yamashita in Leyte, we will advance as a Special Attack Transport Fleet. It is not only an honor to serve His Majesty the Emperor, but also the utmost glory as a warrior. Additionally, for your protection, the fleet is equipped with no lack of weapons, as well as torpedo nets to fend off torpedo attacks. There is absolutely no need to worry. Fight bravely and preserve the honor of the Shipboard Regiment.”

Then, we had a parting toast. In our cups was but a few drops of sake. And of course, only officers received cups.

Later when I boarded my ship, I was taken aback. The Awobasan-Marui was such a ramshackle vessel. But still, there were two 7.5-centimeter anti-aircraft guns each to the bow and aft, four in all. Additionally, there were a number of 2-centimeter heavy machineguns as well as other smaller machineguns. A total of 48 guns were on the ship.

I thought to myself, “Oh well, I guess this will be good enough to make it.” However, little did I know that I was in for a bigger surprise at 3 PM on December 30, 1944.

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**12** Moji is a port city on the far west of Honshu island and facing Kyushu island across the Kanmon Channel.

## Sailing on Enemy-Controlled Seas

The reassurance from Commander Fumio Saeki that the ships were equipped with torpedo nets was but an empty one: there were no such nets to be seen on board. There wasn't even a radar. All we had was an out-of-date sonar.

Within six hours after sailing from Moji, the sonar detected a strong signal 3,200 meters to the right, so our fleet made a 180-degree turn. Then signals were detected on both left and right at 6,400 meters, so we made another turn, and ended up heading in the direction that we had started out in the first place. Reports of strong signals were coming in incessantly. The Captain and Commander could do nothing but stand around looking bewildered. We maneuvered in a zigzagging course. Our fleet was transporting 25,000 soldiers who had been remaining in Korea, but judging from the direction that we were advancing, it seemed that rather than heading for Leyte Island in the Philippines, we would be sending the soldiers back to Korea. At one point, I swore to myself that we would soon be seeing the shadow of Saishu Island.<sup>13</sup> At this rate, we'd never be in time to save Leyte. In any case, our fleet was not heading in the direction of the Philippines.

In retrospect, if we had been in time to reinforce Leyte, even the 270 survivors of our mission probably would have been killed. Any submarines that we detected were not ours. Likewise, any aircraft  
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**13** "Saishu" is the Japanese name for Jeju, the southernmost island of Korea.

detected were the enemy's. In other words, the American forces had total control of the seas and skies. We were desperately trying to dodge the enemy in such waters.

## Bad Memories of the Bashi Channel

Again, a new surprise. As I had feared, despite that we had been at sea for several days, we were still near Korea. We headed from Saishu Island to off the coast of Tsingtao, then advanced south hugging the coast of Mainland China. We were under blackout orders since setting sail, so it was pitch dark at night. On the fifth day, the color of the sea became yellowish. We were now close to the Yangtze River.

We were supposed to be in the Philippines, but instead we were at the Yangtze! Soon we saw the shadows of several islands in the murky waters. It was the Shuzan Islands.<sup>14</sup>

After hiding in the shadow of the island closest to Taiwan, we headed out to open sea, about fifty kilometers from Taiwan. From the west coast of Taiwan and down along the islands in the Bashi Channel, our sonar constantly detected signals, keeping us on the edge. Every time we could visually see enemy aircraft, we'd frantically fire our anti-aircraft guns. However, no matter how much we shot, the shells would explode two kilometers short of the targets. It was frustrating that the range of our guns didn't even reach 2,000

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<sup>14</sup> "Shuzan" is the Japanese name for the Zhoushan Islands off the coast of China.

meters.

The color of the seas of the Bashi Channel, deep blue and seeming infinitely deep, are a bad memory for me.

There was a reason that the enemy submarines and aircraft didn't attack our fleet. They simply didn't feel the need to attack in waters where there were several islands among which our ships could easily take refuge.

### **Our Ships Were Sunk One After Another**

Our long voyage was winding down to an end, and at last we reached the shallow, pale yellow-colored waters off the Philippine island of Luzon. We were almost at San Fernando in the Lingayen Gulf. However, a big surprise was in store for our fleet of thirteen ships.

The enemy had thoroughly scouted on our fleet, and knew exactly where we were and how we were armed. Three bomber squadrons, including one with 42 aircraft, attacked us. The sonar also detected submarines coming in from three directions. There was no escape.

As far as I could see, at least 16 torpedoes were closing in. The incoming aircraft were low-winged carrier-based Grumman fighters and twin-boomed Lockheed fighters. These aircraft suddenly appeared in twos and threes from the shadows of the hills of Lingayen. There were also large bombers, probably B24s. No matter how frantically our antiaircraft guns shot at them, they didn't even



bother to change their altitude or speed.

The Lockheeds fired at us. The 200- to 400-kilogram torpedoes all hit.

By chance, a four-engined Kawanishi flying boat had joined our fleet. For around 20 to 30 minutes it had been scouting for submarines, when all of a sudden it was attacked by four Grummans, two from each side. We instantly heard some clicking sounds, and just when we thought that a Grumman had been hit, alas, our Kawanishi exploded and plunged into the sea, leaving behind a 50-meter tall pillar of flame. It instantaneously sank, leaving only some foam on the wave crests. The plane, crew members, and even the smoke from the plane had disappeared under the water.

Every one of our ships fired all of the antiaircraft guns that they had, but sadly, not a single enemy plane was shot down. Our troops also released antisubmarine depth charges, but the number of apparent hits was zero.

The coast defense ships and destroyers retreated at full throttle. However, there was no way that our fleet could escape the enemy aircraft. It took only one hit to sink our ships. One after another, they sunk.

Yet, one of our valiant destroyers chased after the enemy planes, shooting madly. However, it ran out of ammunition and came to a tragic end. At full throttle, it kept shooting with all of its guns, but eventually was torpedoed by a Lockheed that came in at low altitude. Every transport and warship was bombed by the B24s and shot at by the Grummans. Smoke rose to the height of a hundred meters. By

the time the smoke settled, the warships that had been preyed upon by the enemy bombers disappeared into the water one after another. They were just like broken pots filled with oil, set alight, and thrown into the sea. They would become completely submerged before the smoke stopped rising.

Every transport, every warship, every airplane on the catapults, and all equipment sunk before they were able to be evacuated. Today, they surely must be residences for the fish at the bottom of the South China Sea.

The five 10,000-ton transports, including the one that I was on, were lasting slightly longer, but probably not for much longer. Things were getting dangerous, so with some of my comrades, I jumped into the sea and swam towards land with all of my might.

## **The End of the Transport Fleet**

Thoroughly soaked, we were finally washed up on a sandy beach of San Fernando. With no place to take refuge, the five transports that we had abandoned floated in the dusk of the southern sea. They occasionally exploded, causing vibrations that seemed to send the sand on the beach flying, and spewed up flames and sparks like a show of fireworks.

The enemy launched flares and continued carpet-bombing the fleet. The bombing was so intense that I thought it would kill all of the fish in Lingayen Gulf.

No matter how much our troops shot, the bullets would not reach

the enemy aircraft, and compared with before the warships sank, the number of soldiers fighting back was obviously fewer. We probably were nearly wiped out.

Exhausted and not caring anymore about life and death, we emptily watched the five 10,000-ton transports loaded with gasoline and ammunition exploding in the sunset. The shooting flames were a beautiful sight. For close to five hours we watched the transports explode and burn, forgetting our hunger and the danger of being bombed ourselves. With tears in our eyes, we saw off the end of the fleet in the twilight of the South China Sea. Night fell on the beach.

### Comrades of a Lost Battle

Although we had escaped to the beach of San Fernando, we only had enough rations to provide one salt-flavored barley rice *onigiri* for each of us. We Imperial Soldiers were a pitiful sight. We were skinny, tan, and bug-eyed. We wore barely more than our loincloths, and didn't even have bayonets.

There was no place to hide or escape, and all we could do to escape from aerial attacks was to run to and fro among the palm trees. As shipboard soldiers, if we were to die, we wanted to die in battle at sea. With more luck, we'd be able to die on Japanese soil. We wished in our hearts that a ship would appear to take us home.

I wondered if the Staff Officers and Commanders knew of the fact that we had been routed so miserably, and that there were soldiers reduced to such a pitiful state as us. If they did know, I

wanted to ask them whether they had set their diplomatic and domestic policies based on those facts, and whether they were thinking of negotiations with the enemy. I wouldn't be satisfied until I told them.

We had assumed that we would be wiped out eventually, but before dawn, we received news that gave us hope. We learned that there were survivors aboard the Hyuga-Maru. The Awobasan-Maru had been hit four times and sunk. The Shinshu-Maru, Kibitsu-Maru, Seria-Maru, and Hyuga-Maru were just damaged.

All of the escorting warships had been sunk. They had floundered a while, but eventually were destroyed.

The Imperial Japanese Fleet, which was said to have 500 ships, was reduced to ashes in that war. The Hyuga-Maru, while it had been hit, was still seaworthy. We got on a landing craft and decided to negotiate with the Hyuga-Maru. I called the men on the deck of the Hyuga-Maru, but their reply was, "No, we can't allow crewmembers of other ships aboard. We have no water or rice."

"We don't need any water or rice, just let us aboard."

"No!"

It was no use talking. We needed to use force. We climbed up the boarding ramp, and forced ourselves onto the ship.

"Who says that you won't let us on? We're all Japanese troops. Besides, there are only 270 of us!"

It was a ship designed to carry around 5,000, so there was no reason that they couldn't accommodate an increase of merely 270 passengers. Besides, we were from the same shipboard regiment, the

same rank, and comrades in the same lost battle. There should be no objection to our request.

Thus, we succeeded in boarding the Hyuga-Maru. The men of the Hyuga-Maru had no choice but to reluctantly accept us. The time was about six in the morning on January 1st, 1945. By seven o'clock, we left San Fernando and the Lingayen Gulf, and resumed our difficult journey.

## Caramelized Sugar

Conditions were very harsh: we had to live with short rations, the sonar was constantly detecting enemy submarines, and enemy planes were incessantly scouting upon us. Our ship maneuvered constantly, zigzagging, u-turning, then sailing at full steam, but we had no way of warding off torpedo attacks at night, so we took refuge behind the cover of the islands in the Bashi Channel.

We had fled the waters of San Fernando on January 1st, and at last on the 5th, we reached Takao.<sup>15</sup> This was surprising, too: we would never reach Japan at this slow pace.

On our way to the Philippines, we had passed outside the port and hadn't noticed, but the sugar warehouses on the wharf of Takao had been demolished. The warehouses, which stretched out over a few hundred meters, had all been reduced to twisted piles of scrap metal.

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**15** Takao is the Japanese name for Gaoxiong, Taiwan.

To come to think of it, the period between December 1944 and January 1945 marked the end of Japan's war front. The mission to rescue Leyte had failed, and our troops in Leyte were wiped out. Our forces had failed to defend San Fernando in the Lingayen Gulf, and the enemy had landed.

We escaped San Fernando on the Hyuga-Marui at 6 AM on January 1st. After we left, the enemy landed on January 6th. It was a very close call.

We headed for Takao, first sailing west into the South China Sea. Fleeing from the constant signals detected by the sonar, we zigzagged across the Bashi Channel, and reached Takao at last on the 5th. On the morning of the 6th, we heard news of the enemy landing in Lingayen. Surely, the United States Seventh Fleet would soon be coming to the vicinity of Taiwan to blockade the shipping lanes in the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait.

We hurriedly set sail from Takao and headed for Keelung. We thought that we would be safe there, but the city was attacked by enemy planes on an Imperial Rescript Day,<sup>16</sup> January 8th. Whether the enemy knew that it was a special day, I don't know. We survivors of Lingayen fled as quickly as we could to the Hyuga-Marui.

We wandered around the city asking for sugar, bananas, and even dried bananas. We were very hungry and desperate for food.

There were many sunken ships in the Port of Takao. All of the

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**16** During the war, every eighth day of the month was designated to be an Imperial Rescript Day (Taisho Hotai-Bi), commemorating the Imperial Rescript on the Declaration of War of December 8, 1941.

sunken vessels were Japanese ships. The Port of Keelung was full of ships damaged by bombs and shells awaiting repair.

The state of the ruins of the bombed warehouses in Takao was catastrophic. Still, the burned sugar had been partially caramelized to a brick-colored brown, and was quite edible when broken into pieces.

The city of Takao was strangely very calm. Maybe it was the last remaining true image of Japan. Contrarily, Keelung, where they were trying to repair ships that they would never be able to fix, seemed to be an alternate image of Japan.

### **Wearing a Mismatched Pair of *Tabi***

When Keelung was attacked on January 8th by a squadron consisting of mainly Grummans and Lockheeds, we gave no resistance and fled. During the two weeks after that, we sneaked along the Shuzan Islands, sailed through the muddy waters around the Yangtze River, passed the coast of Tsingtao, passed Saishu Island of Korea, and finally returned to Moji.

When we arrived, I was wearing a mismatched pair of rubber *tabi*,<sup>17</sup> left foot sized 24.5 cm and right foot sized 26.5 cm, and a military fatigue uniform patched up at the shoulder without any rank insignia. The noncommissioned officer in charge of the warehouse yelled at me as if he was barking out orders to stragglers.

“If you need blankets, do the procedures correctly!”

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**17** *Tabis* are traditional tight-fitting Japanese socks. Rubber *tabis* were issued in the military as work shoes.

To this, I blew my top. “I may have lost in battle, but I’m a Medic First Lieutenant of the Japanese Army. Additionally, I command a unit of 270 men. Sergeant, I will not receive orders from you. Stop wasting my time, or I’ll cut you in two!”

The sergeant was thunderstruck by my furiousness and drawn sword, and issued each of us one or two blankets without any further objection. I folded a blanket in two and draped it over my shoulders. It looked like I was wearing a cape.

Despite my high-handed attitude towards the sergeant, I looked nothing more than a straggler. There was no other time when I felt the lyrics “Sunken, sunken”<sup>18</sup> to be more annoying. Sunken was what the Imperial Navy had become.

I later heard that the Hyuga-Marû, which had carried us back to Moji, sank the next morning in the Bay of Hakata after hitting a mine, and that all on board had perished.<sup>19</sup> Yet another close call.

## A Miserable Sight

From Hiroshima Station, we boarded three train carriages, and headed for Headquarters in Ujina where the remainder of our regiment had stayed. We looked miserable, indeed.

At the gate, the guard on duty ordered us to stop. I got mad

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<sup>18</sup> Lyrics to the 1944 popular tune “*Gochin*” (Destroyed and Sunken), from the movie of the same title.

<sup>19</sup> The author had heard a rumor that the Hyuga-Marû sank the next day, but in reality, it sunk on May 30th after hitting a mine in the Bay of Hakata, north of Kyushu.



again and yelled at him, “Don’t you dare talk to me like that!” and passed through without awaiting permission.

The Commander and his deputy were obviously distressed to see me, a Medic First Lieutenant, wearing a 24.5 cm *tabi* on my left foot, a 26.5 cm *tabi* on my right foot, and worn-out fatigues without any rank insignia, and said nothing to me. They received us with a very painful expression on their faces. Contrarily, we even felt pity for them. No wonder we would lose the war. Subsequently, I gave all of my troops a leave of absence and dismissed them. I myself headed to Tanashi in Tokyo where my family awaited me.

However, just three days later I received orders to report to Hokkaido.

## **Assigned to Command the Medical Training Unit**

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Returning to the subject, I had reported these experiences in detail to Commander Fumio Saeki. After my transfer to Hokkaido, I was ordered to return to Hiroshima on April 10th. I had gone through the insane battles on the southern seas and escaped from the seas of fire. Now, the orders from Headquarters, who were obviously running out of options, were for me to command the Medical Training Unit. I made up my mind to give it the best that I could, and thought that maybe I'd even emphasize to my commanders that I was doing them a favor.

I was given full charge of the training plan. My request for five Daihatsu boats was readily accepted, and thus I was assigned to command the training unit. The training plan was as such:

1. On Mondays, I was to read the Imperial Rescript on the Declaration of War.
2. On Sunday mornings, I taught classes, and in the afternoons, the cadets underwent training for flag signaling.

3. On Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, we underwent landing drills on Miyajima Island in Aki.

This schedule incidentally saved my life. I was able to report late at around eight-thirty every day except Mondays, and on the days other than Monday, I stayed at the Togiya Inn. On Mondays, I had to read the Imperial Rescript on the Declaration of War, so I had to report at eight. Thus, I stayed at the barracks (the schoolhouse of the Girls' School of Commerce) on Sunday nights and slept in an Army-issued bed.

August 6th was a Monday, and I was leading the morning assembly from eight when the dreadful atomic bomb was detonated in the skies of Hiroshima. If I had been staying at the Togiya Inn that morning, I surely would have been killed along with the innkeeper Mr. Koda, his family, and the other people staying there. My body probably would have been vaporized without a trace. If I had been in the barracks at the time, I would have been crushed underneath the beams and pillars of the building. The fires were inextinguishable, so I may have burned to death.

I intended to go to see the Togiya Inn on the 7th, but the whole area around it had been burned down, and I was unable to enter the city. Not only that, but I was busy all day extinguishing fires around Hiji-Yama, treating and transporting patients, and cremating corpses.

## News of My Family

Just then, Private First Class Mitani, whom I had sent to Kusatsu

the day before, returned. He informed me that my eldest son, Seiro, who was a second-year student at Hiroshima Daini Middle School,<sup>20</sup> and my third son, Jitsuro, who was three years old, had not returned to the temple in Kusatsu where they had been staying. This was very disturbing news. I reckoned that Jitsuro would be safe, as no fires had occurred in the neighborhood surrounding the temple.

Seiro worked on the training grounds on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays growing potatoes, so he must be somewhere, too. I was told that my wife had been sent flying by the force of the explosion, but was safe. My second son, Tatsuro was also sent flying, but safe, too. I felt compelled to go and meet them myself, but I had no means to go. I was very anxious, but convinced myself that there was nothing I could do and decided to refrain from going.

Whether he observed my anxiousness, Mitani said, "I'll go take another look, sir," and left again for Kusatsu Temple. I decided to leave things to fate and wait. In my mind, I made a resolution to go when Mitani returned again.

I woke up on the morning of the 8th to the moaning of the wounded. I tried to treat as many patients as I could while preparing to head for Kusatsu Temple.

By past noon, the fires had gutted most of the central part of Hiroshima, including even the stones, trees, bricks, roof tiles, and soil. The fire was now spreading towards the coast. The Ota River branches into five before flowing into the sea, and these branches

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<sup>20</sup> The second year of middle school in Japan is equivalent to eighth grade in Western schools.

probably hindered the spread of the fires, but it still was impossible to enter the center of the city. Later in the afternoon, the fires had receded, but nothing was left but blackened stones and scorched earth.

In the afternoon, Mitani returned from Kusatsu.

“I have good news, captain. Seiro has burns all over his face, but returned on the third day from over the hill. He said that he had been unconscious at a cottage in the hills, but someone found him, and from there he walked home.”

Seiro had been digging for potatoes in the training grounds at the time of the bombing, and was sent flying by the blast. When he at last got up, there was smoke everywhere and some buildings had started to burn. He crawled into the hills, and was resting in a cottage when he was overcome by fatigue and became unconscious. Someone found and revived him, and he gauged the direction of Kusatsu and walked home. I was very relieved upon hearing the report.

My third son, Jitsuro had been taken by the wife of the temple's priest into the hills, and spent a night in the bomb shelter there. He was safe, too.

In place of Mitani, I headed for Kusatsu to check upon my family with my own eyes. I entrusted the treatment of the patients to Master Sergeant Nakamura and Sergeant Kimura.

## Walking through Piles of Rubble and Corpses

It was impossible to enter the center of Hiroshima due to the

intense flames and heat. Avoiding the heat, I walked along the hills, crossed bridges, and hurried westward. It was fortunate that the fires had subdued somewhat. Even by the hills, there were hardly any houses that were still standing. The fires were out, but still smoldering.

It was not pleasant walking on the girders when crossing the railroad bridges, but there were no other roads. In fact, they were among the few safe roads that were remaining.

The city was completely devastated indeed. It looked like a magnified image of inside the furnace of a crematory. The iron framework and the concrete buildings in the center of the city looked like skeletons.

Along the roads, there endlessly were blackened corpses, rubble, and ruined wooden structures. The odor and heat was alike to sticking your face into a heated urn. The stench rose upwards into the hills.

Exposed to the scorching August sun, my burns ached. I continued walking in the heat that seemed hot enough to melt iron.

Those working have no thoughts, will, or plans. They simply walk with the crowd. They just walk, never hurrying. Neither do they stop. They follow sluggishly.

When I reached the Koi district, I found that some houses were still standing, albeit barely. There were houses that had collapsed, and others that were half-collapsed. Some were awkwardly crooked. All of the houses had lost their roof tiles. Their wooden pillars and structures seemed that they would collapse any minute now.

I walked between these houses and headed further west. The number of collapsed houses decreased. There were fallen brick fences and fallen gateposts. Trees, stones, tiles, and other rubble piled the streets, making the surface very uneven. However, there was no smoke.

There were many people, people, and more people that had fled from the blast center and subsequently fallen. There still were many corpses, some under the eaves of the houses and some in the gutters.

There were corpses by the river, at the river mouth, and on the coastline. It seemed that the more strength they had remaining, the further they had fled. The number of corpses along the way was not as many as by the river. It wasn't as many as by the river mouth or coastline, either. Their number had notably decreased.

It seemed that the limits of human beings could be categorized according to their remaining energy: that is, whether they were able to work or just move, or whether they would fall or be able to flee.

The stench was not as bad now.

I saw a truck that perhaps had come from the west of the city.

"I've got it! We could use the truck to collect the corpses," I thought.

My left eye had lost its eyesight, and I was glaring at things with just my right eye, so I must have had a very queer expression.

## A Shock Like a Simultaneous Typhoon and Earthquake

As I walked further, the hideous smell, the smoke, the corpses,

and the number of fallen houses all lessened. I suddenly became anxious of the safety of my family. I remember hurrying towards Kusatsu at a very brisk pace.

Kusatsu is a township with several temples, and thus many graveyards. The brick fences to the graveyards were leaning, and some had fallen all the way. Many of the fences were warped. Tiles had fallen off the roofs of the main halls of some temples, leaving them bare. Some temple roofs were bent and crooked.

I passed among the deformed houses and deformed temples, and finally reached the temple gate, which tiles were falling off, of the temple where my family was staying.

## Reunion with My Family

My children, who had been sitting in the entrance of the priest's living quarters and looking outside, jumped up. They probably had been enduring a sense of fear, but upon seeing me, it seemed that their anxiety and restlessness had been overcome, and relief and joy surged in their place. I was relieved, too, to be able to meet them alive again.

My wife looked rather pale, but she said, "I'm all right, it's nothing."

She had recently come down with appendicitis and then pneumonia, so I knew she was not all right, but she was a smart woman, and I knew that she was saying so not to worry me. She seemed tired, nonetheless.



At the time of the bombing, my wife had a slight cold and was sleeping in the room by the entrance, when she felt like she was sucked up into the air and was sent flying onto the flagstones outside of the entrance. After that, she sat on the threshold and had calmly observed the situation.

Jitsuro had been taken by priest's wife to the shelter in the hills. Tatsuro had been outside, but came back to my wife. Seiro was missing for a couple of days, but returned past noontime of the third day.

With all members of my family reunited that evening, we spent time in front of the entrance in silent conversation.

Jitsuro was just three years old and was too young to understand what had happened. However, he seemed to feel the fear in the air through his skin. Tatsuro was feeling the pressure of the war with his whole body. Seiro had burns on his face, both hands, and both feet, which blisters had burst. Still, he clenched his teeth and was bearing the circumstances well. He was in second grade of middle school, and was starting to be able to understand the situation.

My wife, who had to care for the children, was thinking of what to do from the next day. I was thinking of how to deal with the multitudes of burned patients and corpses.

All that many of the survivors could do was sit down dazedly. Or lay down. They were unable to look for direction or objective. They didn't even seem to have any will to act. An atmosphere of unease prevailed.

My family sat down together for a supper of *takuan* pickles and

small stewed fish. We were happy to confirm that we all were alive.

## **“I Must Do Something!”**

Despite that I was a Medic Captain of the Shipboard Artillery Regiment (I had been promoted to Captain by the time), I knew nothing about atom bombs, and was unable to provide a sufficient explanation of things to my family.

Although the whole temple was tilting, it wouldn't collapse immediately, so my whole family slept together in the living quarters of the temple. My burns ached, but as I heard Seiro moaning while he drowsed, I wished I could take his place.

War is ruthless. War had already killed so many people, and still it tormented so many more.

My elder brother and younger brother both died in the war. People called it an honorable death in battle. Our mother, who was over sixty years old, and my elder brother's daughter, who was still under ten, were commended by the Prefectural Governor, the Prime Minister, and the Emperor as Honorable Family Members.

My elder brother Soroku was killed leading a suicide attack in Rozan.<sup>21</sup> He had come to a gory end, with his head and chest pierced by several bullets. It was on August 28, 1938, five months after he had been deployed.

My younger brother Benkichi had initially been a flagman for the

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**21** The Japanese name for Lushan, China.

Assigned to Command the Medical Training Unit

77th Regiment in Heijou,<sup>22</sup> but was commended for valor and assigned to lead an infantry artillery unit. His fearlessness earned him the nickname “the exposed battery,” as he always would madly shoot in full view of the enemy. He was killed during the second year of the war with three bullets to his head and three bullets to his stomach. He was posthumously conferred the Order of the Golden Kite Fourth Class<sup>23</sup> medal for his bravery.

