

# The 30th Edition of Thinking about Peace

## [Elementary School Students]

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### Importance of People's Lives

Daisan Elementary School 5th Grade

Kensuke Kataoka

For my paper, I visited my great-grandfather to listen to his experience. He told me, "I went to Palau for the war."

My great-grandfather is 92 years old. He lives in a senior care facility after he got dementia. Although I like to listen to his story, it seemed that he didn't remember anything at all.

The old woman who was sitting next to my great-grandfather started to speak to me. "Numazu was burned down to the ground."

"We could see the Senbon Beach from the Numazu Station."

She repeated it several times.

I didn't know that Numazu where I live now was also damaged by the war, so I was very surprised.

I decided to research about the damages to Numazu.

The city had the first air-raid on January 9th in 1945. It had 8 air-raids in total, and one of them which was occurred on July 17th. It was called "The Bombing of Numazu in World War II." The damage caused by it was very huge. There were 274 deaths and 505 minorly and seriously injured people. More than 70 battle planes came over and dropped more than 9,000 firebombs. 89.5% of Numazu's urban area was destroyed by fire.

I think the old woman was talking about this "The Bombing of Numazu in World War II." More than 70 years have passed since then, and she also has dementia, however, she still remembers the war. That was why she could keep telling me.

"Numazu was burned down to the ground."

"We could see the Senbon Beach from Numazu Station."

I've never experienced war. The number of people who experienced the war is decreasing now. There will be more people who don't know about wars like me.

Wars take many lives away. Even if we had won, there would still have been many losses.

Wars are very terrible. Only older people know how terrible wars are, however, we should not forget how important people's lives are.

There are no more important things than people's lives.

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### The Story Told by My Grandfather

Daisan Elementary School 5th Grade

Hajime Masuda

In August, we see and hear a lot of news about the war on TV. Hiroshima and Nagasaki were hit with atomic bombs, which caused quite a lot of damage. I know that many people who survived the atomic bombs are still struggling with after effects such as cancer.

I've only ever listened to the story about the war from my grandfathers and their siblings. According to their stories, not only Nagasaki and Hiroshima were affected, but Numazu was also damaged. There were no buildings and houses in Numazu where I live now after the air-raids by America. Numazu held the research facility of the Japanese Navy and it often became the target of dropped bombs. My grandfather still remembers clearly that many people ran away along the river after being burnt out. His house was also damaged. The roof of his house was damaged by some debris caused by the blast. He was minorly injured at that time. The damages caused by the war didn't finish when the war was over. After the war, unexploded bombs were collected and put together on the beach. Sometimes, they exploded suddenly, and elementary school students who played around there were killed by them.

Not only Hiroshima and Nagasaki were affected, Numazu which is a small and minor town in Japan also had serious air-raids. The experiences and memories that my grandfathers have of that time remain in their minds. There are similar things that happened in every region in Japan during the war. I haven't studied reasons why World War II occurred. I think Japan had a strong will such as, "We will win at any cost!" at first. However, many people died during the war, and there are many people who are still struggling with after effects even though it has been more than 70 years since the end of the war. I think everything related to the war brought us bad results.

I feel Japan is peaceful now. I can't imagine well a Numazu that was burned down to the ground, and many planes coming over and dropping bombs from a low enough position to see the faces of those pilots. I'm wondering now about foreign countries. There are some countries which have national conflicts or have a war against their neighbor countries to get territory. Everyone should understand that the lives of innocent people will be continuously taken away if those wars go on. Why do we still have wars that make people hurt?

I think wars cannot be eliminated because people keep using force to make something move, to solve problems, or to capture territory. We try to discuss at school how to make decisions when we get into fights. We should find answers by listening to each other's opinion. We know that it is better for us to negotiate with words, not using force. There were 8 air-raids in Numazu during World War II. There were 318 losses and 631 minorly and seriously injured people. 2,231 people went to the war in foreign countries from Numazu and died there. We should think about what we can do. I learned that Japan is the only country in the world to be bombed with the nuclear weapons from the news on TV. The first step I should take is learning more about the war in order to strongly appeal the elimination of wars. I like to study a lot of things related to the war such as the reasons why World War II started.

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## 11-Year-Old Children in the Republic of Sierra Leone

Daisan Elementary School 6th Grade Konomi Mugishima

The Republic of Sierra Leone is the country with lowest life expectancy in the world. Life expectancy for men in Japan is 78 years and women's is 85 years. Life expectancy in Sierra Leone is much shorter than Japan. Men's is 32 years and women's is 35 years. The reason is a war. In Sierra Leone, very good quality diamonds can be mined. However, all benefits from those diamonds are used for war, so the quality of life in the nation is not rich yet.

The war in Sierra Leone started between the government and a rebel group. They don't use expensive weapons such as big aerial bombs or big tanks, which were used in the wars of Afghanistan or Iraq. They fight with small weapons like rifles. Now, an impossible situation in Japan occurred in Sierra Leone. Not only adults, but children also use those rifles. Those child soldier's bodies are implanted with narcotic drugs. Then, they become like battle machines which don't have feelings such as human

empathy. They harm many innocent people without any thought.

