

The Great Tokushima Air Raid 徳島大空襲**Miyamoto Tomiko 宮本 登美子****Kitajosanjima-cho, Tokushima-shi 徳島市北常三島町**

I was a school girl at the time, born in Aiba-cho 3-chome (the neighborhood of modern day Awa Gin Hall and the Tokushima Arts Foundation for Culture). “A” was the head of the neighborhood association of that time. Around the Shinmachi Bridge, Enomotohyo restaurant with its weeping willows, Ichikawa butchers, Izumo Shrine, Furukawa Hospital, Terasawa Hospital, Moriroku's soy sauce shop, Nishino Kinryo, and the Tokushima warehouse all formed a group that was reflected in the surface of the river.

On the night of July 3rd, a bunch of B-29 bombers came flying in, and fire spread out from the direction of “B”'s mansion. My father cut the string of the bundle of clothing he had hung in the well, and must have left after us, because my little brother (a fourth grade elementary student), younger sister, and I left the house alone carried on the back of our mother. At first we headed for the temple, but because it seemed like firebombs were falling by Mt. Bizan, we followed the road from the base of Bizan towards Nikenya, using bandanas drenched in water to protect us from the fire. Smoke enveloped the area, and it was hard to breathe. Our heads were covered by a light

summer futon, but when I glanced up quickly the outlines of the U.S. Air Force were clearly visible. When we got close to Nikenya, we were guided to the side of the mansion's pond by members of the neighbourhood association, and told to get in the water with everyone else if fire came. At dawn, the building where offerings were hung at Nikenya's Konpira Shrine was burning strongly. Even today, I'm deeply grateful to the members of the neighborhood association for saving my life. The rising sun on July 4th was terrifyingly red. After that, a family of farmers we knew helped us a bit too.

As for my father, we found him at Tenjin Temple at the foot of Bizan, where the four of us went because we heard we could get onigiri, two each. We happily embraced each other. A few people seemed to have been killed by a direct hit on the Kasuga Shrine's pond. For four or five days, it was too hot to go see the burnt remains of our house. When we finally did, only our bath heater remained. For some time, I couldn't stop crying.

Finally, on August 5th the war ended. At that point, I was still covering the lights at night with a big cloth so the light didn't leak outside. From that night on, I was relieved to be able to spend my nights with the house fully lit. A war like this can't happen again. I hope the water heater was at least helpful to the people in my neighborhood.