

Pediatrics Department

The department staff included Professor Sano, Associate Professor (Professor of Special Medical Vocational Department) Hamada, Associate Professor Mori, Assistant Sato, Junior Assistant Hirano, Nomura, Iwasaki, Research Assistant Hirata, and Yamada, Staff Tomigami, Head Nurse Nakao, and 19 nurses.

At the time, there were no inpatients in order to prepare for the expected the air-raids, but three infants without families were in the hospital.

The situation at the time of the bombing

Professor Sano was at home in Hongouchi to see a visitor, and Associate Professor Hamada was lying ill in Taira, where he evacuated.

Associate Professor Mori, Junior Assistants Hirano, Nomura, and Nurse Oyake were exposed to the atomic bombing in the Outpatient Examination Room. Nomura was severely injured and died in the Dermatology ward at midnight on the 12th.

Assistant Sato returned to his home in Yamazato-machi for evacuation, and Junior Assistant Iwasaki was at his home in Shiroyama-machi for recovery from tuberculosis. They were both killed in the bombing.

Other members of the department were also exposed to the atomic bombing in the laboratory and the department building. No one was killed instantly, but Head Nurse Nakao and 8 nurses died later, one after the other.

Official position and name of the deceased

Official Position	Name
Assistant	Noboru Sato
Temporary graduate	Masahiko Iwasaki
Temporary graduate	Nakanori Nomura
Head Nurse	Natsu Nakao
Fourth-year nursing student	Mitsuko Inoue
Third-year nursing student	Kazuyo Fujita
Third-year nursing student	Sueya Noguchi
Second-year nursing student	Fumiko Toki
Second-year nursing student	Nobuko Araki
First-year nursing student	Asae Kawakami
First-year nursing student	Suzuko Kawano

A look at the atomic hell

Shigetaka Mori

At around 7:30 a.m. on 9 August 1945, on my way to work at the College hospital, I heard an air-raid alarm, rushed into my room, where I quickly wrapped my gaiters and put on my steel cap close to me, then listened to the report from a nurse on duty about the previous night. An air-raid alarm was issued at around 8:30 a.m., so I evacuated together with the medical staff, nurses, and children into an air-raid shelter tunnel next to the Pediatrics Department, which could accommodate about 15 people. In the blistering sky, explosive sound of several aircrafts, which I did not know whether they were enemy or friendly ones moved in the direction of Mt. Inasa from Mt. Iwaya. When we got out of the air-raid shelter and hid near the fence of tangerine, I saw the movement of the airplanes, feeling my iron cap burning with the summer sun unusually heavy on my back. The air-raid alarm was lifted at around 9:40 a.m.

There were five or six outpatients, so I started the outpatient clinical training of third- and fourth-year students of the Special Medical Vocational Department at around 10:30 a.m. In normal times, students would have been on a summer holiday by now, but during the war, the academic period was shortened and lectures could not be given properly due to the daily air-raids, so the holiday was cancelled and lectures continued. The first patient brought in by a student after preliminary examination was a 6-year-old child who was the youngest of Mrs. Oura, the prefect of the nurses' dormitory. The child showed signs of typhoid, so I promised the patient to be admitted for treatment. A medical staff member, Hirano, wrote down a notification of disease, and I briefly explained to the students the symptoms of typhoid fever in children. The next patient was the eldest daughter of a fourth-year student, Fujii's younger sister, who was 3 years old. She came in with whooping cough, so I examined her in the Special Examination Room. A medical staff member, Nomura, recorded, and Head Nurse Oyake assisted with the examination.

It was 11:00 a.m. when I took out a pocket watch from a small pocket in my trousers after finishing the examination. I was then washing my hands by the window when I noticed the explosive sound of an aircraft. At the moment, there was a huge boom sound, and a shock knocked my body, and the mud wall of the examination room fell on top of me. However, I brushed away the soil when I crawled and was able to stand up. I could open my eyes, but in a world of pitch blackness where I could see nothing, my body was wandering about while my head was aching. I felt the air heavy. Breathing became difficult, so I took small breaths. Exhalation was difficult. A lukewarm substance gushed from my forehead, ran down my cheeks, and dripped from my chin. I coughed, and sticky substance filled my mouth and poured from the corner of my mouth.

