I entered the elementary school in 1938. In the previous year, Japan had expanded a war front on the Chinese Continent, launching a full-fledged war against China. In 1941, the elementary school was abolished and incorporated into the national school. In 1944, I finished the compulsory education and entered the Hiroshima city girls' high school. In those days, Japanese forces were losing battles one after another. Soon after I entered the school, upper class students began being mobilized to munitions factories. We, the lower grade students were able to engage in our school lessons but only during the first semester. With the deterioration of the war situation, wartime exception laws were passed by the Cabinet in rapid succession, under which the school curriculum for physical training increased. We dug shelters in the schoolyard, cultivated idle lands to help increase production of provisions, or went to help farming families, who were generally shorthanded because their male members were sent to the battlefields.

In April 1945, the school was closed for one year until March 31 next year. We went everyday to work at factories of military uniform, tobacco or canned food. In June 1944, the Japanese navy had lost the major battle offshore the Marianas. B29s, the US bombers, from their base at the Tenian Island began to conduct heavy bombings over Tokyo, Osaka and many other Japanese major cities. With the landing of US forces on Okinawa, the ground battle started there and air raids continued everyday everywhere in the mainland Japan. Strangely, however, Hiroshima had not been bombed. In anticipation for the final battle to take place in the mainland, the Second General Military Headquarters was set up in Hiroshima. From early August, citizens were ordered to evacuate from the city and their houses began to be demolished to make a
huge firelane that would divide the city into north and south. It was to protect important institutions from possible fire caused by the bombing. Soldiers, who were called up again after their retirement engaged in the work. Volunteers of local residents and students of middle and girls’ schools at the ages of 13 or 14 helped them.

On August 5, the students of our school began the work around where it is now the Peace Memorial Park. The school at first refused to undertake the work in fear that it would be difficult to evacuate many students in the open air in the event of air raids. But the military in command insisted that the work had to be accomplished one day earlier. The school finally had no choice but to accept the work, assigning more teachers to accompany the students and rendering the working hours shorter than initially planned. The work started early in the morning and ended at noon.

In the evening on August 5, air raid alerts were issued so frequently that I stayed many hours in the shelter. In the meantime I got a terrible stomachache. So, I could not go to work on the following day. That saved may life. Six hundred fifty four students and teachers who were engaged in the work on the morning of Aug. 6 were caught by the explosion at some 500 meters from the hypocenter, and all died instantaneously; some must have been trapped under fallen buildings and burnt alive in the fire, others must have fled into river and were drowned while asking for help. Their bodies have not been found or identified even now, more than 59 years since then.

I was in a living room of our house with all my family members and an aunt when the atomic bomb exploded. It was at some 4 km south of the center of the blast. PIKA! Suddenly, a light flashed in the north of the sky. My father rushed toward the backyard, saying that tanks of the gas company at about 2 km north were bombed. He got light burn on his right hand. Others rushed to an air-raid shelter, but I was late in following them. Suddenly I was blown up with a tatami mat I was on, as if I had been thrown up by mighty power from underground. The floor was destroyed, and furniture, fittings and flowerpots in the garden blown off. I rushed to the outside and saw a big pine tree in the garden fallen at the base. The house was heavily damaged, though not completely blown down.

I looked up to the sky, having no idea about what happened, and I saw there a indescribably strange fireball floating up in the mid-air, colored in red, yellow, orange, purple and others. Then, a weird thundercloud swelled and rose up. It got dark as if it
had been a solar eclipse. I heard a voice from behind a house saying, “Someone is buried under the fallen house! Please help!” My parents ran toward where the voice came. Soon, Mother came back. She was bleeding from the forehead. She realized only then that a fragment of glass was sticking there, and that because she had run it began bleeding. She went to a hospital nearby. The building of the hospital was also heavily damaged. An old doctor despite his own injuries from shattered glass, gave her first aid treatment. Though fragments of glass were stuck in my both legs, too, I was too stunned even to feel pain at that time. Three pieces were removed about 5 years later, but one still stays in the left leg. Like a needle, it moves inside it, and when it touches a nerve running near the sole, it sharply pains me.

With the passing of time, more and more people, all severely burnt came. Their skins were peeling off and dangling down, and their faces were so badly swollen in red that even their friends or relatives, if there were, could not identify who they were.

Soon, our shrine became full of people who came in escape. Then came an order from the military that the injured be sent to the Ninoshima Island, as airplanes might come back. We carried injured people on door boards and two-wheeled hand-drawn carts to the Ujina port until it was dark.

Incessant lines of injured people continued till late at night, and still about 50 people had to stay at the shrine overnight. Our family slept in the open that night. The whole city was on fire as if it would burn the sky.

