

## The Tragedy of the Major Air Raid on March 10, 1945

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Every time I reflect back on the miserable great War during the Showa period as a person who experienced it firsthand, I re-recognize the fact that war is a mistake that should never be repeated again. On the night of March 10th 1945, when the city was engulfed in silence, the siren of the air raid warnings went off. I jumped out of bed, quickly changed into my protective clothing, and rushed outside.

When I looked up, American B29 bomber jets had aligned in a formation and started to drop napalms and bombs like fireworks over the Asakusa sky and were heading towards my direction. My teeth were clattering due to the coldness and terror. The night sky was painted red with burning flames. The roads were filled with people scrambling to find a way to escape. Under the Senju Shinbashi Bridge, many people huddled running together away from the flames. Squeezing through clamor in the dark, a mother was shouting, "Is there a doctor around...My child has been burned! Please, please..." The following day, the boy who had been lying in a hall of an elementary school murmured his last words of "It's all right", trying to speak with his swelling face. At his feet, his mother was breaking down in tears. Turns out, the woman who had been searching for a doctor was the mother of the naughty boy "tacchan" in the neighborhood. That night when the B29 bomber jets indiscriminately dropped their napalms and bombs, countless people ran away from the flames and dived into the Sumida River from the Kototoi Bridge in hopes of escaping from the heat, but drowned. Corpses of men, women, children were left afloat whole surface, and what I saw from the handrail of the Otake Bridge was a scene like hell that had never left my mind.

I began to believe that there was nothing worse than war. I longed for peace. In 1955, I married my husband, and went to search for the missing remains of my husband's mother and my younger brother, both of whom used to live in Umamichi, Taito until the air raid on March Tenth. Looking at the records in the The Center for the Tokyo Raids and War Damage, I found out that the remains of the missing people were all put into large vases that could hold up to two hundred people in a warehouse behind the Earthquake Memorial Hall ("Tokyo Metropolitan Memorial Hall"). Feelings of both sorrow and hatred well up when I think about my mother-in-law and my brother, now simply left inside a vase. Every year, on March 10th, an exhibit for the Tokyo Air Raid is held on the first

floor of the Asakusa Public Hall by local residents.

◆ Tokyo Metropolitan Memorial Hall...Primarily, the Tokyo Metropolitan Memorial Hall was built where the Army Clothing depot once stood, under the name of “Earthquake Memorial Hall”—a memorial hall to house the remains of 58,000 people who died in the Great Kanto Earthquake. After the war, a hundred and eight thousand remains who lost their lives in the Great Air Raid were housed as well, and was renamed as the “Tokyo Metropolitan Memorial Hall” In September 1951.