

This is how I have lived in Japan

Pak E O

In 15th year of Showa (1940), our family came to Japan from our native place Gyeongsangbugdo, in Korea. There, we engaged in farming but we were forced to do compulsory work for half of each month. Often we were assigned to delivering brushwood. Whenever we had the assignment, my husband used to wander about looking for the brushwood, in harvest time, obeying command to deliver rice, a grain of rice was not left for us to eat. Also severe was tax.

For one reason or another, we could not live on in Korea. We thought it better to go over to Japan even if we had to work hard in the same way. Then we crossed the channel empty handed.

In Japan, we worked at Onoda Mine in Yamaguchi prefecture. The work being very hard, my husband broke down in health and we moved to Hiroshima. Here, too, our life was poor. In the last stage of the war, we lived on millet, from which brooms were made,

I gave birth to my fourth child on July 31, 1945, and the Atomic Bomb fell on Aug. 6. At that time our house stood on a slope at the foot of a mountain in Ushita-cho. Through the bomb blast, our house lost all its window panes and fell down. So we lost our place to live. In those days, my 18-year-old nephew lived with us. When he was caught by the bomb on Tokiwa-bashi Bridge, he broke his leg and was burnt all over the body. But he came home on his hands and knees. My eldest daughter was wounded by splinters of glass.

After childbirth, I could do nothing. My husband brought broken wood from the barracks on Ushita-yama Hill and hastily made a hut. My nephew died ten days later. It was no use pitying him. we buried him. Fortunately, our children recovered their health. It wasn't too bad, but to bring them up was very difficult. When we got sugar rationing, we used to sell it just as it was.

We wanted to work, but Koreans were out of employment. Not being able to find any other means of livelihood, we made a living out of carrying rice for black-market dealings. When we went to a farmhouse, the farmer didn't sell rice to us Koreans at the same price as Japanese buyers. We had to buy it at a high price. Day after day, we ate millet. At the time. we were very hurt hearing the words "Korean go home," or "The Japanese in Korea were nearly killed at the time of the end of the war." Since the end of the war, most of our friends who were caught by the bomb have gone home.

Considering my life, the life of Koreans was changed little by the Atomic Bomb.

In 26th year of Showa (1951), my husband and I began to work together at the unemployment relief work. Being Korean, the pay was the lowest. We were discriminated against. Now we live in Aioi-dori Street, where 300 Korean households live. Our children have grown up and they already support themselves. Though my husband and I don't have such trials as we had in the time just after the bomb fell, we still struggle against a hard life.

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