

**We Were Air Raided by B29s B 2 9 の空襲をうけて****Yoshida Hiroshi 吉田 博****Minami Sako Yonban-cho, Tokushima-shi 徳島市南佐古四番町**

Until two days before the raid, a handsome first lieutenant in the army had been lodging at my home (in a new tatami room). Every day a soldier on duty would come to boil the bath water for him.

Before long it was the early hours of July 4<sup>th</sup>. The air raid siren rang ("*buun, buun*") and then I started to hear the distinctive roar and incendiary bombs in the sky just above as fireworks began to fall littered with packages. The incendiaries fell in circles of sixteen devices in three phases – making forty-eight in total. They broke apart in the air like cluster bombs. As it comes close to the ground there is a whistling sound ("*hyu~hyu~*"), when it hits the ground the sound and force of the blast can even be felt by those sitting in the air raid shelters, we could not feel alive. There were six people in my family, we could only pray and hold our breath that the deadly bombing would be over as soon as possible. The incendiary bombs fell like rain and hail. The Tokushima sky became bright red as B29s flew leisurely at a fairly low altitude. There were no fighter planes to intercept them.

At that time, fire started to appear from the floor of our kitchen. "We'll die together,

we'll die together!" my sister began to scream hysterically. Since the fire was not so large, "We can put it out!" I shouted encouragingly "Let's put out the fire!" the whole family did relays with water buckets and washbasins to try and somehow extinguish the fire. I was a first grade student at Tokushima Junior High School at the time. When we looked later it seemed that a single incendiary device had broken through the tiled roof, gone through the second floor and hit a big water jar on the first floor, it then pierced the boards of the kitchen floor and ignited. If it had been a few shots that hit at the same time, rather than one shot, it would not have been possible to completely extinguish the fire. It was good that it was only one. At that time, there were soldiers lodging at Sako Elementary School so we believed we could extinguish even incendiary bombs.

When day broke a large crowd could be heard calling people's names at the foot of Mt. Bizan "Yoshiko, are you here?", "Ichiro! Dad is alive!", "Come to Suwa Shrine!" Many citizens had fled to Mt. Bizan.

However, my older brother had climbed the mountain path from the back of the Suwa Shrine, aiming for the summit. Unfortunately, he saw a girl die after receiving a direct hit from an incendiary bomb. My brother was a fourth grade student at the old Tokushima Junior High School (in the old education system). He went to see the old school building.

When it became light, overlooking the city from the precincts of Suwa shrine, I looked around and could see only a grey landscape and charred black trees. Somehow the area to the south of the Sako River remained but the area to the north was almost completely destroyed by fire.