

## Unforgettable Experiences 忘れ得ぬ体験

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These are my memories from sixty-five years ago when I was eight years old.

I had already gotten used to the frequent air raid alarms. When the warning sirens stopped that day everyone was relieved but then started panicking when suddenly the B29 bombers came flying in. We fled into the bomb shelter of our house. When shortly thereafter the bombs started coming down, the townspeople who lived in rented houses disregarded the authority of the head of the neighbourhood association and fled to Shiroyama. But I and my mum couldn't leave our house and three rented houses behind. However, the houses were bombed and when the head of the neighbourhood also left we first went out of our shelter. First my mum left and put my little sister in a baby stroller. The stroller with my little sister was immediately hit by three fire bombs. Mum was lucky and survived, although badly burned. My sister might have died on the spot. At that time I was still not in the open. I hid by a gatepost. Grandma was still in the bomb shelter. My mum came doubling back to the well in the courtyard to extinguish her burning clothes and poured water over her air raid hood. When I looked over to our house I saw how several little fires were flickering at the mosquito net. I was

fascinated by the sight and looked at it for a little while. That scene was something that even though I was just a child I could never forget.

I put a bucket on my head and we started walking down the burning streets. We kept slipping on the oil and only barely made it to the river alive where we got into the water. There were already a lot of people in the river. Every time the bombs came down it was like being in a bath, although it got cold really quickly. The water went up to my neck and while I was gazing at the violently burning houses on the other side of the river I was able to survive until the next morning. There were also bodies of people floating in the water who might have been hit by a bullet but no one paid attention and pretended like it was nothing.

After the sunrise my mum started looking for my little sister. Despite the burns and her aching body she went out every day to look for my sister until even her tears dried. Without a clue where to look she ended up not finding her. I was hoping that she was rescued somewhere by someone, but up to this day we have not received a sign of life from her so we gave up.

I submitted this report of my experiences in the hope that maybe someone who reads this might have any information about my little sister. Her name is Miyamoto Sawami (five years old at the time). She had big eyes, a bobbed haircut and was a chubby kid.

Our house was a little candy store. I would be so happy if anyone had any information.