

## Testimony\_Takanari Sakata

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### **Mr. SAKATA Takanari**

*Hiroshima Survivor (exposed to a-bomb at age 15)*

Mr. Sakata was a middle school student when he was exposed to the atomic bomb while working as part of the student mobilization at the Mitsubishi Heavy Industries shipyard, 3 km from the hypocenter. He lost consciousness and when he awoke, he found splinters of window glass sticking to his body and arms. On the following day, he saw the hellish site in the city center of queues of people suffering severe burns, and charred bodies floating down the river. He suffered from various illnesses after the war ended. He continues to give his testimony, and has also established a non-profit organization and works on community revitalization.

Good morning. My name is Takanari Sakata. I am from Hiroshima. I was born in 1930. I was 15 years old when I was exposed to the atomic bomb, 3 km away from the hypocenter. I was in the fourth grade of middle school at the time.

At the time, I was staying with a relative who lived in the center of Hiroshima City, away from my parents' home. In order to prevent fires from bombing raids spreading, the decision was made to demolish some buildings in the area where my parents lived. That was why I moved to my relative's house, which was approximately 25 km away from my parents' house. Because students had been recruited to assist in the war effort, I was working at a shipbuilding factory. As it was wartime, there was no food, and I was hungry most days. I was still paying tuition fees, but as the war situation worsened, I was forced to work without going to school. Many neighboring cities had been subjected to air raids except Kyoto, Nara and Hiroshima, which held many cultural treasures and had not been directly affected. Everyone thought that Hiroshima would be next. At the shipyard where I was working, we were building a suicide torpedo called "Kaiten". A suicide torpedo is an inhumane weapon, a manned torpedo fired into an enemy ship as a part of a suicide mission. At first I wondered what we were building, but as it was being built I gradually understood what it was for. I saw how over time, the material used for the inside gradually changed from iron to plywood, and at times I wondered whether Japan might lose the war. However, we had been taught that Japan was a shinkoku, which literally means "the country of the god". We would emerge victorious thanks to kamikaze, a divine wind. The Japanese emperor was thought to be a descendent of the sun god, and his divine spirit was with us. I was a militaristic boy, strong in the belief that Japan would win. In hindsight, I now understand the terror of how our thoughts, beliefs, words and actions were regulated by the State's control of information and an education system that would not allow for any criticism.

Now I would like to share with you what happened on the day that the atomic bomb

was dropped. On August 6th, I went to the factory before 8 as usual, and prepared to start my work thinking that it's "just another working day". As I was beginning my work, a blinding flash came from the center of the city. The building in which I was in, collapsed, leaving only the steel framework standing. I was injured by a falling slate. So I hurried to the clinic inside the factory. However, the scene before me was just as you imagine hell to be. The office windows were all made of glass, so the people inside were pierced with shards of glass and bleeding heavily from their upper bodies. I gave myself First Aid for the time being and left the office. I listened to the conversations of the people around me. I learned that a large bomb had been dropped in the center of the city turning it to a sea of flames. That day it was forbidden to enter the city centre.

The following day, I started walking toward the city centre to see about my family. As I was walking along the river, I saw something black moving in the park. As I tried to see better, it was actually a human being burned completely black, and muttering "give me water, give me water". Turning onto the big street, some First Aid stations had been established and I saw a line of injured people. "Soldier, please give me water, please give me water" I heard an incessant voice, but I just kept hearing that they shouldn't be given water. After walking for some time, I looked at a fire cistern near a bridge, and I saw a soldier who jumped into the river on a horse. Both the horse and human were burned completely black. When I looked down at the river from above the bridge, there were many charred corpses floating down the river. At the lower reaches, people were pulling corpses out of the river and cremating them. Being a mere 15-year-old there was nothing I could do, and I just looked around in a daze, helpless. Perhaps because it was wartime, and we had been living through war for so long, we were surprisingly insensitive to the scenery around us. In hindsight, I find it unbelievable, and I'm lost for words. My uncle was working in the center of the city, so I walked along the rail track toward the army hospital where I thought I might find my uncle. I looked inside a train, and saw several passengers dead still standing right in the spot where they had burned through the wooden floor. "What on earth is this bomb? This magnitude of devastation and such an intense heat in an instant; this must be a new type of bomb", I thought. I made my way home passing by a pile of corpses being cremated on the way.

