

Burnt out Ruins

Ms. Tome Yamamoto

On June 15th, 1900, I was born in Motozakimachi, the eldest daughter of eight siblings. Our house was a butchers and I helped out in the shop from when I was about 20 years old. After my father passed away, we moved to a place below the citizen sports grounds in Nishiyama and I lived with my mother and my brother's two children. (My brother had gone off to war and his wife had passed away.)

On August 9th, 1945, I was 46 years old back then and I was cleaning on the second floor of my house at the time. Suddenly, I felt a flash of light, then the glass windows broke with a crashing sound, the house shook and *fusuma* (sliding paper panels) and such things went flying off everywhere. I went down the stairs immediately and the four of us went to the *oshiire* (futon cupboard) and covered ourselves with the *futons*. Fortunately, none of us were hurt.

Because my relatives were living in Urakami, I passed nearby Urakami Cathedral on the day the atomic bomb was dropped, but houses and things were blown all over the place and as far as I could see there was nothing but burned out ruins. I couldn't recognize one place from another, people were burnt black and I couldn't tell one from the other. I wasn't sure when the planes would come over again, so I was scared and went home right away.

There were dead bodies lying on top of one another in the river. Five months later, the person who takes care of people in town brought me an Atomic Bomb Victim's Record Book. Except the

ones who had gone to the War, all of my extended family members were dead, but none of my immediate family died from the atomic bombing.

[Location at Bombing: Nishiyamamachi]