

Cherishing the Life My Mother Gave Me

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A-bomb victims persist in giving their testimonies in hopes that all nuclear weapons might be eliminated, even though we have yet to find an effective means to achieve this goal. We have feelings of acute anxiety and even anger when we consider the arms race of the nuclear powers and the nuclear tests still conducted by China and France.



War is a criminal act. The many actions of the Second World War, including those by Japan, represent the gravest mistakes ever committed by human beings. I believe that the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are crimes against all humanity. So, I shall keep on giving testimony of my personal A-bomb experience and appealing for the abolishment of all nuclear weapons and for lasting peace on earth.

During the first ten years after the bombing, charitable relief efforts for A-bomb victims were carried out all over Japan. In May 1955, thanks to cooperative efforts of certain Japanese and Americans, I went to the United States as one of a group of female A-bomb victims to receive reconstructive surgery for keloids. Before we left for America, a rumor went around that stated, "When you go to the U.S. the country that dropped the bomb, you will only be killed.

But we "A-bomb maidens trusted in the good will of people. Arrangements for our treatment were made by a Quaker organization, Mr. Normal Cousins (editor of *The Saturday Review of Literature*) and the Mt. Sinai Medical Center in New York City. Thanks to the surgery, I regained movement of my hands. I could also move my head again. The surgery involved twenty-seven different operations performed over a period of a year and a half, yet it was this very treatment that gave me hope.

Moreover, my experience in America changed my way of thinking from hatred toward people to hatred of war. I returned to Japan with a much brighter outlook on life. Even so, the realities of life back in Japan often did much to dampen this resolve.

Because of my determination that the human race should never again experience an atomic bomb, as I had, I began relating my personal account to others. Following my mother's death, there was another person who encouraged and supported us A-bomb victims, an American lady named Barbara Reynolds. She was moved by very strong religious convictions to spread light into our hearts.

To the day of my death, I will never be able to escape from my memories of the Bomb. Though I would rather not recall the misery of that time, in order to tell the children of this 20th century of the terror of nuclear weapons, I have urged them not to hate their fellow human beings but to abhor the horrors of war.

As an A-bomb victim, my hope is that Hiroshima and Nagasaki will never be forgotten and that this planet where we live will not be destroyed. I want to proclaim this to the people of the world as long as I live. I will use this life given me by my mother so that it may be a means by which countries will come to know of the terror of nuclear weapons and to value living in peace. This is the warning which I will never stop giving.

For additional Information about A-bomb survivors and their stories, please contact.



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