

The 30th Edition of Thinking about Peace

[Junior High School Students]

The War Close to Me

Daini Junior High School 1st Grade

Akitaka Ookawa

My grandfather was born in 1931. He was 13 years old at the end of the war. According to him, many fire bombs that spread fire were dropped in air-raids. Places where those bombs were dropped lit on fire, and people couldn't escape. He and his mother tried to escape shouting, "Hot! Hot!" They reached under the bridge of Komochi river which is along my way to school. That bridge still exists in the same place. I also heard other stories from him. One was when my grandfather was trying to escape from the fire bombs. The elementary school got burnt. That is the same school I went to until last year. It shocked him a lot, so he still remembers that moment well. He said, "The school was completely burnt. I even thought it was beautiful." I can't imagine my elementary school being burnt. Besides that, he saw his friend get burnt in front of him while he was escaping. I thought how painful and difficult it must be if I saw my friends get burnt, or if I got burnt.

I can't accept the thought of my friends getting burnt in front of me. The thoughts "Why did I not help my friend?" or "What should I have done?" don't matter I learned there were many hard facts to survive through at that time.

My grandfather's age during the war is almost the same as my age now. When I compare his life during the war to my peaceful life, I strongly feel it was completely different.

By the way, recently, I read "The Eternal Zero." Since I'm interested in history, I learned the worriers' way of life during Sengoku period from the book. I found a similarity between the "suicide attack" of the book and the "suicide by disembowelment" of Sengoku period. Why would they do such things? I thought that people who survived the war were not cowardly after reading the book and listening to the story of my grandfather.

People were told that losing is shame and dying for the country is virtue during the war. It was no wonder people didn't think of the meaning of killing each other. What do people have wars for? I understand well about both people who went to the war as soldiers and who stayed and were hurt in the country after listening to the story of my grandfather and reading the book. Both kind of people were victims of the painful and sad war.

Recently, I often hear news about suicidal terrorism or nuclear weapons in North Korea. I think Japan has a possibility to be involved in wars. However, I have peaceful and carefree days. After hearing the story from my grandfather, I noticed there were countries having wars in the world. I thought it would be dangerous for us if we didn't notice about those countries although we are having the life oppose to the life in those countries.

My grandfather told me that he had a hard time to surviving when he was my age. So, he never wastes food. He also appreciates things. He fixes old things to use them for a long time. I'm very happy to live with him. I am here now because he escaped from those fire bombs and survived. I think it is my mission to know this fact and live. This is the war close to me.

Passing Down

Daini Junior High School 2nd Grade

Shino Hirano

In the morning, I'm woken up by the buzzing of cicadas and taken eat breakfast. I change clothes and practice the violin until hearing the chime of 12:00. After I take lunch and clean up the dishes, I start my homework. After a while, I get tired and take a rest. My mother comes home. I eat dinner and talk with my family. This is my basic routine every day. Nothing special happens. However, there was a time when people couldn't have this "ordinary" life that they dreamed. We should never forget about it. We should never start a war which would make a time without "ordinary" life.

"War" is indescribable because it is very cruel.

In the night sky during the dark and heavy war, there were many stars to shine on people's feet and small hopes. Even those stars became invisible thought. Many battle planes came over and filled the sky. People knew their coming by the siren of air-raids. Once they heard the siren, it depended on how fast they could move. If they were late in escaping, they would die. I knew about this story from a book written by a 104-year-old doctor.

One-night, new life was about to be born at a hospital. However, the air-raids started without mercy. Once the alarm went off, fire bombs would be dropped any time. Even so, nobody left the hospital. When they heard the baby's cry after delivering, all doctors and nurses also cried. New life was born while many people were dying. They didn't care about own lives because they could save this one life. They wanted to save that life very much. It was not only because it was their job and responsibility. They saw many people dying in the war, and it became a usual thing for them. So, they wanted something to cheer and support themselves. That baby and its growth were hope for them to live.

There were more terrible things in the war. Serious food shortages afflicted the people for a long time. Expensive kimonos were exchanged for a small amount of rice. There were weeds in the miso soup. We can't experience how hard it was. However, people during the war didn't forget to be kind to others. Kindness like sharing their food with strangers. Mindfulness to give food to growing students who needed more food. We have to pass down their kindness and misery of the war.

Why do we still have wars in the world? We should know that there are no problems being solved by force. Uncountable dead bodies are the only things we have after wars. Losers are afflicted by occupation from the winner. The winner has guilt from the killing of many innocent people. Why is such a lose-lose fight not eliminated from the world? If we could find the answer for this question, the world would be completely peaceful. However, anybody, even very smart people, couldn't find the answer.

I have something I fear. It is that people from now and in the future will forget the war. Under the Constitution of Japan, we will never have wars. We might start another cruel war when we forget the value of the Constitution. People will regret after wars and try to pass down their experiences. I would like to stop that repetition.

In order to stop it, we have to know the days when people were suffering, painful, and lonely. There were days when people dreamed of an "ordinary" life. We have to pass down the time when people faced death every day and were filled with fear. We should keep passing them down until we have peace in the world.

Learned From the Monument of Himeyuri

Daiichi Junior High School 3rd Grade

Ryoutaro Nakanishi

This country is peaceful now. It is hard to imagine that there were bombs dropping from the sky like rain, and people facing death every day just 73 years ago in this same country. The sense of importance of life might have been shorter 73 years ago.

When I was 6 years old, I visited the Monument of Himeyuri in Okinawa. I don't remember well about other things when I was 6 years old. However, I still clearly remember that I was shocked at the Monument of Himeyuri. "Dark, scary, the sound of bombing..."

There were diaries probably written by female students in the museum, and that place was dimmed. Next, I heard "Whizz," the sound of flying bombs, and "Boom!" the sound of explosion. Those sounds echoed throughout the place. I was very scared at that time. I still clearly remember about it after 9 years.

I studied about the war in my history class. Now, I know about that place. I learned recently that there were female students the same age as me, nursing injured soldiers in the cave. It is very scary for me to think about caring for injured soldiers. They also made meals for the soldiers. I thought their courage, energy, and humanity was greater than mine. I felt sorry for myself. However, Japan lost the war in spite of their efforts. There were 96 students working in the cave, and 87 of them died by a gas attack done by America. Some of the other students killed themselves by holding bombs because they felt shamed at becoming captives of America. I think nobody wants to die for the country in Japan now. I also think nobody has an idea like killing themselves because of feeling shame at becoming captives in the present. I think there are people who think same way as the present before the war. However, people educated by the country and unable to say their own opinions during the war. Their value of life was ruined as a result.

We have a responsibility to pass down these facts to the next generation. Otherwise, wars like this might occur again after 100 or 200 years, and it will make people suffer and be sad. It can also commemorate victims of the war for their sacrifice.

If you think, "Wars aren't related to me," or "I want to kill myself now," I would say those ideas are wrong. There were no people who wanted to kill themselves during the war. If you think about them, you can't easily say these words.

We should never have wars which will destroy people and bring sorrow again. Never...

Succession

Daini Junior High School 3rd Grade

Ryuuki Yoda

This year is called Heisei 30. The name of the era, "Heisei" will be changed when the present emperor abdicates. Japan is considered as a peaceful country without wars, but it hasn't always been like that. It was only 73 years ago that Japan received damages during World War II.

World War II brought huge damage to Japan. Not only soldiers who went to the war, but many other citizens also became victims. The atomic bombs dropped in Hiroshima and Nagasaki made many victims. Every time I study about the war in my social study class and read books about the war, I really feel that we should never have wars again. However, that sense might become less and less as times go by. As we say, "One picture is worth a thousand words." The memory about the war is clearer and stronger in people who experienced the war than those who didn't experience it. The number of people who experienced the war is decreasing every year. Soon, there will be no one left who experienced the war. Will we still be conscious of wars in future? What can we do to prevent that tragedy from occurring again?

I think we, young people, should try to understand the war. I think we need ways to learn about the war. One of them is from listening to the stories of people who experienced it. I think this is the best way for us to make a big impression. I have heard

stories of the war from my grandmother. She didn't experience it, but my grandfather heard stories from my great-grandfather before he died. My great-grandfather experienced the war, and he came back after the war. However, he didn't talk about the war to his son, my grandfather. I wondered why. I guess that the memory of the war was not a good one for him. The war must have been a painful experience for him. My grandmother lost her brother on the day the war ended. He died of malnutrition. According to her mother, his last words were, "I want to eat white rice. I think people under such situations were also victims. Since my grandmother had this experience, she scolds us, "There are many people who can't eat food" when we have leftovers. I heard this story from my grandmother.

I think our chances to listen to stories of the war from people who experienced it are also decreasing every year. We need to find other ways to know about the war. I think video games, animations, dramas, and so on can be another to understand the war. Young people aren't familiar with wars in the present. I think tools that young people like to use such as smartphones can be a good way to know about the war. Those tools can be triggers to get young people interested in the war. I think there are more ways to teach about the war. It is important for young people to know the war through those ways. It is also important for people who experienced or knew a lot about the war to teach those ways to young people.

It is necessary for young people to know about the war in order not to have wars again. This is not only for our generation. We should pass down what we learn to the next generation, and the next generation should pass down what they learn to the generations after them. I would like everyone to think what we can do to keep Japan peaceful.

The Happiness of Being in Peace

Daisan Junior High School 1st Grade

Ami Totsuka

The Heisei Era will end soon. This year was the last summer vacation in the Heisei era. My daily life started like, "I want to sleep more," "My favorite boiled eggs are not prepared for my breakfast. I can't eat cheese," "The air conditioner doesn't work well. It is still hot. I want to turn on the fan, but I don't want to move. Let's ask my little brother. Oh, I don't have a club activity today. It's good that I don't need to go under the hot weather."

I stayed at home and watched TV. I didn't even change my clothes. My boring normal day would end like this, and I thought it was boring. I didn't know the meaning of peace.

My mother told me that we would go to Hiroshima during this summer vacation. My little sister and I talked that we wanted to go to some amusement parks instead. I think it was because I didn't understand how happy we were, and I didn't appreciate that I could have peaceful life.

When I arrived at Hiroshima station, I still didn't understand peace. I thought it was like Shinjuku. There were many people and pretty shops. I was thinking of what I would ask my mother to buy.

I found that the train going on the street. It was a street car and was called Hiroden. It was the first time for me to see a street car. I tried to get on, and it was a little shaky and interesting. I had so much fun with my little sister on the street car. I didn't expect that many people who got on this street car were blown away with the street car by the atomic bomb. I was surprised more at the fact that there were still lots of victims' remains and belongings under this street.

Hiroden arrived at the Atomic Bomb Dome. When I saw the entrance of the dome at first, I thought it was an unnatural building. When I took pictures in front of it, I flashed a peace sign. My mother and grandmother looked at me with disappointed

eyes.

However, fun time was over.

Once I got into the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, the atmosphere was thick with tension. I was surprised that the things I saw were terrible. There was a movie to simulate the scene that Hiroshima, a peaceful and beautiful city, was completely burnt with one atomic bomb. I was very surprised and watched it again and again. I wasn't the same as myself earlier who laughed and had fun without any thoughts. I was standing there with the feeling of why this beautiful city had to be ruined like this.