My poor brothers probably never even dreamed that Japan and Hiroshima would be devastated to such an extent. They probably had given their lives readily believing that their deaths would help defend the Japanese people and Japanese soil. Alas, war is merciless, and war brings woeful ends.

My mother received word that my family and I were in Hiroshima at the time of the atomic bombing. I don’t know who she heard it from, or whether she received a telegram or letter. She had already lost her eldest and youngest sons in the war. She must have been stricken to think that now her remaining son, Goichi might have died, too. She was overcome by the shock, and became confined to her bed. And on August 25th, in the post-surrender summer heat, she passed away alone.

My mother was also a victim of the war. The war had taken two

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**22** The Japanese name for Pyongyang, currently of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

**23** The Order of the Golden Kite (*Kinshi Kunsho*) was a military award for bravery or leadership in battle. The order consisted of seven classes, with First Class the highest. Junior officers such as Benkichiro were eligible for the 3rd - 5th classes.

of her sons, and now had taken her innocent life. I can't but detest war. I hate it from the bottom of my heart.

Although all of my family was together at Kusatsu Temple, my burns ached. My wife was suffering from faintness, and my eldest son was moaning in agony from his wounds. My second and third sons also seemed to be suffering from faintness. I had a sensation as if everything in my dazed head was getting clouded up. But somewhere in the smog-like blurriness, a resolution and determination saying, "I must do something!" surged upwards.

I will do something! Time to break through! My feelings gradually calmed down. It was still around midnight. I started feeling the long-standing fatigue that I had, and soon fell asleep.

## Burns Infested by Maggots

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When dawn broke, I told my family not to go out of the temple unless absolutely necessary, and hurried back to Hiji-Yama.

I felt ready to beat the enemy I was to face, and swore in my heart, "I'm going to get them!"

I climbed a small hill and looked around. There was still smoke and fire. It looked like Hell was coming to an end. In order to get back to Hiji-Yama, I'd have to detour along the hills and across the railroad bridge as I had done the day before.

Japan had lost its commanders, and so had its military. The revolutions that I learned about in foreign history classes must have occurred under circumstances like this, I thought as I hurried towards Hiji-Yama.

Master Sergeant Nakamura, Sergeant Kimura, Private First Class Mitani, and the rest of my unit were treating the wounded one by one, and handing out food. I ordered for all of our medical supplies to be spread out at the foot of Hiji-Yama, and started giving everything I

had to treat the patients.

The wounded came in one after another.

Those patients died one after another.

We gradually ran out of medical supplies. To our surprise, even though it was still the fourth day, every burn wound was infested with maggots. Maggots were being born in the moist wounds at an alarming pace. There was nothing we could do.

"This is not good," I thought.

I applied zinc oxide oil on cotton swabs, and brushed off the maggots. It felt like I was treating patients at the end of the world. Whoever dropped the atom bomb and caused such consequences is a criminal with the heart of a devil. While he may have won the war, that American called Truman is no hero. And those Japanese diplomats who made a total about-face after the war and started extolling the U.S., and those Japanese business leaders who are overconfident of capitalism, too. I would like them to never forget this: that the atomic bombing cruelly wounded and killed thousands of civilians, and created atrocious mounds of corpses. They must never forget.

We were running out of medical supplies. We were short of food. We had no place to sleep. We had to treat patients in an open-air clinic, cremate the dead, evacuate the wounded to other facilities, and provide food to the patients. We repeated this day after day, night and day.

Two hundred thousand had perished. Fifty thousand had been wounded. The survivors were left groaning in pain. Some survivors

were even unable to move. Some survivors writhed in agony. This was the most abhorring and cruel deed that humankind had conducted, and also the true image of agony inflicted by humans.

Time passed and mingled with my memories, imagination, thoughts, and curses, and the cruelty of war sank deeply into my mind. Leastwise, there is no bigger unhappiness for humans than war. I need many people to know this.

I would not want to misuse the results of the war. I felt that my responsibility was to take the results of the war, and turn what was most unhappy into happiness. It is the mission of those who survive to cry out for peace and to cry out, practice, and act against war.

The Hiroshima Prefectural Girls' School of Commerce, where our temporary clinic and medical unit was stationed, had completely collapsed. We set up temporary Headquarters and barracks in a two-story house about 40 meters square that was barely standing in a hollow of Hiji-Yama. The clinic consisted of four tents, two for cooking, and two to accommodate the patients, part of which was used as a dressing station.

"Please help me Mr. Medic, Honorable Corpsman, please!"

The wounded would come in; their feet were dragging, clothes burned and in tatters, skin burned, blood clotted and blackened, and burned and hardened but eerily clean-looking white fatty tissue protruding. It was dreadful how cruelly they had been broken down.

## Gathering Remains in a Rice-Cooking Pot

I later learned that another atomic bomb had been dropped on Nagasaki. The same kind of tragedy that had happened to Hiroshima had filled the city, I heard.

On August 9th at eleven in the morning, while the fires were still ravaging Hiroshima, the second atomic bomb had been dropped! An indescribable hatred arises in me when I think of their sheer brutality and wickedness. Murder by the atomic bomb is the most inhumane and cruel act in the history of mankind.

I also heard that it was only after the second atom bomb was dropped in Nagasaki that some politicians realized their atrociousness. Of course, that was the case for some scholars, too.

The acclaimed physician Dr. Asada of Osaka University, who came to Hiroshima on the fifth day, simply diagnosed the wounds as second-degree burns. However, even those with mild burns had dark swollen skin, and their skin seemed to have come loose. From their burned and torn skin, you could see charred flesh underneath turning outwards. If their head was burned, their hair had all been singed off. If their face was burned, their eyes, nose, ears, and mouth were wounded and disfigured. All vertical symmetry that is a feature of humans was destroyed. Everything was swollen and burned raw.

If their hands were burned, the skin was dangling inside out, just barely hanging on their fingertips. Their burns were soiled and dirty. If their feet were burned, you could see the flesh of their insteps because their skin was torn up like a torn *tabi*. The feet looked like



meatballs covered in dirt and ashes.

Still, those who could move were better off. Their hair was charred, the skin of their foreheads peeled off and draped on their eyelids. Their eyelids and lips were also burned and torn.

And there were those that had fallen. There were those that were moaning. There were those that were writhing. Some faintly writhed and faintly moaned. And some had ceased moving and become indistinguishable from the burned tree roots.

Even today, I feel deeply indebted to Private First Class Mitani. He worked devotedly for me in the radioactivity every day. And he also went on multiple occasions to Kusatsu to check upon my family. When four or five days had passed and things had settled down somewhat, he still stayed by my side, expressing concern for my burns.

I decided to go confirm with my own eyes what fate had come upon the Togiya Inn, frequented by people involved with my unit. I picked up a shovel, and was wondering who to take with me, when Mitani volunteered, saying, "Please take me with you, Captain."

We took shovels with us, as well as full water bottles. We decided to go through the Nagarekawa-cho district, where there seemed to be relatively few obstacles such as fallen electricity wires. There still were quite a significant number of obstacles that we had to go over. We chose roads where the fires hadn't been as intense.

I still think about it, that wooden Japanese houses catch fire quickly, but the fire also goes out quickly. It took us half a day to get through Nagarekawa-cho to the edge of Togiya-cho, about a kilometer

from where the Togiya Inn was.

Again, I was astonished. There was absolutely no wood remaining. All that remained was sand-like rubble. We couldn't even find any shape or hint of roof tiles. There were lumps of scorched dirt, some the size of a fist, some the size of an egg, and others the size of a fingertip.

Now, the problem was how to find the people we were looking for. What had happened to the innkeepers Mr. and Mrs. Koda and their daughter? What had happened to Nurse Yamaki? There should have been over twenty people at the inn. If they had been killed, where were their remains? It was as if the atomic bomb had evaporated all humidity from the world. The white-hot summer sun was further scorching the remains of the horrific fire. My lips, tongue, and throat all felt parched and it was difficult to breathe. Surrounding us was a pile of rubble that had absolutely no moisture remaining. Where in this pile could be the corpses? Where were the bones?

Shovels were not of much use. Mitani and I grew irritated and annoyed at the situation, and dug furiously. After three hours digging, we were drenched in sweat, but had only managed to collect enough bones to fill a rice-cooking pot. We desperately tried to distinguish between pieces of roof tiles and bone pieces. Still, this pot was the remains of the twenty people at the inn, and a memorial to them.

There is nothing as massively cruel as war. It cannot be said enough.

Holding the pot full of remains, we dragged our feet back to the dressing station on Hiji-Yama.

## Medical Corpsmen Unable to Bandage

From around the fifth day, we started to be able to communicate with regiments stationed in other prefectures, and with our senior officers. We received news that a dressing station had been opened in Itsukaichi.<sup>24</sup>

There was nothing to it. Of the patients that we accommodated on Hiji-Yama, some of them were sent by train to Ujina with the cooperation of Hiroshima Station. Others were put on an “automobile,” which was nothing more than a burned truck that could barely move, and sent to Itsukaichi.

We were a medical unit, but some of the corpsmen hadn’t ever wrapped a bandage, some were just barely wearing their military uniforms for the first time, and some had been using canes and sticks as substitutes for rifles because there weren’t enough guns in the regiment. It even seemed that some knew not much more than how to use their chopsticks to eat, and there were some who proclaimed that “war is a career.” These were the kind of soldiers that were in the medical unit.

We had coerced the stationmaster into moving a train, and put the wounded onto the train and truck. Many of the patients weren’t

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<sup>24</sup> Itsukaichi is a district to the west of Hiroshima.

even bandaged, and we didn't bother separate the old from the young, men from the women, or the soldiers from the civilians. Rather than transporting patients, it was more like loading cargo. All the corpsmen could do was stare at the wounds and burns.

The running of the transports, the transport of the patients, and communication was done spontaneously with no particular plan. The war was in its final stage, and it was looking more pathetic than a fool wetting his bed after having a dream. This was how things were at the end of the Army of the Great Empire of Japan.

### **Surely a Disease of the Blood**

A week later, there was a happening at the dressing station in Itsukaichi. Lieutenant Colonel Honma, the Deputy Commander, had complained of a stomachache and reported an incident of melena. It was not dysentery, and yet he had blood in his stool. I diagnosed him to have an intestinal tumor caused by acute radiation exposure. Of course, it was not until later that I was able to make that diagnosis. He was the first patient that I diagnosed with the disease after I learned about atomic diseases.

Tumors get ruptured by peristalsis, the involuntary wavelike movements of the intestine. Abdominal pain and hemorrhage ensues, consequently followed by an easing of the symptoms. Once this occurs, the prognosis is generally poor.

We were working at the dressing station of an army that had lost its chain of command. Our troops had no commander. There was

nobody to give orders to the wounded soldiers, and they would run away and disappear. With no one in control, so many disappeared as if they were transferring out to death.

Patients would cough and sneeze. Sometimes, they coughed up blood. They had developed blood tumors on their larynxes and pharynxes, which would rupture and hemorrhage. We had less patients dying from their burns, but now we had patients bleeding to death. If the blood tumor was closer to their throat, it would cause them to cough up blood, and if it was closer to their anus, it would cause melena.

Dr. Asada of Osaka University had already left, leaving us with the diagnosis that the wounds were just first-degree and second-degree burns, but it was obviously not so. I thought that it might be some disease of the blood. Humble may my schooling be, I still was a physician, and I thought and pondered over the matter. At last, after a week, I was sure that it was indeed a disease of the blood. I came to my conclusion through observing the patients who died almost instantly, and those that slowly deteriorated. We had no medicine to treat them. We didn't even have enough zinc oxide oil to treat the burned patients. I didn't even have any idea as to what I should do. It was even more difficult than trying to solve problems from a tough examination.

Experimental research using the human body is not acceptable, but this was indeed a living-body test. This was a blood ailment that even a university professor had never imagined. It was radioactivity disease.

As time passed, we saw more and more cases of atomic bomb-related diseases.

## Piles of Corpses Who Had Sought Water

Our antiaircraft artillery units were out of ammunition. Our infantrymen had no guns. Our medical unit had no first-aid supplies. And we Japanese, with absolutely no knowledge about the atomic bomb disease, were powerless and could do nothing.

If we'd had any sulfonamides (there were no antibiotics at the time, which in retrospect was probably a good thing) or any other medicine that would reduce the number of white blood cells, it would have exacerbated the patients' symptoms. But fortunately, we didn't, so we managed not to inadvertently accelerate the reduction of their white blood cells.

All of the "treatment" that we conducted was almost equivalent to just watching the patients. It is impossible to properly treat burns without supplies, and even if we did have the supplies, there probably would have been nothing we could do about the blood-altering atomic burns.

Every day, there lingered the stench of burned corpses from the smoke of the fires to cremate the dead.

"Captain, I think we should take a look at the corpses on the riverbanks, just in case," someone said. There may be survivors among those who fled from the heat to the rivers. The next day, we went to the riverbanks by Togiya-cho to investigate. I will refrain

from even using the word “surprise.” The river was ten meters wide in some places and thirty in others, but from the riverbanks on down, it was covered with so many corpses that one could barely see the water. Additionally, these were not just ordinary corpses. They were corpses that were burned black. It was as if the corpses had been smoldering for a while, and that smoke would start rising again at any time from among them.

They had probably escaped the fires barely alive, hot and burned, and wanting just a drop of water to ease the heat, came to the riverside. What could have been their last wish when their lives sputtered out? It may have been something regarding their father, mother, wife, or children. But their biggest wish was probably cold water, no, not even cold water, but any water, even boiling. But they were not able to even have their last wish for a drop of water answered. Instead, they crawled among flaccid corpses and over groaning people that were dying. They probably had writhed, stumbled, crawled, and fallen along with the other fallen people, with only their desire for water driving them until the desire itself faded out and disappeared. There are no records on this. No records exist regarding the painful deaths that these people experienced. Perhaps this is because all who went through the experience died.

But no, all survivors of the painful experience, even those who experienced relatively less pain and those who lived just slightly longer than the others have an obligation to keep the records alive.

## Hair Falling Out, Faces Disfigured

There were no newspapers or radio. We had heard that Nagasaki had also been hit, but there was no way to confirm. Upon hearing the rumor of Nagasaki, horrible images of the whole Japanese nation burning and all Japanese people burned or killed crossed my mind.

We heard rumors that a broadcast from New Delhi was saying that there were plans to annihilate Tokyo and every other city during August. It seemed as if it was coming true.

All of the warships in our maritime nation, Japan, had been destroyed. The Imperial Army, which used to proclaim itself as the best in the world, was not quite annihilated, but had totally lost its morale. Everything had burned and kept burning as if every Japanese citizen's home would eventually be burned down. Each and every second, human beings and buildings were being destroyed one after another.

“Captain!”

“Doctor!”

The number of patients kept growing. There was nothing to do. The tents were full of wounded and ill patients.

Glass incisions, bruises, cuts, burns, skin charred black... There were various injuries.

Still, I applied zinc oxide oil. I wiped off the maggots. Using cotton swabs soaked with oil, I'd sweep out the maggots. We were short of rations, and the many of the malnourished burn patients had their symptoms exacerbated by septicemia.



And there started to appear more inexplicable symptoms. Things that I'd never seen before with other patients started to occur. Patients' hair fell out, even though they sensed no itchiness. During the first week, hair would fall out while combing. And by the second week, one could pull out hair by the handful. Their faces got notably disfigured, too. Their skin would become pale and almost transparent, and there would be acute swelling. The diagnosis of Dr. Asada of Osaka University that we had initially counted upon, "second-degree burns," was quite apparently wrong. Even I could tell that the symptoms were more serious than third-degree burns.

The fatty tissue underneath the skin of the patients looked like the lard on a pork cutlet. That is, they looked as if someone had poured scalding water on the skin of a pig and pulled out the hair. On their chests and backs, there were petechial hemorrhages and petechial hemorrhagic lesions that looked like dark red peas, very nasty symptoms that are seen in patients with fatal diseases such as cancer and liver ailments. These symptoms could not be confirmed in patients with burns, but their burns were full of maggots.

I decided to conduct blood tests with a portable microscope. To my surprise, there was a drastic decrease of white blood cells. It was especially bad with patients who had no burns but had their hair falling out. The loss of white blood cells was observed in all patients. Using sulfonamides would exacerbate the loss of white blood cells. We had to be careful when using medication.

Our treatment for the atom bomb disease patients was mainly "cleaning." Cleaning was the term we used for wiping out the

maggots. Additionally, we picked out glass slivers. The rest of our job was to collect corpses and transport them.

### With Responsibility, Courage, and Pride

It was Hiji-Yama that protected us from the fires, and enabled us to put up our tent shelters safely. To relieve ourselves from the sizzling heat, we would go into the shade of Hiji-Yama, dig a hole, and put our cheeks against the dirt. I will never forget how the dirt felt from over my bandages, and the smell. We had to work in the heat without any rice or water. The gratefulness we felt for the coolness of the dirt in the underground bunker of Hiji-Yama is something that only those who experienced it can know.

Four thousand and eight hundred wounded passed by me. Some fell, some died, and others never even moved. Some left without word, while others dragged their limbs to the trucks and to the trains of the Ujina Line to be transported elsewhere.

There were only a handful of patients remaining. All of these patients would eventually die.

The ungracious days of August 6th, August 9th, and August 15th had come and gone. The Japanese Empire and its Army and Navy had ceased to exist.

On August 22nd, Dr. Tsuzuki of Tokyo University came. Dr. Tsuzuki told me that he himself had radioactivity disease. Dr. Tsuzuki was living proof that the symptoms seen in my patients, with their blood cells being destroyed, were not caused by just burns.

The seventeen or eighteen researchers that had come from Kyoto University evacuated upstream of the Ota River, fearing the radioactivity. They were like crabs, scurrying out of their holes just to find food, then immediately retreating. There was no way they could conduct research that way. True, they were not affected by the radioactivity, but almost all of them perished when the Ota River flooded due to the typhoon that struck on September 19th. It was close to nonsense.

As for me, I'm still alive, writing a record of the nuclear war. But in reality, there were many, many desperate problems, such as how to deal with the maggots, and how to ease the patients' excruciating pain. Additionally, we needed to cremate the dead, because their stench would become strong within a day. For those who had identification tags on them, it was better. We could put a name tag on the cremated remains. Those who had their name written on their caps, hoods, or jackets were not a problem, but most of the corpses were nameless. There was nothing we could do, so we temporarily rested the nameless bodies on the banks of the Ota River.

I had to get things done. I simply had to get things done. It was beyond theory and logic. It was the desperate reality. I had to do things regardless of my own wounds. I made rounds in a burned-out truck from Hiji-Yama and the barracks to Kusatsu and Itsukaichi, running around trying to fulfill my responsibilities.

Although I was a doctor, I didn't know of the dangers of the strong radiation caused by the atom bomb. With responsibility, courage, and pride, I didn't feel afraid. In fact, I was almost enjoying

things when I was making rounds.

While the treatment eased the pain, my patients gradually grew lethargic.

“Doctor, I can’t walk!”

“Doctor, I’m getting a fever!”

“Doctor, our patients have maggots!”

“Doctor, am I going to die?”

There were so many situations that I could do nothing about. Questions about whether to allow patients to eat or not would have been most troubling, but fortunately there was no food, so I was never asked the question. It seemed that everyone had forgotten about their appetite. They needed water from outside of their bodies, but for hunger, the nutrition was supplemented by their own body tissues. The bottom line is that water is what people need the most.

## **My Missing Fujiwara Housui**

Yukinori Koda, the son of the innkeeper of the Togiya Inn, brought in a patient with glass cut wounds. It was Ms. Uchida, a friend of his elder sister Satoko who had perished in the bombing.

I removed the glass slivers, but she was unable to walk. There was nothing we could do, so I decided to hospitalize her for a couple of days, and laid her on the straw futon with the other seriously wounded patients, the patients burned so seriously that they could not move.

“Doctor! Doctor!” she kept on calling.

I took her pulse, but there was not much hope. This lady was a veteran hostess at the *Kaikosha* officers' club, and had served me exclusively distributed liquors.

Her face was burned all over, and the burns were infested with maggots. I applied zinc oxide oil. I had her put on a makeshift stretcher and took her to the Itsukaichi camp on the truck. I heard later that she died.

A friend of my eldest son Seiro came in. He had been bragging that he didn't get burned because he was absent from potato digging on the day of the bombing, but now his hair was falling out. His hair fell out even with the slightest tug. I was afraid his prognosis was bad.

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I heard that the priest of Kusatsu Temple also passed away soon afterwards. I felt very sorry for him, and grief welled up in my heart. The two military swords that I had left in his charge went missing, too.

The two swords had been with me in the grueling Battle of Daibetsu-zan.<sup>25</sup> One of them was a fine craftsman's sword, an 85-centimeter long Fujiwara Housui. I wonder where it is now. During the six months of that battle at Daibetsu-zan, where we had no lights at night, it was rainy, muddy and cold, and we had to deal with dysentery and cholera. Throughout the time, the Fujiwara Housui

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<sup>25</sup> The Japanese name for the Dabie Shan mountain range in China.

sword was always at my side and kept my spirits high. It was an 85-centimeter long masterpiece.

## **Secondary Symptoms Begin to Appear**

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Around August 20th, two weeks after the atom bombing, secondary symptoms of the atomic bomb disease started to appear. A list of them is as follows.

1. Burn ulcers
2. Malnutrition
3. Hair loss
4. Petechial hemorrhages
5. Intestinal pain
6. Pharyngeal pain
7. Lethargy
8. Liver disorders
9. Kidney failure
10. Cardiac debility
11. Septicemia and similar symptoms
12. Leukemia and similar symptoms
13. Neurasthenia (feelings of distrust, anxiety, and apathy)

14. Neurasthenia developed into paranoia

15. Feelings of alienation and bitter disappointment towards people

There were countless combinations and complications. It further highlighted the cruelty of dropping the atom bomb. It felt like my chest would burst with abhorrence.

## Deep Gashes in the Flesh

In all of the burn wounds, the fatty tissue rotted and dangled from the wound. For some, the rotten fatty tissue fell off altogether, causing hideous deep gashes like valleys in the flesh.

Even the patients who had been able to receive treatment at other clinics were just barely breathing. When I removed the bandaging gauzes from their wounds, every one of them had maggots in their wounds. It was as if they were lodges made of flesh for the maggots. There was no pus, as the maggots had sucked it all up. Their dull red flesh was visible, a dark and deep valley of flesh. Every burn was deep. They were valleys of flesh that would never close.

While the third-degree burns were getting better, none of them could be said to be healing. They were getting better, but still, none of the patients were in a condition where I could say their wounds were healing.

For patients with second-degree burns, the fatty tissue beneath their skin was in a state of necrosis, forming ugly dark grey-brown pseudomembranes. It took a whole week to remove these. If I were



### Secondary Symptoms Begin to Appear

to try and remove them too quickly, they would hemorrhage, and once they hemorrhaged it was hard to stop the bleeding.

Crusts formed on the wounds of patients with first-degree burns. They would hemorrhage, too, when I tried to remove the crusts. If they were left unclean, maggots would emerge. There was nothing I could do but remove the maggots and prevent the wounds from worsening.

No matter what their condition was, all of the patients had one thing in common. That is, their blood was ailing

## Malnutrition Spreads

Symptoms of malnutrition became more and more apparent as the days wore on. These people had already been weakened enough in the first place. The atom bomb had already battered multitudes of people with its heat rays as hot as the sun, and this was a gathering of people that had been battered so. They were the victims of burns as well as physical and psychological trauma. To make matters worse, there was no food suitable for the ill. They could not eat. They did not want to eat. They felt nauseous. Consequently, it was impossible to maintain their balance in nutrition, and they became malnourished.

The burn wounds were so severe, so we physicians had prematurely presumed that their symptoms were coming from the burns or the shock caused by the atom bomb. We didn't think of any other disease. We should have realized that it was caused by the loss of balance in their blood and their desire to live.

## Patients' Loss of Hair Accelerates

In some ways, those like me who saw the victims know the cruelty of the perpetrators better than the victims themselves, and we must speak out.

The younger the victim was, the faster their hair would fall out. Watching hair fall out by the handful in the 15 to 16 young men and women under my care was a scene with an unexplainable dreadfulness to it.

I saw a young girl who seemed even resigned to her cruel fate, but I could not think of any words to comfort her. Perhaps she had the same feelings towards me, a doctor with burns all over his face, and seeing that we shared those feelings was a good-enough comfort and encouragement for her. There is no other time that I felt the saying "Fellow sufferers pity each other" to be more appropriate.

A boy who went to Hiroshima Daini Middle School with my eldest son Seiro had been absent from the potato digging at the West Training Grounds and consequently escaped being burned, but two weeks later, half of the hair on his head had fallen out.

I had initially thought that my son was only relatively lucky, as he had been burned severely, so it was unsettling to see his friend, who had initially seemed very lucky, in this state. I don't know what happened to the child after that, but I fear the worst. That is the horror of the atomic bomb disease.

Not only those that were in the city, but also people who were outside of the city became victims. I couldn't help but feel strong

hatred for the atomic bomb disease, which was complicated by blood disorders.

## Petechial Hemorrhages

Dr. Asada of Osaka University had left us with the diagnosis, “second-degree burns.” However, while severe burns like these do cause changes in the blood, it could not be right. The patients initially complained of lethargy, but the symptoms got worse and worse as the weeks passed.

In the third week, their hair started to fall out, and on their chests and stomachs, red dots similar to fleabites started to appear. It suddenly struck me, “These are petechial hemorrhages!” Petechial hemorrhages are a sign of blood ailments. Things had turned out to be at their worst. It meant that they were at the terminal stages of their disease.

