

That Day, That Time あの日 あの時**My War Experience as a 17 Year Old** 私の戦争体験 当時私は十七歳**Hayashi Nobuyoshi** 林 信義**Tsuda-honcho, Tokushima** 徳島市津田本町

It was November, 1944, around 1pm. “Kaboom!” (“*dokaan*”), the sound of a large bomb exploding shook the whole of Tsuda-machi. It wasn’t an earthquake. I was shocked and went outside in a hurry. People were screaming in the neighbourhood (“*Wai Wai*”). Many people began running to Minami-Sako (currently known Shinhama-cho). People were saying that bombs had been dropped, I wondered where they had landed and wanted to go and see it for myself. I saw the fearsome power of a bomb for the first time, a two-storey house had been completely destroyed. It created a crater about ten metres wide and ten metres deep. A neighbor said that he had got out of the house along with six relatives and that nobody was killed. “Scattered everywhere, the missing, bits of kimono were found in the branches of a tree nearby. The neighbours were crying as I spoke to them. That was the house of a female classmate. It was “A”san’s house. I felt very sorry for her. Fortunately, it later emerged that the father and child had escaped to Yamaji, Tsuda-machi.

[June 5th, 1945. B29 bombers. Several aircraft struck at around 1pm and dropped

incendiary bombs on Tsuda-machi. This air raid destroyed thirty-three houses in Tsuda-cho.]

July 4th, 1945, before dawn. “Kaboom! Kaboom!” (“*dokaan, dokaan*”) the sound of explosions could be heard. “Where’s that?!” I thought and ran outside. I looked southeasterly direction and saw that incendiary bombs had been dropped on Wadajima airfield in Komatsushima. The night sky turned bright red. I did not know the extent of the damage in Komatsushima because of Mt. Shibayama in Ohara-cho. Eventually a number of B29 bombers flew towards Tsuda-cho at low altitude, grazing Mt. Shibayama. I could see it well from my house. It was before dawn. From Katsuurahamagawa, incendiary bombs rained down on Tsudakaigan-cho. (“*shaa-*”) it sounded like a strong wind. Incendiary bombs came down like hail. It was like hell on earth. Before long the sun rose, at about 8:30am. B29 bombers came from the Shinmachi River area to Tsuda-cho. Bombs came down like hail over the whole of Tsuda-cho. Smoke and flames rose up from the ground. There was nothing I could do but stand back and look. I managed to evacuate. Fifty-four houses in Tsuda-cho were burned down in this air raid and fourteen were partially destroyed. Then when you looked from Tsuda to the coast you could see that bombs had been dropped on the whole area, from Katsuurahamagawa to Tsudakaigan. There were many unexploded bombs. They were huge things, almost a

metre in length. Some of the incendiary bombs still had the propellers attached to them (note – these propellers were a feature of cluster bombs which caused them to explode mid-air).

(It became clear later that Tokushima-shi and the Kinki region, Osaka and Kobe, had been bombed that night).