I moved further into the museum and had to look at more terrible things. The thing that I was impressed most by was the burnt clothes of 13 to 14-year-old children. However, the size of those clothes looked like for 4th or 5th graders of elementary school. When I asked about it, a guide explained to me, "The children's nutrition condition was extremely bad. The clothes for 20-year-old girls were also very small." I couldn't say anything. I felt I was so selfish. I made leftovers without any hesitations when I found something I don't like or want to eat. What would I do if I was born in that time? People around me would not deal with me because I kept saying, "No." I might not be able to be alive at worst. I strongly felt happy that I could be born in this time when we have plenty of food.

That was not only the thing that I was shocked at the museum. I found an article with a picture of one mother. Her face was completely burnt. She suffered from it very hard for two days and died on August 8th. I often have argument with my mother, but she is always with me. I feel happy about that. Ordinary things in life are the happiest things. I strongly felt so.

I didn't know about the time of the terrible war. I realized I was very happy because I could say anything I want.

I wish this peace we have now would stay forever.

For Beautiful Japan

Daisan Junior High School 2nd Grade

Yuuna Nawa

My father went to Hiroshima for the business the other day. He visited the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum with encouragement of a person who was living there before coming back home. According to my father, there were many harrowing materials. He found things junior high school student like me left behind. I felt depressed when I heard it. There are many things which show us how terrible the war was in the museum. Honestly, I think it is not a fun place. Why do people living Hiroshima suggest visiting there?

We had the days of the atomic bomb dropping in Hiroshima and Nagasaki this year again. The ceremony was aired on TV. When I saw the Peace Park under the hot weather with heat daze, I thought it was very hard for all attending to be there every year. Many of them were old. They reminded me of the long time that had passed since the war and the atomic droppings. I saw some junior high school students there. I found that their grandparents or great grandparents were victims. They seriously talked about peace in the interviews. The atomic bomb droppings occurred a long time before they were born but they could think of peace seriously. Is that because their families were killed by the war? I thought it was sad.

Children in Hiroshima live near the Atomic Bomb Dome which is the symbol of the atomic bombs. They learn a lot about them at school. The trace of the war is very close to them, and they have chances to think of the war. On the other hand, how about me? I live calmly near Mt. Fuji, and I have tried not to see movies or read books about the war because those were scary. Numazu is also part of Japan, though...

I asked my mother whether Numazu got damaged by the war or not. My mother heard many stories about the war from my grandmother. There was a big air-raid

called the Bombing of Numazu in World War II. My grandmother lived in Senbon area at that time. She escaped into the "Senbon Matsubara," a pine forest with her family. However, they had to break apart when they were lit by fire bombs on the way to escape. They needed to keep escape using the pine trees. It took about a dozen minutes to get to the air-raid shelter. She was also a target even though she was a child. She could see the face of the American pilot clearly and couldn't forget it. After the air-raid, she came out the bomb shelter and looked around. There were no buildings left. So, she could see the place beyond Numazu station from Senbon Beach. I was surprised because my grandmother didn't show us that she had such a terrible experience. My mother told and asked me, "Your grandmother visited many elementary schools around here to talk about her experience of the war as a member of the association for female retired teachers until 5 years ago. Didn't you listen to her story?" I felt I should have listened to her story more. Her memory is lost now, so I feel sorry that she can't tell me anything.

I saw one storyteller of the war in Okinawa on TV the other day. That person said, "This is my last year to talk in front of people" in the interview. It was because the person lost confidence to tell the story in order. Finally, I realized that we don't have lots of times to listen to the story of the war from people who experienced it. I felt shame for myself because I had tried not to know about the war. The anniversary of the end of the war is coming soon this year. News or animated movies related to the war will be aired on TV. I think I will watch them to understand more about the war.

I don't want to experience the war like my grandmother. I like my happy life seeing the beautiful views. I think it is our responsibility to know about the people who made many efforts and became victimized in order to build this beautiful Japan.

For the Future

Daisan Junior High School 3rd Grade

Akari Matsumoto

My great grandmother took the train running Ito, Shizuoka. She evacuated from Gifu. She sat at the seat by the window where she could see the view well. While she was looking at the view, one woman walked to her. She told the woman, "You can enjoy the view from this seat. Please have it." She gave her seat to the woman. The woman said with smile, "Thank you," and sat down there. After a while, it occurred suddenly. The bomb blast came over to the train right after hearing the loud sound of the explosion. Fortunately, she was saved although she got injured. However, people sitting by windows got seriously injured. Some of them died. The woman whom my great grandmother gave her seat was one of them.

I heard this story from my great grandmother. If she didn't give her seat away, I couldn't hear this story.

I strongly think that wars shouldn't occur. If there were no fights or conflicts in the world, there would be no people who would like to have wars. I think people in the world wish to live peacefully. Japan in the present is not supposed to have wars. However, there are some countries having wars in the world. I wonder when those wars will end. I also suspect whether they can end or not.

My great grandmother passed away 4 years ago. Most people who experienced the war are old, so we're not sure how long they can live. That is why I think we should learn more about the war and pass it down to next generation.

"Peace" is not only status without wars. It also includes the world without any crimes such as murder and kidnapping.

Recently, I often hear news about murder including abandoning corpse. Some of those reasons are "Knifed because of being annoyed" or "Just wanted to kill people." I think these problems can be solved by discussion. However, people who commit the crime with such reasons don't think of the solution without force. When I think that

there are people doing heinous crimes like that, the world we are living still needs care.

It is also important for us to tell what we think, not keep inside ourselves. In this situation, we can't feel relief even though we don't have any wars. I will not forget that there are always many dangers around me, and I will appreciate to my life every day.

For Peace in Future

Daiyon Junior High School 3rd Grade

Miharu Tsuchiya

When I was an elementary school student, my image of "war" was terrible and sad. During World War II, one of my grandfathers escaped after his house was burnt by an air-raid, and the other grandfather had to work at the ammunition factory instead of taking classes at school. When I heard these stories, I thought it was just a thing that occurred in the past and in a different world. After becoming a junior high school student, I had a chance to read the books about Malala Yousafzai in Pakistan and the atomic bomb survivors in Hiroshima. I also had a chance to visit Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. I lost my words when I stood in front of the cruel and inhuman pictures of victims. Not only soldiers who were at the front of the war were victimized, but people who had normal lives and laughing children also disappeared in a moment by the atomic bomb.

I went on to 3rd grade of a junior high school this year. I studied about World War II in my history class and read "Black Rain" in my Japanese class. My class chose the song, "Xylophone," which told the feeling toward one's little sister who died in the war for the school chorus contest. Since we sang that song, our classroom teacher suggested to watch the drama, "Song of Sugar Cane Farm" to understand better about the war. The drama was created based on the song, "Song of Sugar Cane Farm" which was sung by Ryoko Moriyama. The story was held in Okinawa. One happy family was involved in the Battle of Okinawa. It was a very sad story.

The sons and the father of the family were sent to the battle as soldiers, and they died. The father was very cheerful and a kind person. He couldn't abandon the American soldiers who got injured. He believed that all people in the world were equal, and it wouldn't be changed by nationality. I think his idea is very normal. There was a scene that impressed me. One girl was aimed at by an armed American soldier. She told him, "Do you kill me?" Those were the only words she knew in English. The soldier put down the gun and stroked her head. However, people in extreme situations easily lost themselves. I heard there were some Japanese soldiers who let people go out from the shelter because they wanted to escape there. Some other Japanese soldiers let people commit suicide at the end of the war. I thought that each person was not bad, the situation of the war was bad. When we finished watching the drama, all my classmates cried. In the drama, the mother was pregnant with a girl. The lyrics to "The Song of Sugar Cane Farm" were the words said by that girl who didn't know her father's face. I couldn't stop crying when I read the lyrics. I thought the song was just slow and beautiful with the repetition of impressive words, "Zawawa, zawawa, zawawa." It was a painful song that the girl thought of her father whom she never met. If you don't know the lyrics, I would like you to read it to the end. It has 11 verses. One phrase is, "A long time ago, the war came from overseas..." Okinawan people were suddenly involved in the war and became victims. People in Hiroshima and Nagasaki were the same. They didn't want to have the war.

The 21st century hasn't been a peaceful century, yet. There are many seeds of fights and conflicts in the world. The lives of many people who are in weak positions and children are lost by terror and civil conflict. In these years, we have abnormal climates which are issues of the highest priority to think about. However, we hardly cooperate, arms reduction is also hardly progressing. Nobody wants to be the victim or their own country to be the victim. It is difficult to get rid of the seeds of fights and conflicts

because of the constraints of religion or antagonism in the past. However, Japan doesn't have many constraints of religion. Besides that, it is the only country in the world to be bombed with nuclear weapons. I think Japan should take action for the arms reduction of the world in order to appeal more to the importance of peace.

What can we, junior high school students, do for it? I think the first step is learning. If we didn't know about the reasons and facts of the war and the present situation, it would be hard for us to make an appeal or take action.

Through a year, not only during August, I will try to notice news in the world and seriously listen to stories from many people.

Through the War and the Atomic Bombs

Daiyon Junior High School 3rd Grade

Ayaka Nishiyama

Since I read "Black Rain" in my Japanese class and studied about the war and the atomic bombs in my social study class during the first semester, I got interested in the war. I went to the city library and read some articles about the war. I like to write about my feelings and thoughts based on these things I learned recently.

First, I'd like to write about the war. We consider a war as a thing that we should never have. However, the war was the thing that "they should do" for the people at the time of the war. They had to go to the war and die for the country even though they didn't wish it. I realized that it was an ordinary thing for them at that time after reading the books. One of the books I read said that the reason why the country didn't stop the war in the middle was to not humiliate the emperor. There was an idea that surrender meant humiliating a person who was at the highest position in that country. Don't you think it is odd? I'm not sure if the idea was true or not. However, if it was true, I think that idea would be wrong. In order not to humiliate the emperor, millions of people became victims. In the end, millions more were victims.

Hiroshima on August 6th in 1945, and Nagasaki on August 9th in 1945 got the atomic bombs dropping by the American military. I saw many pictures of them in my class, and all of them were very cruel. I'd like to tell you about several pictures that had an impression on me.

The first picture showed the shadows of people which were left by the flash of the atomic bombing. I read the explanation of it, and those people disappeared in the flash. I hardly believed it. I was also shocked that only their shadow remained on the concrete wall or ground. It was terrible that each shadow could not identify whom it belonged to. If their families also died, nobody would know them. It's as if they didn't exist at all. Honestly, I can't believe that such a thing happened in reality.

The next one was a picture of a few women standing. I wondered if it had something wrong or not. I took some time to look at it and I noticed there was a burnt old man lying in front of them. I was very surprised when I noticed it. However, the women in the picture didn't look surprised. They looked like they didn't care. It was unbelievable. That was my impression. Why did they not care about the dead body? That was my question. My question was solved after looking at some more pictures. One picture showed that many dead bodies were piled up at the corner of the town. The other picture showed that there were many dead bodies scattered with lots of debris. I noticed that the women in the picture got used to being with dead bodies. Some people lost their families, and others lost their friends. Some other people lost people they loved. It must have been so hard for them. Besides that, people had to look at the dead bodies of the people they loved being scattered. All the survivors including the women in the picture must have had a hard time. I felt pain when I looked at those pictures while thinking of the survivors' minds.

Through this experience, I realized I'm happy that I can live without any inconvenience. I wish that this peaceful life will last forever, and I will live it fully.