The symptoms that were appearing were the same as in terminal cancer, when the patient’s blood goes turbid, with fevers rising and strong lethargy. Some petechial hemorrhages started to appear on my own chest and stomach, too.

“Well, if I’m going to die, I might as well work to the end,” I thought. But while I had made that resolution to myself, I was worried about what was happening to Tokyo. Things in Hiroshima had reached the terminal stages, but the end was yet to come in Tokyo. Had the Americans come to Tokyo yet?

I was uncomfortable for a while, as it seemed that the number of

my petechial hemorrhages was increasing. But eventually, they started to recede and harden. I wasn't feeling any better, but I continued my emergency work.

Of the people who saw so many deaths, over two hundred thousand in all, from burns to petechial hemorrhages, how many have survived? Did the over two hundred thousand dead have clear roads ahead of them in the next world? Or are their dark lives to continue forever?

## The War Is Over!

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August 15th, 1945.

This was the day that the Japanese people were shocked beyond description, perhaps to a degree as much as when the country recklessly declared war on December 8th, 1941.<sup>26</sup> My eldest son wept in front of the radio, not bothering to wipe the tears that rolled down his cheeks, which were bandaged up due to the atomic bomb burns. He cried, “If they were going to go this far and then quit, they shouldn’t have started the war in the first place!”

All of us who had been listening to the Emperor declare the termination of the war, or rather, concede defeat, including me, who had been burned by the atomic bomb, my wife, who had been sent flying by the atom bomb, my second son, who had been burned black by the atom bomb, my three-year old third son, who had gone

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**26** Because Japan is west of the international dateline, the date of the beginning of the Pacific War is December 8th in Japan, instead of December 7th as known in the West.

temporarily missing due to the atom bomb, and the son of the Togiya Inn, who had been orphaned by the atom bomb, were all bewildered, shocked, and disappointed.

The Emperor had betrayed all Japanese citizens in his decisions to begin, continue, stop, and end the war. Or rather, it was proven that he had been used like a puppet, robot, and beanbag by his chancellors.

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The war was over. We were left to clean up on our own. Whether to live or die, or to go away or return, there was no one to give orders to us. We had to make our own decisions.

I decided to make a commitment, a commitment to care and treat for the patients dying because of the atom bomb. Once I made that decision, I felt as if a load had been taken off my mind, and I slept well for the first time in a while in the nearly-collapsed living quarters of the temple. Then I thought about what I would do from the next day.

I was my own commander. When I told myself, "I'm going to do it!" I felt a hundred times more courageous and the pain in my face disappeared.

## **The Irresponsible Commander Contemplates Suicide**

The Commander of the Shipboard Artillery Regiment, His

Excellence Chimaki Nakai, summoned me the morning of the next day, August 16th. Major General Nakai said, “Doctor Sashida, I hear that you are the most competent man in our regiment. If the American troops order me to turn myself in, I’m prepared to commit *hara-kiri*. When that happens, I want you to assist me.”<sup>27</sup>

I was shocked. Upon losing the war, the Generals were immediately thinking of suicide! They had been thinking only of winning the war, no matter how many battles they were losing.

I felt that Army Minister Anami<sup>28</sup> and Commander Nakai, who had both made the same decision with similar thoughts, were guilty of the same unconsciously immature crime. Up to the point that they decided to kill themselves, the circumstances surrounding them had been changing. They had not been able to deal with those changes, and become neurotic. After becoming neurotic, they behaved based on their thoughts, but their thinking was done by the neuroses, so their brain cells became exhausted. Eventually, their neuroses became worse, and their behavior was driven by the most inadequate thinking. From this was born our miserable defeat and disastrous annihilation.

People sometimes say that they will do something even if they know that they are going to lose. If it were games or recreation, it would be fine. But when it comes to war, in which lives are at stake,

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<sup>27</sup> The assisting of *hara-kiri*, called *kaishaku*, was traditionally assigned to a trusted subject, who cut off their master’s head after the master had cut his own stomach.

<sup>28</sup> Korechika Anami, the Minister of the Army during the final months of the war, committed suicide on August 14th.

such thoughts are nothing but fools' gibberish.

The ultimate aim of peoples' livelihoods is to preserve life. To thrive, life needs to have its breeding instincts fulfilled. In no way can it be accepted that the line of a person's family or race, which has been handed down from his ancestors, be discontinued. When it is clear that a certain path will doom a race, it may be difficult, but careful considerations must be made. Such considerations must aim to preserve and hand down their ancestors' honor, make the present secure, and create a foundation for future prosperity. It is utter nonsense to foresee the destruction of oneself and the future, but yet hurry down that very path of destruction.

It was those ranked officers that had claimed that we needed to fight even if we would lose who were now talking of their own responsibility and of our peoples' responsibility. They are pathetic cases that I want to show to all of the other neurotic warmongers who talk the same nonsense.

Commander Nakai's desire to commit suicide was a symptom of his neurosis, which he had no means to resolve himself. To understand him, I needed to stay a step ahead of his neurosis. He was an example of how over-phobic patients end up, considering war to be the terminal stage of politics.

I told him, "Your excellence, it would be easy for me to assist you. However, if I assisted your *hara-kiri*, it would be a crime, aiding suicide. Not just that, but I would be a murderer. Your Excellence will have fully achieved your objective of death, but later I will probably be charged with murder. Please don't go imitating pre-



Meiji<sup>29</sup> customs. I know of a better method for your objectives. That would be to use cyanide. There probably isn't any in Hiroshima, but I am a physician, and I'll see if I can get some."

The next day, I ran around the whole day searching, and at last found some sodium cyanide. I made two small portions, handed one to Commander Nakai, and put the other deep in a pocket of my military uniform in case I would need it myself.

Years later, I heard that General Nakai was alive somewhere in Japan. As for me, my atomic bomb disease has healed, and I am healthily performing my duties as the Mayor of Tanashi, Tokyo.

## An Officer Who Abandoned His Soldiers

There was a man in our shipboard regiment who was an exemplary soldier, the Manager of the Medical Unit, Major Kikuchi.

When he was transferred as a Medic First Lieutenant to the Sixth Division's Medical Unit in September 1938, I was also a Medic First Lieutenant there.

I first met him during the Operation of Youroushi-Suyou,<sup>30</sup> 300 kilometers from Busho,<sup>31</sup> when I was sent to the front line to rescue 390 wounded soldiers. He was a medic attached to the Miyakonojo Regiment.

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**29** The Meiji Era, or reign of Emperor Meiji, was 1868 - 1912.

**30** Youroushi is the Japanese name for Yanglousi, now a district of Linxiang, and Suyou is the Japanese name for Chongyang, now a county of Xianning. Both are south of Wuchang.

**31** The Japanese name for Wuchang, now a district of Wuhan.

He was a pure-hearted but naive medic. When I was transferred to Hiroshima for the third time, he had been promoted to Major and was my superior as the Manager of the Medical Unit.

He must have reported every minute detail to Commander Nakai, even when he wasn't summoned. He had a great fear and reverence towards Commander Nakai, and always ascribed things to the commander, saying, "His Excellence said so," or "His Excellence thinks so."

It was the manner of an out-of-date army. As soon as our surrender was announced, he threw out everything and headed straight to his hometown. He didn't give even the slightest regard to the many soldiers in his charge, the soldiers that he had ordered around daily. He simply left them all behind.

Such selfish acts of self-protection are also a fault of out-of-date armies. It may be a minute detail, but back then, the superiors would ignore their subordinates when something inconvenient to them happened, and the subordinates would unconsciously be motivated by feelings of pressure from their superiors.

## **The Burn Diagnosis Debunked**

The diagnosis proclaimed by Dr. Asada was completely debunked. It had been made clear by Dr. Tsuzuki that the ailments were a blood disease caused by the atomic burns and radiation. By that time, surviving burn patients were passing away at an alarming rate.

## A Telegram from Uto

I received a telegram dated August 15th notifying me that my mother was gravely ill. It was already September 3rd when it reached me.

I heard that there would be a Shimonoseki-bound freight train passing through, so I hurried to Hiroshima Station, taking five military swords and a straw mat with me. When I asked the stationmaster, he answered flatly, "I don't know if it will go to Shimonoseki, but a downbound train should be passing through in the afternoon."

So I waited in a corner of the station talking with Private First Class Mitani. However, the train didn't come. Mitani got impatient and said, "Captain, I'm getting doubts that it will come."

"There is nothing to doubt. Be patient, and it should come."

After three long hours, the freight train arrived at last.

After reconfirming with the stationmaster, I rolled out my straw mat on top of the coal hopper car. Using my five swords rolled up in a blanket as a pillow, I made myself a bed. It was a pleasantly comfortable "sleeping car" for me. Of course, I had told the stationmaster, and received permission from the driver and conductor.

I said goodbye to Mitani, who had come to see me off.

I was able to sleep well on the coal of the open-top car, which ran clickety-clack. When I awoke in Shimonoseki, I was told that the train would go to Moji. I was grateful to hear this. But when we got to Moji, I was told that the train would further proceed to Hakata. How

fortunate! At around that time, dawn broke.

I ruminated over what I had been through: the ship that I was on was sunken in Lingayen Gulf; I was atom bombed in Hiroshima; I had been asked to assist Commander Nakai's *hara-kiri*. Back then, I didn't think that I'd ever be able to see the skies over Kyushu again. But there I was, lying on a freight car running under the skies of Kyushu, and thinking of where I'd been and where I was going.

Apart from the tunnels, riding on an open-top freight car was very pleasant. The fields and hills hadn't been bombed, and there was no sign of the scourges of war. It was a glorious feeling when crossing bridges and running over the rivers.

When we reached Hakata, I was told that the train would go all the way to Kumamoto. I was very grateful.

En route, there was a bridge that had been bombed. Impromptu repairs had been done by piling up wooden crossties as temporary girders. It was frightening because they creaked dangerously when the train crossed.

The hills and rivers, fields and farmlands, and the flows of the rivers were all quiet. The war that ended yesterday seemed so absurd. And looking back at my eight and a half years in the military, from when I was a Private to when I was a Medic Captain, they seemed totally absurd, too.

In the warless skies, an infinite number of exhilarating clouds flowed. The big blue skies spread far and wide, and the air was clear and refreshing. Was this what Japanese air was like? Those blue skies that I saw from the open freight car are a pleasant memory:

while it was still hot, it was an afternoon on September 4th, on the brink of autumn. I reflected upon the ten years that had passed. I had moved ten times, my son had changed schools six times, my comrades had been killed, houses that I had lived in had burned down, the ship that I had been on had been sunken, and Hiroshima had been wiped out. My, how the ten years seemed so distant. Those distant ten years were never to return.

As if my memories were fading and disappearing in the pure and clear atmosphere, I dozed off on top of the open freight car listening to the sound of the train wheels.

### **A Return to My Hometown with a Charred Face**

The Onga River and Aso Mountain Range all welcomed me with beautiful memories.

At last, we reached Kumamoto. But as soon as we arrived, I was told that the freight train would proceed to Yatsushiro. How lucky I was! I would get off at the next station, Uto.

The train stopped for a while at Kumamoto, so I got off the open-topped coal hopper. A station attendant approached me suspiciously. Half of my face was charred black, with some bright red spots. I quite apparently was burned severely. I surely must have been unsightly and alarming to someone who didn't know of the burns caused by the atom bomb.

"What are you doing, sir?"

"Well, I came from Hiroshima. I'm going to Uto."

“In order to go to Uto, you need to cross the bridge across the Midori River. It was bombed, and we’ve just received word that it’s been repaired. This freight train is going to be the test run. I think you’d better get off, sir.”

The attendant was genuinely concerned for me.

“Don’t worry. I survived Lingayen Gulf by a hundred-to-one chance, and I also survived the atom bombing of Hiroshima. Look at my face! It’s not the kind of face that gets killed by merely falling from a bridge.”

The attendant looked flabbergasted and said nothing.

“Will this train stop in Uto?”

“I don’t know, sir.”

So thus, while I was savoring the air of my native land, the freight train that I had been riding had gained a new mission, a test run over a new bridge. The train started moving.

The air, the sky, the earth, and the rice fields were all rich. It was quiet and peaceful.

Suddenly, the train began to slow down drastically. When it had slowed down to a crawl, a faint but chilling creaking sound came from underneath the train cars.

“Aha, it’s the sound of the piled-up crossties,” I thought.

The creaking sounds gradually faded away, and eventually ceased altogether. We had safely crossed the temporarily repaired bridge, and the locomotive started to exert its power. We picked up speed, and ran at a brisk pace. I would soon be back in my hometown.

We crossed the border of the territories of Yukinaga Konishi and Kiyomasa Kato.<sup>32</sup>

Gankaizan, which name means “mountain where wild geese avoid,” came into view. Folklore has it that Tametomo,<sup>33</sup> a legendary bowman, was banished there, and even wild geese would detour away from the mountain to avoid being shot. Notwithstanding the legend, it seemed that the clouds were detouring the skies above the mountain.

While the volcanic smoke was not visible, the Aso Mountain Range could be seen to the northeast of Gankaizan. In the past, the Aso Mountains had been used as a shooting range, and had been shelled so heavily that the landscape had changed. But on that day, the long mountain range looked more peaceful and quiet than I had ever remembered.

The rice fields that spread out below had turned golden. To the west across the Ariake Sea, Mt. Unzen stood quietly. I remembered when I was a little boy that an old man told me that if there were clouds on Unzen, it would rain the next day.

There was no wind on that day, and in the sky, there was not a trace of that war that ended yesterday.

I sat up on the coal hopper and shouted to the driver, “I want to

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**32** Yukinaga Konishi and Kiyomasa Kato were rival *daimyo* from the 16th Century. Konishi ruled the southern part of what is now Kumamoto, and Kato the northern part.

**33** Minamoto no Tametomo was a samurai who lived in the 12th Century. He was the uncle of Minamoto no Yoritomo, who founded the Kamakura Shogunate.

get off at Uto Station. Could you slow the train down?"

The driver gladly consented to my request. Perhaps he felt pity for this straggler, who had hitched a ride all the way from Hiroshima and even stayed aboard during the test run.

"Sorry if I caused you any trouble along the way. Thank you!"

After thanking the driver briefly, I tucked my five swords under my arm and jumped off the freight train. The people who saw me welcomed me with smiles, but I must have been quite unsightly with the left half of my face charred black and my hair uncut.

## **My Mother Had Died from Shock**

The oppression from the nation had disappeared. It seemed that the citizens had recovered their carefree and easygoing peaceful lives, even though they were impoverished.

I was startled when I stepped out of the station. My elder sister's house, which used to stand in front of the station, had been burned down and demolished. There was no one around. On August 9th, one week before the war ended and the same day that the second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, Uto had been bombed and razed to the ground.

I could find nobody about. I left the ruins of my sister's home, and hurried towards my mother's home.

I had a custom of first visiting the graveyards of Kannon Temple and Saishuku Temple, which are on the east side of my mother's house, before returning home.



Behold! There was a brand new grave marker with my mother's name on it. I was so shocked that I couldn't move from where I was standing for a while.

To my great sorrow, my mother had already died on August 25th. I put my hands together and bowed my head towards her grave for a while.

My elder brother Soroku had been killed in battle in August 1938. My younger brother Benkichi had been killed in battle in July 1939. Moreover, my mother had mistakenly thought that I had been killed in Hiroshima. She collapsed from the shock, and had been bedridden for ten days before passing away.

My eldest sister had been forced to evacuate from Kichijoji, Tokyo. My second sister never returned from Manchuria. My third sister was killed when Uto Station was bombed. My youngest sister also did not return from Manchuria.

All of her seven children were either killed or missing due to the war. The grief that my mother felt must have been great. Bearing the sorrow and bearing the pain, she wasn't even able to smile, but nonetheless, she was praised as the "Mother of the Militarist Nation" and "Mother of Honor," and had received a certificate of commendation from the Emperor. And now my 71-year old mother had mistakenly thought that I too had died upon hearing that I had become a victim of the atom bomb. She must have thought that all was lost, that all of her children had perished, and collapsed due to the unbearable shock.

On August 25th, ten days after the end of the war, she died

peacefully in her sleep in front of the family altar.<sup>34</sup> When I heard this from my elder brother's widow, Shizue, the strained nerves and muscles in my body went numb.

I had intended to leave for Hiroshima immediately after meeting my mother and visiting our family's grave, but I ended up laying in futon at my birthplace for five whole days, during which I just gazed at the distant mountain ranges of Kyushu and the trees growing in the garden that my father had left. It was as if the symptoms of the first stage of the atomic bomb disease had appeared.

My sister-in-law kindly looked after me and comforted me. Perhaps she thought that she couldn't let me die now that I'd survived the war. She made me sashimi of crucian carp, my favorite dish, and meat dumpling soup, and also served some pickles that my mother had made before she passed away.

I had these every day until I was full. I gradually recovered my health.

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**34** Many Japanese households have family altars dedicated to their ancestors. In this case, the altar was probably dedicated to Mrs. Sashida's deceased husband, and set up in her bedroom.

## Defying the Swatting

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I returned to Hiroshima on September 10th. There was still much work left to do. There was a notable increase of victims dying from the atom bomb disease, and among the survivors, the symptoms were becoming chronic.

Then on September 18th, a typhoon with torrential rains struck Hiroshima, causing heavy flooding in the city. Even the remaining bridges were swept away. It was at this time that most of the fifteen or so researchers who had come from Kyoto University to study the radioactivity were swept away and drowned.

The Ota River branches into seven within the city limits of Hiroshima. The researchers had chosen to lodge upstream because they were afraid of the radioactivity, and had been coming downstream every day to conduct their research, but their lives had been swept away when the river flooded upstream of the branches. I felt sorry for them when I heard the news.

We stayed and continued to work in the city. We were now fully

aware that we could be exposed to the residual radioactivity, but we didn't have the time to worry about it. However, as a consequence of our staying in the city, we were able to survive the flood of the Ota River. Looking back, I can't help but think that you never know what will save you in the long run.

### Rapid Infestation of Flies and Weeds

Flies and weeds rapidly infested the post-atomic bombing days of Hiroshima. The challenge of life is to overcome any circumstance. Life has the ability to endure the immense explosion of atom bombs and the subsequent radiation and fires. Natural phenomena show us that we can overcome the destructive energy and create and build culture.

The roots of young wheat sprouts are too weak to survive the winter on their own. They need to be treaded upon by heavy feet so that their roots will reach the soil beneath the frozen topsoil and frost pillars in order to bear rich grains.

Flies and weeds have the ability to multiply and flourish before all other beings. For humans, too, those who have not disciplined themselves to be tough are bound to lose. We must win, like the weeds. Like the *haiku* of Issa,<sup>35</sup> flies get swatted at and swatted at, but they defy the swatting and continue to multiply. Good grief!

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**35** Issa Kobyashi was a monk and Japanese poet, and is considered one of the four *haiku* masters.



Later, around the time that several temporary barracks had been built in the city, I heard a rumor that Gurkhas, who had landed in Japan on September 25th, would be stationed in Hiroshima. As the rumor went, when they came, they would punish or execute all surviving Japanese soldiers, and they had advanced to Kure<sup>36</sup> by the 26th.

### Departure for Tokyo: Incident on the Sea

I made the decision to leave Hiroshima. After gathering information and planning extensively, I found that if we were to escape, it would be nearly impossible to go by land.

At the time, there were seven of us: my wife, Seiro, Tatsuro, Jitsuro, my brother's daughter Shihoko, the orphan of the Togiya Inn Yukinori, and myself. I was determined to take everyone back to Tokyo, but it was difficult to get train tickets. After much effort, I was able to secure just two tickets, but it obviously wasn't enough for the seven of us. Additionally, it became clear that the trains were very unreliable.

Thus, I sought help from the senior priest of Kusatsu Temple, who introduced us to a fisherman. After some negotiation, he agreed to let us take his motorboat to Onomichi.<sup>37</sup>

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**36** Kure is a city adjacent to the east of Hiroshima.

I had been provided with a brand new military uniform and one thousand yen. However, I had received neither retirement pay nor relocation allowance. It would be hard to live on just my 130-yen monthly pay as a Medic Captain. Still, we had to move. We sold our belongings, including my wife's kimono, which amounted to an additional one thousand yen, and first headed for Onomichi. We were seen off by the senior priest and his wife as our motorboat headed seaward.

Kusatsu Temple had saved the lives of my wife and children, but it was now time to say farewell.

The town with many graves, the town where I saw piles of death, and the last standing town in Hiroshima. The people of Kusatsu had initially thought that the massive explosion of the atom bomb was an earthquake. Most of the tombstones had fallen over. There were many temples with triangular roofs in the town, but most of them had lost their roof tiles, and their columns were tilting.

We left the wharf of Kusatsu at dawn, and watched the town grow smaller as we drew away. At noon of the 27th, the water was blue, the sky was high, and there was nothing to worry about for now. It was as if the Seto Inland Sea was graciously welcoming us.

But past noon, an alarming situation came upon us out of the blue. An American warship suddenly appeared. I had never seen an American warship at such close range from the front. It looked like a destroyer. It came straight towards our small motorboat at a very  
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**37** Onomichi is farther east than Kure, about 50 kilometers from Hiroshima.

high speed.

I couldn't tell what they were, but the warship was causing bright red explosions as it came. The bright red explosions came in series of three, first to the right, next to the left, then again to the right. We were in trouble.

The warship was very fast, and was closing in quickly on our motorboat. We could see that the warship was pulling ropes on both sides that were 400 to 500 meters long. At the end of the ropes were buoys with red flags on top of them. It apparently was clearing mines from the water.

There was no time for our motorboat to go around the buoys. We had no choice but to stay in the middle of the warship and buoy, where the waves would be relatively small. If I didn't maneuver correctly and rode up on one of the massive waves that the warship was causing, we could capsize. Even if I didn't capsize the boat, we were still in danger of hitting one of the mines that the warship was clearing. There was no time to think. Mustering up my nerves, I gripped the rudder lever and steered straight sideways.

What I had thought was a destroyer was actually a minesweeper. The minesweeper shot three red flares, then another three red flares straight ahead of us, which exploded into bright red fireballs. It was clear that a direct hit by the fireballs would cause much more damage than burns. And if I hesitated and hit a mine, all would be over.

From the minesweeper, they shouted at us in what seemed to be English, but we couldn't understand.

We headed straight through the area of the water with the least

waves, and when we made it through, all of us, including the owner of the boat, were relieved. On the minesweeper, the American soldiers were shouting and laughing loudly.

“Thank goodness those red flares weren’t cannons and guns,” we said to each other.

From there, we headed straight for Onomichi as fast as we could. The currents of the Seto Inland Sea were clear and peaceful.

## Two Tickets for Seven to Tokyo

Yet, another incident occurred. As we passed an uninhabited small island, something hit the bottom of the motorboat. The next thing we knew, our boat started turning in circles. The shaft of the propeller had apparently been bent when we hit an obstacle.

Our boat stopped moving. It was no use. I took off my clothes, jumped into the sea, and dived under the boat. As I had thought, the propeller shaft was bent. There was no way that the boat could move straight with it.

I pulled the bow of the boat up on a beach of the island, and using a rock, dived underwater again and again to beat the shaft straight. At last, I managed to repair it.

I started the engine, and seemed to be in fine condition. However, we didn’t have any food or water. Our final destination, Tokyo, was a great distance away. But stopping and thinking would not do us any good. We simply needed to hurry on.

We reached Onomichi at last, but again, there were more



obstacles awaiting us. We went towards the station to catch a train, but the plaza in front of the station was so crowded with people sitting that there was hardly even any space to stand.

At the entrance of the station were standing some men in blue uniforms, who seemed to be soldiers. A closer look revealed that they were wearing armbands with the English letters "NAVY" on them.

I asked, "What are you guys doing?"

"We're on guard."

"I see. I came here by Army orders, and I'm heading for Tokyo. My family is with me, and we need to go through!"

"Go ahead."

I was rather surprised at how lenient they were.

We proceeded to the platform, where we were astonished to find it filled with people. Absolutely no one knew when the next train would come or what kind of a train it would be. There was nothing more that we could do than to wait. We only had the two tickets that we had bought at Hiroshima Station for the seven of us, and we were in no position to be pushy. In about an hour, a freight train arrived. It was already crammed with people.

A mail car stopped in front of us. It was already packed, too, but the windows were open, and we could see that there was some space aboard. We would be in trouble if we weren't able to board this train. We pushed the children in through the windows, and after they were aboard, my wife and I jammed ourselves in as well.

Clickety-clack, clickety-clack, the rain rolled down the tracks for a long time, and at last, we reached Osaka.

## To Our Home in Tanashi

It was the evening of the 28th, more than a whole day since we had left Hiroshima. We waited for about an hour on a platform in Osaka Station, when I saw a passenger car that apparently would be heading for Tokyo. Again, we successfully were able to squeeze aboard. We had brought no food with us, except for some hard crackers that we gave to the children in very small portions. All that my wife and I had was water from the taps on the platforms where the train stopped on its way to Tokyo.

It was a grueling journey, but we endured it somehow, and at three in the morning of the 30th, we at last reached Mitaka Station in Tokyo.

From Mitaka Station, I carried my little boy, Jitsuro, on my back, and we dragged our exhausted feet all the way to Tanashi, and at about five-thirty in the morning, we finally staggered into our house.

I found a couple of kilograms of rice from the corner of a cupboard in our long-vacant house. There was no other time that I savored the word “*gohan* (rice)”<sup>38</sup> so much, even before eating.