A fear of death engulfed my mind. "I'm having trouble breathing. Will I stop breathing? Will I die without seeing my wife and children again?" My body was shaking as I was losing balance

from the bumpy and uneven footing, and I rushed forward a couple of steps. I lost my footing under the floor, which was 90-120 cm high, and crashed into the outer garden, and was chilled to the bone. After standing for a while, the area gradually brightened. I was standing in a garden facing the Ophthalmology Ward. When I realized Mt. Anakobo, as I was scared to look back at where I had just been, without looking back, I staggered towards the mountain, pressing the bleeding on my left upper eyelid with a piece of cloth torn from my medical gown. At the back gate of the hospital, Nurse Yamazaki was covered in fresh blood on her face, with glass stuck in her eyeballs. Her lower limbs were injured. She was trembling and screaming that she could not walk.

Beside her, a nursing student called Kawakami, who had come for the pediatric clinical training, had a thigh injury with severe arterial bleeding, and was crying out loudly, "Help, help." I ripped open my doctor's gown, which I was wearing, and bandaged her upper thigh tightly. I carried her, who had lost her energy and was exhausted, on my back. I climbed halfway up Mt. Anakobo. Near the back gate, I met Nurse Nakata and Oyake, who were with me at the patient examination. Noda was covered in blood from her face to her neck, her "*monpe*" trousers were torn, and her shins were sticking out, covered in fresh blood. Blood was gushing out from Oyake's face with numerous glass shard wounds. A medical staff member, Hirano, was holding the bleeding on his left cheek, encouraging the wounded nurses, and followed us up the mountain. I laid Kawakami in a field halfway up the mountain, and searched for stones so that it would stop the bleeding better. Unfortunately, perhaps because she had already lost too much blood, her energy was so weakened, her body trembled, her pulse became weak, and before we could do anything about it, she died in the evening.

Around noon, a strong west wind came, and large drops of rain began to fall. The College burned with a tremendous sound, and the library was engulfed in a terrific whirlwind of flames. The whole area from Yamazato-machi to Hamaguchi, Takenokubo, and Ibinokuchi-machi was a sea of fire, and the flames were burning the sky. By the time the College hospital was burning, the smoke started to hurt my eyes. Crops, grass, and trees in the fields were all broken and burnt black, and the soil had a garlic-like odor. Pumpkins without vines and leaves were blackened and scattered around.

There was a shop near the College Hospital street car station, which used to sell regulated milk, but the owner was shouting in a loud voice: "My wife, daughter-in-law, and grandchild are all dead." A 35 or 36-year-old woman ran around with disheveled hair and dragging a band, shouting, "I'm scared, someone hold me!" Some were climbing up the mountain, some groaning on the ground, others were lying on their backs pressing the wounds on their faces. A mother with scorched hair running from the smoke of the town carrying her baby, a naked young man groaning as he came up the hill, Numerous wounded people were wriggling and

suffering on the mountain. The sounds of flames, moans, and the roar of the strong winds intermingle, all mixed to resemble a picture of hell as seen in religious paintings.

A staff member from Internal Medicine (name unknown), who was strangely unharmed and his clothes undisturbed, approached me with a first-aid bag over his shoulder, sprinkled iodine tincture on the wound on my left upper eyelid, applied gauze, tore my gown, and bandaged the wound. At around 3:30 p.m., I asked a medical staff member, Hirano, to keep an eye and decided to return to my home in Motohara 1-chome.

Our house was located 700 m from the hypocenter and had been completely collapsed, and became a terrible spectacle with the *tatami* mats and pillars on the torn roof. My wife and two children were buried under the house, but fortunately escaped instant death. We spent the night in a side-hole air-raid shelter with our neighbors, but I could hardly sleep because of the moans of the burnt and injured people in the shelter. Since the next day I was busy treating the neighbors, and again on the 11th, I was called in by many people.

On 12 August, the children finally regained peace, and my wife gathered up dishes and boxes. I left my house around 8:30 a.m. and headed to the College. On the way, a woman appeared from an air-raid shelter in Motohara-machi, stopped me, and begged to examine a girl of about 10 years old with a high fever and bloody stools who had become suddenly ill. She had already lost her energy, her pulse was weak, and she died shortly afterwards. The College headquarters and the Basic Science Department buildings all collapsed and burned down, including the solid concrete buildings, and white bones lay in piles in what appeared to be the department building. 1 metre square stone gateposts collapsed on one side and sloped down about 15 cm off the base on the other side. The College hospital, which was built entirely of reinforced concrete, had its outer corridor remain intact, but the window frames were blown out. Most of the interior was burnt down, and became empty. In the remaining area, ceilings fell and materials were scattered, or buried on top of each other. It was a tragic sight.

