

PART 1

My life began with a-bomb

(2)

What I learned on the back of mother

Wherever I go, I was on the back of my mother. My childhood was spent on her back. She walked me on her back. I used to feel nice and warm with her back.

The radius of my operation or the view itself has been obliged to be limited as compared with that of the ordinary persons who are capable of going wherever they wish and do. Once I decided to walk to a certain place, I gazed at the spot never being able to look and watch around to see what are happening around me.

This trend of my activity behavior has continued up until this time more or less. At the age of 60, however, things happen to use what you call “supportive device for a physically handicapped person” on my both leg and foot. The devices have played ever since wonderful opportunities and joy for my life, which would be written far after this book.

One thing that I should write about my good experience on the back of my mother is that I learned how to pronounce “V, R, L, TH”. For instance, when she walked me on her back, she walked to the rhythm saying, “left, right, left, right” was it.

As it is known, Japanese is in those sounds. Her English was sure as she lived in Hawaii until the age of eleven. She entered in Hiroshima Jogakkou, the present Hiroshima Mission School. She used to tell me proudly that the founder of the school, Miss Gaines, used my mother as her interpreter for the students occasionally.

My English ability as far as its pronunciation and elocution are concerned, therefore, I owe to her great deal. In fact, if I say something in English at this age here in the Philippines, people say, “Are you American?” I have never looked as Japanese ever since I am here. This makes me all the more reason why I should continue to speak it clearly and surely.

I have one more thing that I learned from mother for which I still remember vividly and that for the good of my whole life ever since. And that is, she taught me the word “Even”.

She used to say to me, “Yuuki, you have a handicap. In order not to let it make difference or gap to the ordinary persons or to keep ‘even’ to others, you have to make effort

twice as much as they do. Get it!?” These simple words of hers ever since became the root of my attitude toward life, making people say and say myself too, “I am a man of efforts”.

Years later, I became to believe that even if not specially talented myself or even having handicap, if I works ten hours or more while others eight hours, I would be as good or catch up with as those talented or un-handicapped. The image of Yoshida as “a man of effort and hungry spirit” thus has been as it is ever since my great mother taught me, for which I have been thankful to her and the same to God for making me handicapped.

When I write such things about me, the readers may think, “Oh, Yoshida is such a capable man in spite of his physical disability to be praised for his accomplishment!”. I am not that type of a man to be admired at, you know. I am a very ordinary man or sometimes have made stupid errors in a long way of life up until this age of 78.

I recall myself that I was a naughty plain boy like every boys are. For instance, when someone makes fun of me crippled or pretend my duck like walking style, I used to be brave enough to fight against him.

My style of fighting was funny, you know. I sit on the ground and say, “Come on! Let’s fight!” was it. It is the style of “groundwork technique” in Judo and “pinning technique” in wrestling. Once I sit and fight I never be the loser.

I recall, therefore, I was not the type of a genuine or study-crazy boy, never. The lesson I learned from mother, therefore, is something that has grown up later years.

As regards my physical deformity, I never had what you call “pathetic or complex mind or inferiority complex” at all. I was optimist or cheerful person, so to speak. This was because of my life environment surrounded by three tender sisters who loved me so much and rather well to do family.

When I think of my character or personality from the boyhood, I admit that I was and am by nature very pure, gentle and mild. This, I believe, has led me to accept later years that my physical deformity is the trial and gift given me by God.

By the way, my first name “Yuuki” has an episode. My father’s first name was “Yuuichi”. The Chinese character of “yuu” has its root of God’s help.

When he became a serious disease some seven doctors said that even if he recovered, some aftereffects would be left. He completely recovered, however, that nothing left. The doctors, some of them are his friends, said in one same word, “As your first name implies, God saved you ONE TIME”.

“Ichi” of “Yuuichi” means “one”, which could be

interpreted to “God saved him one time”. The person who was helped one time by God, my father, named me “Yuuki”. “ki” of “Yuuki” means “stand, rise, build or get-up”.

I have an interesting story that my mother used to tell me. She used to say, “Our ancestors are said to have a long history of some 300-year. The Yoshida Family had a 300-year family tree. If we go back and back to the olden days, we would come to the Kanmu Emperor’s root. Your grand-grand mother was said to get married to the family simply because she wanted the family tree, although the family tree was burned by fire some time ago...”

Whether the story is true or not I don’t know. While my father named me “Yuuki”, which, as mentioned before, means “Risen up by God’s help”. He used to tell me why I was named so.

According to our parents, our ancestors, at the time of “Meiji Reformation”, sold the land and houses with no hesitation to pay good enough money to the servants what we call “retirement money”. This non selfish measure made the family poor ever since, my parents used to say to us.

The important thing about my naming of “Yuuki;Risen up by God’s help” was, therefore, my parents, especially father, strongly placed on me some desire or wish that I would be the person who would “rebuild” the family of Yoshida. Ever since then, I have been telling myself I am sort of a man given a mission in my life to do something.

I, as a son of the Yoshida family, placing in that destiny, became crippled by polio. This brought my father to name the second son, Yuuji. “ji” in Chinese character means “take in charge of” or “administer”, meaning “Yuuki helps and supports physically handicapped Yuuki”.

For further information, the third son, Yuusaku, the one who died by the atomic bomb, comes from the meaning of “strategist”. Those three sons would rebuild the family of Yoshida, was our father’s dream, so to speak.

A very interesting about my first younger brother, Yuuji, is that he happens to name his three children all with the character of “yuu” as if his family is destined to succeed the Yoshida family.

While on the other side, I have been divorced with my former wife with three children. They have no name of “yuu” on their sons and daughters, even their own family name changed to that of my former wife’s family name.

The voice of “Why?” seems to be heard from the readers. Maybe this is what God worked for me to do something more important to do in my life. As the readers know, I have moved my residence here in the Philippines and am determined to spend the rest of my life here until the day of

coming back to the Heaven.

By the way, my father used to say, “I would have to take care of Yuuki through his life...” Such impossible thing no matter how he saves money. The very person who said that impossible future died at the age of 45, right a year after the a-bomb drop. Ironically, the a-bomb changed his life to work for his son-in-law who asked our father to work for his sawmill, where he met the accident to death. Here lies one of the destinies of what I am now unable to talk about my life without telling of the “a-bomb and me”.

I would like to take this opportunity to write something about my brothers and sisters. Yuuji, three years younger than I have for years enjoying his retirement life with a son and daughter, who, as mentioned, have “yuu” in their first names and their children. The youngest brother, Yuusaku, died soon after the a-bomb, who appears hereafter.

My eldest sister, Hatsue age of 89, lives in a care home alone. Her husband is the very person who asked our father to help him for the sawmill operation which took his life. I owe him much of my success, which I would like to write more hereafter.

The second elder sister, Fumiko age of 86, is in care home unable to do anything by herself. I owe her my life at the time of the a-bomb, which I write after.

The youngest elder sister, Hiroko 81 of age, had far much harder and horrible experiences by the a-bomb. Stories about her come later. I would like to write here about something. A piece of hairs of hers that dropped off soon after the a-bomb because of radio activity are displayed in the Hiroshima A-bomb Memorial Hall.

Her only son whom she borne against the doctors advice not to because of her too poor physical condition, is now active as an orchestra conductor. He is well known as the last student of that famous Herbert von Karajan and the one who conducted Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra when his great teacher suddenly became sick. The stories about them come out later.