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We had at last settled down at home. However, I felt so lethargic that it was as if my body was falling off. Consulting my secret doctors'

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<sup>38</sup> In Japanese, *gohan* means rice, but it can also mean meal, as can the word bread in English.

book, I decided to rehabilitate at Hama Onsen in Yamagata, where the hot springs were said to contain the highest concentration of calcium phosphate in Japan.

At Hama Onsen, I drank a few liters of the water of the hot springs every day. After a few days, the fatigue that I felt gradually faded, and I was able to return home to Tanashi within two weeks.

But I could not be idle, as I wouldn't be able to feed or support my family. I gathered up my strength and started working. I had to, or else we would starve.

## The Biggest Mistake in My Life

It was a new society. A new society without war. A peaceful society based on science. I made a vow to dedicate my life to help build such a society and to give my best efforts to it.

I sent my sons, Seiro, Tatsuro, and Jitsuro to study medicine at my alma mater, Tokyo Medical University (it was called Tokyo Medical Teaching Establishment when I graduated), and entrusted them to the Yodobashi Hospital<sup>39</sup> for training.

In retrospect, I had made a grave mistake by that time.

We had made it through the post-war confusion out of Hiroshima. After returning to Tokyo, I got a job at Sasa Hospital through a relative. Since they were short of people, my wife helped out, too.

She never complained and stayed by my side. She was resolute

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**39** Currently known as the Tokyo Medical University Hospital.

and resourceful, and I left her to busily work on purchasing medical supplies for the hospital. She also accepted a position as the Chairwoman of the Pricing Committee for the Town of Tanashi. I respected her and was thankful for her hard work.

I was especially grateful for the eight years during the war. While I was deployed to the front line, she never complained and made ends meet with the monthly five and a half yen Army salary that was sent to her. My salary would never have been sufficient, even with my 120-yen salary as a Medic Captain, but she never said a word about not having enough money.

I'm in no position to say so, but I was impressed by her impeccable manner, and was grateful. It was my fault that I left her too busy to receive a thorough medical examination. As a result, I forever lost my wife, who had stayed with me even through the hardest of times, due to complications from the atom bomb disease. This truly was the biggest mistake of my life.

In retrospect, I have a feeling that she knew very well that she had the atom bomb disease. My consolation is that receiving treatment from Dr. Kojima, a court physician, eased her pain somewhat.

In any case, she passed away the next year.

Our first son was in second grade of middle school, second son in third grade of elementary school, and third son three years old. I always had a hard time because their trousers would often wear out at the knees. When my wife was alive, she'd mend them with ease. Although it was too late, I again felt grateful.

Now, with a new mother, all three of them have grown up and become doctors. The eldest, Seiro is the father of a son and two daughters. There apparently is no effect of the atom bomb disease in my grandchildren. I am busy with my duties as Mayor, but always feel solace when I see my dearest grandchildren.

## **Author Profile**

**Goichi Sashida** was born and raised in the city of Uto in Kumamoto Prefecture. He graduated from Tokyo Medical Teaching Establishment (currently Tokyo Medical University) in 1933. In 1935, while training at Sawa Hospital in Numazu, Shizuoka Prefecture, he opened his own clinic in Toi, Shizuoka (now a part of the city of Izu). In 1941, he opened a hospital in Hankou, China (now a part of Wuhan). In 1943, he worked for Sasa Hospital in Tanashi, Tokyo, and in 1945, while serving as a Medic for the Army in Hiroshima, he encountered the atomic bombing. In 1954, he opened the Sashida Clinic in Tanashi, and in 1962, he was elected Mayor of the Town of Tanashi. He was the first reformist mayor of the town. In 1966, he was reelected, and in January 1967, when Tanashi was promoted to a City, he became the first City Mayor. Dr. Sashida passed away at the Tokyo Medical University Hospital at 8:03 AM on March 24, 1969 due to a brain hemorrhage. He was 59 years old at the time. He occasionally called himself Batten, a nickname he received from a characteristic conjunction of the Kyushu dialect.

All Wood-block prints except for the last from *Pikadon* by Iri Maruki and Toshiko Akamatsu (Toshi Maruki), published by Potsdam Shoten in 1950  
最後をのぞき、丸木位里・赤松俊子(丸木俊)『ピカドン』(ポツダム書店、1950年)より。



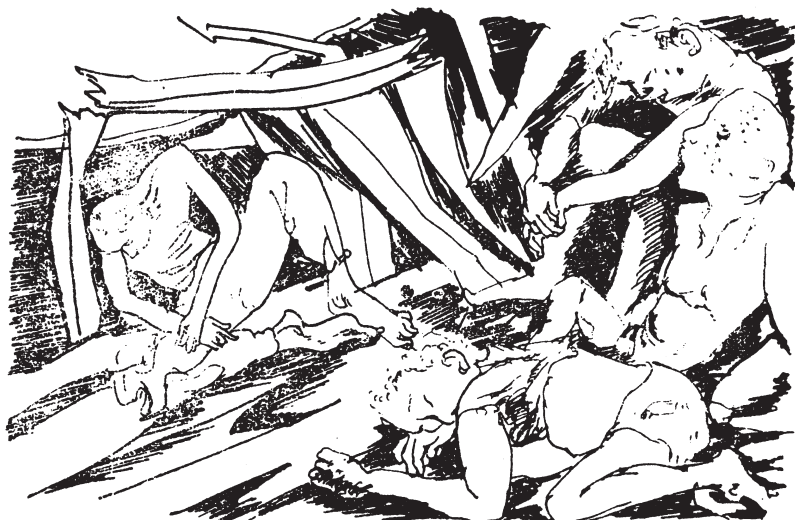
Flash! The bright blue light was unlike anything else.  
ピカ！ その明るい蒼い光は、何にたとえようもなかった。



A young mother and her baby were trapped under a crushed building.  
若い母親と赤ちゃんが、大きな材木の間にはさまれていた。



The whole city was a sea of fire: Hell can't be much worse!  
全市一めん、火の海……地獄もこれより恐ろしゅうない！



The wounded gathered like moths to a flame.  
傷ついた大ぜいの人たちが、火に寄る虫のように集まっていた。





Help! From underneath the piles of gray rubble came the cries.  
助けてくれ！ 灰色に焦げた底からうなり声が聞こえてくる。

## その夜

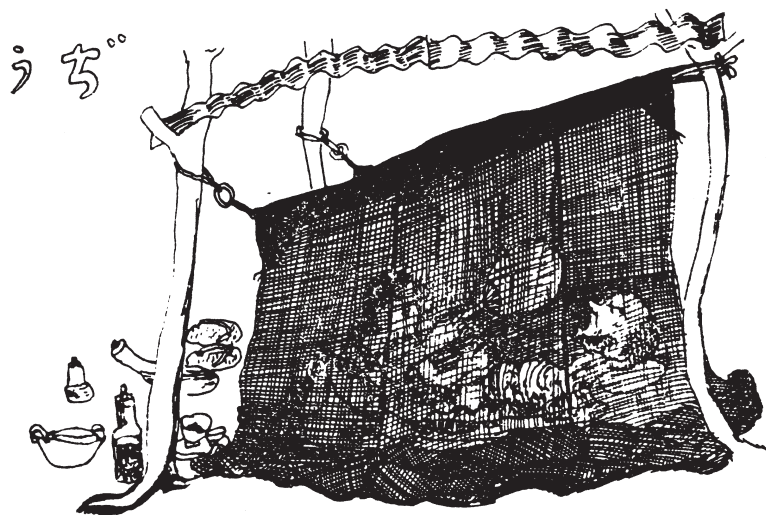


That night, the survivors stayed up sitting.  
生き残った人も、その夜は座ったまま夜を明かした。



The school in Koi was filled with the corpses of people who had fled the city.

己斐町の学校は、逃げてきた人びとが死体の山を築いていました。



The wounds stung when they were infested with maggots,  
but there was no medicine

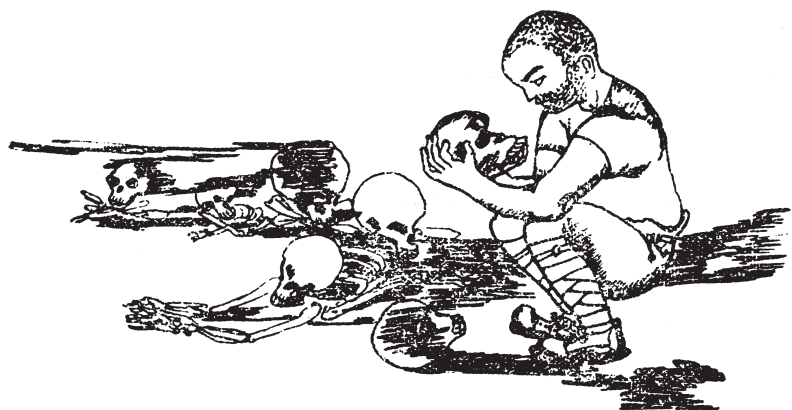
ウジがわくと、チクリチクリ痛むが、薬はなにもない。



Only sand-like rubble remained, and lumps of scorched earth.  
砂礫だけだ。焼けた土芥類だけがころがっている。



No one remains to tell us of what happened at the blast center.  
爆心地の話をつたえてくれる人は、だれもない。



Many people died. Their bones remained, but their names did not.  
たくさんの人が死んだ。白骨になった。冥土への鑑札もなく……。

## 毛のぬけ3人



Even if they survived, their hair started to fall out.  
命びろいした人たちも、髪の毛がぬけ落ちたりしました。



An infinite number of clouds flowed through the warless skies.

I was sick of war.

戦争のない大空には、無限に雲が流れる。もう戦争はまっぴらだ。



My brothers died in battle. Two of my sisters never returned from Manchuria.

Another sister was bombed to death. And now my mother...

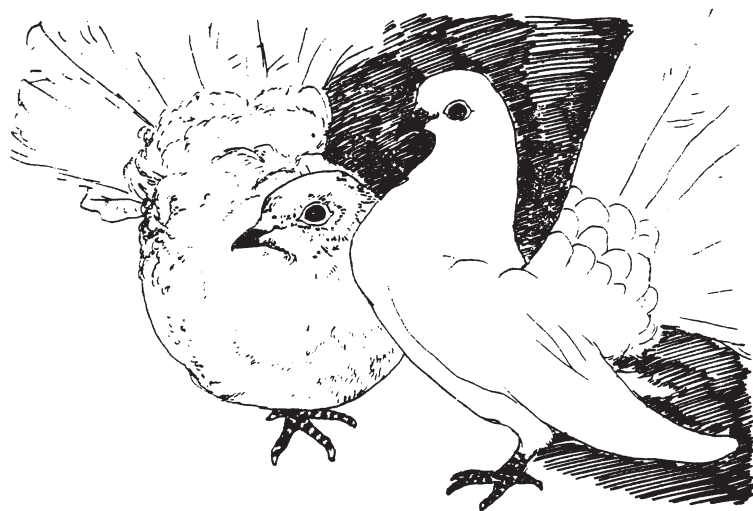
兄と弟は戦死。次姉と末妹は満州。三姉は空爆死。そして母も……。





Rumors of blood-sucking flies spread.

そのころ人の血を吸うハエがいるというわさがひろまりました。



I lost my beloved wife forever to the atomic bomb disease.

原爆症で、糟糠の妻でもあった家内を永久に失ってしまった。

# 原爆の記

指田 吾一





## あの日は晴天だった

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昭和20年8月6日……。

それは世界の歴史の上に、大きな変革をもたらす、記念になった大へんな日だった。

その日の広島は、紺碧の空の下に、真夏の太陽が、広く、大きく、ジリジリ灼けつくように照りつけていた。

静まり返り、流れる汗の暑さをさえ忘れさせるような、全くの晴天だった。

**「隊長、敵機！」**

広島県立女子商業学校の校庭にしつらえてあった司令台上で、宣戦詔書を奉読し終わった私に、軍紀教官の糸井中尉が、軍の定めに従って刀の敬礼をした。次の瞬間、糸井中尉が青空を引き裂くように絶叫した。

「隊長、敵機！」

と、同時に広島市の内外、遠く、近く、いっせいに空襲警報のサイレンがけたたましく鳴り響きはじめた。とたん、異様な無気味さを感じた私は、糸井中尉の指し示す剣尖の方向を仰ぎ見た。

青空の真ただ中に3つの閃光を見た。約2メートル間隔に、等辺三角形の青白い閃光、恐ろしく浸透するようなその光り、私はそれを確認した。

その直後、言い知れぬ打撃に体が宙に浮いた。ただ浮いたと思った。それは確認ではないが、そのように記憶している。

午前8時に集合して、宣戦の詔書をちょうど奉読し終わったあとのことであり、的確な時間の覚えはない。毎週月曜日の慣習であったので、午前8時10分前後であったことに間違いはない。説明のつかないことである。閃光を見る前に、奉読し終わった詔書を持って、部隊本部へ引き上げたはずの中村曹長と、私が立っていたはずの司令台の西南約20メートルのところで、2人とも折り重なって倒れていたことである。

しかも何かが動くので、左手で腹ばいしながらあたりをさわってみたら、声がした。中村曹長である。人間はやはり集団性を持つものであると、あとで考えた。

中村曹長であることを認めて、何か心強いものを感じた。

倒れている私たちに、何とも形容のできないジワッ、ジワッ、ジワッと、繰り返し熱風が来る。熱風というより、細い針金の羽毛で、しかも熱く熱く焼いて、赤くダイダイ色になった羽毛で、繰り返し繰り返し、顔やそこら一面をなで回されているような気持ちの中で、

あの日は晴天だった

だんだん正気づいていった。

中村曹長は、私の腹の下にいたのである。自分へか、中村曹長へか、いまでもわからないが、3回も、5回も「しっかりしろ」「しっかりしろ」と繰り返し叫んだことを覚えている。自然に意識は回復した。これはやられた。何か物凄い強烈な爆弾が炸裂したと感じ、私の部隊は全滅だと思った。でも立たねばならぬ。行かねばならぬ。視力も回復した。

ドス黒く黄色い風、ゴミを巻き上げる黄色い風の中で……。

私の隊は、広島県立女子商業学校の校舎を兵舎代わりに使用していた。

その兵舎も、もはや兵舎ではない。女子学生勤労奉仕隊の寄宿舍も、全部倒壊してしまった。それはほんの一瞬間の出来事だった。

## 原爆火災を手押しポンプで消す

4～5カ所から煙が出ている。これを見て、何か力がはいったように飛び起きた。

「みんな、来い、動けるものは集まれ！」

中村曹長、木村軍曹、三谷上等兵、山田上等兵が飛んで来た。午前9時前後である。

糸井中尉もふらふらとやって来た。みんな顔は真っ黒く焼けていた。

ポンプを持って集合した。20リットル石油カン大の手押しポンプである。かつて駅のプラットホームの水まきに使っていた型だ。全

力を尽くして消火に当たったので、私の部隊と女学校だけは、さいわい5台の手押しポンプで、煙っている火を消し止めた。

初めは、黒っぽいところからくすぶっている。それがだんだん焰となる。

広島全体では、午前10時過ぎに、あっちこちに焰が見え始めた。

最初は、ほとんど破壊された家屋が、どす黒い煙に覆われたのが、かすかに望見された。それがだんだん焰に変わっていった。

何しろ、私の隊の煙は消し止めることができたが、周囲すべて、目に見えるところは破壊され、つぶされている。どことなく煙っている。

と、どこからともなく、重苦しいうなり声が聞こえてくる。耳のせいではなさそうである。私の隊だけではなさそうである。

とっさに「動けるものは、集合して待機せよ。」「すわっていてよろしい。」

ひと声ふた声どなったあと、みんな、動けるものは顔や手の甲の焼けただれたまま、必死に集まってきた。

司令部はどうなっているだろうか、と心配で、比治山頂上の峰にある第6180部隊（船舶砲兵部隊）司令部へ駆け上がって行った。

## 全部吹っ飛んでしまった

駆けつけて見ると、全部吹っ飛んでいた。皆つぶれている。つぶれた材木の間に、本間副官（中佐）が倒れている。顔が真っ黒に焼

けている。

「おい、指田、来たか、やられたよ！」

すっかり弱り切った副官の脈をみて

「だいじょうぶです、がんばってください。」

私は、夢中で比治山を駆け上がってみて、はじめて驚いた。

全広島中が、どす黒い煙の中に覆われている。ところどころに焰の舌が伸び始めた。

1 発や 2 発で、こんな広範囲に火を点ずることのできる爆弾は、何だろう。私は臭気をかきながら一生けんめい考えた。

マグネシウムの粉末に、一度に火をつける。そうしたら、このようになるだろう。臭気から想像しても、全くマグネシウムに放火したとしか思えない臭いだ。

私は、その手段は別としても、すぐにマグネシウム類の発火であるように感じた。

数百トン、数千トン、いや数万、数十万トンもの材木と、金属、コンクリートも、石も、瓦も、レンガも、区別がつかない。いっしょにころがっている。しかも、不規則に重なり合っている。そして煙っている。くすぶっている。ところどころに焰が見える。

どこからともなく、「助けてくれ！」「助けてくれ！」「助けてッ！」「助けてッ！」と、悲鳴に似た声が聞こえてくる。

私は、ショックと、仲間の真っ黒い顔の映像で、何をなすべきかわからなかった。焦点の不明瞭な自分の脳裡に、何かが生き返って来たように感じた。

「助けてくれ！」「助けてッ！」

そうだ、火事を消すのも大事だが、私は軍医だ。医者だ。救いを求めている負傷者たちを助けねばならぬ。焦点がだんだん明瞭になった。

私は比治山を、前よりも早い速度で駆け降りをした。

## 広島陸軍病院も全滅

営庭に待機させておいた動ける兵隊が、中村曹長、木村軍曹、山田上等兵、三谷上等兵らをはじめ、15～16人ばかりいる。司令部は吹っ飛んでしまった。衛生隊も、すでに第1小隊まで、全部の隊がバラバラだ。火災は消し止めたが、兵舎はなくなってしまった。

残った営庭と、比治山の防空壕だけ。頼りにしていた広島陸軍病院も全滅してしまった。救いを求めている負傷者たちを、何とかして自力で助ける途を考えるほかに方法はない。

## 油と脱脂綿……これが衛生材料だ

比治山西南側の防空壕の前に、待機させておいた中村曹長以下の15～16人を集合させた。

「まず脱脂綿、次に油。食用油なら何油でもよし。もちろんオリーブ油があるようだったら持ってこい。衛生材料は何があるか。中村曹長は責任をもって調査しろ。それから鍋、釜、タライ、洗面器、何でもよい容器があったら持って来い。サラシ、ホウタイ、ガーゼ、あったら出しておけ。あったか。よし。それではすぐに診療開始

あの日は晴天だった

だ！」

「中村曹長！ 防空壕倉庫から食料を全部出せるよう、ただちに調べよ。」

「木村軍曹は診療の助手だ！ ほかのものはまず、2つの天幕を組み立てろ。1つは診療用だ。1つは休息用だ。衛生隊の負傷者は防空壕の前に寝かせておけ！」

「木村軍曹は、そこにある洗面器に亜鉛華澱粉を入れろ。脱脂綿も入れておけ。もちろん大きいままで。その上に食用油を入れろ。そしてそれをしぼるんだ。」

これでチンク油ができた。

「チンク油のしみた脱脂綿で、そら、この通り、そっとなでてやる。火傷にはこれが一番だ。動けるものは、全部こい。ほら、気持ちがいいだろう。」

焼けつくように、ヒリヒリ痛みはじめていた兵隊たちは、治療を受けて喜んだ。

## めくれ下がる皮膚

私も、そっとチンク油を手の甲につけてみた。ほんとに気持ちがいい。

そのころになると、第6180部隊衛生教育隊と、赤十字の旗をたよりに――

「兵隊さん、助けて……」

「軍医さん、助けて……」

「看護兵さん、助けて……」

「先生、助けて……」

つぎからつぎと、負傷者が集まって来た。焰と煙でくしゃくしゃになった火傷に、まぶたの皮膚は焼け下がり、あお向くようにして前を向く。

胸の高さに両手をあげている。皮膚がちょうど、手袋を脱ぎかけて、指のところまで裏返しになったように下がっている。

真っ黒にすすけたほおの皮膚は、めくれ下がって、白い脂肪が見えている。もちろん血の気などは全然ない。首輪がずれたように、首筋の皮膚が下へ重なり合い、白い脂肪がのぞいている。

唇ははれあがり、下唇はぶらりと下がっている。鼻の頭も、額も、べろりとむけている。足は甲がほとんど焼けて、皮膚が浮いている。髪の毛はチリチリに焦げている。

着物も焼け焦げている。その上を覆うように、頭髮が、前うしろ見分けがつけにくいほどに乱れ、下がっている。

これは始まったばかりである。白い脂肪を冷湿布のつもりで、そっとチンク油でなでてやると、みな一ように気持ちよいと言って喜ぶ。

半数ほどの患者は、薄れた記憶をたどっているのであろうか、どこかへ去って行く。残りの患者は、くずれ落ちるように倒れ込んでしまう。

時間がたつにしたがって、重症者がふえてきた。昼ごろになると、症状はだんだん醜くなってきた。悲鳴にも似たうなり声は、恐怖と憎悪に変わり、やがて無気味な沈黙に変わってきた。



あの日は晴天だった

どす黒い苦悩が、真っ黒い流れとなって渦を巻いた。虚脱であり、生への否定となっていた。

私たちの診療の方針はだいたい決まった。だが、司令部の方針が決まらない。確かめるために、また比治山へ登る。登りながら、いろいろな考えが頭の中をかけめぐる。

## どす黒い煙、赤い舌

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広島中が、全くどす黒い灰色の煙に覆われてしまった。その中から、ところどころ真っ赤な焰が見える。どす黒い煙がモクモクと動き、焰があたかも巨大な怪物の真紅の舌のように気味悪く伸びてゆく。山の稜線の方へ伸びてゆく。その輪郭が、白く光っている。どす黒い煙。灰色の雲。山際の濃く黒い緑が、両面から広島を、瀬戸内海を、日本中を、いや世界中を包むかと思われた。

どこからともなく、うなり声とともに押し寄せ、覆い尽くすという文字どおりの暗黒。いまに、すべてが暗黒の涯に落ち入るのか。妄想に近い。

が、しかし、なあに、あの煙の、あの雲の中から、光が出てくるのだ。暗黒は、夕立雲のように消えるのだ。そして、それから重傷者を治療するのだ——と、希望を沸き立たせる。しかし司令部は連絡もとってこない。いったい何をしているのだろう。

全力で比治山の裏道を駆け登った。やっぱりだめだ。私の姿を見

どす黒い煙、赤い舌

て、ほっとしたような表情のものばかり。だが、ほっと笑おうとするが、顔がゆがみ、ピリッと黒こげの顔を少し動かすだけだ。何とも手の下しようもない状態だ。

「ようし、思うとおりにやるより、仕方がない。」

そう決意すると、こんどは表道を駆け降りるために走った。

道路の両側に、倒れ伏している人、死んでいる人、すわっている人、たくさんな人だ。このような有様を“地獄の1丁目”とでもいうのであろうか。

なかには、私を知っているのか、焼けただれた誰とも判別しかねる人が、「軍医さん」と呼んだ。

「ようし手を伸ばして、女子商に天幕の診療所があるから、みんなで助け合って行きなさい。治療しているから——」

と言い残し、私は状況を把握しなければと、駆け降りながら、あたりを見回し、破壊の状態を確認したが、処置なしである。

どす黒い煙、悪魔の舌のような焰が、前にも増して、だいぶふえてきた。

「全市だ。全部だ。日本中だ。」

いや、生き残ったもの同士は、何としてでも助け合わなければならぬ。

私は夢中で天幕診療所へ走った。走ると顔へ響く。いままで痛みを感じなかったが、痛い。ビリッと押しつぶすように、熱く痛い。しかし、私は走って、原隊へ戻ってきた。そこには負傷者がいっぱい集まっている。中村曹長、木村軍曹、三谷上等兵たち……みんな、自分自身の火傷は、顔をゆがめ、がまんしながら治療にがんばって

いた。

## 手術とはいっても名ばかり

腕をまくって負傷者の診療に当たらなければならない。そうだと治療だ。

さいわい私は、詔書奉読のときに白い手袋をはめていたので、両手は助かった。おかげで手を使っての治療は自由にできた。

手術とはいっても、ガラス破片の摘出である。顔に3センチから5センチほどもあるガラス片が、とくに肉の多い部分にささっている。うっかり摘出しようとする、破片の見えているところだけで、すぐこわれてしまう。

傷の浅いものは消毒だけ、深いものは消毒をしてペアン（鉗子）ではさみ、ゆり動かしながら静かに抜き取らなければならない。

ザリッと響くが、負傷者は、みんな精神的なショックのためか、打撃によるシビレのためか、顔を少ししかめるだけでがまんする。

10人、20人と負傷者を診るにしたがって、冷静さを取り戻していった。

## 倒壊家屋それは燃料の山

やがて、食事の準備もしなければならない。

「中村曹長、米の用意はよいか、いや鍋の方が先だ。」

私の命令に、中村曹長は敏捷に応じた。比治山寄りの斜面を50セ

どす黒い煙、赤い舌

ンチほど、縦、横に掘って、またたくまに5つほどのカマドを作った。湯沸し用、汁づくり用、飯たき用のができた。燃料などは周辺に山ほどあった。1000人も収容できる兵舎（女子商校舎）がつぶれているのだから、いわば燃料の山があるようなものだ。

