

Participation in the First Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Disarmament

Recollections of a Student Representative

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1. Introduction

Good morning. It is a great honor and pleasure for me to participate the program of INU Student seminar on Global Citizenship-Peace. I appreciate very much from the bottom of my heart. I feel secure very much. The first U.N. disarmament general assembly was held from May to June, 1978. Scrupulous preparations of an unprecedented scale were made towards the First Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Disarmament. I would like to introduce about different episodes related to a series of activities to the First Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Disarmament.

The recent international issues are global warming, terrorism, etc., and seldom arguing about an atomic bomb or disarmament. However, compared with 30 years before, neither the problem of nuclear weapons nor the problem of disarmament was necessarily solved, and I think that the crisis of usage of nuclear weapon has become strong increasingly and it is easy to use nuclear weapons increasingly. In that global warming, the food issues, and terrorism's problem were added in addition to the nuclear problem. The problem of global warming or food is an unsolvable problem in a short period of time. However, issues of nuclear weapons and the problem of disarmament will be solved immediately, if we can reach a global agreement. It is necessary to soften the burden on the earth.

2. Process to the First Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Disarmament

From February, 1977 one year before the First Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Disarmament, investigation preparation and implementation were started and mental and physical investigation of A-bomb victims was conducted through interview by the volunteer. In those days, I lived in Miyagi Prefecture in the northern part of Honshu in Japan. As a student volunteer, I participated in the investigation process.

Those days, the number of candidates was 235 in Miyagi Prefecture.

Among them 200 were contacted in the whole investigation. The reply was obtained from 167 persons. We could obtain the high cooperation of 75%, and felt

the strong expectation for the First Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Disarmament from A-bomb victims.

There were 102 investigators (400 persons of a total). Not only the interview of A-bomb victims, but also hand drawn picture and the collection of signatures carried out simultaneously.



Fig.1 Investigation of the A-bomb victims (Hibakusha) in Miyagi Prefecture

The situation at that time is shown in Fig.1. Such investigation was conducted in all prefectures, the signature activities against usage of the nuclear weapon were also carried out simultaneously, and the purposes of the signature were as follows:

- (1) to tell people in the world about the fear of an atomic bomb, and pain of A-bomb victims
- (2) to forbid use of nuclear weapons as a crime contrary to humanity
- (3) to hold a world disarmament conference and contract the treaty of a total ban on nuclear arms

17 million people's signatures were gathered. Based on these results of the investigation, "the Symposium about the Mental and Physical aftereffect of A-bomb" was performed at the end of July, 1977 in Hiroshima. Moreover, at this that time, the World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs unified, and was held.

I had opportunity to participate in A-bomb victim's investigation, international symposium, and a nuclear-bombs prohibition unified convention. At that time, I worked with Dr. George Wald, Dr. Arthur Booth and Dr. Noel Baker who were the Nobel Prize winners. That experience influenced strongly to a 20 years-old student like me on the way of life.

3. Participation in the First U.N. Special Session on Disarmament

A-bomb victim's investigation and a signature-collecting campaign were

performed in parallel, and contribution was also gathered with an A-bomb victim's strong hope and an immense number of signatures.

There was also strong recommendation that young generation also had to attend the First U.N. Special Session on Disarmament. 30 persons formed "The delegation to present the record of A-bomb tragedy to the World" from May to June, 1978. Fig. 2 shows the ceremony celebrating the establishment of the group in Tokyo. I was one of the members of the group.



Fig.2 the Celebration of Establishing the group in Tokyo

After arrival in New York, we participated in the next activity of Press conference. Fig.3 shows the press conference in the U.N building.



Fig.3 the Press Conference in U.N building

We visited some newspaper publishing companies and the Diet member offices, and told them about the mental and physical condition of A-bombed victims. The photo exhibition on atomic bomb was opened in the road at the Y.M.C.A. building near the UN building. Fig. 4 is the pamphlet of the First Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Disarmament. It was the first time that

Japanese language (not the U.N. common language) flowed into the whole UN building.



Fig. 4 the pamphlet of the First Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Disarmament



Fig.5 The Poster for the rally on “Mobilize for Survival”

On the other hand, near the Hammarshold plaza park, 15,000 people participated

with the poster of Fig.5 for the rally. The slogan of the rally was "mobilize for survival."

The newspaper reported that there had been no large-scale procession like that for a long time, after the Vietnam War ended. The A-bomb victims went up to the platform established in the Hammarshold plaza park which was the goal of a rally one after another, and they told experience of them to it, and it had many support from the audience. The folk singers and the actors also climbed the platform one after another, sang the song, a speech was made and the spot was filled with heat. Fig. 6 is the figure of the young men who were staging a rally. On the platform of the destination of a rally parade, a Japanese A-bomb victims' representative made a message (Fig. 7).



Fig. 6 the Rally for Survival

Fig.7 Platform of the Destination of the rally

We always carried the photographs to show about the tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by A-bomb. We opened the corner which introduced a pamphlet. And we explained to the participants why we went there (Fig. 8).



Fig.8 talking with the participants beside the rally

When such activities were carried out, we had very dramatic incident. While we

were holding the photograph exhibition in Carnegie Hall, Mr. Harvard Sass (56 years old at that time) who was the executive of a company appeared. Fig.9 is the situation of the talk between Mr. Harvard and Mr. Matsushige who was the cameraman of Chugoku Newspaper Company and took the photographs of the situation immediately just after A-bomb explosion. On the other hand, Mr. Harvard was a U.S. Air Forces investigating commission's cameramen. They took photos from the bottom and from the air in the same situation. At that time, we knew that many photographs and data were collected in the U.S. Public Record Office.



Fig.9 Dramatic Meeting Mr. Matsushige and Mr. Harvard



Fig 10 Photo Exhibition in front of Y.W.C.A. in Albuquerque

After leaving New York, we opened the photo exhibition in each place. The photo exhibition was opened at the roadside or under the eaves, without **no** reservation. They were held in New York, Washington, White Sands, and Los Angeles and Honolulu. Fig 10 is a photo exhibition in front of Y.W.C.A.in Albuquerque of New Mexico.

Moreover, Fig.11 shows exhibition in the hotel where we stayed. In the picture you can see visitors' serious feeling.



Fig.11 Visitors feeling about the photos

Our tour and photo exhibition had very important strategies. We were traveling with three cameramen who took the photographs. But unfortunately most of them died five or six years ago. We could hear their explanation with showing photos. For example, "Immediately after taking this photograph, houses begun to burn from left-hand side and I could not help other victims in agonized shrieking of the damned, either, but my tears covered the camera finder repeatedly losing sight in it". We could hear "Remember Pearl Harbor" when a photo exhibition is opened at the roadside. We said "we did not come to blame the United States. We came to warn to our future". Then, they understood about the significance of our mission. Now, the problem of a worldwide scale is called the warming phenomenon and food shortage. However, don't forget the miniaturization of nuclear weapons, the problem of nuclear proliferation, etc. The problem of nuclear weapons is always hanging around.