I could see the Ophthalmology Ward from the back gate through the Pediatric Treatment Room, and a messy accumulation of books and specimens could be seen from the windows of the library and Specimen Room. The Pediatrics Department was the closest of all the Clinical Departments to the hypocenter, so the damage was bigger, and although no one was killed instantly, no one escaped injury. Near the pediatric air-raid shelter, a department staff member, Hirano, was boiling water in a fire pit made by heaped soil. He shouted to let the pediatric nurses know that I was alive and well. The Head Nurse had third-degree burns on her neck, her face was blue-black and swollen, several shards of glass were stuck in her back, and her left earlobe was pierced and became a round hole. Almost all the nurses had wounds on their faces and limbs and were heavily bandaged. In the same shelter, an ophthalmology nurse was groaning and shouting from what was probably subcutaneous cellulitis in her right lower limb, which caused a swelling, a high fever,

and difficulty in urinating. An ophthalmologist was attending to her, but it seemed that there was nothing he could do but be beside her.

Ms. Tomigami, a pediatric staff lay next to the water motor for the hospital water tank near the air-raid shelter, her face gouged out on both cheeks and her eyeballs visible, her right forearm bone was fractured in both ulna and hyoid, and her lower limbs showed no external injuries, but one side could not be moved, probably due to nerve damage. After injecting her with morphine hydrochloride, she fell asleep for a while, then called out to me in a loud voice, and pleaded sorrowfully, "Please administer the same injection again." In the same place, three or four first-year students were moaning and screaming, one of whom had a sudden change in condition and passed away at nightfall on the same day. The father of the student searched for his son for three days but could find no trace of him. In the morning of the same day, he had visited Kannon shrine in Koga Village, and was grateful to have been reunited with his son by the grace. It was about 2 hours after I saw the father and the son embracing each other when the student suddenly died. We took the corpse to a grassy area 7 to 9 meters away and covered it with a glass mat.

At around 2:00 p.m., rice balls and pickled plums were brought in from the Women's Association in the city. Hirano and I tied buckets with ropes and fetched water from the water tank. When we had finished, we boiled water and ate the rice balls. The Head Nurse broke off rice balls to make porridge and served it to the seriously injured. The tangerine hedge surrounding the Pediatrics Department garden was uprooted, and the green paulownia trees near the Annex Building were all felled as well, but sasanqua camellia near a small monument with the words from the "Book of Rites" were standing resolutely undamaged. The tree was in the shadow ("*kage*"), so it was as the word "*Okage-sama* (thank you)" implies, seemed to be protected by the shadow, but it could have been thanks to the power of Buddha. On the stairs at the entrance to the professor's office, a student was lying dead.

From the professor's office to the corridor, Dr. Sano's carefully preserved x-ray films and vast amount of documents passed on by the senior department were scattered, and near the stairs down to the basement, where the milk preparation room was, a large red cow was moaning and barely breathing. Together with Hirado, I thought we could enter the basement from the animal shelter, to distribute ampoules of glucose and nourishing sugar that we had stored in the darkroom to make everyone feel better.

The dismal state of the laboratory bordering the darkroom was beyond description. The incubator, which was used exclusively to nurture TB bacteria, the incubator for the culture of intestinal bacteria, the centrifugal precipitator, the fluorescent lamp, glassware, and other equipment were so badly vandalized that there was not even room to step on them. Hirata, a research assistant who met the disaster in this room, had amazingly managed to escape from

here. All the changing shelves for the department staff had collapsed, and the shelves, which stored reagents, large desks, and other furniture, were also piled up. I could not enter the milk preparation room as a Shimadzu-manufactured fridge, the large desk in the center, and a washing sink had been turned upside down. In the evening, upon hearing about a medical staff member, Nomura, who had been suffering from acute peritonitis caused by a strong blast to the abdomen and was in the basement of the Dermatology Department, I went to see him. He was examined by Professor Shirabe from the Surgery Department, but as there was nothing that could be done, he complained of severe thirst and abdominal pain in agony. It was pitiful to hear his words begging for water as he knew he was facing death.

I passed through the eerie campus after dark and headed home through the College grounds. Each department had been assigned to cultivate a potato field on the north side of the ground, but several X-ray nurses were weeding when the disaster hit them. They were so swollen up that no one was recognizable and black as if they were painted by oil lying on the ground, without a stitch of clothing on them.