堀一等兵は、軍衣の背中を汗でグッショリ濡らして飯をたいている。顔は真っ黒焦げのままだから、汗の流れ出る毛穴はふさがっている状態である。

## 空に立ち昇る原子雲

突如として、再び空襲警報のサイレンが悲鳴のように鳴り渡った。

もう、誰も動こうともしない。それでも幾人かが、のろのろと比治山の防空壕の入り口にうごめいている姿が見える。他のものは尻もちをついたままだ。大半のものは空を向いてすわっている。舞い昇るどす黒い雲をにらんでいる。山際と一定の間隔を保って、どす黒い雲がムクムクと動いてゆく。上空へ、上空へと立ち昇る原子雲だ！ 原子雲と山際との間は、夕方まで晴れていた。

警報だけで終わった昼の大空から、雲を破って雨が降り出した。その雨が真っ黒いのには驚いた。《黒い雨》である。白いワイシャツに、直径2センチほどの斑点が、十も十五も不規則な模様をつける。雨水とは違う、黒いボタ雪の感じだ。

のん気なもので、そのまま皆、いつまでも《黒い雨》に濡れた衣服をまとったままだった。いや着替える服がなかったのだ。

急激な放射能受傷には、新生細胞を出し得る人だけが生きられる。これはあとで、私が東京に帰ってから考えたことである。

何か冷たいものが欲しい。黒い、そして灰色の雨のあと、第2回目の空襲のため、私はそれを考えた。皆そうらしい。すわっている場所の日陰の土を、20～30センチ掘って、腹ばいになり、焼けた頬を土にあてる。いい気持ちである。

こんどは、誰いうとなしに、この新治療が負傷者の間に伝わった。皆、比治山の斜面の日陰を掘って顔をうめる。

私も比治山防空壕の中にはいり、下の方を掘って、しばし顔をあててみる。何ともいい気持ちだ。まず、これが一番である。

## 麦の握り飯で腹ごしらえ

泣き声はつづいている。悲鳴とはこのことであろう。

昼すぎの負傷者は、だんだん重症者が多くなる。救急収容所ができていた話を伝え聞いて、負傷者が、つぎつぎに集まって来るのだ。

フトンの上に寝られるわけではない。天幕や比治山の日陰を選んで、土べたにただ寝かせるだけである。

そのころになって、やっと心にゆとりが幾分できた。塩をつけた麦の握り飯で腹もできた。

## 生と死の境

比治山の登山道や、公園に逃げ込んで倒れている負傷者だけでも

どす黒い煙、赤い舌

助けようと、飯盒に亜鉛華油（チンク油）を入れ、三谷上等兵を連れて出かけた。虫の息とはこのことだ、ほとんど動かない。うつぶせているもの、横に寝ているものは、まだ息をしており、見込みがある。あお向いているのは、突っついても動かない。ときおりフーッとかすかに息をつく。腹ばいのものを横寝させて、焼けているところにチンク油をつけてやる。

10人か20人に1人ぐらい、崖際に寄りかかっている負傷者たちの中に、動けるもの、または歩けるものがある程度で、大部分が重症のものばかりだ。

私たちの救急収容所のある場所を教えると、負傷者たちは、その方向に行こうと歩きかけるが、倒れてしまうものが多い。それでも何とか、必死になって、やっと歩いて行く。

数知れぬほど多くの、こと切れてしまっているものは、もう明日の苦しみはない。

今日なお生きている人は、苦しみだけで、明日の苦しみへ続いている。おそらく明後日はないであろう。

「どうすれば、いいんだ！」

「なぜ、こんな目にあわなければならないのだ！　ちくしょう！！」

無念の涙を飲み、そう言って死んで行く人もいる。

私は、自分でも不思議だなと思った。自分は生きてウロウロしているのだから……。

三谷上等兵が「隊長のご家族の様子を見に行つて来ましょうか」と言ってくれる。三谷上等兵は僧職で、私の当番兵であり、まった

く忠実な兵隊であった。

三谷上等兵の言葉で、忘れていた家族のことが、急に心配になりだした。どうにかなっているのではないかと思った。忘れていたと言ったらウソになるが、心の片隅では、2～3日たったら連絡をとろうと、漠然と考えていたことに気がついた。前後の見境もなく、

「そうだ、すまぬが草津（広島市の西方）へ行って様子を見てきてくれよ」

と頼む。電話も自動車もないところを、疲れのことも考えず、三谷上等兵は、私の家族の様子を見に出かけることになった。

## 日本陸軍最後の衛生隊

チンク油を塗布するだけの治療。比治山のふもとの斜面に、天幕を2張り、負傷患者用にして、ワラムシロをしいてやる。これが、日本陸軍最後の衛生隊診療所であろう。

数多い負傷者を、とうてい収容しきれものではない。何とかよそに護送して、他に収容しなければならない。

まず、比較的被害度の少ない宇品へ送るべきである。しかし、担架も何もない。

燃え残った広島駅に駆けつけた。そして宇品線を、比治山寄りのもっとも近いところに持って来て、負傷者を乗り込ませることにする。貨車積み込みは、支那事变以来なれているところだ。

何とか運べるようだ。これで生きている負傷者はいちおう始末がつく。あとは死んだ人だ。特に名札をつけている人はいい。骨壺に



どす黒い煙、赤い舌

名前を書き込むことができる。だが受け取り人のわからない、無名無縁の死体が無数に多い。

太田川の堤に運ぶか、その場で火葬にするか……。火葬に付すのが親切だが、全部というには手が回りかねる。溝を掘って材木を渡し、その上に遺体を乗せる。積み重ねて火葬にする。分担で、火葬にした遺骨に、それぞれ名札をつける。火葬するにも、石油もガソリンもないので、時間がずいぶんかかる。

とうてい、少人数では始末におえぬ。わずかでも骨が見えたら、それをとって遺骨にする。

診療、後送、死体集積……。だが《死体》《死体》《死体》どこまでも、どこまでも死体の山である。

## 時間は空虚に過ぎる

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もし、戦争を起こしてでも、国を守りたいという人があったなら、見せてやりたい。あのときも、いまもそう考える。

これから先、戦争があるとするならば、一方が、あるいは両方が、このような結果にならなければ、戦争が終結しないことは明瞭だ。戦争こそ愚人のたわごとである。物はすべて破壊される。人はみな死んでいる。鉄線、電線、電柱、樹木、石、瓦、土、コンクリート、みな瓦礫と死体の山。どこもかしこも、すべて文明以前の姿であり、生命以前の不自然さである。

核爆発を知らない人たちに見せてやりたい。ただ愕然、ただ茫然、無抵抗な、無自覚な、不自然な、不毛な、不吉な、あらゆる破壊、あらゆる罪惡、あらゆる非人道の、言語に絶する地獄絵そのものだ。

物は折り重なり合う。物は破壊される。物は崩れ落ちる。物はす

べて原型をとどめぬ。物すべてが原始に還る。

生物は死滅し、緑は灰色に焦げ、青はどす黒く、白は紅蓮の焰に、真っ黒い煙にうずまる。生物はうごめき、そして生物は倒れる。生物はのた打ち回り、やがてしまいには動かなくなる。

木の葉は焦げ、木の葉は燃え、木の葉に生はなくなる。すべて灰一色である。すべては生命以前の、すべては原質のかたまりであり、死そのものである。

時間がたつ。時間がわからない。時間は空虚に過ぎてゆく。時間は喜びも、結果もない。ただ、ただうごめくもの。水平には波である。上下にも波である。音も動きもない波。それが、たちまち動き出した。点火された火薬のように、突発した龍巻のように、ごうごうと。どこから来るのであろう。うなりが聞こえて来る。合いま合いまに、男の、女の、子供の、悲鳴をふくんだ、うなり声が……。

助けて！ 痛い！ 苦しい！

表現のことばはない。それはのろいであり、祈りであり、あきらめである。

時はたつ。

煙は広島中に、日本中に、世界中に広がってゆく。

誰と誰が生き残るなどという、生ぬるいものではない。ただ意志のない、ただ考えのない、苦しみのみの人たち。魂のない抜けがらのような、うつろな人間像ともいえるだろう。

昼すぎごろになって、やっと負傷者の処置も一定してきた。

まず、火傷だけはチンク油で処置。異物損傷は摘出。その両方を受けた負傷者もいる。医療材料はありったけ。消毒、チンク油、観

血手術（大手術）に使う。

## 衛生隊は持久戦だ！

そのころになって、やっと飯が炊けた。岩塩のような、塩をまぶした握り飯。無性にうまい。治療の合いまを縫って、大きいのを1つ、負傷患者も兵隊も、喜んでほおばった。精神面での治療に役立った。

比治山診療所——比治山船舶砲兵部隊治療所——指田部隊診療所——などと考えて見たが、何も特別に名称をつけることもあるまい。《第6180部隊指田衛生隊》の門柱に掲げた標識はそのままに、赤十字旗をいっしょに立てた。

さあ、持久戦だ。持ちこたえねばならぬ。半永久的にだ。その覚悟で‘野戦的衛生隊’の準備はできた。大陸での野戦のことを考えれば、雨つゆをしのげるだけでも結構なことだ。野戦衛生隊である。天幕は張った。カマドもできた。飯もたけた。腹もふくれた。治療のこともこれでよし、衛生隊はがんばりぬくぞと張り切った。

## ひろがる不安と疑惑

なぜか、こんな姿の戦争が、いつまでも続くような気がする。帝国陸海軍は運命をかけて、最後まで戦う作戦だと言っている。しかし、どこからともなく、戦況不振のニュースが伝わってくる。船舶兵の中には、轟沈されて生き残りの経験者がたくさんいる。

陸でも、海でも、広島でも、そして空には勇ましかった戦闘機もなければ、大きな爆撃機の姿も見られない。これではどうにもならぬ。

気力だけで戦争はできない。作戦を練っている幕僚たちも、必ず勝つと信じ切っているわけのものでもないだろう。へたなバクチで、損の追い打ちではないだろうか。何となく、不安と疑惑の雲が、しだいしだいに広がってくる。

### 眼の下3センチにガラス片

診療所はめっぽう忙しい。火傷の女の子がやってくる。火傷より挫傷の方がひどい。よくみると、左顴骨下部（頬骨）の横3～4センチのところ、不潔な切挫創である。ソンデーでさわってみると、サリリッという。

「ガラスだな」助手の中村曹長が、消毒したペアンを持ってくる。横に浅くはさむと、またサリリッと音がして、碎けてしまいそうな感じだ。深く、弱く、やわらかくはさんで、引っ張ってみた。それだけではだめだ。左右にゆすってみる。よろしい。上下にゆすってみる。だめだ。割れそうだ。そこで根気よく左右にゆすって、引いてはゆるめ、ゆるめては、また引っ張ってみる。

動いた。出はじめた。ついに取れた。その間、15分。女の子はよくがまんした。

何かの厚いガラスが、直径3センチ余りの破片が、こともあろうに、左目の下のところに、横一文字に入っていたのである。これが

3センチ上の目だったら、と思っただけでもゾツとした。

南段原小学校へ来てくれ、と連絡がある。中村曹長を随行して行ってみる。ここはもっとひどい。医師も、看護兵も、看護婦もないのに、折り重なるように、負傷者でいっぱいだ。ほんとうに、ところせましと、いっぱい寝ている。寝ているというより、倒れ伏している。

チンク油処置以外に方法はない。5本ばかり用意してきた包帯も、たちまち使い果たしてしまった。負傷者自身の持っているタオルや、手ぬぐいでしばってやる。文明以前の姿である。

## 何のために、誰のために

明治37～38年の日露戦争以来、莫大な国民の血税で作りあげた帝国陸海空軍は、日本および日本人の発展と、幸福のため以外なし、国民もまた、政治と軍部に奉仕し、犠牲もまたやむなし——と、東条は、岸は、賀屋は、阿南は言う。

そして、この責任者たちは、なお狂気の戦いを、われわれ国民に強いる気であろうか。奉仕こそ、国民至上の義務なり、と豪語したが、この広島を、この惨憺たる状態を、何と釈明するのだろうか。

すでにいま、虚栄と無知とどん欲な彼らの恐るべき鉄面皮は、国民をここまで深く落とし込んだのである。もし一片の軍隊もなかったと仮定したら、日本がもっとひどい結果を生じるようになったとは思わない。

もちろん、警察や自衛隊があってもよい、常にそれらが国民の側

時間は空虚に過ぎる

にあり、そして警察も自衛隊も、国民と一体になって治安を守る。そして国民の自由意志にもとづいて政府をつくる。それでいいのだ。そうしたなら、原爆広島 of 惨劇は起こらなかっただろう。

そしてまた、350万！ そんなにも多くの人間が、太平洋で戦死しなかったであろう。

私の主義主張として、資本主義を守るために、あるいは思想を守るために、戦争という手段に訴えてまで……と思うほど、相手は凶悪なものではない、と考える。

原爆を日本に落とし、ナパーム弾をベトナムに叩き込み、人間を焼き殺すことが、何のために、だれのために許されるのか。だれが何といっても、絶対に許されるべきものではない。

資本主義を守るためにも、人殺しは許せないし、もちろん社会主義を守るためにも、人殺しは認められない。それは、すべての生命の安全のために、考え、行動しなければならぬからである。

## 動けるものは生きられるぞ！

寝静まるはずの夜の比治山は、うめき声で充満した。

私の火傷も痛む。焼きちぎれるような痛み。あんな痛みは始めてであった。ただれて、破れるような痛み。煮えて死んでいる表皮と、生き残っている真皮との境が、焼け落ちるのを食い止めようとする、引っ張り合いからくる痛みであろう。

いま、比治山に生き残っている人びとは、みな、露出部分は真っ黒焦げである。そして痛みと激痛におののいている。震えている。

眠れるものではない。熟睡できるものは1人もいない。真夏の夜、うなっている。原子爆弾による火災の焰の熱、生き地獄のうなり声である。どこもここも、悲鳴の断続とうなり声の波である。夜はあくまでどす黒く、どこからともなく、焰の反射で薄明るい暑熱の夜である。鈍重な焼けた斧で、手さぐりで土を掘り、土の穴へ焼けた頬をそっと押しつける。それがせめてもの、無力な人間の逃避なのか。だれもが逃げようとしめない。同じ思いなのであろうか。同じように動かない。

夕方まで、宇品線護送の約300人以上の人びとを、瀬戸内海の島々への分散と、江田島へ収容する、との連絡が来た。約30人の重症患者が残っている。この人たちの苦しみは、想像を絶する症状である。

夜明け方、とろとろとまどろんだ。広島市全域にわたって燃える火災、だれ1人として消そうともしない火事、ただ逃げ回るだけの火事、のろいの憎しみの火事である。

夜明けになっても、温度は下がらない。が、そうだからといって、そのためだけや、火事のためにだけ暑いのではなさそうだ。

少しでも元気を出して、がんばるんだ。動けるものは、心配するな。生きられるんだ。

連絡をとる必要のあるものは、各自連絡をとれるだけとるがよい。行くものは、必ず握り飯だけは持って行け。



## 被災下を訪ねて来た少年

朝飯の仕度の最中、「おじさん」といって、1人の少年がやって来た。

私の宿舎になっていた旅館で、船舶兵が出港するたび、私物品をあずけに行く研屋旅館の長男で、中学3年生である。

「どこへ行っても火事なので、昨夜は兵隊さんのところで休んだ。おじさんがここにいるとわかったので、だいじょうぶかどうか、様子を見に来た」と言う。かわいい心づかいである。さっそく握り飯を食べさせた。

「君の家の近くの火事が消えたら、行って見てあげるから、しばらくここにいるがよい。」

さいわい怪我もしていないし、安心もした。しかし、不吉なことながら、一家全滅と思われる予感がした。何しろ爆心地の旅館だったから、とてもだめであろう。

考えてみれば不思議なものだ。もし原爆投下が月曜日でない日の午前8時10分であったなら、私は死んでしまったであろう。旅館とともに私は燃えてしまったかも知れない。

月曜日以外は、つねにこの旅館に泊っていた私であった。

## 広島からきた電報

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生き残った私自身の不思議さを考えたとき、広島再任当初の4月のことを思い起こした。

4月12日、第6180部隊（船舶砲兵部隊）の教育隊を引き受けたときにさかのぼる。

北海道小樽で、船舶砲兵分遣隊の衛生隊責任者であった私に、広島から電報が届いた。即刻、広島船舶砲兵隊本隊へ帰投せよという電報であった。広島に来いということはわかったが、なぜ帰投するとか、その内容についてのことは全然不明であった。

《こりゃ参った。太平洋での戦況が最悪のときに、沖縄海上勤務に回るかも知れぬ。ついてないな。最低だわい。》

しかし、軍の命令であってみれば、反対するわけには行かぬ。やむなく広島に向けて出発することにした。

## 小樽——東京・田無——広島

私も、昭和13年以来の、カンの働く古参の軍医中尉であった。海上勤務にでも回ったら、もはや家族とは再び会えぬ。ようし、いまのうちに、東京都下北多摩郡の田無町にいる家族の様子を見ておこうと思った。

田無についたのは4月12日。田無駅前壊滅の直後である。96人の町の人が、空爆による爆死をとげた直後だった。駅の周辺は1トン爆弾に見舞われた。無残な爆弾の穴、穴、穴だった。

死体累々。合わせて96体だった。自宅に戻ったものの、すぐさま上着を放り投げ、軍刀をはずし、救急医者に早変わりし現場で三十数人の治療。20人は入院。広島の本隊へ帰るところではなくなってしまった。

さいわい、田無警察署長の津田さんから、陣中見舞いに樽詰めウイスキーの提供があり、これを飲み飲み、入院患者や外来患者においまくられて夜になった。

家の中は、爆塵と石のかけらと爆片で、ちらかり放題である。それでも家族は、みな無事だった。

96の遺体は、町の中心部にある総持寺の境内に並べた。生き残った負傷者は入院、外来もともに一手に引き受けた。

そのときだ。また空襲警報のサイレンが、高々と鳴りわたった。患者をかかえての空襲は、全くもって「こりゃかなわぬ」以外の何ものでもない。それでも、ウイスキーのおかげで、勇を鼓してふるまい、元気を出して診療を続けることができた。

あの新宿、明治神宮付近が壊滅したのは、4月13日であった。それも夜だった。その夜は、田無方面はだいじょうぶだった。しかし田無町の空まで染まって、真っ赤、真っ赤。爆弾が落ちて来る不安がないので、夜警の人たちと、明け方までウイスキーを飲み明かした。

13日。1日中、診療をやったので、やっと人間らしい1日、医者らしい1日を過ごした。

14日。電報が入る。《北海道を出発したというのに、なぜ広島へこぬか?》やれやれ、とうとう見つかってしまったか。

15日。急ぎ広島へ向かう。途中、数回となく、空襲で停車。ようやく広島に無事に着く。

「君の到着を待ちかねた。君の体験で、6180部隊（船舶砲兵）衛生教育隊の隊長になってくれ。」

これには驚いた。いくら何でも、教育隊長とは。

家族全員、田無駅前の空襲からは助かったが、そのまま田無におくことは心配で、ほどなく、私の任地、広島へ呼びよせることにした。しかし、それが後になって、広島草津であの恐るべき原爆の洗礼を受けることになるなど、夢想だにできなかったことだ。世の中は全く皮肉なものである。

## 船団を組んで南の海へ

私は、昭和6年兵である。軍事教練では、指揮者をやったこともある。歩兵二等兵を6カ月もやった。軍医候補生では1番の成績だ

った。

昭和12年、召集以来、大陸では、六師団の第3衛生隊長をやり通した。色は黒いが、血は赤い。九州育ちの六師団衛生隊、第3隊長だった。やれんことは何一つないはずだ。

大陸戦線で。満州、北京、中支、南方と。輸送船、特攻隊、北方の守り北海道分遣隊長……。その間、戦傷数回。生きている仲間のうちでは、体験豊富の方であった。

また、レイテ特攻輸送船団の最高責任の軍医長として出勤、しかし比島レイテ湾まで行き着かぬうちに、13隻の船団は全滅。リングエン湾サンフェルナンドで、私たち乗船の《青葉山丸》も、戦友2700人とともに轟沈させられてしまった。レイテ島に上陸できたものは1人もいない。1隻の戦艦も目的地に進入することはできなかった。

船も、軍艦も、上陸用舟艇も、兵隊も、兵器弾薬も、食糧も、落下傘も、馬も、自動車も、すべて海底の藻屑と化してしまった。これほどなす術もなく、惨敗を喫することは、滅多にあるものではない。完敗と言っていいほどの惨敗であった。

## 司令官閣下の訓辞

船舶砲兵隊の最高幹部は、私の体験が豊富であると勤務評定。敗戦直前の衛生教育隊長として指名したらしい。そこで私は、あのときの完全惨敗の実況を回顧しなければならない。

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私の乗っていた《青葉山丸》をはじめ《せりあ丸》《神州丸》《吉備津丸》《日向丸》日本に残っていた1万トン級の輸送船5隻で、船団を編成。これらを守る巡洋艦《鳳祥》は、まるで弁慶の外出のような武装をしていた。

キャタパルトに飛行機2機。西側を向いて空を仰ぎ、さあ来いの体勢。駆逐艦3隻、海防艦4隻、それらもみな、ハリネズミのように武装していた。門司を出発するとき、司令官は訓辞でこう言った。

「諸君、いま、レイテの山下閣下の要請によって、われわれは特攻輸送船団として突入する。上御1人に対し奉り、名誉であるばかりでなく、武人の誉れでもある。しかも、諸君の身を守るため、装備は砲雷等、その他十分な備えとともに、防雷網を装備し、魚雷攻撃を防ぐようになっている。全く憂いの要はない。勇敢に戦い、船舶兵の名誉を守るよう……」

そして、訣別の酒杯。杯には名ばかりの日本酒が、少量注がれただけ。もちろん将校だけにであった。

やがて、乗船して驚いた。古ぼけた青葉山丸。それでも7.5センチ高射砲が、前後2門ずつ4門、その他2センチ機関砲数門、ほかに機関銃もあり、合わせて48門あるということだった。

《やれやれ、まあ、これなら何とかいけるわい》と思ったが、昭和19年12月30日の午後3時になって、またまた驚かされることになった。

## 敵米軍の制海、制空権下を航行

防雷網が、各船ごとにつけてあると言った佐伯文郎司令官の話は、たんなる気やすめに過ぎず、一片の網らしい網もなかった。電探もない。古めかしい時代おくれの音波探知機があるだけだった。

門司を出てから6時間もたたないうちに、音探感度大、右3200方向で180度方向転回、後帰り左右で6400方向で1回転である《正面、ゼロ方向へ一致》。たえまなしに音探感度大の報告がくる。船長も司令官も、まごまごするばかり。フィリピン、レイテに行くのに、朝鮮に残っていた2万5000の兵隊を乗せ、たえまなく、船は左、右、左、右のジグザグ行進の電光型進撃。このまま突進するなら、朝鮮からの兵隊を乗せた船は、再び兵隊を朝鮮へ送り届けに行くようなものだ。そのうち済州島の島影が見えてきそうな疑いも起こってこようというもの。これじゃあ、レイテ救護に間に合いそうにも思われないし、いっこうにフィリピン方向へ進まないのである。

あとになってわかったのだが、レイテ救護に間に合っていたなら、われわれ助かって帰って来た270名の仲間も、全員死んでいたかも知れぬ。潜水艦というのは、味方ではなくて、敵艦のことであり、飛行機というのは、みな、敵のもの……と思わなければならないほど、アメリカ軍に制海権も制空権も握られていた。その中を縫う必死の航行だった。

## バーシー海峡のいやな思い出

ついで、またまた驚いた。危惧したとおり、幾日たっても朝鮮近海である。済州島から青島沖、中国大陆の沿岸沿いに、南へ。出発のときから灯火管制のため、夜間は真っ暗である。5日目になって、ようやく海水が濁りはじめた。揚子江近くまで、たどり着いたなと思った。

フィリピンに行かずに、揚子江だ。そのうち濁った海水に、いくつもの島影が見えて来た。舟山列島である。

台湾にいちばん近い島影から、50キロの台湾沖へ。台湾西岸から、バーシーの島づたいに音探に躍らされ、あるいは敵機の影を見ては高射砲の乱射。撃てど叩けど、弾着は2キロも手前。2000メートルも届かないもどかしさ。

あのバーシーの海、黒紺色の海、無限の深さを思わせる海……いやな思い出である。

敵潜水艦も敵機も、やたらに攻撃して来ない理由があった。島が多くて、逃げこむ場所の多いところにいる船に対し、わざわざ攻撃をかけて来ることをしなかっただけのことである。

## わが船団つぎつぎに轟沈

フィリピンのルソン島、浅黄色の浅い海、長い航海をへて、やっとたどりついて、ほっとした海。リングエン湾サンフェルナンドもすぐ目の前。われわれ13隻の船団が近づくと、これはどうだ。



敵は、わが方の位置も、武装も、船団の状況も、先刻すでに偵察ずみ。42機編隊を中核とした3編隊。三方から音探感度が入って来て、逃げ場もない。

魚雷の数も、私の目に映ただけでも16発。飛行機は低翼の艦載戦闘機のグラマン、それに双胴のロッキード。この両者が、リングエンの山影から、突如として2機、3機と突進してくる。B24らしい大物は、わが高射砲が、いくら火を吹いても、高度も変えなければ、速度も変えない裕々たるものだ。

ロッキードが射ち込んでくる。200キロから400キロの雷撃は、どれもこれもみんな命中である。

たまたま、わが川西式四発水上艇がやってくる。潜水艦偵察らしきことを20～30分間ほど行なっている。そのときグラマン4機が、2機ずつ左右からこれを攻撃して来た。瞬間カチィ、カチィ、カチィと音がした途端、グラマン機が撃墜かと思いきや、何としたことか、わが川西が50メートルの焰を残して爆発、海中に突入していった。あとは、ちょぼ、ちょぼと波頭が泡立っただけ、もう艇も人間も、煙さえ姿を消してしまった。