I tried to go back to my parents' home, which was about 60km away from the hypocenter. But, it took over a week to finally get a train ticket to go home. When I got home, they were surprised and said, "Takanari, you were alive". I was overcome with fatigue the moment I got home. I went to see a doctor in the town, but he just told me the fatigue was because of malnutrition, and that it was a symptom of the early stages of tuberculosis. I was also told to have a good rest and eat nutritious food, so I caught river fish such as eel from the river in front of the house and ate them. By the time a month had passed since the atomic bombing, most of the hair around the front of my

head had fallen out from the roots. The continual fatigue just didn't seem to go away. Perhaps it was caused by radiation, but at the time we weren't even aware that there was such a thing as radiation.

After ten years, I was struck down by a variety of illnesses. However, I always kept a positive attitude and my mental power supported my sick body. 40 years passed since the atomic bombing. At the age of about 55 or so, I was diagnosed with a number of illnesses such as prostate cancer and rectal cancer. It's thought they were the result of being affected by the atomic bomb. Somehow I overcame these illnesses and lived to celebrate my 84th birthday this month.

I have two children. When my eldest daughter was born, she had some sort of birthmark on the arm. A part of the skin of her right arm was discolored in seven colors. We took her to a hospital but they couldn't find the cause. We took her to ABCC, the Atomic Bomb Casualties Commission, which was a US commission established in 1946 in Hiroshima and Nagasaki with the aim of investigating effects of atomic bomb on the human body. After she was examined, we were told that this kind of birthmark was a special case and that it was probably caused by an abnormality in the chromosome due to the effects of radiation emitted by the atomic bomb.

Through my own experiences of the atomic bomb and surviving through it until today, I have reached the conclusion that nuclear weapons, which have such devastating effects, should no longer be manufactured under any circumstances at all. Even if we claim that nuclear material can be used for peaceful purposes, we have to keep in mind that there is always the possibility that it can be used for other purposes. I firmly believe that both nuclear power and other civil uses of nuclear material should also be abolished before they even become a reality. By the way, have you ever heard of the "4H movement"? 4H stands for "Head, Hand, Heart, and Health". This is a spiritual movement that began in the US in 1930s for revitalization of farm villages. After the war ended, Japan adopted this movement for young farmers in order to increase food production. The philosophy of this movement teaches us to utilize our head, hand, heart, and health. If any of these four elements is missing, no project can be carried out. The same thing can be said for community building or nation building. It is my hope that the leaders of each nation strive for the wellbeing of their people and unite together to build a peaceful world for all. I hope that the power of the leaders will be used not for their own profit but for the good of the people. I sincerely hope that every country will be governed with human love. As a Japanese, I recognize Japan's responsibility for what it did to other countries in times of war. And I hope to work hand in hand with people all round the world to build a global community free of war and free of nuclear weapons. Thank you for listening.

こんにちは。私の名前は坂田尚也と申します。広島から来ました。

私は1930年に生まれました。原爆の被害に遭ったときは、中学校4年生の15歳でした。爆心地からは3キロメートルほどの地点でした。

<8月6日まで>

当時、私は家族のもとを離れ、広島市中心部の親戚の家の下宿しておりました。

私の住んでいた場所が、爆撃による火災を防ぐため、建物を取り壊し防火帯をつくる対象となったので、25キロほど場所に移り住みました。

当時、私は学徒動員により、造船工場で働いていました。戦争中で、食べ物もなく、空腹の日々が続きました。授業料は払っておりましたが、戦争がひどくなるにつれ、学校にも行かずに働かされておりました。

近くの都市が空襲を受ける中、日本の文化財が詰まった京都、奈良と、広島だけが直接被害にあわないので「今度は広島だ」と誰もが思っておりました。

私が働いていた造船工場では、「回天」と呼ばれる人間魚雷をつくっておりました。人間魚雷というのは、自らの死を覚悟して敵艦につっこんでいく非人道的な兵器です。当時の私は、「何をつくっているのか」と不思議に思っておりましたが、作っている過程で次第に分かっていきました。内部の鉄の材料がだんだんとベニヤ板になっていく様子を見て、これは日本は負けるのではないかと思ったこともありました。

しかし、日本は神国で、神風がふいて勝つと教えられていました。私は日本は勝つのだと信じていた、軍国少年でした。今となっては、批判を許さない一方的な情報の国家管理や、教育のおそろしさを感じます。

<8月6日>

今から、原爆が投下された日のこととお話しします。

8月6日は、いつものように8時前に工場に入り、「やれ、今日も仕事かいのう」と想いながら作業の準備をしておりました。作業を開始した途端、ピカーっと市内中心部が光りました。何秒かあとに爆風が吹き、私がいた建物は、鉄骨を残して崩れ落ちました。