On 13 August, after rewinding the bandaged nurses in the air-raid shelter, I walked around the garden between the Pediatrics and Ophthalmology Departments and entered the Outpatient Examination Room and found that the area from the Reception Room to the Examination Room had been completely burnt, and the partition wall of the Special Examination Room had been completely crushed. From the Head Nurse's Office on the north side to the Preliminary Examination Room for students, the Weighing Room, the Old Patient Examination Room and the Treatment Rooms were completely burnt down, and the patient diaries and childcare records in the Preliminary Examination Room, which had been recorded with great care and dedication by the senior staffs, were destroyed. The rooms to the east of the Reagent Specimen Room on the north side, and to the east of the doctor's office on the south side, were destroyed by the falling ceilings, including all the tools, but it was a great relief that they did not burn down. In particular, books were blown to various places, some of which had their covers removed or torn off, but thankfully, most of them survived. The big cow that had been panting in the corridor yesterday seemed to have been moved to the basement last night and was lying dead in the entrance to the milk preparation room. The ceiling of the professor's office was falling in, and various items were piled up in a messy heap. My summer outfit was on top of it, a piece of paper with the words "belongings of Assistant Professor Mori" written on it, and it was nailed to it. I was supposed to be missing. The College headquarters were set up at Shirabe Surgery, and on the wall, there was a note about the updates of the staff.

Professor Sano: alive. Associate Professor Mori: missing.

Noboru Sato: dead. Masahiko Iwasaki: dead.

Yoneo Hirano: alive. Nakanori Nomura: seriously injured.

I still remember today how moved I was when I was able to meet Dr. Sano at around 10 a.m. He shook my hand firmly and shed tears of joy. Medical staff, Nomura died the previous night. Three of us, Dr. Sano, Hirano, and I, placed his body on the door which came off from the Dermatology Department, and carried him into the garden, gathered stones to make a burning place, picked up timbers and placed them on top of the corpse, and set fire. Three of us pressed our hands in prayer for the repose of his soul. My heart was full of emotions, and tears fell. When I looked at the fire, I saw his feet burning between the few sticks of firewood. During the cremation, an aircraft flew over, and Hirano and I hid in a half-collapsed air-raid shelter.

In the evening, we picked up the bones, put them in a vase, and placed them on the desk in the Medical Office with a paper on which we wrote late Nomura's name as "*Eiryō* (the heroic spirit of the dead in war)." At that time, Dr. Sano came and told us that the part of Professor Takagi's ashes would be placed in the professor's office, so that we should keep it with care. From that day onwards, the relief teams from all over the area began to work, and seriously injured staff were given priority to be transported to Isahaya. Mitsuno, a seriously injured staff member, was taken away in the light of day. The nurses under the Pediatric Head Nurse were to go the next morning.

Around noon on the 13th, Professor Hamada of Special Medical Vocational Department, who had been lying in bed due to illness at the evacuation site in Yue came, and told us that he had received a naval summons to enlist at a place called Kame in Hiroshima Prefecture by the 15th, but that he was unable to go due to the destruction of the railway line beyond Orio, and about the newspaper article that the Soviet Union entered the war on 9 August at midnight. I don't remember who told me, but I also heard a rumor that 23 Japanese aircraft had air-raided New York, inflicting heavy damage and shaking the American people to their core. In the early afternoon, Watanabe, a third-year student, gave me a piece of sweet potato cake. I will never forget the delicious taste of it and the gratitude. At night, we spread straw at the entrance to the Pediatric air-raid shelter and slept under a single blanket shared by Head Nurse Nakao, a woman called Matsunaga from the animal shop, and me. The sky was clear, and countless stars were fluttering in the sky as if they were falling. It was difficult to fall asleep as faces after faces came to mind like a running lamp while thinking about President Tsuno'o, Professor Yamane, Associate Professor Matsushita, and others who were in critical condition, and the acquaintances, whose safety I was concerned about. The next day, early in the morning, my shirt was damp with dew, and I felt cold, and with a dripping nose, I gathered up the broken boards in the corridor of the Psychiatry Department, lit a fire, boiled water, and made porridge from the leftover rice by loosening the rice ball from last night. Nurse Ohyake and Nurse Taniguchi fetched water from only one tap on the hospital premises, which was still running.

When the morning sun was shining softly on the hospital campus, I decided to go back home.

