

The Burned Fields of the Tokushima Air Raid in 1945

昭和20年徳島市空襲で焼け野原に

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When you enter Honmachi from the east, where back then the Tokushima District Court was, there was a little alleyway along the fence of the courthouse. At the end of that alley was a house (Tokushima Honmachi 1-chome). That is where we lived. This area is now a national highway.

When you went out in Honmachi that day, there was a constant roaring sound of bombs being dropped and machinegun fire. We had something like a bomb shelter but I saw how all the houses got burned down and there were people running, god knows what they were thinking. I also started running. A blazing pillar of fire fell down under our gate. While watching the Commerce and Industry Promotion Building (which used to be a temporary medical school I think) burn down on the left I kept running aiming for Washi-no-mon (“The Eagle Gate” of the former castle). I hid underneath a short concrete bridge under the radio tower. Machine gun bullets came zipping by one after another outside of the ditch. I remember I was scared wondering whether the bridge could withstand the fire. After that I ran to the former library diagonally across from the

central park. On the west side of Mt. Shiroyama was a tunnel going in the direction of Suketo River. I went halfway inside the tunnel and used a cloth to cover my mouth. There was dense smoke everywhere so I had no choice but to wait it out.

After some time had passed I went west to the old western sports stadium and up to the spectator stands. There I saw dozens of people lying on the ground. They were all shot dead. One of them had a backpack. I took it and went back home. It was only because everything was in such disarray that I was able to do such things. After I got back I looked inside the backpack and I found an aluminium lunch box with one dried plum inside. There was also a blanket. I didn't have anything, so despite feeling sorry I washed the blanket and used it for myself. When I arrived at our house nothing was left but a burned black pot with rice inside and the concrete foundation of our house.

After a little while, my dad, brother, sister and our five assistants came back one after the other. At the time I couldn't even ask where they were and what had happened to them. I was only relieved they weren't hit by a bomb.

There were multiple buildings of which only the concrete shell remained. For example the Higashi-Shinmachi Marushin Department Store, the Higashi Anaba Kangyo Bank (today Mizuho Bank) and the Kogen Sekiyu building in front of it, the Prefectural Government Office and the City Hall. Anyhow, sixty-five years have passed

since that happened and I have learned first-hand that war is something that must never happen again and that peace shall forever prevail on earth.

The National High School Baseball Tournament (Senbatsu) was held again this year from March to April. From 1942 to 1946 the tournament was suspended for five years because of the war. At the 19th Senbatsu Tournament in 1947, when it was resumed after the war our Tokushima Commercial High School won the championship. This year it will already be held for the 82nd time and you can also tell how important peace is from the fact that the Senbatsu tournament is held. The happiness that it could have continued for sixty-five years in peace is something that I will always keep in my heart.