

Part 1
My life began with a-bomb

(3)

Nearly escaped from death by a-bomb

I would like to make a time slip back to my boyhood. It was in the midst of the Japanese militarism. Our junior high school boy and girl students were taught in a militaristic way. There was manpower shortages for the War, which drove the students to work in companies and factories with no school lessons.

There was and is a company called “Hiroshima Streetcar Company” which deals with transportation business by tramcars and busses throughout the city and suburbs. My classmates were forced to work for repairing plants and I myself, being crippled, was the only student to have a place to work in an office.

After we attended the morning meeting under our teacher, I was walking through the dime corridor to my office of the department of electricity. Suddenly a big sparked light came into my sight. At that moment of a second, I saw someone’s silhouette like posture on the wall as if the person was raising up arms with surprise or fear. It was like a slide picture on the wall. What came into my mind was that a tramcar in the switchyard made overloaded with the circuit made a sparking.

In a matter of another second, there came a huge “bang!”, “don!” is the Japanese expression. By the way, the former spark or splash is expressed in Japanese “pika”. Later days the Japanese a-bomb survivors began to call the a-bomb “Pika-don” making the two words together to express the bomb came with splash and bang in almost a second or some by the distance.

With a huge bang, came an instantaneous collapse of building. I was completely buried under the debris in darkness with breath stopping dust and smell. I could not move an inch. For a crippled boy, I was hopeless if placed in such situation. For a moment and unconsciously, I came to hold hands together to pray to as if I were to die.

A few minutes or so at the time the dust come down, there came into my eyes a twilight above my head. I saw a small hole of light far above my head. I began to crawl up to that direction. My legs and feet did not work, only by arms I tried to began to climb up toward the dim light hole.

I succeeded anyhow to get out of the collapsed building. I felt I was far high up a place looking down there where people are running here and there shouting. At the moment I got out, the first thing came into my mind was where about of

my bicycle, for I was completely dependent for my move.

Soon I came to know much bleeding in my face. I cried out, "Mom, bleeding!" The readers would say, "What a pampered child!" As a matter of fact, I could do nothing or move nowhere had I no bicycle at all, you know. "What should I do!?" was ahead of everything.

The voices down below came yelling, "Go to the Red Cross Hospital!!" I crawled down the ground anyhow. The circumstances were so awful and disrupted that no more about the bicycle in my mind, only instinctively to pick up a piece of rafter in the debris as a walking cane and began to walk toward the Hospital.

The Hospital was located just between my home and the working place, only a few blocks. For me, however, it was quite a distance to walk. I picked out a towel from the waist belt. In those days we were obligated to hang a towel in the belt for emergency.

I was obliged to stop and sit on the ground to wipe the blood and wring out the towel of blood. I could not use both hands without relying myself to something, you know. I still never forget that greasy and slippery touch when wipe the blooded towel.

By the way, the place of office I worked in the company at that time, after more than half a century, turned to be a branch office of a bank, where I used to go for cashing when I established a consulting company in 1998 as my third stage of life. Whenever I go, the memory of the past came into my heart.

Now when I arrived the Hospital, I stood in a line of injured people for medical care. All of them were terribly burned with their burned skins were peeled off or hanging. A soldier wearing a red cross armband came to me saying, "come, boy" and picked me out from the line to see the doctor. Later days I realized that was because he thought I was the only patient to be survived to the doctor's eye.

It was at that time that I came to know I had three deep cuts in my face. The medical treatment, however, was not sewed up, only bandaged after treated with some mercurochrome.

In one corner on the floor, a high rank like soldier officer was lying on the floor surrounded with nurses. He tried to draw his sword saying, "Let me kill myself!", while the nurses were trying to stop it. It was like a hell.

Some hours passed, but still I do not remember how long it was. I was sitting on the floor with my back on the big pillar on the front gate of the hospital, watching the houses across the street burning absent-mindedly. I still thought in heart, that someone sometime would sure come to pick me up

or even thought my home is OK.

However, as time goes, I became to be more despaired. In the mean time, a soldier came with a bucket full of “Umeboshi”, Japanese plum pickles. This is one thing I never forget its taste in my life.

I happened to see one of my neighbors, to whom I asked, “My home is OK?” He moved his head right and left weakly. I finally came to be aware everything is hopeless. If I were an ordinary boy, I could run to my home to face the reality sooner. So small and narrow my world was because of my difficulty in moving.