

Fear of the Bombs 爆弾の恐ろしさ

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Sixty-five years have passed since the war. I have tried to write so that we remember that day vividly even now.

Before 8 o'clock on June 22nd, 1945, the month before the air raid, I was approaching Kachidoki Bridge on my way to work. Suddenly a siren sounded, the air raid alarm did not usually go off unless it was night time. As it sounded I thought "What's that!?" I glanced to the east and saw what looked like a single B29 aircraft. The plane flew towards me and I saw two black bombs fall one after the other.

I was shocked, the other people walking to work over the bridge shouted "Quickly! Quickly!" and we rushed to the air raid shelter to the west of the Prefectural Government Office. The bunker was full of people. As soon as the doors of the air raid shelter closed there was a huge blast, "kaboom!" ("*dokaan*"), and the earth shook. I was crouched down there. We were all talking about where the bomb could have struck.

"That was terrifying" everyone said as we left the shelter, we wondered where the B29 had gone, we couldn't see its shadow. Because a B29 had never come so early in the morning it became talk of the town on the way to work. People also said "The B29

must have been aiming for the Prefectural Government Office. They must have missed their target. If they had hit the Prefectural Office I would surely be dead or seriously injured.” Even now, it is chilling to think about it.

Before long, it became clear that the bombs had fallen on Akita-machi. When I heard that people had died I became worried about people I knew in that area. I was shocked to hear that a family of three had died, a childhood friend of mine and her parents. They lived in my area for a long time and had just moved to Akita-machi, only to die in the bombing. I remember how sorry I felt for them to this day. My children and grandchildren do not know about the war so it is important to convey the horror of the Tokushima Air Raid from time to time.