

War Makes People Unhappy 戦争はすべての人を不幸にする**Uematsu Tooru 植松 亨****Dekijima-honcho, Tokushima-shi 徳島市出来島本町**

On the night of the Tokushima Air Raid on July 3rd, my father woke up my big sister and I so we could escape to the bomb shelter behind our house. When I looked at the red and black sky to the west and saw Tokushima Station burning, columns of fire suddenly rose up before my eyes and I felt the severe shock of the explosion through my body as it struck the ground. Once I regained my awareness, I crept out from under the ground in a dream-like state. Around me countless flames swirled about. From the hot flames, the three of us went into an alley that ran next to the electric company and we dashed to the field by the Terashima River bank. In that area was a large bomb shelter into which we were allowed to enter.

Twenty people were there in the shelter and feelings of fear and anxiousness hung in the air. Just as I sat down on the mat, a strong pain ran up the left side of my back. A large explosion hit the back side of the shelter and at that time I recalled that I hit my back.

“The grass nearby has started to burn! The smoke will suffocate you!” said the screaming voice of a member of the civil defence unit and as he crawled out of the

shelter, the heat and flames drew nearer to us. Everyone slowly stepped back and immersed themselves within the river. On the waterfront, a hooded woman took out bandages and salve from her medical kit and treated the injured. There were several sunken bombs at the dark bottom of the river. In the dark, I heard screams and wondered if we were under attack. In Tokushima Park on the opposite bank of the Terashima River, Shiroyama burst into a gigantic cluster of flames. The injured stayed in the dark river and I gazed dumbfounded at the crimson flames that rose up in mountainous form before me. It was an other-worldly sight like a living thing burning through the dark sky over Shiroyama with an ominous beauty. Due to its sheer awesomeness, all the people momentarily forgot about the fear of reality and just watched. The two story house by the park on the riverbank was hit by numerous bombs and even though the flames climbed up the building, a group of people, who appeared to be soldiers, ran around the building to try to put out the fire.

"That's the dorm for the navy sailors." said a person near me. A menacing B29 flew through the sky filled with red flames and black smoke. People ducked under the water of the red, black, muddy river and held their breaths as they continued to endure this hellish scene. Suddenly the ghastly sounds of explosions stopped and the heat around us weakened a bit as well and there was movement in the river among the people. Even

though I was shaking with fear and uncertainty, I felt a sudden chill and I climbed out of the river. I kept myself warm by some smouldering wood. Once the area became brighter, the people affected by the air raid and finally free of it began to gather. The voices of people calling after their family resonated throughout the wide park. At dawn, we headed toward our house in Terashima near Kenzaki Bridge, but we turned back, due to the burnt up road and exhausted looking people. On the street by Higashi-Terashima the hot winds caused bits of wood and burnt sheet metal to whirl about through the air. From then we continued to tread on and we relied on our relatives in the countryside.

After it all, Saipan and Iwo Jima were honourably defeated. Cities both big and small underwent air raids as well and then the atomic bombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were dropped. Japan was defeated and transformed from a militaristic country to a democratic one; the times suddenly changed, and then came many long overwhelming days. I bought books about philosophy and human life from a used book store and read them covetously as I became absorbed into them. Since I was still a boy, I couldn't understand the contents of the books, but it was like my powerless self was desperately searching for a way to live. I eventually painted over the lie that was my wartime education, which was used to evoke our fighting spirits over the "Colours of Defeat."

Houses burning down and the inhuman acts ordered by military authorities to fight on the mainland with hand grenades – That is the true nature of “war.” It's probably due to the militaristic idea that we should “see through the true weakness in the foundations of democracy”, that we rushed toward war.

War does nothing but make people unhappy. On this earth, even now, girls and boys are involved in suicide bombings and the hearts of those affected by the atomic bomb have been closed.