どの船も、艦も、あるだけの対空砲撃をしたが、残念無念、1機の敵機も撃墜することができなかった。わが方からは、ドラム缶大の潜水艦攻撃爆雷を、海中に投下したが、爆破反応は全然ゼロ。

海防艦、駆逐艦は全速退避。しかし、わが船団は、敵の飛行機から逃げおおせるわけでもなく、1発の被弾であっけなく轟沈。1隻また1隻、つぎつぎに沈んで行った。

それでも、勇ましいわが駆逐艦の1隻が、全速力で敵機に追いつ

がり、狂気のごとく射ちまくる。しかし、これもまた、全弾射ち尽くして、悲壮な最後を遂げてしまった。

全速力、全砲門から、射って、射って、射ちまくるうちに、低空から突進してきたロッキードに爆撃される。どの船も、どの艦も、B24に爆撃され、グラマンに銃撃され、煙がモヤモヤと100メートルも上がる。それが消えるころには、敵機のえじきとなったわが戦艦が、つぎからつぎと波間に姿を消していった。

まるで油の入った割れ鍋に、火をつけて、海の中に放り込んだようなもので、煙が消える前に、すべてが見えなくなる。

どの船も、どの艦も、キャタパルトの飛行機も、装備も、逃避する前に沈み、いまごろは南支那海の海底で、魚の住み家にでもなっていることであろう。

私たちの乗っていた1万トンの5隻は、いくらか持ちこたえたものの、持久戦というわけにもゆかない。ますます危険さを加える。海中へ脱出した数名の戦友とともに、私も陸地めざして力の限り、泳ぎに泳いだ。

## 輸送船団の最後

グシヨぬれで、サンフェルナンドの砂浜へ、叩きつけられるように、やっと泳ぎついた。

爆撃を避ける格好の場所もなし、暮れかけた南国の海に、私たちの乗り捨てた5隻の輸送船が、ときおり、砂浜の砂を吹き飛ばすような振動を起こし、爆発音を発し、火の粉を散らし、仕掛け花火の

ようだった。

敵機は照明弾を投下。じゅうたん爆撃を継続する。リングエン湾の魚類が全滅してしまうのではないかと思うほどの激しさだった。

味方の射撃は、いくら射っても届かないし、船が沈む前とは打って変わり、兵員の数も激減してしまった。おそらく全滅に近いものになっているのだろう。

疲れ果てて、死も生もなく、痴呆のような状態で、ガソリンと爆弾を満載した1万トンの船が5隻、夕陽の中で爆発し、火を吹く美しい光景を眺めていた。

5時間近くも、真っ赤に爆発し燃え尽くす輸送船の最後を、爆撃の危険もおそろしさも空腹も忘れ、暗くなってゆく南支那海に起こった船団爆発の光景を、涙を流しながら見送り、砂浜の上に夜はふけていった。

## 負けいくさの仲間

いつとき、サンフェルナンドの砂浜へ逃げのびてみたものの、食事は、塩をつけた麦の握り飯が1日にたったの1個だけ。やせて黒く、目玉だけギョロギョロさせた帝国軍人が、ほとんどフンドシ1本の丸裸、ゴボウ剣さえ持たぬ、情けない姿になり果ててしまった。

逃げるにしても、かくれる場所はない、飛行機の爆撃を避けるためには、ヤシの木陰をただうろうろするばかり。この状況を見て、われら船舶兵は、どうせ戦いが負けいくさなら、同じ負けでも、海

で死にたい、もし運があるなら、日本国土の土の上でと、帰れる船の現われるのを、だれもが心のうちで念じた。

こんなにまで叩かれ、みじめに負けている姿を、この事実を、参謀は、司令部は知っているだろうか。知っているなら、この事実の上に立って外交作戦と内政作戦を統合し、敵国との交渉、折衝を考えているのかどうか、言ってやりたかった。また言わなければ気がおさまらなかった。

夜明け前、全滅必至と思い込んでいた私たちに、かすかな希望をつないでくれた。《日向丸》の生き残りの兵隊が、まだ船に乗っていることがわかった。《青葉山丸》は4発被爆。《神州丸》《吉備津丸》《せりあ丸》《日向丸》は、いずれも傷ついている。

護衛艦は、全滅した。船はみな、のた打ち回っていたが、ついには撃沈されてしまった。

500隻あるといわれた日本の艦船は、あの戦争によって、すべて烏有に帰してしまった。《日向丸》は被弾してはいるが、まだだいじょうぶのようだ。上陸用のボートで《日向丸》に交渉することにした。《日向丸》と甲板越しに声をかけ、交渉すると――

「他船のものはだめだ。水も米もない。」

「水も米もいらぬ。乗せるだけ乗せろ。」

「だめだ！」

話の交渉ではラチがあかぬ。強引な体当たりでゆくほかない。むりやりタラップによじのぼり、強制乗船をする。

「乗せないというのは誰だ。みんな同じ日本兵じゃないか。乗せろと言っても、たった270名だけだ！」

5000名収容の船に、270名ぐらいいもぐり込めないわけではない、しかも同じ船舶兵同士、同じ戦闘序列、同じ負けいくさ仲間だ。われわれの要求に反対はないはずだ。

かくして、270名は強制乗船を敢行してしまった。《日向丸》の連中もしぶしぶ了解しなければならなかった。ときに昭和20年1月1日の午前6時ごろである。

まもなく午前7時、リングエン湾、サンフェルナンドをあとにして、さらに苦難の航海を続けることになった。

### 焼けた砂糖はカルメ焼き

食糧の制限やむなし、音探たえまなし、ひっきりなしに上空からは敵機の偵察が続く。

電光型、Uターン型、前進速度全速、夜間は魚雷襲撃を防げない。バーシーの島陰めざして逃避する。

1日にサンフェルナンド沖から逃げ出して、ようやく5日になって、台湾の高雄へ。これまた驚きである。いつになったら日本へ着けるやらである。

往路は港外通過で気づかなかったが、高雄は、波止場の砂糖倉庫は全滅。数百メートルつづく倉庫は軒並み、ねじ曲がった鉄片の屑と化していた。

考えてみると、19年12月から20年1月までが、いよいよ最後の戦線であったのだ。

レイテ救援ならずして、レイテ全滅。

リングエン湾、サンフェルナンド防衛ならずして、敵上陸。

私たちが《日向丸》でサンフェルナンドを離脱したのが、1月1日の午前6時。そのあとへ、入れ替わり、敵が上陸したのが1月6日。これまた冷汗三斗である。

台湾の高雄へ向かって、まず西へ、南支那海へ。音探に追いまくられて右往左往、バーシー海峡から電光型航行で、1月5日やっと高雄へ。6日朝、敵のリングエン湾上陸の情報をきく。

米第七艦隊が、南支那海方面から台湾海峡の全面封鎖をするため、やがて台湾近くにやって来ることだろう。

急ぎ高雄を出港、基隆（キイルン）へ。ここならまず、だいじょうぶと思いきや、1月8日の大詔奉載日と、知るや知らずや、敵機の来襲。私たちリングエン被災組は、一目散に《日向丸》へ避難。

あっちで砂糖、こっちでバナナ、あるいは干しバナナまで、求めるためにうろちょろする。食い意地だけは張っていて、誰でも必至だ。

高雄では、沈没船がいっぱいだった。それもみな日本の艦船だった。基隆波止場も、被弾や被爆で破損した船が、修理のために満員である。

高雄の爆撃によって、焼け落ちた倉庫の跡は悲惨だった。焼けた砂糖は、レンガ色の不完全カルメ焼きになっていて、ブッカキにすると、けっこう食うことができた。

日本最後の姿であったのか、高雄の町は、いやに平気をよそおっていた。かえって基隆の方が、できもしない船の修理をやっているだけに、そんな姿こそ、日本の別の形、別の姿であったように思え

た。

## 左十文三分、右十一文のゴム足袋

グラマン、ロッキードを主力にした1月8日の基隆空襲で、われわれは一目散、逃げるが勝ちの退避であった。

それから2週間。舟山列島の島陰へ、揚子江の泥水へ、青島の沖合いへ、朝鮮の済州島へと逃避を続け、やがて門司へ……。

左に十文三分、右に十一文のゴム底足袋をはき、肩当ての縫い着けてある、階級章なしの兵隊作業服の私に向かって、倉庫係の下士官が、

「毛布がいるなら、手続しろ！」

まるで、敗残兵でも扱うような口ぶりで、一喝を浴びせかけて来た。これにはつい、我慢がならず、

「敗れたりとはいえ、日本の軍医中尉。しかも270名を指揮している部隊長である。軍曹！ 貴様ごときの指揮は受けはせぬ。ぐずぐずぬかすと、たたっ切るぞ！」

軍曹は、抜き放った軍刀と、私の見幕にびっくり仰天、直接、在庫品の毛布を1～2枚ずつ、文句なしに、支給してくれた。毛布を二つに折って、肩からすっぽりかけると、マントを着たような格好になった。

さきほどは、大人げもなく威張り散らしたものの、なんともはや、敗残兵よろしくの姿である。‘轟沈、轟沈……’の歌が、このときほどシャクにさわったことはない。轟沈とは、帝国海軍のなれの果

て、すなわち、いまのわが姿であった。

私たちを門司まで運んでくれた《日向丸》が、その翌朝\*、博多湾で不運にも触雷して轟沈、乗組員が全員死亡したことを、あとで聞いた。またまた、冷汗三斗の思いであった。

## 兵隊服の軍医中尉

広島駅から、電車3両に分乗して、宇品へ。そして宇品の留守部隊本隊へ、何ともはや、あわれな姿で帰還して来たのであった。

部隊の営門で、勤務中の衛兵から「止まれ！」の命令。またまた頭にきて「何をぬかすかっ」とばかり、どなりとばし、勝手に営門を通過してしまった。

左十文三分、右十一文のゴム底足袋、階級章もつけてない、兵隊服を着た軍医中尉のみじめな姿を見て、司令官も副官も、愕然として言葉もなかった。悲痛きわまりない表情の面持ちで、私たちを迎えた。私たちには反対に、この上官たちが、むしろあわれにさえ思えた。これでは負けようというのも無理ないわけだ。やがて私は部下の全員に休暇を与えて解放。私も家族の待っている東京の田無へ――。

しかし、その3日後には、北海道へ転任の命令を受けたのである。

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\* 本人が伝え聞いた噂によれば翌日とのことであったが、実際には5月30日に博多湾で触雷により沈没した。



## 衛生教育隊長になる

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話は前に戻るが、以上のいきさつと実情を、私は佐伯文郎司令官に、つぶさに報告したのである。

北海道転任、そして4月10日の広島帰投命令。狂乱の南海戦線、焰の海からの脱出。万策尽きての私への命令は、前記のように衛生教育隊長になれというものであった。私もついに腹をきめ、《ようし、それならこちらも、一つ恩に着せてやれ》という考えになった。

教育計画は私まかせ、ダイハツボートを5隻欲しい、この条件が簡単に入れられ、私はいよいよ教育隊長になることになった。

- 一、月曜日は宣戦の詔書奉読。
- 二、日曜日は学科、午後は手旗信号の練習。
- 三、火、水、木、金、土は、安芸の宮島において上陸演習。

このことが、後に私が救われる結果となった。月曜日以外は、ゆっくり8時半ごろ出勤すればよかったし、ゆっくり出勤できる火水

木金土日は、もっぱら研屋旅館の宿舎泊りだった。

ただし、月曜日だけは詔書奉読の日であるから、午前8時に集合しなければならない。そのために、日曜日の夜は、兵舎（女子商校舎）の軍用ベットで寝ることにしていた。

それで、8月6日、この日は月曜日であり、午前8時からの恒例による朝礼の最中、あの恐怖の原子爆弾が、広島の上空に投下された日であり、投下された朝である。

もし私がおその日、研屋旅館にいたとしたら、旅館主の幸田さんの家族や同宿人ともども、爆死していたことであろう。遺体も残らずに――。

また兵舎の中にいたなら、梁や棟木の下敷きとなって、ブチ殺されていたことであろう。火も消すこともできないで、焼け死んだに違いない。

7日に、研屋旅館へ行くつもりだったが、そこまでの一帯が全部焼けてしまったので市内には入れない。

そればかりではなく、比治山周辺の消火と、診療と、負傷患者の輸送、それに死体の始末などで追い回され、1日中忙しく過ごしてしまった。

## 草津で被爆した家族たち

そんなとき、昨日、草津へ出かけて行った三谷上等兵が帰って来た。

私の長男・勢郎（当時広島二中2年生、13歳）と三男・実郎（3

歳)が、あずけてあった草津の寺へまだ帰ってないという。これにはまいった。三男はきっと、寺の周辺が火災にはやられていないようだから、だいじょうぶと思われる。

勢郎は、月水金と、練兵場で芋作りのはず、きっとどこかにいるに違いない。家内は吹き飛ばされたけれども無事。次男・達郎も、家内と同じように飛ばされたが、これも無事だったという報告である。私自身で見に行ってやりたい衝動にかられたが、さがす当てとてない。不安ではあったが、やむをえぬことと思いとどまった。

三谷上等兵が、私の心痛を察してか、「もう一度、行って来ます」といって、草津の寺へ再度出かけて行った。

天にまかせて運を待つ。《明日は、交替で俺が行こう》と、思案の中で考えた。

8日の朝は、一晩中、負傷患者のうなり声に明けた。できるだけ多く治療をすませ、草津の寺へ出かける準備をした。

昼すぎごろまでに、火事は、広島市内の中心部のほとんどを、石も、木も、レンガも、瓦も、土も、何もかも焼き尽くした。

そして火勢は、なおも海岸の方へと燃えて行く。太田川の支流が、大きく5つに分かれているため、燃える過熱を幾分防いだかに思われたが、とてもまだ市内中心部には入れない。昼すぎおそくなって、やや下火にはなったが、完全な焼け石、焦げ土である。

午後になって、三谷上等兵が草津から帰って来た。

「隊長殿、よかったです。勢郎君は、顔中火傷していますが、山を越えて、3日目に帰って来ました。一時、山の小屋に倒れていたようですが、人に起こされて、歩いて帰って来たと言っていました

た。」

練兵場で、芋を掘っているところを吹っ飛ばされ、やっと立ち上がってみると、あちこちに煙が昇り、燃え出している。はうようにして山へ逃げたが、山の小屋で休んでいるうち、くたびれて寝てしまった、とのことだった。それでも人に起こされ、草津の方向を見定めて帰って来たという報告をきいた。よかった、よかったと、一安心。

三男の実郎は、草津寺の奥さんが抱いて山へ駆け込み、山の防空壕で一晩過ごして来たという。これまた大助かり。

私は三谷上等兵と入れ替わりに、仕事を中村曹長、木村軍曹らに一任し、家族の安否を自分の目で確かめるために、草津の寺へ出かけて行った。

## 死体と瓦礫の中を行く

広島市の中央部は、焰と熱気で、とても入ることはできない。熱気を避けながら、山際へ、山際へと行つては川に入り、鉄橋を渡つて西へと急ぐ。火災が治まっているのはさいわいであつた。山際であつても、ほとんどまともに建っている家とてない。火は消えていたが、まだくすぶっていた。

鉄道橋の橋ゲタを伝いながら渡るのは、あまり気持ちのよいものではない。しかし、これが唯一の道路であり、残された危険の少ない交通路でもあつた。

まったくよく焼けた。火葬場の炉の中の拡大図のようだ。市の中

心部に残っている鉄骨や、コンクリートの建て物が、まるで骸骨のようだ。

死体と、瓦礫と、木材の残骸とが、黒々として続く。焼けガメの中に顔を突っこんだときのような臭気が、ふもとをなでて山上へと昇って行く。

灼けつく8月の太陽、日中の暑さにさらされて火傷が痛む。鉄をもとかすような熱気、その中を歩きつづけて行く。

働く人はみな、思想も意志も計画もない。人波についていっしょに歩く。ただ歩く、急がない。止まらない。ノロノロと続いて行く。

《己斐》まで来たら、少し家が残っている。倒れている家。倒れかけている家。ゆがんだ家。瓦が落ちている家ばかりだ。いまにも木材が倒れて来そうな、いまにも崩れ落ちそうな家と家。

道路と家の間を縫って、さらに西へ進む。倒壊家屋は少なくなった。倒れている塀、倒れている門柱。木、石、瓦などが重なり合っていて、平坦ではない。それでも煙はない。

爆心地から逃れて来て倒れた人、人、人。死体は相変わらず軒下に、倒れかけた家の側溝などに転がっている。

川と、河口と、海岸に倒れている。力の残っている順位に、残っている力が強いほど遠くまで逃れて来ているように思われた。

途々、続いていた死体の数も、川ほどにはない。河口ほどにはない。そして海岸ほどにはなく、その数もずいぶん少なくなった。

働けるか、動けるか、倒れるか、逃げられるか、ここらが人間の限界をなすらしい。

いやな臭気も少なくなった。

西地区から来たのか、貨物自動車を見た。そうだ！ これで死体を集めよう。左目の視力を失っていた私は、右目1つで、人相は結構妙ちきりんな、おかしいものだったと思われる。

## 台風と地震のようなショック

歩いているうち、いやな臭いと、煙と、死体と、倒壊家屋がしだいに少なくなって、急に家族の安否が気になりだした。駆け出すように、早足で草津へ急いだことを、いまでもおぼえている。

草津は寺町である。墓所が多い。墓地の石塀が傾いている。石塀の倒れているものもある。ゆがんでいるものも、たくさんある。寺の大屋根がむけているのがある。屋根がかしいでいるのがある。

地震と台風のショックを、一度に受けたようなものだ。それも過ぎ去ったあとに、残るのは凄惨さのみである。

ゆがんだ家、ゆがんだ寺の間を通り、瓦の落ちかけている山門へ、やっとたどり着いた。

## 生きて家族と再会

庫裡の玄関で、外を見ていた子供たちが、飛び上がるように立ち上がった。

おそらく、恐しさを噛みしめていたのが、不安と焦燥が、一気に破れたように、安心と喜びがつき上げてきたのであろう。よかった。

ホッとした。生きて再会できたのだ。

家内は幾分、血色が悪い。本人は「だいじょうぶ、何でもない」と言う。最近、虫垂炎と肺炎をやったことがあるので、じょうぶとはいえないが、利巧な妻なので、心配させまいとして、気をつかっていることが私にはよくわかる。疲れているようだ。

風邪気味で、玄関の部屋で寝ていた家内は、あのとき、吸い上げられるような気持ちに、玄関外の石畳に吹き飛ばされたと言う。上がりがまちに腰かけて、あとのなりゆきを静観したと言う。

実郎は、寺の奥さんが連れて山へ逃げた。達郎は、外にいたが手許へ帰って来た。勢郎は、1日、2日帰ってこなかった。それでも、3日の昼すぎ、何とか帰って来た。

家族一同、初めて夕刻のひとときを、寺の玄関で、無言の会話で過ごした。

実郎は三つだ。まだ何も知らない。だが、恐怖のどよめきを、皮膚で感じているらしい。達郎は、戦争の圧迫を、体じゅうに受けている。勢郎は、顔と両手、両足の大腿部に、火傷の跡が水を持って破れている。

それでも、歯を食いしばっている。中学校2年生だ。環境にたいする、わずかな自覚が芽ばえて来ている。

家内は、あすから、子供たちとどうしたらいいのだろうと考えている。

私は、あの多発した火傷患者、爆死者をどのようにしたらいいのか、考えていた。

ただ、生き残ったものは、茫然と腰をおろす。あるいは体を横た

える。みずからの方向を、みずからの任務を求めない。行動する意志さえもないようだ。どことなく、落ちつかない空気。

たくあんの漬け物と、小魚の煮つけで、久しぶりに家族そろって夕食を食べた。そしてみんな生きていることを確かめ合った。

## 何とかせねば……せねばならぬ

あわれ船舶砲兵隊の軍医大尉（当時は大尉に昇進していた）も、原爆についての知識もなく、家族にくわしく、説明することもできなかった。

寺全体が傾いてはいるが、まだつぶれる心配はないので、寺の庫裡に家族全員、頭を並べて寝た。

私の火傷も痛むが、勢郎がウツラウツラしながら、うなっている声を聞くと、自分が代わってうなってやりたい気持ちだ。

戦争は残酷だ。あれだけ多くの人を殺して、なお、このような苦痛を人びとに与える。

私の実の兄貴も弟も死んでいる。ひとはみな名誉の戦死だと言った。六十を過ぎた母が、十にもみたない兄貴の娘っ子が、名誉の遺族として、県知事に、総理大臣に、天皇に表彰された。

兄貴曹六は、廬山で決死隊の隊長として、無数の弾丸を頭と胸に受けて、壮烈な戦死を遂げた。出征5ヵ月目の昭和13年8月28日の戦死であった。

弟弁吉は、平壤第77連隊の連隊旗手としての勲功によって歩兵砲隊長となり、《露出砲台》のアダ名があるほどの勇猛果敢な隊長で



あったが、開戦2年目、頭部に3発、胸部に3発、腹部に3発の敵銃弾を浴びて戦死した。武功拔群、功四級であった。

あわれ兄貴も弟も、いま、日本がこんな目に、また広島が、これほどまでに無残に潰滅することは、夢にも考えたことなどはなかったであろう。戦死の価値を自覚し、戦争によって守られる日本人、戦って守る日本国土、そう信じきって戦死したのであるに、ああ、無常なものは戦争であり、あわれな結末は戦争である。

私が家族もいっしょに、広島で被爆したということを、誰が知らせたのか、熊本の母の耳に届いた。電報でか、手紙でか、年老いた母は、息子3人のうち、上の息子も、末の弟も、戦争で失っている。知らせを聞いた母は、「こんどは吾一までもか……」と、がく然としたことだろう。

そのショックで、寝込むようになったという。そして8月25日、敗戦の暑いさなか、母はさびしく死んで行った。

母もまた、戦争の犠牲者となった。戦争は2人の兄弟息子を奪い、遂には罪のない年老いた母までもを奪っていった。私は戦争を憎まずにはおれない。心から憎む。

私も、広島草津寺に一家全員揃ったとはいえ、火傷が痛む。妻は貧血、長男は火傷でうなっている。次男も、三男も貧血らしい。茫然とした脳裡にすべてはかすむ。脳裡にはスモッグのような混濁の中で、《何とかせねば……せねばならぬ》という意識と決意とがもり上がってくる。

やるんだ！ 突破だ！ しだいに気持ちが落ちついていった。やっと夜半である。打ちつづく疲れもあって、自然に睡眠に入ってい

った。

## 火傷に湧いたウジ

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夜明けとともに、外出はなるべくしないよう言いおいて、私は急ぎ比治山へ向かった。

敵愾心とでもいうものか、《やって、やるぞ》と、心に誓う。

小高いところに登って見る。まだ煙と炎と、地獄の果てが目に映る。比治山に近づくためには、きのう来たときのように山際へ、そして鉄橋伝いに歩かねばならぬ。

指揮者を失ってしまった日本、指揮者のいなくなってしまった軍隊。外国史に出てくる革命とは、こんな状態で起こってくるのではないかなどと思いながら、比治山へ急ぐ。

中村曹長、木村軍曹、三谷上等兵らは、傷病患者をつぎつぎに処置し、飯を食べさせていた。

私は、在庫中の衛生材料をみんな、山ろくに出させて、救助に全力をあげた。

つぎつぎに、傷ついた患者が来る。

つぎつぎに、それらの患者が死んでゆく。

だんだん衛生材料はなくなる。驚いたことには、4日目だというのに、火傷という火傷にウジがいっぱいだ。いたるところに湧いている。しめっている火傷に、ウジがいっぱい生まれている。どうにもならぬ。

《こりゃいかん》脱脂綿にチンク油をつけて、これでウジを掃き落とす。全く、この世の果ての診療所である。こんな、むごい目に合わせる原爆を投下したやつは、全くの悪魔のような凶悪犯人である。

戦争には勝ったかも知れないが、アメリカのトルーマンというやつは、英雄ではない。戦後、手の平を返したようにアメリカ一辺倒になった日本人外交官も、資本主義過信の日本の財界人も、こんな凶悪行為を、あえて行なったことを、いつまでも、忘れることなく記憶しておいてもらいたい。原爆で、非戦闘員である人間を傷つけ、むごたらしい殺し方で、無残な屍の山を築いたことをだ。私は、その事実を、この症状と、死を賭しての困難な治療のことを知っていてほしい。どんなことがあっても、忘れてもらっては困るのだ。

衛生材料もない。食糧も乏しい。寝所もない。野ざらしの診療所の治療と、火葬と、後送と、給食。毎日が、昼夜を分かつたこの繰り返しであったのだ。

20万人の死亡。5万人の受傷。そして生き残りのうなり声、生き残りの動かない人。そしてうごめき回る人。

このことは、人間の行なったもっとも憎むべき残虐行為であり、人間の行ないによって起こされた苦しみの真実の姿であった。

記憶と、想像と、思考と、のろいの交錯の中で、時がたち、戦争の残虐性が身にしみた。

少なくとも、人間の不幸は戦争以上のものはない。多くの人びとにそのことを、よくよく知ってもらわねばならぬ。

私は、戦争の結果を悪用しようとは思わない。戦争というものを結論から言って、この人間最大の不幸を、転じて福となすために、その責任を心から感じなければならないと思う。平和を叫び、戦争反対を叫ぶ、実践する、行動をすることが、生残者に課せられた任務であろう。

臨時救護所、衛生隊のあった県立広島女子商業学校は、完全に崩壊した。比治山の窪地に残った、半ば転覆しかけた50坪ほどの2階家を、本部宿舎とする。診療所は、天幕4張である。2張は炊事用、2張は傷病患者収容所、その一部は包帯所である。

