

My Escape from The Korean Peninsula

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At the end of the war, I was in the second grade of Keijo Women's Teacher Training College and I worked at the elementary school as a student teacher in Ranan City because of the government's mobilization. The Soviet Union abolished the treaty of neutrality and invaded Mansyu and Korea on August 9th. On August 12th they suddenly began naval bombardments. As we knew the government's evacuation order, my father, my sister and I escaped without any contact with my mother. We went to Keijo (now Seoul) and moved North to meet my mother who was also over 38 degree line. We stayed at a refugees camp. By December it was getting so cold that elderly people and children were dying one after another due to the cold and malnutrition. Our family planned to get away by separating into two parties and not being noticed by Soviet soldiers. Unfortunately my sister and I were lost from my parents. On the way Korean people helped us sharing their food.

One day after deep fogs rapidly disappeared in the morning, there we met five Soviet soldiers. I thought if we run away fast they would suspect us, then an idea came into my mind to pretend that I was crippled and she was blind. They seemed to be officers wearing nice clothes and passed by looking down at us and ignored as poor sisters. Later I thought we were lucky, if they were privates with bad manners, that would be really terrible.

Finally we were found by the Korea peace preservation police and fortunately their boss was an elite graduate from Takusyoku University. He said, "The Japanese aren't guilty, only Imperialism is guilty." He said more, "If you escape in winter, you'll die. You should stay here till spring comes." He took care of us for half a year. We knew that our parents died of typhus at a refugee camp. In spring headed south. At night we managed to cross a remaining railway bridge with only the ties and rails, helped by moonlight, eventually reaching the south bank. Happily we were able to come back to Japan through the U.S. Force's assistance.

◆ 38 degree line ...

It's a border line in the Korean Peninsula. The North area was occupied by the Soviet Union and the South was the U.S.

In the north Japanese residents were in a miserable situation. Bound and robbed of all their treasures by Soviet soldiers.

