

**The Great Tokushima Air Raid 徳島大空襲****Ogawa Kayoko 小川 加代子****Hachiman-cho, Tokushima-shi 徳島市八万町**

I lived in front of Shinmachi Elementary School. We were a family of five. My mother was head of the Shinmachi chapter of the Women's Association for National Defense (*kokubo fujinkai*). My father was the town's air raid defense chief. My younger sister worked at the police headquarters, where she was in charge of the air raid warning signals. I worked night and day at the Girls' Volunteer Corps (*joshi teishintai*) from 1943 until the end of the war. I used to go to the Kawasaki Aviation munitions factory, up until the war ended. My family were sword makers; we sharpened swords for the troops. During the war, the 43<sup>rd</sup> Regiment was trained where the Tokushima University Hospital is now. The Tokushima air raid was in 1945, starting from late at night on July third to the early hours of the fourth.

A flare was dropped, lighting up the pitch-black area like it was the middle of the day. Soon, one hundred and twenty-nine B-29s flew in, covering the sky with thousands of incendiary bombs. The rain of fire looked just like fireworks. I don't know how or where we ran to. The fire fell at my feet. I heard screams around me. The river boiled and was piled with bodies. It was like seeing hell. On my way to the company, I came

under naval artillery fire twice. As of this year it's been sixty-five years since that day, but I still remember it like it was yesterday.

There were over two hundred swords at our house. My father was killed when the dugout he took shelter in was directly hit by a firebomb. More than seventy swords were at his side. I remember him every day.

War must never be started again.