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Title: Junji Sarashina Interview
Narrator: Junji Sarashina
Interviewer: Naoko Wake
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<Begin Segment 14>

NW: So how long did you stay at the factory?

JS: So we stayed at night, we sat at the bank, and watched the fire and saw the Hiroshima city burning, it was only two and half kilometer from the dead center, so it was not that far. So you can see fire burning, oh, it's burning over there, burning over there, watch smoke and everything coming up. And then, in the morning, of course, we all get up at seven, we decided that seven of us go back to the dormitory or back to the school. So we were headed to cross the bridge. And then, after I crossed the bridge, the first thing I saw was mother hanging onto . . . they are all burnt, you know, you can't tell mother or father, male or female. I saw this mother, hanging onto a little, they are all burnt, you know. You can't tell if it's a mother or father or man or female. I saw this mother, hanging onto black object, a baby. And I looked at that. It really shook me then, you know. I have seen maybe 500, 600 dead people. When I saw that, the baby, I think the mother, I think she was dead, too, and you know, there was this black little bundle, you know, maybe less than 2 feet object, you know, and you think, oh, no, you know.

NW: So did you think that this not just a traditional, usual bomb?

JS: Oh yeah. But we did not know what it was. But there was, it must be really something. Because after we crossed the bridge, this way, it's in the city now. This way you can see the islands and the ocean. You look this way, you can see the mountain on the other side of the hill.

NW: Which is very abnormal.

JS: Oh my. Where am I? Just like standing in a, this side and that side. And of course it's burning too, and to the ocean you can see, but on the town, there's still some of the old concrete building maybe collapsed but still standing. No pine trees, no nothing, nothing is growing. And people were just wondering around. Along the street. You see so many, you look at people, you don't feel like it's dead people. It's just, it's there, you know, you lose certain sense of what, immune? You are used to looking at objects like that. So I was kind of surprised, too. Oh, I am not sensitive, you know. I'm not feeling anything. I guess I was so immune to the situation.

NW: Because you are surrounded by it.

JS: Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's it. And then we entered the city of Hiroshima and we said hey, we should go back to the school where we . . . you know. So we went to the school, happened to be

0.5 km from the center. Can't find the school. Where is it? Oh, there is a stone, *mon*, the gate, oh, this is our school. That's how we found, because everything was flat.

NW: So you're lucky that you weren't there, in a way.

JS: Oh yeah, yeah. So the school building was just totally gone, nothing but stones here and there. But there was a swimming pool, our swimming pool. So we went over there, the water was low, but there were about six, seven students in the pond, um, in the swimming pool. So we asked them, do you want to get out of the pond? You want to get out of the swimming pool? And they said yeah, I grab on a kid and tried to pull up, and his skin came, peeled off, you know. But somehow we got him up the swimming pool, but I don't know, he just rolled over and went back into the pool. We couldn't stay there any longer. That's when I understand that a lot of my lower classmate students, um, died. About 1 km away, the second grade students were assigned to demolish some of the wooden building to make a fire break. So they all went over there, under the direction of the teacher, and the Army, the defense, they were making a fire break to demolishing some of the building. That's when the bomb dropped, which is about 0.5 km from the hypo. So they all died. Yeah. And one of the monuments, the building, in the schoolyard, I think 250 names are listed, and I think only six or seven survived, 250 dead, six survived. So survivors for some reason didn't attend the class, they were away from the school. So the second grade was kaput, they were gone, demolished, disappeared, melted. That's some of the story. And then we left, left the swimming pool, we left the school, and on the way home, there was a Red Cross building. About 1.5 km from the hypocenter. And whenever we went into the school, Red Cross, it's a big hospital, Red Cross Hospital. When I walked in there, I saw one of the students over there, happened to be in the same school uniform. Because of the uniform, yeah, you could identify it, so I talked to him for a while. And, you know, oh yeah, we talked, I talked to him for a while, and he said that I want some water. So. Everybody. You were told not to give water for the people who want it, but I looked at him and . . . he is not going to live. Because he was burnt. And you know it's almost like twenty-four hours after the bomb and he was down to nothing. You know, a glass of water, some I found, glass or can, I don't remember. Because the water was running, yeah. It was broken, but I think Ōtagawa has the water system

NW: Just keep on coming.

JS: Yeah, so the water was somehow running. And then the spigot was open. So he said, he looked at me, and that was it. So yes, at least I gave him water. And when I tried, the yard in the Red Cross building was, you could hardly step in there. Maybe 600, 700 people in the Red Cross entrance way. So I went to the Red Cross building and I could not get in there. It was full of doctors and nurses, all hurt.

NW: Ah. That's right. That's right.

JS: All the nurses were hurt, all the doctors were hurt; they can't do a damn thing. So I walked in, so can you help the doctors? So some healthy people were walking around, you know. So we did as much as we can. But we said we'd better go. So we left, we went back to the dormitory. Which is about maybe three kilo, five~six kilometers away.

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