The War and the Meal

Katahama Junior High School 1st Grade

Touya Ide

"Atomic bomb"

I learned these are terrible nuclear weapons which can burn everything, including things and people, in a moment.

I think Japan in the present is peaceful. There are no people who experienced the war around me. I don't often think about the war in my usual life. However, I can feel its horribleness at the Atomic Bomb Dome and Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park.

Last winter, I visited Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park for one of the Boy Scout activities. The purpose was dedicating a thousand origami paper cranes. I saw the full-scale model of the atomic bomb for the first time. I also saw the picture of the mushroom cloud, a melted school bag, a clock stopped at 8:15, and some more pictures of dead bodies whose gender wasn't identified and bodies which were entirely burnt. I felt pain in my heart. They must have been in so much pain. What happened to the child who had this school bag? The "time" of Hiroshima was stopped at 8:15. I realized the horribleness of the war.

Numazu where I live now has a trace of the war. It was the trace of a bomb on Onari Bridge. If an atomic bomb was dropped in Numazu now, and I lost my friends and family, I would lose my courage to live anymore.

Since I would like to listen to the story of the war, I visited my grandparents who were born 4 or 5 years after the end of the war. The thing that impressed me most was the story about toothbrushes and meals.

Toothbrushes they used at that time were bamboo sticks with pig hair. They put powdery toothpaste on them to brush their teeth. I thought it would really hurt if the bamboo stick hit against their gums. Pig hair didn't seem sanitary. Powdery toothpaste would take moisture from their mouth, and they might have a hard time to brush.

For the meals, they grew some vegetables to make pickles. Dried sardines, pickled plum, and rice-bran paste were main dishes for them. Staple food was barley mixed with rice. I wouldn't be happy to have those meals because I like fish and meat so much. However, I wouldn't be able to say such small complaints when I thought of people at that time.

"The meal after the war was Suiton." My grandmother said and made one for me. In Suiton, there were some pieces of carrot which was not peeled. Getting rid of those peels is a waste of food. People didn't often put meat in it but only rich people who could own chickens could put them into Suiton and eat them.

First Suiton was like Tonjiru. Dumplings made with flour and water were not round and shaped like rocks. They had both soft and hard parts and no taste, so it was hard for me to eat them.

When I think that people at that time had these meals every day, it goes without saying meals in the present are very rich. If I talked about liking and disliking food, I would be scolded by the people at that time. I thought I should appreciate that I can have good meals without any troubles.

The Boy Scout activity in Hiroshima was a good trigger for me to get interested in the war. I got some knowledge about the war after listening and researching about it. I started to think about what we can do even though we didn't experience the war. How can we pass down these facts of the war to the next generations? Can it have any meaning if we, people who didn't experience the war, talk about the war by telling our knowledge? When I thought like this, I decided to appreciate "ordinary" things around me. The anniversary of the end of the war, the Atomic Bomb Dome, and Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park might be chances for us to remember "feeling of thankfulness." I think "peaceful" world would come true if each of us appreciated "ordinary" things.

I Learned About the Life of Women and Children During the War

Katahama Junior High School 3rd Grade

Miori Goto

I realized that I didn't know about the war after I watched the TV program, "73 Years After the War" during this summer vacation. So, I decided to visit National Showa Memorial Museum where I could learn the life during and after the war in Tokyo and Shokei-Kan, also called Historical Memorial Halls for the Wounded and Sick Retired Soldiers.

I learned a lot of things that I'd never learned in a textbook at National Showa Memorial Museum. Especially, I was interested in the life of women and children during the war. For example, one-thousand stitches. Each of one thousand women made a knot on a big cloth to wish for men "not to be hit by guns" and "to come back safely." There were people's evacuation and building removal during the war. Building removal was breaking the buildings to make it easy for people to escape. People during the war had to carry their identification card for cases when they evacuated, got injured, or died at the time of air-raids. I learned a lot of things. The thing I was impressed most at this museum was the experience section. I experienced the air-raid shelter. I heard the real sound of bombs dropping in dark. I was very scared, and I couldn't believe that children during the war could endure it. I was very surprised that they could get through this fear. If I were them, I would think that I wanted to die because of fear.

At Shokei-Kan, I saw a miniature hospital where injured soldiers were cured and artificial legs and arms. Those things taught me how the situation was during the war. The miniature hospital was precisely made so I could understand how it was like very well. It taught me that both people working at the hospital and soldiers had a hard time. The museum also exhibited the things that accidentally protected people during the war. There were glasses with a hole made by a bullet. If a person wearing those glasses hadn't worn them, the bullet would have got inside of the person's head and that one wouldn't be saved. There was also a cigarette case with a hole made by a bullet. If a person hadn't put the cigarette case in the chest pocket, that one wouldn't be saved. I thought I saw miracles. I had never thought of wounds that soldiers got. After going to the museum, I learned there were many people who were still suffering from their wounds even after the war. I thought their suffering continued so long.

I realized that we should never have wars again after visiting the museum. I think nobody will get any benefit, and nothing will be born from wars. However, the fact that the world had the war can't be erased. So, we have to understand well about the war in order to tell fears of the war and the atomic bomb to the next generations because the number of people who experienced the war is decreasing. We should appreciate that we were born in this peaceful time and place, not in the time of the war, and live fully every day. I don't think that I will have a lot of chances to visit these kinds of facilities, so I will not forget what I learned and experienced at the two museums I visited this time. I will respect every day and live fully. I learned about women and children this time. Next, I would like to learn how soldiers worked and fought in the war, and how old people lived during the war. I would also like to visit Hiroshima or Nagasaki where the atomic bombs were dropped and see the Atomic Bomb Dome.

Passing

Kanaoka Junior High School 2nd Grade

Mayu Hiyoshi

When looking up,
Propeller planes of the enemy country
Fire bombs coming down like rain

If you look around,
The town is a sea of fire
Many unidentified people

How scary it was?
How sad it was?
I don't know.
However,
I can learn what happened 73 years ago
I can pass down what I learned to the next generation

When looking up,
In the blue sky,
Planes connecting countries

If you look around,
Busy town with people
Many cars passing by

73 years from the end of the war
Peace is ordinary every day

Recover from burnt ruins
There is people's effort
To build peaceful time
Which is much longer
Than the time of the war

In order not to end
Peaceful time
In order not to ruin
People's effort
Learning about the war
Learning about this town

Let's pass a sash of peace

School Trip and the Story of My Grandmother

Shizuura Elementary and
Junior High School 9th Grade

Sakiko Ikai

My grandfather and grandmother experienced the war. My mother told me that during summer vacation when I was an elementary school student. At that time, I understood that the war was wrong. However, I didn't know what to think and thought

it was a thing that happened in the past and unrelated to me.

Now, I became a 9th grade student and had a chance to go to Okinawa for a school trip. I studied a lot about the history and culture of Okinawa before going there. I started to think a lot about how the war was terrible and difficult, not like when I was an elementary school student.

I visited many places related to the war on the school trip. The places that impressed me a lot were the Himeyuri Peace Museum and "Abuchiragama." I learned about Himeyuri Students Corp when I studied before going there. They were almost the same age as me, they took care of soldiers, and helped the operations. When I got there, I found the monument of Himeyuri that I saw on TV. I listened to the explanation from the guide with my classmates. According to the guide, the students' happy lives changed during the war. Their education was also changed to be taught about the war. I felt the fear of education. I saw many group and individual pictures of students in the museum. When I saw them, I had unspeakable feelings. There were no differences between them and me. However, they had to live suffering every day and lost their lives. It was only because that they were born in the time of the war. I think many people, not only the students of Himeyuri Students Corp, also wished peace. Things that are ordinary for us were things that people wished for during the war. Being able to go to school every day, having enough food, spending times with family are ordinary things for us. However, these were not ordinary things for them. I appreciated my life from my heart.

I also visited the place called "Abuchiragama" with my classmates. "Abuchiragama" was a native cave and its total length is 270m. It was used for evacuation, for storage, and as a hospital. Its entrance was tight, and we went down the steep steps while holding the handrail. It was getting colder as we went further inside. After we moved while listening to the explanation by the guide, we found some remains, piled stones, and the water wells which saved and supported people's lives. When we turned off the lights together, it got very dark, a darkness that I had never experienced before. I heard the sounds of water droppings in quiet and heavy atmosphere. I thought it would be hard to live in such darkness. However, the guide told us, "This darkness helped people at that time because they didn't have to see the situation of the cave." The guide also told us about the survivors. When I heard this story, I understood how unbelievable the situation was, and realized that the war was really a terrible incident.

I also visited Ie Island and the Peace Memorial Park with my classmates. Through this school trip, I recognized that our lives are very rich and happy. I thought we should appreciate it more. We should not forget about the war that Japan used to have. I also learned the importance of passing it down. Now, I would like to listen to my grandmother's story again to think deeply about the war.

Ordinary Things

Shizuura Elementary and
Junior High School

9th Grade

Sena Sugiura

Not doing things that others don't like. Not doing things that others will be sad about. Be nice to others. All of these things are ordinary for me. I admit that there are some exceptions, but they are usually common for everyone. It is also normal that people would receive warnings if they broke them.

I went to Okinawa for my school trip. The main purpose of the trip was to learn about the war. I took a very long time to study about the Battle of Okinawa before going there. I thought I understood a lot about the battle. However, it turned out that I didn't understand very well. I just studied its history.

I visited many traces of the battle. Some of them almost remained as it was when it

happened. As I visited and looked at them, I felt something that I couldn't feel when I was studying beforehand. One such experience was at "Abuchiragama." It was a dark cave. Many people were there to evacuate at that time. It was used as the field hospital so many injured soldiers were carried in. There were also many people who died at this hospital. While I was in the cave, I felt anxiousness and fear. I didn't have those feelings before I went in. It was no wonder. I learned how the people live in the cave through the pictures taken by someone else. So, I was not supposed to understand how the people who lived or died in the cave felt only by seeing those pictures. I was able to say, "I understand what they felt," for the first time when I stood in the real place. If I lived at that time, would it have been possible for me to live in such a dark place? Would it have been possible for me to see the people who were suffering and dying? This is not a fictitious story. This is what happened a short time ago.

I had a lot of things to think about after seeing the war as the past. What were "ordinary" things for them? It is obvious that what is "ordinary" in the present and in the past are different as far as seeing and learning. It does make sense. Time has passed. Ordinary things during the Edo Era and the Meiji Era were different, and the Edo Era and the present are also different. However, ordinary things have a definition. A thing that all people think it is wrong shouldn't be an ordinary thing.

Can letting children abandon corpses or forcing them to commit suicide by telling them, "It's better than being captured" be ordinary? Can we say that it is ordinary that people don't treat others as human beings? As one of the people living in this world, I can't say it is at least.

I learned that ordinary things during the war were not really ordinary. These might be ordinary for the people at that time. If they thought so, I would like to say it was crazy.

Things that were hardly considered as ordinary were done in Japan in the past. I think there might have been some people who thought they were wrong. Even so, those people were treated like they were crazy if they said the right thing despite many of the crazy things happening. Everyone would become crazy at last before they knew. That kind of group psychology is awful. If normal people noticed "something wrong," they would be eliminated by the fear of being hurt by the opposition of others. The people during the war were brainwashed like this and moved toward the wrong way and death.

