

Records of Atomic Bomb Experiences for Publication

Yoshi Itonaga: Chairman of the Board of Directors

When the sun starts to dazzle in mid-summer, it makes me think about that day of providence. It was 37 years ago.

In 1970, the Genbaku Home was opened at Meguminooka and to witness those elderly people's first anniversary of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki at the Home, I asked the residents their opinions about what we should plan for the day.

"I don't want to think about it, don't even want to talk about it" I had heard someone say. But a reporter who had spoken with them said "They started to talk about it like a dam inside them had broken." On another day, I heard one reflexively say "I don't want to see it", before we showed a film called *Ningenwokaese*, a documentary that had been made about the bombing.

I think both reactions were their honest feelings. They naturally have an inexhaustible story to tell but on the other hand it's really detestable to even recall it. Being the ultimate tragedy that deprived them of their family, home, town, their own health and life in a second, who could talk about this easily? They may have closed their mouth firmly thinking "No one else can understand these feelings" even while it is frequently talked about in various ways around us. Or they even may not have had anyone to talk to about it and so they grew old being forced to keep silent and not having a chance to talk about the atomic bombing, so they may have buried it deep in their minds.

I think about this sometimes knowing it's not possible... "I wish to

talk freely about that day, that time - with the children of Junshin Student Corps who are in heaven.” I also wish to do the same with the residents; to allow them to share their atomic bombing experiences, but I couldn’t have that opportunity until today. Anyway, when all is said and done, ‘Many, LORD my God, are the wonders you have done, the things you planned for us. None can compare with you; were I to speak and tell of your deeds, they would be too many to declare.’ [PSALM; 40]

Since the home was opened I have been thinking that those many people’s noble experiences should be put together and although it was my dearest wish, I hadn’t been able to realize it yet. But today, those people from the Home’s efforts have paid off and it is really meaningful now to be able to publish the first *Genbakutaikenki* [A Record of Atomic Bombing Experiences] on the year of the second Special Session on Disarmament of the United Nations General Assembly. It is very gratifying to me that it brings consummate bliss for those elderly people who have felt totally powerless to call for the total destruction of nuclear weapons, for them to be able to both pass on their atomic bombing experiences to the next generation and also to pray for peace day and night.

I pray for true peace to come.