

Friday March 18, 1983
Nagasaki, Japan

No. 1

Dear Mom, Dad + Grandma -

Today I visited the Peace Statue + Atomic Bomb Memorial Museum in Nagasaki. I met a man there who lived in Nagasaki at the time of the blast. He was a jr. high student and was in school when the bomb was dropped. The school was located outside the city. I asked him if he remembers the bomb going off. (He spoke very good English). He was outside in the school yard with his friends. They were trained to react to airraids by placing there fingers over their eyes, thumbs in their ears & getting down on the ground. Practice drills were common. This time there was no alarm. He remembers hearing people (children in the yard) yelling that something was falling from the sky. As he looked to the sky the bomb exploded and he and

The others hit the ground of the school yard in the way they were trained. He tried to open his eyes a few seconds later but could not even see his friend just a few feet away. The dust from the yard was rising upward in a huge dust storm. When the dust storm subsided, he opened his eyes. Although it was mid-morning, it looked very dark outside. He saw a huge wall rising up from the city. The man stretched out his arms to show the width of the wall as he saw it from the school. The school was located on the other side of a mountain + thus no one was instantly killed. His friend, however, returned to his home that afternoon. One week later his hair was gone, he was bleeding from the mouth and a few days later he died. The man

I spoke to said he was not injured. He was, however, living in fear for months that he would die in the same horrible way as did his friend. He said over 74,000 people died instantly, with many more dying later from the radiation. He has known people who have died as recently as a few years ago whose death was attributed to radiation + its complications.

The man said that as a young boy, he did not know what an atomic bomb was. The sight of the rising wall of dust + debris with its mushroom shaped cap led him to believe it was "doomsday."

I'll write a happier letter to morrow.

Love, Jany