People noticed that they and all of Japan up to that time were crazy after the war.

What are ordinary things? The answers would vary by the individual. However, the situation that most people can say this thing is wrong is the genuine "ordinary" thing. I can clearly say this after looking back in the past.

Wars make "unordinary" things "ordinary." I strongly felt that we should never forget about the war.

Appreciation For Ordinary Thing

Shizuura Elementary and
Junior High School

9th Grade

Mizuki Nomura

The destination of our school trip was Okinawa, not Kyoto. Since I had wanted to visit Kyoto for a long time, I was disappointed when I heard that we were going to Okinawa for a school trip. That was because I can feel more history in Kyoto than Okinawa. However, through what we studied before going, I found that Okinawa has a deeply sad history.

I felt the misery of the war more in Okinawa than the time we spent studying about it beforehand. I think it was because the effects of the war were much bigger than I expected. I felt it for the first time at the Mabunigaoka. There were cenotaphs for

people who died in the Battle Okinawa. Cenotaphs included the people from other prefectures besides Okinawa. Cenotaphs for the people of Okinawa were special. Those names were different depending on the first son or the second daughter. They were children who didn't have names because they died right after they were born. The names carved on those cenotaphs were the shapes of their parents' love who were wishing for peace. I felt fear of the war when I heard that.

While having the feeling of fear, we moved to "Abuchiragama." Even though each of us had a flash light, the inside was very dark. Himeyuri Students Corp took care of soldiers in the darkness without flashlights during the war. I wondered if I could go back to that time and help them when I heard that story. I think they had hard and long days because they had to take care of the soldiers while worrying about the enemy's attack every day. Most of Himeyuri students weren't accepted in any caves, so they had no choice other than committing suicide in group. Only three of them survived. Those three students built Himeyuri Peace Museum. They left their words behind saying that they enjoyed being under the sunshine when they got out and freedom after the war. Now, living under the sunshine is an ordinary thing for us. However, it was not ordinary for the people at that time, and they were not even allowed to live. I think they must have been sad and had a hard time. There are many cheerful and friendly people in Okinawa now. However, its history was hard and sad.

According to the people who let me stay at their house, the American military landed in Ie island first. The population of the island was about 3,000 to 4,000 at that time. However, about 5,000 people including soldiers died in the war. Now, 35% of the island is still used by the American military. There are still exploding bombs and the flight training area for Osprey.

Okinawa used to have its own currency and culture before the war. However, those cultures were also taken away by the war. Their culture is affected by American culture now.

The people of the house I stayed said, "The nation, not the soldiers, got enormous damage by the war. The war involved the whole nation a lot without any benefits. The war also brainwashed people's mind and made people something not like human beings. We should never start any wars again." When I heard that, I thought that the war is a part of history which we should not have again.

Through the school trip, I appreciated our rich environment. The life I think it is ordinary was not ordinary during the war. I think about my every day with my friends as very precious. The present Japan is made by people who fought and struggled through various things during the war. However, they weren't allowed to live. We should value our own lives and live for the people who couldn't live even though they wanted to. I think it is important for us to care and help each other to avoid any wars and make a peaceful world.

From the "Experience"

Shizuura Elementary and
Junior High School

9th Grade

Minagi Furuya

It was a dark, narrow, and deep cave. Can we live in such a place, shivering for many days? We can have water if we open a faucet. We can have light if we push a switch. These are ordinary things now. Can we live without them if we cannot use them?

The cause of my thinking of these things was the school trip. There are many schools going to Kyoto for school field trips in Numazu. However, our school was going to Okinawa. When I heard it for the first time, I thought, "I wanted to go to Kyoto." However, I can't blame myself at that time because I was still an elementary

school student. I didn't know the relationship between Okinawa and the war. I also didn't know anything about "the war." As our year in school advanced, we studied more about Okinawa. It didn't take a long time to shift my interest from Kyoto to Okinawa. The fears of the war. The fact that the war occurred in Japan, my country, only 70 years ago. The shock that the Battle of Okinawa occurred. When I knew these things, I started to get interested in the things happened that in Okinawa. After we learned lots of things about Okinawa, we left for Okinawa. I thought that I should strongly never forget what I experienced in Okinawa. First, we visited "Himeyuri Peace Museum." During the Battle of Okinawa, there were 13 to 19-year-old female students called Himeyuri Students Corp who helped the soldiers. As the battle got serious, their work also became harder and harder. They had to hold a soldier when he got an operation. They also had to throw away arms or legs that were cut from bodies. I was shocked that these things happened in real life. Besides that, the fact that these things were done by people the same age as me shocked me. There was a replica of the cave where Himeyuri students worked. My heart broke when I thought of the students' working in the dark and deep cave. This was the place where I felt the fear of the war for the first time.

Next, we visited "Abuchiragama." "Abuchiragama" is a word in Okinawa that means "a deep and long cave". This cave was very deep as it was named. It was so wide inside that we couldn't believe it was under the ground. The place was used as the evacuation place for the people of Itokazu at first. However, as the battle got more serious, it was used as the compartment of the military hospital. I was surprised that I couldn't speak inside. I didn't know why but my voice wouldn't come out. The place had such a serious atmosphere it made people speechless. When "Abuchiragama" was used as the hospital, soldiers who suffered serious injury and couldn't be saved by medicine at that time were carried to another room and abandoned. Those soldiers were fighting hard to fight for the country. However, once they got a serious injury or disease, they weren't allowed to go back to the battle and treated as a "nuisance." The "fear of the war" was something enormous hiding in a deep place that we can't expect and express with words.

"Wars" are not only things I learn in Okinawa and my classroom. They are related to the world. The atomic bombs dropped in Nagasaki and Hiroshima took hundreds of thousands of people's lives. There are some countries holding nuclear weapons which have tens of times the power. Do we really need nuclear weapons? Can they be triggers to start another war? Japan, as the only nation to suffer from atomic bombing, should make an appeal of "eliminate nuclear weapons" to the world. At the same time, I should recognize the "happiness" we have now, and I would like to not think that happiness occurred in the past.

Don't Make Misery Happen Again

Ashitaka Junior High School 2nd Grade

Kouki Shishido

On August 6th last year, I went out with my friends. While I was riding a bicycle, I heard the siren. My friends and I were very surprised but soon I remembered it was August 6th. I didn't care about it at that time, but I started to research about the atomic bomb droppings and how the war was frightful and unprofitable after I got home.

According to the news on that day, Japan had a Peace Memorial Ceremony in August which it has every year to relay the misery of the war in order to prevent people from suffering like old Japanese people did from atomic bombs and nuclear weapons.

When I was in the 2nd grade, I thought about atomic bombs in my moral education class. While my classmates answered with their opinions to the questions given by my teacher, I hardly found my answer. I kept thinking and asking myself how people who

were at the center of the explosion felt or thought during the class.

One question hit me. "Why do Japanese people behave like they are only victims?" It is true that Hiroshima and Nagasaki had enormous damage caused by the atomic bomb droppings. Many other places in Japan were also damaged by the air-raids. However, the same things happened in America and other countries. That is why I wondered why only Japan got attention in the matter of the war.

Damages are different by country. However, the fact that many people were victimized in the war is the same. Since we often hear news about the world now, fears of war in the world, as well as the fear of atomic bombs, should be delivered.

Now, there are many people being victimized by national conflicts and wars. There is no end to people suffering from these fights even though they are still alive. It might take long time for the earth to eliminate all conflicts and wars.

Even so, I still hope that all wars will be eliminated from the earth, and people in the world can live every day with smiles.

During World War II, not only Japan which had the atomic bomb droppings but also many other countries in the world must have had enormous damage, and the people of those countries also had many emotional damages.

I was very happy that I could spend time with my friends on August 6th last year. I can have enough of the materials that the people during the war couldn't. I can also have meals with my family every day. All these ordinary things in my life are because of the people who were trying to rebuild Japan with a strong mind even though they were traumatized in a frightful situation after the war.

We might not be able to do anything special, but we should remember that wars are unprofitable and shouldn't occur again even if there are reasons. We also should pass down what happened during the war in order not to make "August 6th" the day of misery. I thought and felt that we, as the people born in these peaceful times, should make a world without people who become sad in wars.

Learning and Delivering Words

Ashitaka Junior High School 3rd Grade

Momoka Yagi

Have you ever thought what we can do to make the world peaceful? I think most of you would have answers like, "All wars should be eliminated." I also think that it can be the first step towards world peace. On the other hand, I also understand it is very difficult to understand each other. However, if we don't understand each other, sad and cruel wars will occur again.

In summer of 1945, atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II. The damage Hiroshima received was enormous.

Little Boy, the atomic bomb dropped in Hiroshima, was the first nuclear weapons to be used on people. The temperature at the time of the atomic bomb went off reached thousands degree. Black rain containing radiation came down after bombing. Radiation goes deep inside of the human body and destroys its cells. It causes serious damage. Those damages occur not only right after being bombed, but also after several years. They are very scary. I felt strong anger because many people who were not related to the war were involved by that atomic bomb dropping.

I have been interested in atomic bombs since I was an elementary school student. So, I decided to visit the Atomic Bomb Dome in Hiroshima during the first summer of junior high school. The Atomic Bomb Dome is carefully preserved as a symbol of sadness and a wish for peace. I also visited the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and looked at some pictures taken shortly after the atomic bombing. I felt the fears of the war from those pictures. It was too scary for me to imagine what happened in that scary mushroom cloud. The people during the war suffered, felt fear, and hated the war. They didn't know when bombs would be dropped on them.

I found and visited "the war exhibition" held in Shimizu Town during this summer. There were photograph panels which told us the misery of the atomic bomb droppings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and showed remnants of victims such as wallets, bags, and so on which were donated by the town people. I felt so much pain when I looked at those many photograph panels. The picture of a boy whose back got burned and who suffered for 1 year and 9 months. The story of another boy who got burned and groaned, "Water, water..." as he was dying. People died after the atomic bomb without seeing or talking with their families. These things were beyond my imagination. When I thought that many people lost important people, I strongly felt, "We should never make this same mistake again." I also thought that the countries having wars now should stop them, and all people in the world should live peacefully.

What can we do to make our wish for peace come true? I think that "learning" the about fears of war and "delivering words" that wars don't have any benefits are necessary. When this idea is spread to people in the world, I think there will be more people who hope, "All wars will be eliminated from the world." I believe that the world will have no wars someday after we spread this idea.

Peace for me is that there is no war, every country helps each other, and all people in the world are happy and have gentle spirits that care for others. I think everyone in the world has a right to live peacefully. I don't want anyone to experience the deep sadness and regret caused by war.

It is impossible to change what happened in the past. Why don't you listen to the people who are trying to tell their stories with courage? I think it is important for us to learn these stories and pass them down to the next generation.

Wars Will Not Make Anything

Ashitaka Junior High School 3rd Grade

Asuka Watanabe

One day, I heard a poem. It was written by Rinko Sagara who was a 3rd grader in junior high school like me, and its title is "I Am Alive." I had thought wars were bad things, and peace was a good thing in a vague way until then. However, I felt my idea was very flimsy after I read this poem. At the same time, I felt like something as heavy as lead dropped into my mind. I thought that the fear and misery of war and the value of life could not be described in one or two words.