私は落ちてきたスレートで少しケガをしたので、急いで、工場の中にある診療所に向かいました。しかし、そこでは地獄のさまをみたようでした。事務所は周囲がガラス窓だったので、中にいた人々はガラスが全身に突き刺さり、上半身からは大量に血が噴き出しておりました。

私はとりあえず応急処置をして、事務所を出ました。周りの人の話を聞き、市内に大

型の爆弾が落ち、火の海になっていると知りました。その日は市内への外出が禁止されました。

<8月7日>

翌日、家族の安否を確認するため爆心地の方へ歩いていきました。川筋の道をたどっていくと、公園の中に黒くうごめくものが見えました。よく見みると、真っ黒に焼けた人間で、「水をくれー水をくれー」と言っておりました。

大きな通りにでてみると、救護所が設置されていて、負傷者が並んでおりました。「兵隊さん、水を下さい、水を下さい」という声がしきりにしていましたが、水を飲ませては駄目だという声のとびかっているばかりでした。しばらく歩いて、橋の側にある防火水槽を見ると、馬に乗ったまま飛び込んだ兵士の姿がありました。馬も人間も表面は真っ黒に焼けていました。

橋の上から流れる川を見ると、真っ黒の死体が流れていました。下流の方では、死体をひきあげて、そのまま茶毘に付しておりました。

その状況の中で、15歳だった私に出来ることは何もなく、ただただ呆然と周りを見渡すばかりでした。当時は戦争中で、戦時を生き抜いていたからか、そのような光景も平然と見ることができました。

今となっては信じがたいことで、後から考えると言葉に詰まります。

市内では叔父が働いていたので、叔父がいるのではないかと思われる、陸軍病院に向かいました。電車の中を見ると、数人の乗客が床が焼けて起立したままの遺体となっていました。

「この爆弾はなんであろうか。一瞬にして、この破壊、この高熱温。果たして新型爆弾ではないだろうか」と思いながら、多数の遺体が積み重ねられた火葬を見ながら帰路につきました。

<8月13日>

爆心地から60キロほど離れた実家に帰ろうとしましたが、帰りの汽車の切符がとれたのは、それから一週間後のことでした。

駅から家に帰ると、家族が「尚也（タカナリ）、生きておったか」と驚きました。帰ってから、けだるさを感じるようになりましたので、町医者に行くと、栄養不良であり、結核の前期の症状であると言われました。休養をとってせいのつくものを食べろと言われたので、家の前の川からウナギなどの川魚をとって食べました。

原爆の被害にあって1ヶ月後には、髪の毛が前頭葉の部分からごっそり抜けました。けだるさもいっこうになおりませんでした。けだるさは、もしかしたら、放射能の影響かもしれないが、当時は放射能があったことなどはわかりませんでした。

### <その後>

それから10年後に病気をたくさんしました。私は前向きな人間であったので、精神力が病気の体を支えました。

原爆の被害から40年が経ち、55歳ころからは、原爆の影響と思われる前立腺ガンと直腸ガンなどに数々見舞われるも、克服し、いま84歳を迎えることができました。

### <放射能の影響>

私には子どもが2人います。長女が生まれたときに、彼女の腕にはアザのようなものがありました。右の腕のところ七色に変色しており、病院に行ったけれど原因がわかりませんでした。

ABC Cに行って検査を受けたところ、このようなアザは特殊な事例で、原爆の放射能による染色体の異常だろうということ言われました。

### <まとめ>

このような原爆を経験し、私が今まで生きてきて思うことは、核兵器は、いかなる場合でもあれだけの破壊力のあるものは、もう製造しない方がいいということです。

平和利用といっても、いつの間にか、転用してしまうおそれがあるということです。原子力発電も、平和利用も、計画目標のうちにやめるべきだと考えております。

ところで、みなさんは「4 H運動」というのをご存じですか。

4 Hというのは「ヘッド、ハンド、ハート、ヘルス」のことです。これは1930年代にアメリカで生まれた運動で、戦後、日本が食糧増産のために農村の青少年を対象に取り入れた運動です。

頭をつかい、腕をつかい、心をつかい、健康をつかう。どれ一つが欠けても事業を進めることが出来ない。これは、地域づくりや国づくりにも言えることだと思います。

各国の主導者が国民の幸福を願い、団結して地球全体の平和な世界をつくることを望みます。主導者の権力は、自身の損益のためではなく、国民のために使ってほしいと思います。どの国も、人間愛のある国作りを行って欲しいと思います。

一人の日本人として、日本が過去の戦争で行ってきた行為の責任は認めたくなくて、世界中の皆さんと手を取り合いながら、核兵器や戦争のない地球国家を築いていくことをのぞみます。