「軍医さん、衛生兵殿、助けて……。」

引きずるような足どり、ボロボロに焼かれた衣服、火傷の皮膚、黒くどす黒く固まった血、固まっているが不潔さはない、焼けた脂肪、恐いようなこわれ方であった。

## 飯盒1杯に集めた遺骨

あとで聞いたのだが、長崎にも原爆が落とされたという。広島と同じような悲惨な苦しみが、ちまたにあふれていたという。

広島の火がまだ消えやらぬうちに、8月9日午前11時、広島について、第2の原爆が落とされたと……。

その惨酷さ、悪どさ、いい知れぬ憎悪が湧く。原爆による殺人、これは、世界史上いまだかつてなかった、非道きわまりない残虐行為である。

これもあとで聞いたことであるが、長崎に第二弾が落とされて、はじめてその酷烈さに気づいた政治家がいたとか。もちろん、学者でさえ、そのような人もいたほどである。

5日目にやって来た阪大の浅田博士ほどの医学者が、ただたんなる第2度火傷と診断した。

軽傷者でさえ、軽く浮き上がった皮膚、黒焦げに焼けふくれた皮膚、焼けて一部破れた皮膚から露出する黒焦げの肉、めくれ上がった肉……。それが頭部の場合、毛髪は焼き切れている。それが顔の場合、目が、鼻が、耳が、口がやられている。それがゆがんでいる。人間らしい左右の平均性が破壊されている。ふくれている。ただれている。焼けている。

それが手の場合、手袋が指の第1関節までぬげきらぬまま、裏返しにぶら下がったようになっている。よごれたその火傷。足の場合、甲のやぶけた足袋のように、中の肉が見えている。土と灰にまみれた、肉ダンゴのように……。

しかし、動ける人はまだいい。毛髪が焦げ、額がむけて、まぶたの上にたれ下がり、まぶたも、唇も、焼けて破れている。

そして倒れている。うなっている。うごめいている。かすかにうごめき、かすかにうなっている。そしてもう動かない、焼け焦げた木の根と何ら変わらない。

いまでも、三谷上等兵にはすまないと思っている。放射線の中で、

毎日、私の手足となって立ち働いた。被爆ののち、草津へ数回となく、私と私の家族の間を往復してくれた。

4日、5日とたち、落ちついたあとは、毎日、火傷を負っている私のことを案じ、始終、私の身辺から離れなかった。

私の隊に関係あるものたちの宿舎、あれからの研屋旅館の様子を自分の目で確認するために、探索に出かけることにした。円匙（スコップ）を1本持って、誰を連れて行こうかと考えているとき、三谷上等兵が、

「私も、隊長といっしょに行かせてください」

と進んで随行を志願してきた。円匙をかついで、水筒に水を詰めた。2人は、流川町の電線など、障害物の少ない道をえらんだ。それでも障害物を乗り越え、火事跡の火の気の少ないところを歩いた。

いまでも考える。木造の日本家屋は、焼けるのも早い、鎮火するのも早い。流川町から研屋町、研屋旅館のあった1キロとない場所まで、半日がかりでやっと行き着いた。

重ねて驚いた。木片などはすでに1つもない。砂礫だけだ。屋根瓦も影も形も残していない。こぶし大の、卵大の、指頭大の焼けた土芥類だけがころがっている。

これから、どうさがすべきか。旅館主の幸田親娘は、どうなったろう。山木看護婦はどうなってしまったのか。20人以上もいたはずの旅館だが、爆死したとすれば、どこに骨があるのか。世界中の水分を原爆が吹き飛ばしてしまったように、完全に酷熱の火災の跡に、白色の太陽がガラガラと灼きつけている。唇も、舌も、ノドも、すべてが乾燥し切って息苦しい。周囲は、1滴の水分もない瓦礫の山

だ。そんな中に、どこに遺体があるのだろう。どこに遺骨があるのだろう。

1本の円匙では、どうにもならぬ。三谷上等兵と私は、無性に腹が立ち、じれったくなって、やたら掘りまくった。

汗みづくになって、3時間もかかり、やっと遺骨を飯盒にいっぱい集めた。瓦のかけらと、骨のかけらを区別するのに必死だった。それでも集めた飯盒1杯が、20人分の遺骨、遺霊なのである。

戦争ほど大量の残虐はない。何度いっても、言い過ぎではないと思う。

2人は、飯盒1杯分の遺骨を抱いて、重い足を引きずりながら、比治山包帯所へ帰った。

## 包帯巻きも知らぬ衛生隊

5日目ごろから、他県からと、上部機関からとの連絡も、ようやくとれ始めた。五日市の包帯所開設の連絡である。

何のことはない。比治山で収容した組も、一部は広島駅の協力により、列車で宇品へ。また一部は、自動車とは名ばかりのトラックで五日市送り。焼け焦げた、動くだけのトラックであった。

私たちは、衛生隊とはいっても、包帯を巻いたこともない兵隊と、軍服がはじめての兵隊、銃を持たない杖と棒の兵隊、箸を動かして食うことだけを知っている兵隊、`戦争はキャリア' だという兵隊……そんな兵隊が集まった衛生隊だ。

駅長をおどしつけて、列車を動かし、焼け焦げのトラックに、包



帯もしていない火傷者や負傷者、それも老幼男女の区別もなく、兵隊も民間人も区分なく乗せた。乗せるというより、積んで運ぶだけの患者輸送。衛生隊はただ傷をみ、火傷をみるだけであった。

その運行、輸送、連絡、すべてはその場かぎり、すべてが無計画で行なわれた。戦争は終末であり、愚かな人が夢を見て、寝小便をしたのより、なおカッコが悪い。これが大日本帝国の軍隊、最後の姿であったのである。

## 血液病であると確信

1週間後、五日市の包帯所に異変が起こった。本間副官中佐が腹痛を訴えた。血便である。赤痢でない血便。原爆腸潰瘍と私は診断した。もちろん、のちになってそう診断したのであるが。原子病のことを知って、あとで名づけた第1号患者である。

ぜん動と、いっしょになって、腫瘤がある。しばらくすると、腹痛とともに出血し、一時は軽快する。原爆腸炎、この形になると、かなり予後が悪い。

無統制になった軍隊の包帯所。司令部のない軍隊。重症者は、命令もなく、いずこともなく消え去って行く。統制もとれないまま、あまりにも多くの死への転出者が、つぎつぎに消え去って行った。

セキが出る、クシャミが出る。血も吐く、咽頭喉頭に血腫が出てきて、破れる。

火傷死が少なくなったら、今度は出血死だ。咽頭に近ければ血を吐き、肛門に近ければ下血だ。

阪大の浅田博士は、たんなる第1度ないし第2度火傷だといって帰って行ったが、これは違う。たしかに、何か別の血液病であるようだ。私も、げすの智恵の1人だが、いろいろ考え、迷い、悩んだ。あげくの果て、その1週間後に、一種の血液病であると確信した。

即死や、悪化する症状をみて気づいたのだ。といっても、薬があるわけなし、火傷にチンク油だけでも、まにあわない有様であった。どのようにすべきかもわからない。むずかしい試験問題に取り組むよりも、はるかに大変で、むずかしいことだった。

研究、実験のために、生きた人間を使うことが許されるなら、これは確かに人体実験であった。大学の教授さえ、考えおよばなかった血液疾患、すなわち放射能病である。

時間がたつにしたがって、原爆疾患がいよいよ続発しはじめた。

## 水を求めた死体の山

弾丸のない高射砲部隊。銃のない歩兵。救急薬品を持たない衛生兵。全く原爆症についての智識を持たない日本人は、非力であり、無手にひとしかった。

サルファ剤（まだこのときは抗生物質がないから、かえってよかったのかも知れない）や、その他、白血球減少の薬物があつたら、その症状は悪化したであろう。さいわいにも、それがなかったために、白血球減少のお手伝いは、運よくまぬがれたわけだ。

すべての治療が、眺めるだけにひとしい程度だった。もともと、火傷に材料なしで治療ができるわけのものでなし、材料があつたに

しても、血液変化を伴う原爆火傷に、打つ手があったと思われ  
ない。

毎日が、焦げ臭い死臭であり、火事場の煙、火事場のただよい、  
火事場の臭いである。

「隊長、いちおう、川べりの死体を見ておきましょう。」

生き残りがいるかも知れない。だれ言うとなしに言う。火熱を避  
け、川辺へ逃げた人々が、少しは生き残っているかも知れない。  
確かめるために、その翌日、研屋町の川辺へ行って見たのだが、も  
う驚くという言葉はやめにしよう。

それは、10メートルから20メートル、あるいは30メートルある川  
幅の、崖の上から、水面が見えないほどの死体である。それも、た  
だの死体ではない。黒焦げの死体である。いぶして、いぶして、い  
まにも硬直した死体の間から、むらむらと、どす黒い煙が立ち昇り  
そんな死体の渦である。

おそらく、半死半生で、熱くて、焼けて、その熱のために、1滴  
の水でもと、水辺へのがれ、寄り集まって来たのであろう。彼らが  
こと切れる瞬間の願いは、望みは、何であったろうか。

父のことであり、母のことであり、妻のことであり、子のことで  
あったかも知れない。しかし、最高最大の願いは、冷たい水、いや  
冷たくないのでもいい、煮たっていてもいい、ただ水でさえあれば、  
よかったのであろう。彼らは、願望の水一滴すら得られないまま、  
死んで行った。そして死体の、ぶよぶよの、うめきの、うなりの上  
をはい回り、のた打ち回り、はいずって、のっかり、のめり、転落  
し、他の死人とともに、願望の水を求める意識だけが、後まで残り、

うすらぎ、消えて行ったであろう。このことについての記録はなにもない。この死の苦痛を体験した人の記録は、何も残っていない。全部死んでしまったためであろうか。

いや、わずかでも苦痛の軽かった人、わずかの時間でも生き残り、苦痛の体験をした人は、その記録を生かさねばならぬ、それは生き残った人の義務でもある。

## 毛髪は抜け、人相が変わる

新聞も、ラジオもない。長崎もやられたと聞いたが、確認すべきものは何もない。長崎もやられたというと、やがて、日本国中が焼野が原、そして日本人のすべてが火傷か、爆死か、おそろべき妄想が脳裡をかすめる。

東京をはじめ、中小都市をも、8月中には全滅させると、ニューデリー放送が言っているということだったが、ほんとうにそれが具体化してきたようだ。

海洋国日本の軍艦と名のつくものは全滅だ。世界に冠たると豪語した帝国陸軍も、全滅というより、完全に戦意喪失だ。国民の住居を焼き尽すのではないかと思われるほど、焼けて、燃え続けている。人間も、建て物も、刻一刻と、つぎつぎ破壊されていった。

「隊長さん」「軍医さん」と、しだいに患者はふえていく。どうにもならない。天幕の中は傷病患者でいっぱいだ。

ガラス破傷創、打撲傷、切傷、火傷、黒焦げ、種々さまざまな負傷患者。

それでも油でふいてやる。ウジを落としてやる。油でぬらした脱脂綿で、ウジを掃き落としてやる。もちろん食糧は、不十分なので、栄養失調と火傷からくる敗血症で、ますます重症化する。

いよいよ、わけのわからぬ症状が続く。傷の手当て中に、普通患者には見られぬ症状が起こった。毛髪が、かゆくもなく抜けてくる。1週間目には、クシにかかっただけ抜ける。2週間目には、ひとつかみも抜ける。人相が変わってくる。顔色はすきとおったようになり、浮腫が極端に認められる。頼みは阪大の浅田博士の言であるが、《たんなる第2度火傷》。しかし、これではだめである。私が見ても、たしかに第3度以上のものだった。

トンカツの脂肪のような皮下脂肪。豚の皮膚に熱湯をかけて、脱毛したような皮膚。胸や背中にはペテヒエン（点状出血）、暗紅色のエンドウ豆大の出血斑。ガンや肝臓病患者の、死の経過を1度引き起こしたような、いやな症状。火傷のある患者には、その症状は少ないが、ウジがいっぱいだ。

携帯用顕微鏡で検査をすることにした。驚いたことには、白血球の減少がはなはだしい。火傷がなく脱毛している患者は、特にひどい。白血球減少は全員である。サルファ剤を使用すれば、血球減少が悪化する。うっかり薬剤も使えない。

私たちの治療とは、原爆症にかぎり、清掃である。つまりウジ落としてである。また、ガラスの破片とりが仕事である。死体収集、死体輸送が、仕事のすべてであった。

## 責任と勇気と誇りをもって

焼け野が原から、私たちを守ったのも、天幕を何となく張ったのも、比治山のおかげである。

灼けつく暑さに、比治山の日陰を求めて、土を掘り、その穴に頬を当てる。包帯の上からでも、その土の感触、比治山のあのときの臭いは、いまでも忘れることができない。

米はもちろん、水もない耐熱作業に、比治山の地下の土の冷たさは、体験者のみが知るありがたさであった。

4800人の傷病患者が、私の前を通過した。あるものは倒れ、あるものは死に、あるものは動かない。また、あるものはいずこともなく去って行き、また、あるものは、手と足を引きずり、トラックと宇品線の鉄道で後送されて行った。

いま残っているのは、数えるほど。いずれもやがては死んでいくことだろう。

8月6日、8月9日、8月15日と、不愉快な日々は刻まれ去って行った。大日本帝国も、陸海軍も消えて行った。

そして8月22日。東大の都築博士がやって来た。博士自身が放射能患者であるという。なるほど血液がやられ、血球が破壊されていくことは、たんなる火傷ではないことを、博士自身の事実が証明していた。

京大から来た17～18人の研究者は、放射能を恐れて、太田川上流に退避し、カニが穴からエサをさがしに来るように、出て来ては去って行く。学問の研究にもなりはしない。彼らは、放射能ではやら

れなかったが、9月19日の台風による太田川のはんらんで、ほとんど全員死亡してしまった。無茶に近い。

私は、いまなお生きて、原爆戦争の様相を記録しているのだが――。実際は、もっと、もっと切実なものであった。ウジはどうしたら退治できるか。あの苦痛をいかにしたら軽減させられるか。1日で死臭が発散する死体を、火葬しなければならぬ。冥土への鑑札のある人はまだいい。遺骨に名札をつけられる。防空帽か、防空頭巾か、上着の胸に名前をつけてる人は始末がよかったが、大部分の遺体は名なしの権兵衛さんだった。仕方がないので、名なしの権兵衛さんは、一時、太田川の川岸に運んでおくようにした。

やらねばならない。とにかく、やらねばならない。学問や理屈ではない。せっぱつまった現実だ。自分の痛みは忘れてでも、やらねばならぬ。比治山、兵舎、草津、五日市と、焼けたぼろトラックで、つぎつぎに巡回し、責任だけは果たさねばと、駆けずり回った。

私は、医者ではあっても、原爆によるその強烈な放射能の恐しさを知らず、責任と勇気と誇りをもって、恐怖などいっさい気にもせず、むしろ、楽しいくらいの気持ちで駆け回り、動いた。

痛みは軽減するけれども、患者は、だんだん虚脱状態になる。

「先生、歩けない！」

「先生、熱が出てきた！」

「先生、うちの患者にウジが湧いた！」

「先生、死ぬのですか！」

どうにもならない状態がいっぱいだ。食べ物を食ってもいいかという質問が、いちばん困ることだが、さいわい食べ物がないので、

その心配はなかった。みな、忘れたように食欲を訴えなかった。水を外に求め、飢餓はみずからの体内組織で補給する。最後の最後の線で、もっとも人びとに必要なのは水なのである。

## 藤原包水いまいずこ

研屋旅館の次男の幸田幸典君が付き添って、被爆のため亡くなった幸典君の姉、里子さんの友人である内田さんが、ガラス破片創で治療に来た。

ガラスの破片を取りのぞき、処置をしたが歩けない。仕方がないので、他の重症患者を収容してあるワラのフトンに、2～3日、入院させることにする。もちろん、重い火傷のために動けない患者が入院している場所だ。

「軍医さん！」

「先生！」

と繰り返し呼んでいる。脈をみたが、ほとんどだめである。この人は、かつて階交社にいて、酒の特配をしてくれた、古参ホステスであった人だ。

顔中が火傷で、ウジがうごめいている。チンク油治療。代用担架で運び、ぼろトラックで五日市収容所へ後送した。あとで聞いたのだが、ついに死んだということだった。

長男、勢郎の友人で、ただ1人だけ練兵場の芋掘りを休んだために、火傷しなかったと自慢していた山田君が、髪の毛が抜けるという診療を受けにやって来る。髪をつまんだだけで抜けてしまう。



この子も、予後が悪そうだ。

\*

\*

\*

草津寺の坊さんも、その後、まもなく死去されたと聞く。お気の毒に……と、胸があつくなつた。草津寺に預けておいた2本の軍刀も、ついにわからなくなってしまった。

大別山の戦鬪の苦しみを、ともに味わった刀であり、1本は二尺八寸の藤原包水であったが、いまはいずこにありやである。夜になつても灯火もなかったようなあの6ヵ月、雨の、泥の、寒さの、暑さの、マラリヤの、赤痢の、コレラの、大別山ではいつも私の身近にあって、私をつねに励ましてくれた思い出の藤原包水であり、あとの1本は、二尺八寸のわざものであった。

## ついに第 2 期症状

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8 月 20 日前後になった。2 週間経過した原爆症は、ついに第 2 期症状を呈するようになった。

- 1 火傷潰瘍
- 2 栄養失調
- 3 脱毛
- 4 ペテヒエン
- 5 腸痛
- 6 咽頭痛
- 7 脱力感
- 8 肝臓障害
- 9 腎不全
- 10 心臓衰弱
- 11 敗血症、あるいはその類似症
- 12 白血病、あるいはその類似症

13 神経衰弱症（不信感ないし不安、あきらめ）

14 その発展した呪い

15 人間疎外、あるいは人間失望

それは数え切れない併発症状である。原爆投下の残虐性がいっそう強化され、憎しみは、いちだんと胸が張り裂けるほどこたえた。

## 深く窪んだ肉の谷

火傷は、どれも脂肪が腐れ落ちて、ぶら下がっている。あるいはずり落ちてしまったその跡が、肉の谷のように、深く窪んで悲惨である。

他の医療所で、治療したという患者も氣息えんえんである。どの患者も、当てガーゼを取って見ると、ウジが出てくるし、そこはウジのための肉の宿であった。

ウジに吸い取られて濃汁はない。どす赤い肉、どす暗い、深い深い肉の谷である。火傷はどれも深い。埋まることのない肉の谷であった。

ただし、第3度火傷の軽減しつつあるものも、あえて軽快とはいえない。ただ、いくらかの軽減である。軽快というほど経過良好の患者は、1人もいない。

第2度火傷程度の患者たちも、皮下脂肪がネクローゼ化し、不快な黒灰褐色の義膜となっている。これを除去するには、1週間もかかる。急いで取ったら、出血して、その出血はなかなか止まらない。

第1度火傷の患者は、火傷面が痂皮となっている。除去すると、

やはり出血。不潔にするとウジが湧く。そのウジを落として悪化を守るだけ。方法がない。

どの階層の患者にも共通点がある。それは血液が侵されているということである。

## つぎつぎに栄養失調

栄養失調の症状も、いよいよ明瞭に確認されるようになってきた。それだけでなく、弱りきっている人たちばかりである。

多くの人びとを、太陽のような高熱で、たたきのめした原子爆弾、たたきのめされたその人びとの集まりだ。それも、火傷と衝撃と、精神的ショックのための被害者であり、しかも病人食として与える食べ物は、何一つないのだ。

食えない。食いたくない。気持ちが悪い。ついに栄養の均衡が破れて、栄養失調となる。

火傷の程度があまりにも強いので、他の疾病すべてを、火傷あるいは原爆ショックのためであると、われわれ医者は早計にもそう思い込んでいたほどである。

血液と、生きるバランスの破れたことに、気づかねばならなかったのだが――。

## 頭半分もの髪が脱落

私たちはこのことを、本人が知る以上に、加害者の残虐性を指摘

せねばならぬ。

若い人ほど、脱毛が早かった。15～16人の青少年男女の、ひとつかみの毛髪が抜けるのを見るのは、何ともいいようのない凄惨な光景である。

泣いても仕方がないというような顔の少女を見たが、なぐさめの言葉もない。おそらくその少女も、医師である私の全面火傷の顔を見て、同じ気持ちであることだけが、なぐさめ、激励であったのかも知れない。

同病相あわれむという言葉が、このときほど適切に、当てはまって感じたことはない。

長男・勢郎と同じ広島二中の友だちが、当日、西練兵場の芋掘り作業を休んだために、火傷をまぬがれたと喜んでいたが、2週間後、頭半分もの髪が脱落してしまった。

私の長男は火傷で、まあまあ救われたと思うぐらいで、子供の友だちの脱毛が、実に怪奇に見えてならなかった。

いま、あの子の予後は、どうなったかわからないが、あるいは……？ 原爆症の恐ろしいのはこれである。

市内にいたものも、市外にいたものも、それぞれ、さまざまな被害者となった。血液病を併発する原爆症が、憎くてならなかった。

**あっ！ これはペテヒェンだ！**

「第2度火傷」そう言いおいて、阪大の浅田博士は帰ってしまった。

が、しかし、焼けた肉のほかに、血液変化を起こすということは、火傷の一般症状ではあるけれども、おかしい。

患者は、脱力感を訴えるが、1週間を経過し、2週間目になると、いっそうその症状がはっきりした。

3週間目に入ると、その症状は脱毛を伴い、そのうえに胸部や腹部に、ノミに食われたような赤い斑点ができはじめた。

《あっ、これはペテヒエン（点状出血）だ！》

血液混濁による、血液疾患にみるペテヒエン。すべてが最悪の最終段階にきた。

ガンなどの終末に、悪血液になった患者が発熱し、脱力感を訴えるのとはほとんど同じような症状が現われた。動けない重症患者はみなそうである。私自身にも、ついにいくつか、胸腹部にペテヒエンが現われだした。

《ようし、死は覚悟だ、最後までやってやれ》と、決意した。最後までやると決心はしたものの、東京はどうなっているのだろう、広島では、この最悪にして、最後の段階を迎えているにしても、東京にはアメリカがやって来たのであろうか。

ペテヒエンがますます増加するようで、なんとなく不快な気持ちが続いた。

そのうち、いくぶん縮小し、固まって来たような状態になったので、一応はそのまま、気分はよくならないが、無理をおして救護の作業を続けたのである。

黒焦げからペテヒエンまで、20万余りの死の爪跡を知っているもので、幾人、生き残ることができるであろう？ 20万余の死の行く

ついに第2期症状

手は、明るく晴れわたるようになるだろうか？ その暗い生涯は、果てしなく続くのであろうか？

## 戦争は終わった！

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昭和20年8月15日。

この日は、太平洋戦争突入の宣戦布告、大爆発的行動で、日本国民に衝撃を与えた昭和16年12月8日について、全日本国民が再度受けた、筆舌に尽くしがたい《大ショック》の日である。

私の長男は、焼けただれた原爆火傷の包帯の間から落ちてくる涙をぬぐいもせず、ラジオの前に立ちすくんだまま、

「こんなにしてやめる戦争なら、やらなければいいんだ！」と、言いながら動かなかった。

原爆で焼かれた私も、原爆で吹き飛ばされた妻も、原爆で真っ黒になった次男も、原爆で一時、行方不明になった3歳の三男も、原爆で孤児になってしまった研屋旅館の次男（中学1年生）も、この終戦というより敗戦による戦争終止、天皇の終戦宣言のラジオ放送には、みなとまどい、驚き、がっかりしてしまった。

天皇は、戦争を始めるか、行なうか、止めるか、終わるか、とも



戦争は終わった！

に全国民を裏切った。裏切ったというより、天皇を動かす連中のために、人形のように、ロボットのように、お手玉のように利用されたことだけは、事実であることを証明した。

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戦争は終わった。

私たちは、あと始末をしなければならぬ。生きるも死ぬも、行くも帰るも、命令するものはいない。みずからの判断でやらねばならぬ。意を決しやってみようと思った。

私は、全身全霊を傾け、全力を尽くして、この原子爆弾で死にかけている患者たちのめんどろをみよう、治療を続けよう、そう腹を決めると、私は何となく気が楽になり、いまにもつぶれそうな寺の庫裡で、しばらくぶりに長々と手足をのばし、ひと眠りした。そして明日からの行動についていろいろと考えた。

命令者、指揮者は私自身だ。勇気百倍《やるぞ！》と思うと、顔の痛みも消えてしまった。

## 自決するという無責任司令官

船舶砲兵司令官、中井千馬騎閣下が、私を呼んだのは、その翌日、8月16日の午前中であつた。中井少将は言った。

「指田軍医、君はわが部隊の中では、いちばん腕が立つということだが、わしにもし米軍からの出頭命令がきたら、わしは切腹する覚悟だ。そのときはよろしく介錯をたのむぞ。」

これには驚いた。将軍ともなれば、敗戦即自刃だ。負けても、負けても、勝つまでは……と考えているわけである。

阿南陸相も中井司令官も、同じような感覚と決意で覚悟をきめているところに、無意識的幼稚さをもった罪状が生まれるのだ。

みずからを殺す、すなわち自殺するまでには、四囲の状況が変化してくる。その変化に対応できないで、ノイローゼになる。そのノイローゼ以後に、行動するために考える。ノイローゼが考えるから、脳細胞がますます疲労する。やがてノイローゼが加重する。そして強いノイローゼが、正常でないいちばん不適格な思考をして行動する。そこに悲慘な敗北、凄惨な全滅が生まれてくるのだ。