My grandmother experienced the war. I asked her, "Was it a hard time during the war?" She answered smiling, "I wasn't scared of it. I don't remember well about the war." She didn't tell me a lot about the war. I thought the reason she didn't talk about it was because I was an elementary school student. However, when I became a junior high school student, I suspected she might not want to remember the war. When I thought this, I felt a dull pain in my mind. Although there wasn't a serious battle, like the Battle of Okinawa in Numazu, it also received many bombings during the war. People evacuated to air-raid shelters every time they heard a siren signaling that the enemy's planes were flying over. They had to listen to the eerie sounds of planes' engines and loud blasts from buildings being destroyed by bombs. Listening to those sounds happen nearby must have been unbearable fears.

Since my grandmother didn't tell me much, I had a chance to read essays about the war in Numazu which were researched and written by my older sister. Numazu's situation was more miserable than I expected. At the time the Bombing of Numazu occurred in July 1945, the air-raids had started at midnight. The town of Numazu was completely burnt down by enormous numbers of fire bombs. Mt. Kanuki was burnt red, and the bridge over Kano River was burnt down. The fire bombs were dropped on the beautiful pine forests of Senbon Matsubara without any hesitation. There were many holes on the beach. Almost 300 people died and lost their houses. My grandmother escaped through this hellish sea of fire while holding a few of belongings

on her back. I don't think that a 10-year-old child could keep calm in that situation.

"It was just because times were different then." She lost her house and school where she spent time innocently. Reading and being impressed by books, studying hard, and having fun with her friends were also taken away. How did she feel when she saw everything being burnt while escaping? If I saw the same scene from Mt. Ashitaka... I couldn't imagine it.

Wars and foolish acts can ruin everything. "Everyone was alive. Everyone was alive like me. Everyone was trying hard to be alive." I strongly agreed with it. We don't need wars which destroy ordinary lives and brilliant futures.

I was shocked by the essay written by my sister. "One bomb was dropped near my grandmother's house. As a result, one of her classmates died in front of her."

I realized the misery of the war through poetry. My grandmother who didn't tell me a lot about the war left many books and written materials. It was a hard and sad time for her, so she might have wanted to seal off those memories. However, I felt her silent message that she didn't want us to forget this time. As well as this message, the calm days and unchanging streetscape of Numazu have taught me the importance of peace.

Constant Drips Eventually Make a Hole in Stone

Hara Junior High School 1st Grade

Hayato Fujiwara

I have a great grandmother who is 89 years old. When I was a 6th grader in elementary school, I interviewed her and wrote a report called, "12 Years Old in the Present and the Past." It was the first time I thought seriously about the war. Until then, I had never thought of "peace." When I watched the news about the war or other affairs, I thought they occurred in a different world and didn't relate to me.

However, my idea completely changed after I listened to the story of my great grandmother. The war had occurred in Japan. It was not something that only happened on TV. It was something that happened in real life.

Now, we can have three meals every day, and each meal is enough. We have an abundance of food. However, Japan had applied a food rationing system during the war. People could only have a small amount of food which couldn't keep them satisfied. They ate everything they could find such as crawfish and claims from rivers, and even weeds on the street.

School life during the war was also different. Studying English was forbidden. Students learned how to use triangular bandages and treat wounds. Boys were trained to be able to use swords and guns. Girls were trained to use bamboo spears. Women and children were also counted as "Japanese soldiers" to fight against enemies under the flag of "universal conscription" in preparation for battles in the mainland. My great grandmother told me, "I don't want my great grandchildren do such things." I can't forget her sad face when she said it.

I was also impressed with the story of the ammunition factory. She cut side panels of anti-aircraft guns by using a slice blade. She worked in the dim place where there was no sunshine in the factory. She already was malnourished. Beside that, she got scurvy and inflammation of the gums, so she had to be hospitalized. I was speechless when I learned she experienced this when she was the same age as me.

The war ended after Japan's unconditional surrender after the dropping of the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. It has been 73 years since then. The number of people who experienced the war is growing smaller, so I am lucky I could hear the story of the war from my great grandmother.

After the war, Japan underwent significant reconstruction and became a peaceful country. However, there are still wars in the world. There were the Gulf War and the Iraq War. National conflicts in Syria and Ukraine are continuing. I think many innocent and weak people like children and old people become victims in those countries. I also

think that Japan is fearful of wars that might happen due to the forces of other countries.

Is it impossible for all people in the world to get along with each other and live peacefully without any wars and conflicts? I think it would be possible if each of us had gentle minds to others and did things with care for others. Is my idea far from reality? I can have a peaceful and fulfilled life so far. I think my family and friends also have good lives. I think those lives will make "peace."

There is a proverb, "Constant drips make a hole in the stone finally." I believe that even small efforts can make good achievements with persistence. I would like to do things that I can do now in order to build a peaceful future.

Wishing That Peace Will Be Ordinary

Hara Junior High School 2nd Grade

Kokoro Kubota

It was when I was in lower elementary school. When I went to the toy hospital to fix my toys, I saw pictures of Vietnam. They weren't pictures of beautiful views of the country. They were pictures of people who were damaged during the Vietnam War. There were people who were injured by Agent Orange, which was sprayed by the American military. Because of Agent Orange, some people had their hands around their legs, and others lost fingers. 5 years since have passed I saw them. However, I still remembered them well. It means that those pictures shocked me a lot at that time.

I think wars are things that we must not do. Nobody likes to have wars. Not only the Vietnam Wars, there are also many people who are suffering from them in the world even though I don't know all of them. Many people disagree with having wars. However, there are still some countries that have them. It means that peace in Japan may not be an ordinary thing that would last forever.

On August 6th, we can see people who are praying silently all over Japan on TV. Everyone wishes for peace for the people who died in the atomic bomb of Hiroshima and have suffered since they got damaged. I think there are also people who remember the memory of the war. According to my grandmother, her grandfather was also damaged in the war. He lost his legs under the knees because they were caught in the machine at the ammunition factory. He couldn't have nice artificial legs or a wheel chair which are ordinary things in the present. His family had a hard time even though his life was saved. My grandmother's mother lived in Tokyo. She evacuated to Numazu where people she knew lived. My grandfather's father was taken to the war. His mother had a hard time protecting her family. I found that my ancestors also had a difficult time although they didn't experience atomic bombings.

Last year, I had a chance to learn about peace at school. I listened to a lecture about the war and watched the movie, "Barefoot Gen." I'm going to visit Hiroshima next year for a school trip. I think it might be more beneficial to visit the places which were damaged than just listening or studying about the war because I can then learn more. The Atomic Bomb Dome remains will scare me because it remains as it was, 73 years ago. However, I'm going to accept the facts of people's sufferings or difficulties during the war.

When I thought of the war like this, I realized how happy my life was. At some point, I started to take it for granted. I might envy others or become frustrated at small matters. I sometimes forget to appreciate that I could live in this peaceful time. A short time ago, the world felt tension that America and North Korea might have a war. If it happened, everything we have would disappear, and we would regret our selfishness such as waiting to sleep longer in the morning, or not waiting want to eat food that we didn't like.

I haven't decided what I want to do in future, and I don't know what I can do for peace because it is too difficult to find those answers. The only thing I can do is to

become a person who considers everything around me as a gift and appreciate every small matter. There are many people who have jobs related to medical care around me. I've been interested in becoming a nurse since I was an elementary school student. I would like to be valuable to others and help them. Jobs related to medical care may not reach to peace directly, but I still want to have that kind of a job. Things that each of us can do aren't very big. However, wars can be eliminated if all people have the same feelings. It is not easy to understand each other because everyone has different religions, colors of skin, and ways of thinking. However, I would like to recognize ordinary happiness in order to make peace become a norm for all.

Visiting Nagasaki

Hara Junior High School 2nd Grade Kazutoshi Takahashi

Nagasaki. There are many world heritages, so it is a popular place to visit. It is also the place of the atomic bomb dropping after Hiroshima.

I went to Nagasaki during this past summer vacation. Streetcars were running in the town, and many people were coming and going. I couldn't believe that this was the place where the atomic bomb was dropped because many people in the town were smiling.

After I got off a streetcar, I started to walk. After a while, I found the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum which was a big, brown and big building. I became nervous a little. When I went into the exhibit room, I found many pictures of the town of Nagasaki and children before the atomic bombing. I felt more pain when I thought of what happened afterward. There were also replicas of "the wall clock that stopped at 11:02" and "the water tank from Keiho junior high school." The water tank was made from iron, but its frame was buckled and collapsed. It made me understand how strong the destruction the atomic bomb was.

I went further and found the model of "Fat Man" which was the atomic bomb dropped in Nagasaki. Its length was about 3m. I felt goose bumps from the fear when I noticed that such a small atomic bomb could take approximately 70,000 lives away in a moment. Its force couldn't be compared to other air-raids that I'd learned before.

There were also bombed tiles. I thought, "Even these tiles were blown by the blast." However, it was wrong. When I got closer and looked at them, I found bubbling patterns on them. Their surfaces were boiled by direct heat waves, and these patterns remained. I saw the deadly heat waves which was beyond my expectation with my own eyes. It was terrible to imagined, "What would happen when people were exposed to the heat waves."

I also found one picture nearby. It was debris which was squashed by a rotor. Suddenly, I noticed some things and looked away from them. There were many burnt dead bodies on the ground. I couldn't distinguish who they were. It was hard to say if they were men or women. There were also burnt bodies of mothers and children. I could see her facial expression even though it was completely burnt. She opened her eyes and glanced over here. It looked like she was trying to say something. I felt that she made an appeal that we should never had the atomic bomb and the war. I wondered if this child had a dream. If so, the dreams and hopes were taken away with its life in a moment.

At last in the exhibit room, I listened to the story from people who experienced the atomic bomb. When I heard the story of "I was very thirsty" and "My sister was crushed under the house," I thought each story was still clear and specific and felt like I slipped back in time. They could still talk like this even though it had been a long time since the end of the war. It proved to me how terrible the atomic bomb was. "Was it necessary to do this?" This question stuck in my mind. There were approximately 74,000 people who died in the atomic bomb. There were also people who were still

suffering from the after effects of it. Some people said that the atomic bomb was necessary to end the war. However, I think the atomic bomb shouldn't have been dropped. Nobody would be happy about it. Wars produce sadness and deprive smiles and lives from people. We can say that Wars cause death. There are many nuclear weapons in the world today. These nuclear weapons are held to protect and frighten other countries. To protect people's lives, smiles, families, and peace, Japan should tell the horrors of nuclear warfare and try to make the world conventionalized as the only nation in the world to be bombed with the atomic bombs.

After I left the museum, I visited the Peace Park. Half a century has passed from that day. Bomb-survivors are getting old and are rapidly disappearing. That is why I who learned about the war should tell the misery of warfare, fear of the atomic bomb, and importance of peace. Peace cannot be created by only one person. However, everyone's wish will make peace. I want a world without nuclear weapons and wars as soon as possible. It was the last summer of Heisei. I wished for peace in front of the statue in the Peace Park.