I managed to walk through the stone pavement on the campus. Burnt corpses were still piled up in the Auditorium of the Hygiene 1 classroom, and several skulls with black pieces of flesh were still lying in the Anatomy Department. The stone walls of the sports field's stands were crashed, The huge trees were all broken and split, and two or three birds were singing as if they were starving, reminding me of the Chinese poem "*Kanzanji* (The Temple of Cold Mountain)": "The moon falling, night crow crying as the signs of frost filled the sky, the coldness approached." In the neighborhood of the church in Yamazato, a rescue team was busy removing burnt corpses. The bodies were tied hand to hand, foot to foot, and carried on poles like carrying a deer caught on a hunting trip. The corpses were collected near the prison and in front of the church gate, where several dozen of them were piled on top of wooden logs. The legs were placed as far out as possible, with the head in the center. I saw some heads and torsos in pieces.

On the afternoon of the 15th, I went to Yamazato National School to obtain a war damage certificate. I joined long lines of people in the schoolyard, where the concrete buildings had collapsed and were devastated, then received war damage certificates, four kilograms of rice, and a handful of dried sardines from the city officials. It was there that I heard about Dr. Nagai. He had been injured near the carotid artery, but instead of a great risk, he had picked up his wife's bones from the ruins of the fire in Yamazato, and then came to the school to get his war damage certificate. On the same day, a relief team was also in the area of Motohara-machi to collect the bodies, and the bodies in the pumpkin fields had been taken away somewhere else. In the evening, I had a sudden visit from my nephew, who was a student of Kyushu University. He said that he had come to Nagasaki as a member of the Kyushu University medical team. Was this the joy of seeing the light in hell? At night, we lay down on the board and slept while talking with joy. During the night, it suddenly began to rain, but we used the door boards we had collected during the day as a ceiling, and put up torn mosquito nets on all sides to keep out the rain spray, so we didn't get too wet. The next morning, the rain had cleared up, and a fresh sunny day began, but I had a hard time lighting the fire in the wet furnace. Although the food was poor, consisting of warm rice with a side dish of dried fish, I enjoyed the meal with guests from far away. My nephew went out to rescue work, promising me that he would visit again in the evening. Around 10 a.m., I too went to work at the College, and on the way, I was surprised to see an enemy aircraft swooping down as fast as it could. The Pediatric air-raid shelter no longer had anyone. At the back of the shelter, there were two corpses of a mother and her child, rotting away. They seemed to pass away while mother was breastfeeding. I met Hirano in the Pediatric Department corridor and heard the sad news of the unconditional surrender. I was told that yesterday, in the afternoon of the 15th, President Koyano had gathered everyone together at the headquarters of the Surgery Department, and read the imperial edict of the ceasefire. President Tsuno'o was said to be in critical condition in the precincts of a shrine in Nameshi. Professor Yamane was said to have

contracted tetanus, was in extremely critical condition, and was confined to the Ophthalmology Ward. When I was clearing the Medical Office, Professor Sano arrived, so I accompanied him on a tour of the wards. The cover of the latrine pumping outlet in the basement had been removed, and a body in a black “*monpe*” trousers was floating in it. The body was lying on its back, but the face was black and swollen, so it was difficult to tell whether she was a man or a woman. However, as the body was floating on its back, it should be assumed to be a woman. In the area, there were scattered CVs of a woman named Matsuoka who worked at the Pharmacy. In a dark room in the basement, there were two or three oil cans of nourishing sugar preparation, but these had already been broken into by someone, and the contents had been completely stolen. The unrefined nourishing sugar became liquid and was sticky all over the place, uselessly. Professor Sano searched the Milk Preparation Room for a tin containing 1,200-1,800 grams of white sugar and ordered: “Keep such valuables in a safe place,” so Hirano and I hid it behind a shabby tea shelf in the Medical Office.

When I went to the headquarters in the afternoon, I saw several dozen medical staff and student nurses busy working, for the treatment of patients and corpses, administrative communication, and other assignments. Those who were admitted here were all severely injured students and nurses. A young girl with encephalitic symptoms was turning over in agony, completely naked, and it was such a pity to see that every single one of them was mourning and shouting. I climbed the bank behind and entered a garden in Kohoku Ward. They were burning corpses there. I heard that just a few days ago, a student called Hiwatari was also cremated.

I was extremely tired from the psychological blow of the defeat and the all-day labor, so I headed home at nightfall. On the way, a group of Koreans was celebrating around a bonfire in Motohara-machi, shouting repeatedly “*banzai*.” It was frustrating. The war was over. We were defeated. Men must be prepared to commit suicide. The night passed while they talked about how women and children had to flee to the mountains and hide.

Since then, on the 35th day after the bombing, my wife died of atomic illness, and during the same time, I suffered from cold sweats and attacks caused by seeing floaters in my eye for about 40 days. My white blood cell count had dropped to 4,000.