世の中に、よく《負けてもやるんだ》という言葉がある。遊戯や、レクリエーションならそれでもいい。死命を制する戦いでは、これは全く愚人のたわごとである。

生活は、生命を守るためにある。生命は、播種本能を有意義化せしめねばならぬ。祖先から受け継いだ民族の、自己の系列を亡ぼしていいはずはない。亡ぼすことの明瞭なときには、困難ではあるけれども、よく思考しなければならぬ。その思考によって、祖先から名誉を伝承し、現在を守り、将来の基礎と繁栄を求めねばならぬ。自己および将来の滅亡を知って、滅亡の道を急ぐものは、ナンセンス以外の何ものでもない。

戦いは負けてもやらねばならぬと、思い込んでいる階級の連中だけが、やれ責任だの、やれ民族の責任だのと考える。ナンセンスなノイローゼ患者どもに、よく言って聞かせねばならぬ事例である。

中井司令官の、自殺せんとする心境は、みずから解決し得ないノ

戦争は終わった！

イローゼの症状であり、その一歩手前で考えなければならないことである。また、戦争を政治の終局と考える、過度恐怖症患者の転帰である。

私は言った。

「閣下、介錯することは、いとやさしいことであります。しかし閣下の切腹に当たり、介錯することは、自殺幫助罪になります。それどころではなく、自分は殺人者になります。閣下ご自身は完全に死の目的を果たすことになりますが、私はなおその後、殺人罪を構成することになります。明治以前のまねごとをしないでください。目的を果たすによい方法が別にあります。それは青酸カリの使用であります。自分は医者でありますから、焼け野が原の広島ではだめでしょうが、何とか手に入れるようつとめます。」

私は翌日、1日がかりでかけ回り、青酸ソーダを見つけ手に入れた。青酸ソーダの分量を2つに分け、1つを中井司令官に、残りの1つは、私自身がいざという場合のために、軍衣の物入れ深くしまい込んだ。

それから何年も過ぎて、中井将軍が、日本のどこかで生きておられるということを耳にした。私は原爆症も軽快し、このとおり、東京都下田無市の市長として、毎日、元気で公務の仕事に励んでいる。

## 部下を放置した上官

当時、私たち船舶部隊で、もっとも模範的な男が1人いた。軍医

課長の菊地少佐である。

彼が、現役の中尉で転勤して来た昭和13年9月、私も六師団衛生隊で軍医中尉になった。

武昌から300キロ、羊楼司崇陽作戦のとき、390名の戦傷兵救援のため、第一線に出かけたことがあった。そこで都城連隊付き軍医の彼を知った。

純情な軍医だった。私が3回目の召集で広島に応召すると、なんと、彼は私の上司、軍医課長の少佐殿になっていた。

彼は、中井司令官から呼ばれなくとも、何でも1つ1つ報告していたのであろう。

《閣下は、こう言った》《閣下は、こう考えている》と、恐懼感激したことまで、閣下のせいにしていた。

そこに過去の軍隊があった。しかも敗戦になったとたん、彼はすべてを投げうち、郷里に向かって一目散、多くの部下など見向きもせず、日ごろことごとくにこき使っていた部下を置きざりにし、行ってしまった。

このような保身行為もまた、過去の軍隊の欠陥であった。さ細なことではあるが、当時の軍隊の中にあつては、たえず上司は部下を、都合によっては無視し、部下はつねに心のすみに、圧迫の感覚を、知らず知らずに持ちながら行動していたということは言えると思う。

## 崩れ去った火傷宣言

浅田博士の称えた《第2度火傷》宣言は、もろくも崩れ去った。

戦争は終わった！

都築博士によって、血液病、すなわち放射能による火傷、および疾患であることが明らかにされたが、それと同時に、生き残っていた火傷患者は、つぎつぎに死亡する数を増していった。

## 母危篤の電報で、宇土へ

8月15日発信の母危篤の電報を受け取った。電報を手にしたときは、すでに9月3日になっていた。

下関まで貨物列車が通ると聞いて、私は急ぎ、5本の軍刀とムシロ1枚を持って、広島駅へ駆けつけた。駅長に聞いたところ、駅長はこう言った。

「下関まで行くか、どうか、わかりませんが、午後には下りがくるでしょう」

と、すげない返事である。そこで、三谷上等兵と、駅の片隅で、世間話をしながらしばらく待った。待っても列車は、なかなかやっこない。三谷上等兵は待ち切れずに、

「隊長、これはあやしいです。」

「何、あやしいことはない。気長に待つことにするさ。」

やっと、3時間も待ちあぐんだころになって、貨物列車が下ってきた。

私は改めて駅長に確かめて、石炭車の上にムシロを敷き、その上に、毛布で巻いて束にした5本の軍刀を枕に、ベットを作った。けっこう寝心地のよい寝台車(?)になった。もちろん、駅長にもことわり、機関手や乗務員にも、了承をとったうえでのことだ。

見送ってくれた三谷上等兵と、しばしの別れを告げた。

ゴトンゴトン走る無蓋貨車の石炭の上で、いい気持ちでぐっすり眠った。下関に着いて目をさましたら、この列車は門司まで行くという。ありがたいなと感謝しながら門司に着いた。やれやれと思ったら、さらに列車は博多まで行くという。大助かりだ。そして夜が明けた。

考えてみれば、リングエン湾で轟沈。広島で原爆を食らい、中井司令官に割腹の介錯をたのまれたときには、とても九州の空を仰げるとは、つゆ思いもよらなかったことだ。それが、いま、九州の空の下、走っている貨車の上で体を横たえ、さまざまな越し方、行く末に、思いを馳せている。

無蓋貨車の上は、トンネル以外は全くいい気持ちである。野も山も、爆撃も受けず、戦禍の跡もない。鉄橋を渡る、河川の上を走る、全く気持ちがいい。

列車が博多に着いたら、さらに熊本まで行くという。ありがたいことである。

途中、爆撃を受けたあと、緊急修理で枕木を積み重ね、橋げたにした橋梁をわたるとき、貨車の重みで、ギーッ、ギギーッと鳴って気味の悪い思いをした。

山や川、野や畑、河川の流れも、みな静かであった。

昨日までの戦争のばからしさ。二等兵から軍医大尉までの8年半にわたる戦争行為、考えてみると、全くばかばかしくなった。

戦争のない大空には、無限に爽快な雲が流れ、果てしなく大きな青空が広がり、空気は清く、あくまでもすがすがしい。これが日本

戦争は終わった！

の空気だろうか。

無蓋車の上で見る青空。しかも暑気がまだ残るとはいえ、秋立つ9月4日の午後であった。過ぎ去った10年間、10回もの転住、転居、子供を6回も転校させ、戦友は死滅し、家は焼け果て、船は沈没し、広島は消え失せ……。ああ10年の過去は、すでに遠い。遠く帰らぬ10年の昔。

思い出が、かすんでゆくように、清い透明の大気の中に消えて行くように、無蓋車の上で、鉄路を走る轍のきしむ音を聞きながら、いつしかウトウトとしていた。

## 黒焦げの顔で故郷へ

遠賀川も、阿蘇の連峰も、きれいな思い出で迎えてくれる。

とうとう熊本へ着いた。着いたとたん、貨物列車はこのまま、八代まで行くという。何と私はツイていることか。つぎの宇土駅まで乗せてもらうことにした。

しばらく停車する熊本駅で、無蓋の石炭車から降り立つと、駅員がけげんそうな顔で寄って来た。

顔半分は真黒く焦げ、ところどころ赤く光っている、火傷のあと歴然。しかし原爆火傷のことを知らない人には、実に見苦しい驚くべき顔であったろう。

「どうするんですか。」

「ウン、広島から来た。宇土まで行くのだ。」

「宇土へ行くには、緑川の鉄橋が爆撃されて、やっと架設がいま

できた連絡があったところです。試運転にこの貨物列車を通すんですよ。降りたほうがいいのではないですか。」

駅員は案じ顔で、親切にしてくれる。

「心配しなさんな、リングエンでも100人に1人、広島原爆でも生き残ったのだ。この顔を見なさい。鉄橋から落ちるぐらいで、死ぬような顔ではないでしょうが。」

駅員はあっけにとられ、黙ってしまった。

「宇土駅には止まるかい。」

「さあ、わかりません。」

故郷の空気を味わっているうち、試運転の新しい任務をおびた、件の貨物列車がやっと動き出した。

空気も、空も、大地も稲も、豊かである。静かで平和である。

突然、列車が極度に速度を落としはじめた。そして最徐行になった貨車の下から、かすかにギーッ、ギーッときしむ音が気味悪く伝わってくる。

《ははあ、積み上げた枕木の音だな》

ギーッ、ギーッと鳴る音がしだいに遠のき、ついにきしむ音は聞こえなくなった。緊急修理の橋梁を無事に渡り終わって、機関車に力が入って来た。速度が出はじめ、快調だ。まもなく生まれ故郷である。

小西行長、加藤清正の境界線を越えた。

雁回山が見えて来た。

為朝が流刑されたと伝えられ、雁さえも、為朝の強弓をさけて迂回したといわれる山である。かすかに秋空の雲は回っていた。為朝



戦争は終わった！

の故事とは関係なく、かすかに、うす雲は回っていた。

今日は煙は見えないけれど、その山の北東に、阿蘇の山々が静かに、かつては山容が変わるほど撃ちまくられた射撃の練習場であった連山が、記憶にもないほど平和に、静かに、延々と連なっていた。

稲田は一面、黄金色一色である。

西には、有明の海を越えて、雲仙が静かであった。この山々に雲がかかれば《明日は雨だ》と、少年時代に聞かされた古老の言を思い出した。

今日は風もなく、大空には、昨日までのあの戦争の形跡すら残してはいない。

石炭車の上に起きなおり、大声で機関手に呼びかけた。

「宇土駅で降りるんだ。速度を落としてくれ。——」

広島から仮橋試運転までをともにしたこの敗残軍人に同情してか、機関手は二つ返事で応諾した。

「道中、世話をかけてすまなかった。ありがとう。」

機関手にお礼もそこそこ、5本の軍刀を小脇に、貨車から飛び降りた。見ていた人たちは、笑顔で迎えてくれたが、左半面の真黒焦げの顔、髪はボウボウの伸び放題、ふた目と見られた人相ではなかったであろう。

## 母もショックで死んでいた

国家の圧力は消え去った。国民はすべて気楽な、のん気な、平和

さを取り戻したようだった。たとえ、生活は苦しく必死でも——。

私は、駅を出て驚いてしまった。駅前の姉の家が、燃えてなくなっていた。だれもいない。

8月9日、終戦1週間前、長崎に第2の原子爆弾を投下された同じ日に、宇土市も爆撃、全滅的被害を受けていた。

だれも見当たらない。姉の家の焼け跡をあとに、母のいる故郷へ急ぐ。

いつもの帰郷のときの習慣で、まず、東隣の観音寺、西宿寺の墓地へ行く。

あっ！ そこには、母の名前のある真新しい墓標が立っているではないか。私は驚きのあまり、そこにしばらく立ち尽くしてしまった。

母は、むごいことにも、8月25日、すでに死んでいた。私はしばし無念の合掌を捧げた。

兄貴曹六、昭和13年8月戦死。

弟弁吉、昭和14年7月戦死。

かてて加え、私までが、広島で戦死してしまったものと思い込んだ母は、そのショックも大きく、仏間に床をのべて10日間、寝込んでしまったということだった。

長姉は、東京の吉祥寺から強制疎開。

次姉は、満州より帰らず。

三姉は、宇土駅前において空爆死。

末妹は、これまた満州より帰らず。

7人の子供たちが、みなそれぞれ戦死、あるいは戦争犠牲の被害

戦争は終わった！

者ばかりだ。母も、さぞ心の中で嘆き悲しんでいたことであろう。

悲しみに耐え、困難な心の痛手にも耐えて、笑うことすらできなかった母は、軍国の母、名誉の母と言われ、直接、天皇にほめられたえられ表彰状をもらった。そして71歳の母は、私の原爆被爆の報を聞き、これですべては終わった、ついに子供は全滅してしまったものと思い込み、その耐えられないショックで、寝込んでしまったものと思われる。

終戦の日から10日目の8月25日、ついに母は仏前で眠るがごとく、帰らぬ人となって息を引き取ったという話を、兄の未亡人静枝姉から聞かされ、私は、いままで張りつめていた気持ちも、体中の力も、一度に抜け切ってしまった。

母に会い、墓参りをすませたら、折り返し広島へ帰るつもりなのが、ついに5日間、九州連山の見える生家の奥座敷で、父の遺愛の庭に生え茂る雑木を、敷きのべたフトンの中から、終日、眺めて過ごした。原爆症の第1期症状が出て来たのではないかと思われた。

義姉は、やっと生き残った私まで死なしてはと思ってか、私の好きなフナの刺し身に、だんご汁、母が生前丹精をこめて、漬け込んでいた漬け物で、慰め待遇してくれた。

それを毎日、腹いっぱい食べた。そのうち、しだいに元気を取り戻した。

## 叩かれても叩かれても

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9月10日、広島に復帰。後始末がなかなか終わらない。原爆症死亡者と、症状の長期化がめだってきた。

ところが、9月18日、集中豪雨を伴った台風が広島を襲い、市中は大洪水に見舞われた。そして残っていた橋も、全部流されてしまった。京都から放射能研究に来ていた十数人の学究の人たちのほとんどが、流され、水死したのもこのときである。

太田川は、広島市内で七本かに分流している。放射能を恐れ、上流に居をかまえ、毎日々下流に降りて来ていた研究者たちが、本流の大はんらんで、命ごと流されてしまったという話を聞いたが、気の毒なことだった。

私たちは、それでも市内でがんばった。残余の放射能を浴びる恐れのあることは十分考えられたことだが、そんなことを考えてはいられなかった。しかし、市内にがんばっていたおかげで、太田川のはんらんで命を奪われることはなかった。いまでも、当時のことを

叩かれても叩かれても

思うと、何がさいわいするかわからないものだと思う。

## 急にふえだしたハエと雑草

被爆後の広島には、ハエと雑草が急にふえだした。

生命の試練とは、何もののにも勝つことである。原子爆弾の大爆発にも、放射能にも、すべてが燃やされても、焼かれても、生命は保ちうるものである。自然の現象は、その破壊するエネルギーを越えて、文化を作り、建設することを教えている。

春の野を迎えるには、麦の根は弱い。数センチの凍土、霜柱の下に、重く強く踏み入れなければ、寒さに負けて、豊かな麦は実らないものだ。

ハエもやはり、雑草もやはり、すべてにさがけて繁殖し、繁茂するのであろう。

人もまた、鍛錬なきものは敗北する。勝たねばならぬ、雑草のように……。叩かれても、叩かれても、繁殖するハエ、俳句の一茶ではないが、やれやれと思われる。

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やがて、市内のあちこちにバラックが建ちはじめたころ、9月25日、日本に上陸したグルカ兵が、広島にも駐とんすることになるという情報を聞いた。そうなれば、生き残っている日本兵は処罰される。あるいは処刑されるというデマが飛んだ。26日には、すでにグルカ兵が、呉まで来たという話を耳にした。

## 東京へ——海上の災難

いよいよ広島から脱出することを決めた。いろいろ考え、研究した結果、脱出するにしても、陸地に行くことは、非常に困難であり、不可能であると知った。

このとき、総勢7名。家内、勢郎、達郎、実郎、長兄の子「し保子」、研屋旅館の遺児幸典君と私で、7名である。

私は、これらを引き連れて、東京へ帰ることに決心したのだが、列車の切符がなかなか手に入らない。ようやく2枚だけ入手することができたが、7人にたった2枚の切符ではどうにもならぬ。その上、列車はとてもあてにはならない見通しが濃厚になった。

そこで、草津寺の老僧のとりなしで、漁師と交渉。発動機つき的小舟で、いちおう尾道へ出る方法をとることに、話はまとまった。

新品の軍服一そろいに、金壺千円也だけ。退職金なし。引越料なし、130円の軍医大尉の月給だけでは、これから先が困難である。それでもやらねばならなかった。

持ち物、それも家内の着物などを売り払い、1000円の金もつくり、まず尾道へ向かうことになった。草津寺の老僧夫人に見送られ、小舟は陸地を離れて行った。

草津寺、この寺のおかげで、家内や子供たちは、命拾いをさせてもらったのであるが、もはや、いざさらばである。

墓の多い町、そして死の山、広島最後の町草津。原爆の大炸裂を、この町の人びとは地震ではないかと思ったと言う。

あの数多い墓、石塔のほとんどが倒れた。とがった屋根の寺、寺

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の多い町も、大半は瓦が落ち、柱は傾いた。

激震を思わせた草津の町を、ふりかえりふりかえり、夜明けの舟つき場からだんだん遠ざかって行った。

27日正午、水は青く、空はあくまで高く、いま何一つ、気にかかるものとしてない。瀬戸内の海は、海の果てまで、私たちをこころよく迎えてくれているかに見えた。

正午ごろ、突然、驚くべき事態が、降って湧いたように起こった。

すぐ近くに、アメリカの軍艦が、忽然と現われた。いままでに、これほどまぢかで、正面からなど見たことのなかった軍艦の姿だ。

駆逐艦らしい。かなりの速度で、私たちの小舟に向けて突進してくる。

何か知らないが、3発連続して真っ赤な爆発を起こす。1発は右へ、1発は左へ、1発はまた右へ、いやこれには参った。

軍艦の速度は早い。私たちの小舟との距離はどんどん縮まる。軍艦は両側から400～500メートル引いているロープの先に、赤い小旗を立てたウキを引っばっているのが見える。機雷の掃海をしているらしい。

私たちの小舟は、そのウキを迂回する時間がない。ようし、こうなったらやむをえぬ。軍艦とウキの間どころの、波の少ないところを乗り切る以外に方法はあるまい。万一、舵を取り損なって、泡立つ波に乗り上げることになれば、うまくいっても小舟は転覆、また掃海にかかった機雷にでも触れることになれば、それこそこの世の最後だ。

南無三、一直線にぶっ飛ばせ、度胸をきめて舵棒を握りしめ、真一文字に突っ込んで行った。

ところが、駆逐艦と見えたのは、実は掃海艇だった。その掃海艇から、またまた3発、続いて3発と、赤玉を正面に撃ち込んで来た。それが小舟のまぢかで、赤く爆発して燃え上がる。

赤玉の直撃をまともに受けたら、火傷ぐらいではすまされない。迷って掃海の機雷に触れでもしたら、それこそ一巻の終わりだ。

掃海艇の上から、何やら英語らしい言葉でどなっているが、われわれには通じない。

一直線に、波の少ないところを乗り切ったとき、一同は、船頭とともに、やれやれ助かったと、ほっとした思いだった。

掃海艇の艦上では、米兵たちが何やら大声でどなったり笑ったりしていた。われわれ一同も、

「あの赤玉が、大砲や鉄砲でなくてよかったな……。」

もう、それからは尾道めざして一目散だ。瀬戸の海の流れは、清く平和だった。

## 東京への道、7人で2枚の切符

ところが、またもや事件発生だ。

無人島の小島のそばを通過するとき、何かが舟底に突き当たった。と思った瞬間、小舟はぐるぐるっと回った。推進機のシャフトが、何か障害物に当たって、曲がったらしい。

小舟は動かなくなってしまった。仕方がない。はだかになり、飛



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び込み、もぐって見る。案の定、シャフトが曲がっている。これでは進むわけがない。

小舟のへさきを無人島の砂浜に引っぱり上げ、石をもつてもぐってはたたき、もぐってはたたき、何とか修理することに成功した。

エンジンをかけてみると、調子はなかなか良好のようだ。しかし食べ物もなく、水も少ない。目的地の東京までの道は、はるかに遠い。しかしへたな考えは休むに似たりだ。ただ急げや急げである。

やっと、尾道に行き着いたところ、またまた大変である。

列車に乗るために駅の方に行ってみる。駅前広場は、足の踏み場もないほどに、たくさんの人びとがすわり込んでいる。

駅の玄関には、青い服の兵隊らしいのが、つつ立っている。見ると《NAVY》と書いた横文字の腕章を着けている。

「君たちはなんだ。」

「警戒しています。」

「そうか、わしは軍の命令でここまできた。これから東京へ行く。家族もいるが通るぞ！」

「どうぞ。」

案外おとなしいのに拍子抜けした。

ホームに入ってみて、これまた驚いた。いっぱいである。いつ、どんな列車が来るのか、誰ひとり知らない。仕方がない。広島で求めた2枚の切符で7人だ。こちらはすでにどうかしている。それでも待つこと1時間、すでにすし詰めでいっぱいの貨物車がホームに入ってきた。

目の前に、郵便車が止まった。これも人間でいっぱいだ。窓が開

いている。いくらかすき間があるようだ。この列車に乗れなければ問題だ。強引に子供たちを窓から押し込み、家内も私も、あとから無理やり乗り込んでしまった。

ガタンゴトン、ガタンゴトン、やがてのこと長時間かかって大阪に着いた。

## 東京・田無のわが家へ

広島を発ってから、1日以上もたった28日の夕刻である。大阪のホームで1時間待っていると、東京行きらしい客車が出発するらしい。ここでもまた、もぐり込み乗車に成功した。出発のときから食い物はない。子供らだけにはわずかな乾パンを少しずつ与え、大人は東京までの間、駅々に着くたびに、ホームの水を飲み継ぎ、がんばらねばならなかった。

苦しい旅だったが、よくしたもので、ようやくのこと、30日の明け方3時に、東京の三鷹駅へ、たどり着くことができた。

三鷹からチビ助（三男・実郎）を背負い、みんなでガサガサ田無まで、疲れた足を引きずりながら歩いた。朝の5時半ごろ、やっとの思いで田無の留守宅に転がり込んだ。

長い間、空き家になっていたわが家の、戸棚の片隅にあった1升ほどの米をさがし出した。このときほど、《ご飯》という言葉をしる、食べる前の言葉で、しみじみ味わったことはかつてなかった。

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叩かれても叩かれても

ようやくわが家に落ちついた。しかし私の体は、抜けるようにダ  
ルイ。医師の《虎の巻》をたよりに、日本中でいちばん磷酸カルシ  
ウムの多いといわれる山形県の浜温泉に出かけて、療養すること  
にした。

浜温泉に行ってから、毎日、毎日、数リットルの温泉のお湯を  
飲んだ。毎日飲んでいうちに、だんだん体のダルサがとれて、2  
週間目に田無の家に帰って来た。

遊んでいては、食べることも、家族を養ってゆくこともできない。  
元気を出して、やにわに働き出した。やらねば飢えるからだ。

## わが生涯の最大のミス

新しい社会。

戦争のない社会。

科学して、平和な社会。

そのために、私は全力を尽くし、残されたこれからの私の人生を  
捧げようと心にきめた。

勢郎も、達郎も、実郎も、私の母校、東京医大（戦前の東京医専）  
に、医者 of 道を進ませるために学ばせ、淀橋病院に一任だ。

ふりかえってみるとき、私はいままでに、実に大ミスをした。

広島から終戦後の混乱の中を切り抜け、帰京してからは、しばらくの間、縁故筋にあたる佐々病院で、手不足でもあったので、家内といっしょに手伝い、手助けのため働いた。

家内が何も言わず、私にしたがってしてくれるのをよいことにし

て、彼女の勝ち気さと、才覚にまかせ、医療材料の仕入れ、物資の購入など、それからそれと、忙しく立ち働かせた。また、町の物価委員長まで引き受け、がんばっている家内を尊敬し、感謝していた。

特に、戦時中の8年間、私の応召出征中、泣き言もいわず、私の5円50銭の月給当時から、120円の大尉の月給になるまで、たりないにきまっているのを、たりないとも言わずにやりとおした。

私が言うのも変なものだが、私はその偉さに感心し、感謝をしていた。毎日の忙しさにかまけて、精密検査もせずにいたのが悪かった。

ついには、原爆症悪化のため、糟糠の妻でもあった家内を、永久に失うことになってしまった。これは本当に、わが生涯における最大のミスであった。

私は、あとになってからではあるが、家内が自分で原爆症であることを、よく知っていたような気もする。ただ、私としての気休めは、宮中に仕える侍医、児島博士の診療が、せめて、幾分なりと、彼女を気楽にさせたようであった。

それにしても、とうとうその翌年、冥土へ旅立ってしまった。

中学2年生と、小学3年生と、3歳になる男の子3人。モンペ・ズボンの膝が抜けるのには、弱ったことだ。

家内は、それをよく手まめにつくった。つくづく家内のありがたかったことを、いまさらのように感謝している。

いまではみんな、新しい母のもとで、3人ともそれぞれ成人し、医者になり、長男・勢郎は男の子1人、女の子2人の父親になっ

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た。

これらの孫にまでは、原爆症の影響はなさそうである。私は、市長としての忙しい毎日を送っているが、可愛い孫たちの姿を見るにつけ、ほっとしている今日このごろである。



## 指田吾一略歴

熊本県宇土市出身。医学博士、享年59歳。

昭和8年、東京医大（元・東京医専）卒。同10年、沼津市沢病院で研修、同時に土肥町に診療所開設。同16年、中華民国漢口市に病院開設。同18年、田無市で佐々病院に協力。20年、軍医として応召中、広島で原爆被災。同29年、現在地に指田病院を開設。同37年、田無町初の革新町長として当選。同41年、町長に再度当選。同42年1月、市制施行とともに初代市長となり、44年3月24日午前8時3分、脳出血のため東京医大病院で死去。医専学生時代に、著者が九州出身であることから「バッテン」のアダ名があったため、みずからも抜天と号した。

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