Smile

Hara Junior High School 3rd Grade

Mana Yamamoto

A picture of a person who had an injury on his face. A picture of a person who lost a leg. A picture of lunch in a lunchbox which was completely burnt. I went to the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum when I was in the 2nd grade of elementary school. At that time, I saw many of those pictures. I still remembered that I became speechless and stood rooted at that spot because the pictures were very painful too see. I thought, "We should never have such terrible things again" at that time even though I was only a 2nd grader. After several years, I became a 6th grade student of the elementary school. It had been 73 years since the end of the war. During a summer vacation of that year, I listened to the story of the war from an old woman. She was my relative and lived next to my house. According to her, there was no massive destruction here like the Kanto area had. I told her, "It means that people who lived in Shizuoka lived normally like before the war." She didn't say anything for a while. I was wondering and tried to look at her face. However, she didn't want to be looked at and started to speak, "It was impossible for us to live life like we did before the war. We thought it might have been tomorrow that Shizuoka would get bombed by air-raids. If it did, I might have died. Everyone always thought like this and was afraid of it every day. Everyone tried hard to live in the moment. So, nobody kept smiling." She talked about the war. I thought her face looked sad. Her voice was quavering. She may have been fighting to keep from crying. After a silence of some minutes, she started to say, "Mana, that is why we should never have wars. We should not make more people sad, while looking straight into my eyes. Her voice was very gentle. Maybe, I should have said, "I understand" or "Yes" to her. However, I couldn't speak. My voice couldn't come out, so an instead of speaking, I nodded strongly while looking straight into her eyes.

Japan in recent years is peaceful. I think it is a good thing. However, there are many people who don't understand the weight of people's death because it is too peaceful. Some of them post words like, "I want someone to die" on the internet, despite the fact that were people who died even though they didn't want to. I think many people in the present post some wrong words on the internet because they don't know much about the war. The number of people who experienced it are decreasing recently. I think we should listen to their stories at least once before we can't anymore. As a result, I think people will not post such hurtful words to others. They will think about wars again. I hope their answers will be "We should never have wars again." I think the number of

smiling people will increase, too. That is genuine "peace."

I hope all people on the earth will smile.

Scars Left By the War

Ukishima Junior High School 3rd Grade

iri Warashina

One day, I studied about the war at school. I studied about World War II in my social studies class and learned poetry about the atomic bomb in my Japanese class. I understood well that the war was terrible.

After what I learned in those two classes, I thought would like to know more about the war. So, I searched the atomic bombs on the Internet. I noticed one picture which shocked me a lot. It was a burnt dead body. It looked like a doll made with mud, and wasn't an adult, it but a child. I couldn't believe it really happened in Japan. It was very cruel and heartless. The only thing I could do was be surprised. I imagined what it would be like if the person in the picture could have lived longer.

I read some poem about the atomic bomb in my Japanese class. When I understood it, I was impressed by the writer's feelings and wishes. Its title was "Greeting," written by Rin Ishigaki. When I read it for the first time, I thought it was about losing a friend. As we read it more and more in the class, I was starting to understand the weight of the poetry and Rin Ishigaki's wish. The poetry told us that we felt safety even though there were hundreds of atomic bombs on the earth, and those atomic bombs have the potential to be used. Rin Ishigaki sent a message such as we should have a sense of crisis making sure not to forget the fear of wars and atomic bombs. Atomic bombs will hurt not only people's bodies but also their minds.

I thought twice of the necessity of the war, and still don't think it was a good thing. The atomic bombs took the hopes and dreams away from innocent people like the elderly, women, and children, hurt their bodies and minds. However, there are some people who said we needed the atomic bombs to finish the war. I don't understand that idea because those women and children could have had dreams, hopes, and happy lives if they weren't damaged by the bombs. It shouldn't be OK to victimize many who lives in order to finish a war. It is not necessary for people to kill each other. I found that wars had, not only fears and frightfulness, destructive force which was enough to destroy people's minds. I decided to live with a sense of crisis, without inattention. I hope there will be no nuclear weapons in the world in the future.

Thinking on the Anniversary of the End of the War

Imazawa Junior High School 1st Grade

Kakeru Akao

August 15th is the anniversary of the end of the war. I prayed silently at noon. I thought, "This is long. It's not over yet," while praying because I didn't know much about the war. Soon after I thought this, "It was over." That is why I decided to think about the war.

When I was in the 5th grade, two years ago, I went to the exhibition of the war which was held at Fuji Rose Theatre with my mother and older sister. There were photograph panels explaining the air-raids in Fuji and Numazu, a fire bomb which was dropped for real, and a backpack with holes. One old man who was a volunteer guide told me about the war in Numazu and Fuji. I heard many people died in Numazu. I was surprised that much damage occurred in Numazu, too. I had already known that Japan

had the war, and the atomic bombs were dropped in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I learned that in my textbooks. However, I had never thought of the war in the area which was familiar to me. I thought I was lucky that I wasn't born during the war.

I sometimes see news about a war which was held in some other countries on TV. There were children who were the same age as me. They held guns to fight, got seriously injuries, or lost their parents. How did they feel? I didn't find any answers, so I asked my mother. She suggested I watch the movie, "Grave of the Fireflies."

I watched it for one and a half hours, and it was breathtaking.

In the movie, one older brother tried hard to live in the time of the war while protecting his younger sister. Their house was burnt by an air-raid. They didn't have any food. Their parents died. Everything was hard for me to imagine. I have never experienced not having anything to eat. I have never been unable to take a bath or sleep in a futon. My daily life during summer vacation was lying down on the sofa in the air-conditioned room to avoid heatstroke and playing video games all day. I thought it was my ordinary life, but people couldn't do it during the war. I had never thought that I was living for my life even though I lived every day. I had never thought that tomorrow might not come. I didn't like to wake up in the morning and study every day. I complained about meals if there were some dishes that I didn't like. I lived in this peaceful world without any doubts. I realized they were very happy things.

I hope this peaceful life that I have now will come to countries which have wars. I also think that wars are wrong.

I will think of the war on the anniversary of its end and the importance of life while praying silently, wishing that this peaceful world will continue forever.

Today Is August 15th

Imazawa Junior High School 1st Grade Satsuki Tanikawa

73 years has passed since the end of the war. My grandfather was born during the war, and he will become 73 years old. He told me about the time of the war when I asked him.

My grandfather was born in Numazu in 1944. It was right after he was born, July 17th, 1945, when the Bombing of Numazu in World War II occurred. My mother had asked my great grandmother who isn't alive anymore, about the time when she was a child, so she told me about it. My great grandmother escaped into a rice field which was filled with water while holding my grandfather on her back. Since they were soaked in the water for a long time, his feet went wrinkly. My mother also told me about my great-grandfather who also isn't alive anymore. He experienced the war, so my mother asked him to tell her about it. However, he had never talked about it until he died. She found a picture of him wearing a military uniform.

My grandfather introduced me to one TV program while I was asking him about the war. The TV program introduced the history of the war orphans after the war. The many orphans just now become able to talk about the war. I was drawn into the story and cried when I saw the sad scenes. The story of their parents dying and receiving discrimination and violence at places where they were fostered were unbelievable for me. I was shocked at by those stories. The story that I was affected the most by was that one of those orphans committed suicide. One orphan lost the sight in his right eye. He lost his friend, another orphan who often rubbed his back, by jumping into a railroad to commit suicide. He cried when he remembered it. I also cried in sympathy. I felt very sorry that he had to remember it and tell such a hard story. When I understood how he felt, I also understood why my great-grandfather didn't talk about the war. He also had a hard time like the man on TV. I can't say how he exactly felt because I don't have the same experiences. I think his experience was so hard that he couldn't talk anything about it.

For writing this essay, I researched and looked up the war and listened to the stories from people who experienced it. I think it was a good chance for me to know about the war in a way that I didn't know or had heard about before. My mother told me that our generation might be the last one who can listen to the valuable stories from our grandparents who experienced the war. So, I decided to listen and know more about the war in order not to forget about it. I also decided that we should pass them down to the next generation.

When I heard the fact that my grandfather was born during the war, I felt it was close to me. There are some countries having wars in the world even though Japan doesn't have one now. Those countries look far away, but wars occur for real. Wars will take people's happiness. Many people could have lived happily if the war didn't happen. I realized these things while I was writing the essay. Today is August 15th. I'd like to grow up while thinking of the war.

It Was Good for You To Come Back Alive, Wasn't It?

Imazawa Junior High School 3rd Grade

Mao Ike

"Hurry up! We're leaving now."

A Buddhist monk comes to my house to give Buddhist scriptures at the time of Bon every year. My family goes back and forth between my house and my mother's parents' house, which is nearby, and listens to the Buddhist scriptures.

I listened to the Buddhist scriptures while looking at the monk's back and caring about the numbness in my feet just like every year. While I was listening, I noticed the name, "Eisaku Sato" on the award certificate which was on the wall.

It was the name I learned about in my history class. There was an old picture of a young man wearing a sailor suit next to the award certificate.

I knew the picture was there and looked at it every year. However, I wanted to know about it more this year. After the monk left, I asked my grandfather about it. The young man in the picture was my great-grandfather's youngest brother. His name was Tadao, which was written in the award certificate. My grandfather didn't know much about him, though. My mother used to hear about him from my great-grandfather when she was a child. According to her, Tadao was a member of the navy. He died somewhere in the ocean, and his family didn't get his body. He was the same age as my great-grandmother and a very gentle and calm person. Soon after my great-grandparents got married, Tadao went to the war. He died in the ocean, and his death was known to his family by just a letter.

I wondered how my great-grandfather felt when he heard of his brother's death, because it was the time that people believed it was a good thing to die for the country. My great-grandfather could be alive even though he lost his youngest brother. My great-grandfather also went to the war. He was a member of the army and stayed in Malaysia and Manchuria. His leg was injured by a gun bullet. His injury was not so serious, but he lost his eyesight by being involved in a fight which occurred at the hospital that he was. Once he was in critical condition, but he was able to recover. After that, he was allowed to go back to Japan.

I've never met my great-grandfather. I only know his face because of a picture of him wearing glasses and smiling. He didn't look like he was in the war and fought. My mother told me that he showed her his scar from being hit by a gun during summer when he wore short pants. One of his eyes was artificial.

How was my great-grandfather's life through Taisho to Heisei? He couldn't dedicate his life to the country and lived with his family after the war. The brother who died for the country and himself who couldn't fight until the end...

If I were in the same situation now, would want to come back alive by all means and spend time with my family. I would like to ask my great-grandfather, "Wasn't it good

for you to come back alive?"

Eisaku Sato, the Prime Minister in Showa, declared "Three Non-Nuclear Principles." Okinawa was returned to Japan. Japan took steps toward peace. How do we learn about the steps to future? We study history. It might be for learning what we shouldn't do again and forget. Wars take not only lots of lives but also their minds.

The reason why I feel this way this year is because I've studied history. The old picture I hadn't noticed for a long time also made me feel this way. I would like to feel peace and appreciate the people who lived during the war every summer. I feel that I have an obligation to time where create a people never do wrong. I should study to recognize wrong things. I would like to use summer to appreciate peace and many lives next year, too.

Our Mission

Kadoike Junior High School 1st Grade Ryoutaro Uchimura

I traveled to Hiroshima with my family during summer vacation when I was in the 3rd grade. When I saw the town of Hiroshima for the first time, I thought, "I can't believe that the atomic bomb was dropped in such beautiful town."

I visited Hiroshima Memorial Peace Park. There was a museum, and it had an enormous number of remains and pictures. The pictures looked painful. Some pictures showed burnt dead bodies from being bombed, and other pictures showed people who got burnt over their entire bodies, and their skins were seriously blistered. There were also burnt lunch boxes and canteens, wooden clogs which had the shadows of feet on them, and raggedly teared clothes next to those pictures. I became depressed when I looked at those things because I thought that the people who owned them definitely wanted to live more.