On the next morning, I was stunned. Even those who did not seem injured were dead. Father went out early in the morning on that day to inquire about the safety of our relatives and friends at other shrines. The rest of the family were engaged in relief activities. Injured people clung to my leg and cried, saying, “It’s hot. Water, please water!” But we had been told not to give water to the heavily burnt people, and that if given, water would kill them. Nevertheless, it was very painful to turn down their desperate request.

For people who fled scantily clad in tattered cloths, my mother and elder sister made underwear out of towels. There were no medicines. Flies gathered on the burns and injuries. Maggots swarmed and crawled into the flesh. The injured people were unable to remove them. So, we picked them off with chopsticks. There were so many of them that no sooner had we taken one off than others appeared. People around me maybe
of many X-ray photos. This happened over and over gain. I was a good swimmer and keeping fit. But since the fall of 1948 (when I was 17 years old) I often fainted from anemia. Canker sores and sties appeared in succession; purple spots appeared too, and I kept feeling unbearably weary. A check at a hospital revealed the decrease in the number of my white corpuscles. The doctor, however, had no idea about what had caused these symptoms. After graduating from high school in 1950, I idly stayed at home about one year. Mother said that I was lazy, but a deep weariness kept me from doing anything active.

On September 9, 1945, the General Headquarters of the occupation forces (GHQ) issued a press code banning the press coverage of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The foreign journalists were banned from entering Hiroshima and Nagasaki. All data of the researches by Japanese scientists and of the medical treatments of Japanese doctors were confiscated by GHQ. It was determined that the Hibakusha meant the people who were burned or injured within 2km radius of the hypocenter. Therefore, when the doctor diagnosed that, because I had been 4 km away from the center of the explosion, my symptoms had nothing to do with the bomb, it was natural that none of us had any doubt about it. In fact, neither our neighbors who engaged in the relief works with us, nor my own family members thought for a long time that they, too, were suffering from the bomb.

The Japanese government still runs its Hibakusha-related administration based on the wrong information released by the US occupation authority under its occupation. At present, the simultaneous lawsuits of the Hibakusha over the state’s recognition of their disease as caused by the bomb are being fought in Japan. Dr. Shuntarō Hida and Prof. Shōji Sawada, a physicist, (who are themselves sufferers) have testified in the court about the effects of fallouts that fell over wide areas, as well as of low-level radiation. Guess how many Hibakusha have died in agony, while the truth of the suffering was kept under the cover. My uncle, who engaged in burning corpses with me, and Father, who died of stomach cancer after suffering from tuberculosis without any adequate treatment, are both victims of the bomb.

The humans should not allow any more outrage that would lead to the destruction of our planet. I want to appeal that the humans cannot coexist with nuclear weapons. There is no other way for us but to completely abolish nuclear weapons, the ultimate tools of war.
thought it was too cruel for a little child like me to face so miserably injured people. They told me to go to watch out the fire that was burning corpses. In a few days thereafter, the evacuees began to develop such symptoms as high fever, heavy diarrhea, loss of hair, purple spots on the skin and others. Many cried, “Please kill me, please!” Military planes still flew over the sky of Hiroshima (which I later learned were scout planes). So, it was decided that my immediate elder sister and I were sent to the countryside for evacuation. On August 15 we went to our relative’s house at Hesaka-mura, some 10 km away from our house, walking along burnt out areas. I felt that it could have been my last farewell to the family. At the village, we saw quite a few groups of people, who lost their houses by fire, listening to the radio. It was an important announcement at noon. I could not fully catch the speech, which I knew was Emperor’s. I was told by one of the men that Japan finally surrendered. We decided to return home following the road we had walked along in the morning. On our way home a military truck kindly picked us up, and we managed to come home by the evening.

Next day, the elder sister went to the factory to which I was assigned as a mobilized student and to my school for the first time since the bomb was dropped to report that I was safe. The school buildings had collapsed, but did not catch fire. In the evening on that day, she had a high fever and had to lie in bed. Her symptom was similar to ones that appeared among the injured by the new bomb. A military doctor checked her and told us that she had contracted dysentery and that we had to set her apart from us. We did not have any place where we could send her. Besides, as we were all suffering from diarrhea, we actually thought that her sickness was due to malnutrition and poor sanitary conditions. She had to stay in bed for one month and a half, after all.

School reopened on September 1. As school buildings were heavily damaged, upper class students who came to school were engaged in repair work on fine days, while first and second year students who survived went to various places where students and pupils had died to collect their ashes and remnants. In the spring in 1946, when relative peace came back, a teacher distributed questionnaire to us, instructing us to fill in answers to the questions, which asked us in detail what changed in our health since the bombing. Later, it occurred to me that the inquiry had been ordered by the US forces. After the inquiry ended, a Japanese American soldier (Nisei) came to the school on a Jeep. He interrupted the class and took students to the Atomic Bomb Casualties Commission (ABCC), which was tentatively set up in the building of the Hiroshima Red Cross Hospital. They came back, crying, and said that in a shameful manner, they were taken