The remains that I was most impressed by were Sadako's paper cranes. Those paper cranes were folded with colorful papers, and some of them were very small so that they could be held on a finger. Those small ones were folded with a needle.

Since we decided to go to Hiroshima, I read many books about the war and the atomic bombs. The book that I was interested in most was about the story of Sadako's paper cranes. She was bombed when she was 2 years old and died when she was 12 years old. I had often pictured how the Atomic Bomb Dome and Children's Peace Monument looked like because they were often described in the book. I wanted to see them with my eyes. The Children's Peace Monument was built by Sadako's friends when she died from A-bomb disease. Sadako had folded paper cranes believing that she could recover from her disease when she was hospitalized. I felt her thoughts like believing she could recover after folding a thousand paper cranes also wanted to recover and go home when I saw each paper crane.

When I saw The Children's Peace Monument with my eyes, I felt sad and thought about how the war was terrible. Since many people died in the war, I think we should never have any wars again. Traveling to Hiroshima became a trigger for me want to know and learn more about the war.

I participated in the tour for parents and children to visit and look at the traces of the war in Numazu during the summer of 5th and 6th grade. I participated in it because I knew that Numazu, where I live now, was also damaged by air-raids. I visited more than 10 places and looked at many traces of the war, such as the bombed trace on Onari bridge, the air-raid shelters, the evacuation facility for students, the site of the research institution for the development of naval technologies and engineering, and so on. The site of the research institution for the development of naval technologies and engineering especially impressed me. It was in Tabi, and its underground factory was very dark, so we couldn't go forward without flashlights and it was very cool although it was summer. The factory site was in the cave in order to avoid damage from the air-

raids. Its space was very large more than we expected from the outside. According to our guide, Numazu was on the way for planes to drop bombs in Tokyo. They dropped bombs that they couldn't drop at Tokyo on the way back. That is why Numazu was called, "a trash can of bombs." I was frustrated when I learned this. The people who lived in Numazu at that time definitely felt horrible. Many lives must have been taken away. I realized the misery of the war again.

We should never forget August in 1945. I decided to pray in silence on August 6th, 9th, and 15th every year. I would like to attend the memorial service for the war dead as much as possible on the anniversary of the end of the war. I will seriously think of the scars of the war and pray for the war dead and peace. At the same time, I would like to be more interested in the world daily and study the reasons why the world still has wars. I will think of what we should do in order not to have wars again.

The Pen is Mightier Than the Sword

Kadoike Junior High School 1st Grade

Yuu Kawaguchi

I decided to read a book, "Why Do We Go to School?" to think of peace.

This book begins with a speech at the United Nations by Malala Yousafzai who was a student in Pakistan and advocated for the right for girls to be educated. Her words, "I was shot in my head by them because I said I wanted to go to school" shocked me a lot. "Them" was the Taliban, an antigovernment armed group in Pakistan. The group occupied Swat, Pakistan which was Malala's hometown and forbade girls to go to school for the group's benefit. I didn't understand why forbidding girls to go to school would make any benefits for the group.

However, I understood a little after reading the book and understanding some hints in the proverb, "The pen is mightier than the sword."

"Pen" means words. If you say something appropriately, people will listen to you. They will agree with you. According to the book, Malala said, "The voice will never disappear. That is why each of us stand up and speak. We should speak out to change the world. We need schools and education to change." I'm sure that it is important for us to speak about our own feelings and ideas. I started to think of the relationship between education and peace, and its value.

In India, many poor children have to work instead of going to schools. In Nigeria, armed groups insist that, "Education isn't necessary for children" and destroyed many schools and killed teachers and students. In Afghanistan, girls are forced to get married when they are very young and do work around the house instead of going to school.

In Japan, children have the right to be educated. Going up to junior high school is compulsory education, so adults have to let their children go to school. That is why we, the children in Japan, go to school and study various kinds of subjects.

On the other hand, there are many children who can't go to school even though they want to go. Approximately 15% of children in developing countries cannot go to elementary school. Only 50% of children can go to junior high school in those countries. Those children might think, "I want to go to school and play with friends. I want to be able to read books and write words. I want to be able to calculate." Children cannot choose the countries or parents they are born to. It was just coincidence for me to be born in peaceful Japan. Since I'm living in a peaceful country, I can't believe that there are people who are living in fear because they are being occupied by armed groups in the world.

The book taught me the present situation of the world and made me think a lot. I understand the problems are very difficult. However, I decided to do things I can do to make all people in the world live in peace, safety, security, and happiness. "The pen is mightier than the sword." The world can be changed little by little by speaking out our thoughts.

We Should Not Forget

Kadoike Junior High School 2nd Grade

Riho Kodaira

It was the 73rd August 15th after the end of the war. Today was the last anniversary of the end of the war in Heisei. I watched the ceremonies which were held in every region of Japan on TV. Many families of the war dead were attending and praying there. There had been an issue, that aging families would decrease the people attending the ceremonies every year. I watched absently as the old people spoke, "We should never forget the memory of the war" and "I like to pass down the fear of the war and painful memories to my grandchildren and great grandchildren." Both my parents and I know a time without wars, so we don't think about the war unless we have a chance like this.

However, something has changed my mind. It was several days after August 15th. I visited my grandparents in Kawane because I didn't have a chance to visit them on the day of Bon. The grave of my ancestor was within walking distance. When I visited the grave, I noticed the names and ages that were carved on the grave. "Katsutoshi, 1 year old" and "Kiyoko, 3 years old." Why did they die at such a young age? I asked this question to my grandmother.

During the war, my grandmother and her family moved to Manchuria to build a village with the people who lived in the same community. Katsutoshi and Kiyoko were born there. However, they got sick under the serious conditions of life in Manchuria. They didn't have neither doctors or medicine. Besides that, they couldn't get enough nutrition. So, they died one after the other.

I couldn't believe that my grandmother had a brother and a sister who died at such a young age. Both people who could live only 1 or 3 years without going back to Japan and who had to live even though they lost their children, must have had indescribable pain. After they came back to Japan, they still had a hard time. They had to cut through a mountain to make a place for their house. My grandmother was often told how sad and painful was to have lost her own children by her mother.

I learned that people who are close to me also had a hard time during the war from this story. I also realized how my life is filled with happiness. I can have enough delicious food. I can study at school. I can laugh by talking with my friends. All of these things are ordinary for me, but Katsutoshi and Kiyoko couldn't do them. I decided to live for them by appreciating my life and others' lives. As the old people on TV mentioned, it will be our role in the future to pass down the fear of the war and the thoughts of the people who experienced the war.

For the chorus contest at the school festival, my class will sing, "The Bell of HEIWA." It has a strong message, we will never make the same mistake as the war again. There are lyrics which remind us about the war, such as, "a shot ran out and the ocean and the earth were shattered." We can read about the pain of losing precious places and lives from this part.

The song also has a part that encourages and cheers us such as, "open your fist and hold your minds to become one." Through my school life, I sometimes think that it is hard to understand each other because each of us have different ideas and opinions. Even so, we try to accept others' values and work together. I think it can be the first little step towards peace.

Unfortunately, some countries and regions still have situations where one war causes another war. That is why I think all people in the world have to think about what they can do and work together towards peace. As a result, the world can be wonderful. We shouldn't think that wars occur in countries faraway. It is important for each of us to think about what we can do to reach a happy future. I would like to start with being fair to others and acting with care.

Feeling Happiness

Nagaisaki Junior High School 2nd Grade

Ryu Kaise

"Are you happy, Ryu?"

My mother suddenly asked me. It was an easy question, but I couldn't clearly answer. That is because I didn't feel happiness in my daily life.

The moments when I feel happiness are when I win a game of baseball and when I get a present. If I laugh and tell funny stories with someone, I would feel "happiness." This has become my "ordinary" life in my 14 years.

At present Japan is one of the safest countries in the world. Of course, we wouldn't fear war. So, we Japanese people can relax every day.

However, Japan was different 73 years ago. Japan had had many wars such as World War II, Japanese-Sino War, Japanese-Russo War, Sino-Japanese War, and so on for a long time. In World War II when the atomic bombs were dropped in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, many Japanese people became soldiers and lost their lives. There were also many people who had hard lives even though they didn't fight in the war.

I learned about difficulties during the war from the movie, "Grave of the Fireflies." The scene that impressed me most was when the little sister of the main character was very delighted by one candy. People would think, "It was only a candy. Why?" in the present Japan. However, I understood that people didn't have food during the war. In the movie, the amount of rice for one meal was very little, so they had rice porridge with a lot of water and weeds. We, in the present, can eat delicious meals like hamburger steaks or deep-fried foods until we become satisfied. This didn't happen during the war. I think we should know that meals we can casually have every day are not "ordinary" but "happiness."

The Japanese High School Baseball Championship, called "Koshien," had its 100th tournament this year. Since I play baseball, I watched and was excited by fine plays by many high school students each day. World War II also had a huge effect on this Koshien at that time.

For playing baseball, we use English words like "strike" and "out." We can use these words naturally now. However, they were prohibited to use during the war because the enemies were America and England. English was considered the language of the enemies, so it was prohibited. For example, "strike" was changed to "Yoshi, ippon" and "out" was changed to "Hike." All English words were changed to Japanese.

During the war, people couldn't even play sports freely. I was very shocked when I learned that the war had influenced sports, which I thought were unrelated to the war, too. Playing sports peacefully now is definitely not an ordinary thing. We can do it because people are keeping the world peaceful.

Since the present is peaceful, things we once did "happily" became things we do "ordinarily." However, having an ordinary life and living ordinarily is happy enough. Things people couldn't do 73 years ago when Japan and America were at war became things we can do freely. I think it is our mission to appreciate our lives and do our best at everything for the people who died in the war. There are many people who complain, "It's troublesome," or "I have had no motivation," towards club activities or studying. We shouldn't have that war which involved unrelated people, towns, and things. I think if everyone in the world could say, "I'm happy," about their own life without any discouragement, it would be genuine world peace.

Thinking About Peace

Secondary School of
Numazu-Ichiritsu Numazu 3rd Grade
High School

Kami Kawahara

I went to Hiroshima in October for a school trip. I thought I need to think about peace.

I had a chance to learn about life during the war in the class at school. During the war, it was said, "Being extravagant is the enemy." People during the war had hard lives. They couldn't eat enough food or buy things. Despite having hard lives, fathers and brothers got draft cards to make them go to war for the country. There were many families in that situation, and many of them lost their family member.

When I heard this story, I thought we should never have war again. It is because wars are cruel things which take people's lives away. If I were alive during the war, I don't think I would have been able to survive. I think we can now live lavishly because the people in the past.

However, there are many countries still having wars. There are also countries developing nuclear weapons or firing missiles. So, the present world is not completely peaceful.

My great-grandfather didn't fight in the war. He worked for a laboratory to make submarine boats to use in the war. As a member of his family, I'm happy that he didn't go to war. On the other hand, I have mixed feeling about the fact that he made weapons for the war.

Many people's lives could have been taken away in a moment by submarine boats that my great-grandfather made, or by nuclear weapons and missiles that many countries are developing now. It is unbelievable in the present Japan that there were weapons or strategies that turned people into weapons like human torpedo or suicide attack.

I used to visit Yokaren Peace Memorial Museum in Gifu. I learned about the daily lives of boys who were trying to be the navy pilots and their thoughts about the war. I read a letter written by one of the suicide attackers. He wrote it to his mother to tell her his appreciation before going into battle. In the letter, he wrote he was glad and proud of himself to be chosen as one of the suicide attackers. However, I thought that was not his real feeling. I couldn't think of anything harder than this. At this museum, there were some clothes that the suicide attackers wore. I noticed that there was a picture of his family and a good luck charm that was given to him by his family in the jacket's small pocket. His family gave him the lucky charm, although they knew that he would not come back again. He also understood he was going to die, so he took his family picture with him because he wanted to feel like he was with his family. When I imagined their feelings, I was filled with sadness and my chest felt tight.

Young people in the present cannot imagine these things because they were things that happened in an unknown world. Even so, I think we should never forget about the war. I want as many people as possible to think of the war.

Things We Can Do As The People Living in The Only Nation To Be Hit By Atomic Bombs

Gyosyu Junior High School 2nd Grade

Kanako Seki

8:15 in the morning on August 6th, 1945, happy daily lives turned into an inferno in a moment. The atomic bomb was dropped in Hiroshima.

I visited the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum when I was in the 6th grade of elementary school. There was a burnt lunch box that we couldn't know what was inside, a girl's dress which had blood stains and was in shreds, the mannequins of a parent and child whose skins were hanging, and other mannequins walking in the blazing town with empty eyes. I was very shocked when I saw them.

I listened to the story of a person who experienced the atomic bomb at the museum. When the atomic bomb was dropped in Hiroshima, there were many people who died straight away, who lost their arms or legs, or whose skins were peeled from burning. Those people said, "Give me water, give me water," and dived into a river for water. The person who told me this experience said that the person could only try to go home while looking at those people. When I heard the story, I thought the person wanted to help others, but they couldn't. They might feel their own powerlessness. The thing that took the lives of people in Hiroshima was black rain. The black rain contained the enormous amount of ash, toxic chemicals, and radioactive fallout. The atomic bomb made these by products. Many people were affected by black rain. Some of them got after effects, and others died. Many people not only got injured or burned because of the blast of the atomic bomb but also died struggling with the after effects of radiation or radioactive fallout.

The people who experienced, survived, and struggled through the atomic bomb teach us the fear of the atomic bomb. I realized their toughness after I saw many things related to the atomic bomb and listened to the stories of their experiences at the museum. I also watched a movie where there were people who were younger than me at the time who said, "When I went into the shelter, there were only my neighbors, not my family," and "I looked for my parents by myself. I should have found my food by myself." I can't imagine what I could do if I lost my family and relatives. I have no idea where I would get food to live or where I would go. The people who experienced the atomic bomb might blame themselves because they could survive. Even so, they have tried to live harder for the people who died in the atomic bomb. I don't think they could have lived if they didn't have that will.

Last year, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted by the United Nations. However, Japan didn't join this treaty because we are protected by America's "nuclear umbrella." I don't think it is good that Japan, the only nation to be hit by the atomic bombs, doesn't join the treaty. Japan knows the effect and the fear of nuclear weapons most. Not only the people who experienced the atomic bomb but also those who learned about the atomic bombs should try to speak precisely about things that happened after the atomic bomb dropping on people in the world. I also think that we should join the treaty in order to inform and be recognized by the people in other countries that the treaty is necessary for us and the world.

Lastly, the first thing we can do for peace is learning more about atomic bombs. We can listen to the stories of people who experienced the atomic bomb, or we can do a signature-collecting campaign for the total destruction of nuclear weapons. We have to pass down what we learn. I decided to pass down the fear of the atomic bomb and thoughts of the people who experienced the atomic bomb to next generation.

World Peace and the Role of Japan

Gyoshu Junior High School 2nd Grade

Nanaka Hoshiya

"Is the world peaceful?" What is your answer this to question? I think that Japan is peaceful at least. Nobody in this country is woken up by the sound of guns in the morning even if you think Japan is not peaceful. While we, Japanese people, wake up with alarm clocks and have breakfast, there are many children who wake up with the sound of guns and have a hard time eating breakfast.

Now, I want you to remember one person. Do you remember the girl who received

the Nobel prize for peace in 2014? She is Malala Yousafzai who lives in Pakistan. She fought against an armed group of Islamic militants to receive an education. We, Japanese people, are different from them. All of us can receive education under the law of compulsory education. On the other hand, there many people who have the idea that women should not receive education in Pakistan. Malala stood against people who had such an idea. She could tell their situation to the world because she kept speaking out even after she got shot on her head. I think the idea that women do not need to receive education would create discrimination between men and women and conflicts it would be difficult to say the situation is peaceful.

Women should receive education. In Japan, we still have the fact that men earn more money than women because of the difference of working time. However, I think it is necessary that women have rights to work at companies and to receive education in any countries, regardless of religion. Countries will develop by letting women receive education. They will also be able to solve problems without civil wars or conflicts by improving themselves. Based on this idea, it is important to manage both study and housework in order to convince the people who think that women are enough to do housework, give birth, and do child-rearing. Managing both study and housework is essential for women to change the present inequality between men and women although it might be unfair.

I heard that there are men who do housework while having a job in many countries in Europe. If the people in Pakistan know about this European life style, what do they think about it? Would they change their concept of education? I think all children in the world should be able to receive education in order to make all countries in the world peaceful. Education improves people and develops countries. As a result, it will lead us to a world without wars and other conflicts.

Now, I want to mention the people who can't receive education, not the people who aren't allowed to receive education. There are 61,000,000 children who don't receive education in the world. Many of those children's parents prioritize work over study. Those parents don't know the benefits of receiving education because they also didn't receive education. They noticed the benefit of education is enormous if their country started the system of compulsory education, even if it was tentatively. If the period of education for children was one year longer, their income would increase about 10%. I think if those parents knew this fact, they would let their children receive education. Teaching the value of education to people is important by any method. If Japan built a school in one country and offered free lunch every day and the people in that country knew about it, they would let their children go to school immediately. Those children can acquire both nutrition standard and education. After they become adults, if that country became developed, Japan might be able to receive support or help in any ways from that country. Like in this example, the world could change significantly only if one country starts education. I think most Japanese people don't notice the benefits because we receive education as a norm. Education is the strongest weapon which can help individual, families, countries, and the world.

We can make the world more peaceful by developing Japan into a country which can help other countries that have difficulty educating children.

Bastion of Peace Built By Interaction

Gyoshu Junior High School 3rd Grade

Midori Tatematsu

We human beings are good at looking away from facts that we don't want to face in order to forget about it. That is why I can be happy every day even if something depressing happened to me. However, there is one thing we should never forget. That is The Second World War.

We can see many TV programs about the war at the beginning of August every year.

Until last year, I didn't have strong feelings after I watched those TV programs. The war brought tragedy. We should keep peace. Those things were all I thought about. I didn't blame myself that I could have only those feelings because the war occurred about 60 years ago before I was born.

I watched the video, "A Century on Film" in my class at school. My thoughts for "wars and peace" was changed. The video was about the time from the beginning to the end of World War II. It included actual video, so I wanted to look away from some of those scenes. Some of my classmates dropped their eyes. The scene I was most shocked with was a woman with her hair shaved off who sadly stared at the camera. She was surrounded by people ridiculing her. She was treated horribly by people she didn't know because her boyfriend was German. I, as the same woman, couldn't believe that she was treated like that just because her boyfriend was a foreigner. Most of my classmates said, "That's disgusting" or "I don't want to watch it any longer" after we watched this video. I also thought this as well. We didn't want to watch the many tragedies even through the video. However, people who lived 73 years ago had to see the hardship with their eyes. They may consider this miserable condition as ordinary things.

Now, there are some regions that still have conflicts in the world. 357,000,000 children live in conflicted areas, and their numbers are increasing. Places where children used to play turn into battlefields. Those children are forced to fight as soldiers who sometimes do suicide bombings. Place like Syria have civil wars and it is a horrible place. Both children and adults who have to live there feel stress which has high toxicity.

How can wars be eliminated? Our selfish bias might be a reason for causing them. There are many countries in the world. So, we have a variety of races, cultures, religions, and thoughts. Each of us has his or her own background. Since we are living there, we have to interact with more people without stereotypes. I believe that interactions with people from different cultures is a good way to take us out from selfish stereotypes and lead us toward a good direction.

In my class, there are people who have various backgrounds. One friend is half American and half Japanese. The other friend is half Chinese and half British, so he is trilingual. He speaks English, Chinese, and Japanese. Since my class has people who have various backgrounds, we boys and girls have good relationship. Some of us have known each other since we were kindergarten students. Our relationship is long, so we understand each other well. However, it doesn't mean that we always stick together. When we have a new student, we can include them naturally. Having interactions every day are good opportunities for us to find many things and understand each other. I would like the relationships I have with my classmates because more common between people. The world should be a place to naturally help each other, not to be a place to fight for selfish desires. Steps we can take to build reliable relationships are taking chances to interact with as many as people we meet. I think that first step can be the step to find something new, understand a variety of countries, cultures, and thoughts, and understand each other.

For Becoming Peace

Gyoshu Junior High School 3rd Grade

Satsuki Yamada

What is "peace?" It occurred to me one during summer vacation. There are many days such as the day of the atomic bomb dropping and the anniversary of the end of the war that make us think about "peace." Now, we have problems about nuclear weapons. Some countries have conflicts with one another. The world has more problems. However, I don't have such big problems as an individual. I would say my problems are like being unable to get good scores on tests or having quarrels with my

parents. When I thought about my problems, I felt my environment is still a peaceful one. There are peaceful and unpeaceful place in the world, although the world is one and the earth is one.

I think Japan can be without wars or conflicts because of the people in the past. It was wrong that we had the war. However, we held up the three non-nuclear principals after The Second World War in order to strive toward peace. That is why I think we can live peaceful now.

On August 6th, I watched the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony on TV. I watch it every year, and the speeches by elementary school students in Hiroshima impress me a lot every year. I am also surprised at the great number of foreign leaders that visit the site. When I saw them, I was very happy because I found that there were many people who wish for peace in the world.

I went to Nagasaki for my school trip. I visited the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum and learned the misery of the use of it the heat wave from the atomic bomb melted and extinguished everything. I was very scared and sad because of such a thing happened in a moment. Because Japan has this past, we should head for peace. I also thought that there are people who can feel peace because the people in the world help each other.

However, there are places that are having conflicts and cannot achieve peace yet. There are people who get injured or died after being involved in conflicts even though they didn't do anything. As long as there are those people in the world, we can't say there is world peace although my individual environment is peaceful. I think that Japan has a role to stop battles with force for all people in the world living peacefully because we are the only nation to be hit by atomic bombs. Is that all we can do for being peaceful? Even if there are no battles with force, I don't think the world is peaceful unless hatred in people's minds disappear. It is OK to have small frictions between small numbers of people. It is sad that many people get involved in those small frictions. If something like this happened in or around America, Japan might be involved because there are U.S. military bases in Japan. All countries in the world should cooperate in order to not have such things and avoid making mistakes we used to have in the past. The time when all people in the world can laugh heartily is "peace."