The Government of Sierra Leone is spending an enormous amount of money for the war, so they don't have enough money for education. I am 11 years old and go to school every day; however, 11-year-old children in Sierra Leone have rifles to kill people and don't go to school. The most shocking thing for me was about amputees. All of them injured their bodies, such as hands, feet, or ears. There is a place for them called amputee camp, and people who lost their arms or legs by being attacked by the rebel group live there with their families. The number of people living there is about 2,000. The camp is managed with some help from other countries such as Doctors Without Borders, which is an NGO group of France, and Handicap International. There is a 3-year-old girl who lost her legs and arms in the camp. The children soldiers attack those people and make them line up to cut their legs or arms. It's straight and to the point.

If this war was on trial, those nations would be both victims and victimizers. Those soldiers are the same as the victims because they are forced to be. However, wars are bad things that we should never do.

The Republic of Sierra Leone has changed. It reminds me how horrible wars are. It is impossible for me to experience the suffering that people in this country have. All I can do is listen to their stories and have sympathy. However, I think Japan can help Sierra Leone like France. Now, I'm 11 years old. I will be an adult in 9 years. I would like Japan to have a firm attitude at that time.

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## Self-Contained Life

Daiyon Elementary School 6th Grade

Natsumi Kubota

World War II ended on August 15th in 1945.

What thoughts do you have about the war? I think many of you feel sympathy or thinking about how hard it was to get through. I think they were trying hard to live, though they faced danger. I also think they were very good at having a self-contained life.

Japan had rationing system when there were not enough foods. At that time, there were many big families, with as much as 8 people living together. It was not easy for them to live with only rationed foods. So, many housewives tried various kinds of things to increase their food as much as possible. For example, they picked dandelions and other weeds on streets. They boiled them or put them into miso soup to make their family satisfied. They also used eggshells. They ground them down, mixed them with chopped seaweeds, and put them on rice. They didn't have any taste and their texture was like sand. However, people took it only for nutrition such as calcium which they were lacking at that time. I learned people at that time tried various kinds of things to increase their food. I think they had lots of knowledge about food that cannot be compared to what we know because they had to protect their families' health through dangers of war.

The atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki while people had to live creativity with food. There were thousands of victims at that time. It only took one bomb to destroy everything, like their creativity and even their little happiness, too. It destroyed them in a moment. I felt very sad and couldn't believe that it was done by people like us. The world looked different when I compare our lives to their lives. Now, there are many foods, and we sometimes throw them away. I try not to make leftovers as much as possible when I dine out. However, we feel OK to make leftovers because we have enough foods. Weeds like dandelions are considered as offending weeds. We like to remove eggshells in eggs as soon as possible. It is very different to the people during the war who ate those dandelions and eggshells.

Various kinds of things such as TV, smartphones, or the Internet are developed now

and have improved every day to a more convenient life. Life in the past and present is so different.

I found that people in the present cannot have a self-contained life compared to the past. It's just weeds, but we can have them when we don't have anything to eat. It's just eggshells, but we can have them when we don't have anything to eat. Can we have a self-contained life? I feel amazed how wonderful the ideas and creativity of people in the past are. I think about what I can do.

Wars destroy people's valuable lives. Their lives might be little, but they cannot be destroyed by wars. Wars shouldn't exist. What can we do to eliminate wars in the world?

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## "In Blue Sky..."

Kaihoku Elementary School 5th Grade

Teppey Shigyou

In the morning, I followed my mother out the house, who was going to water the plants in our garden.

Suddenly, I heard the sound, "brattle, brattle, roar!" The sounds came closer and closer over my head. I felt my heart lurch, but I tried to look up.

There was an emergency medical helicopter, white with red and blue lines coming out from the edge of my neighbor's roof. I was relieved and thought, "It's OK. It's just an emergency medical helicopter."

My heart beat so fast because I was very scared. I had just read "I had the war when I was a child" a book about the war, the day before so I was so scared.

Some people evacuated to avoid air-raids. They couldn't live with their families. Some husbands had to go to the war even though they had just gotten married. People believed that they could live happily immediately after the end of the war, but they couldn't.

A child my age stared at another child who was eating a rice ball on the street. Nobody would give rice balls to that very skinny child. That is because everyone was in trouble for lack of food. I can't believe that there was a time like that. I felt very sorry when I thought if I were that hungry child.

Elementary school students like me and children younger than me could survive the war. They had to live fearing the sound of planes like "Boom! Boom!" They didn't have enough food and places to live. They felt sorrow because of the war.

People who went to the war also didn't have enough food or drink. They wandered in fields or mountains in foreign countries. They had to kill others for them to survive. I felt terrible when I realized these things happened for real.

73 years ago, it was terrible that there were planes loaded with bombs to attack people and destroy towns in the blue sky just like today.

I think Japan is a happy country because we can live calmly and peacefully. On the other hand, I sometimes hear news about wars or terror in other countries in newspapers and TV news programs. I think there are children who are afraid of the sound of planes or feel sad from losing their families just like Japan during the war.

"Brattle, brattle, roar!" It would be good if these sounds were heard from an emergency medical helicopter or other rescue helicopter. I like the world where everyone can cheer and say, "Go! Go!" to planes or helicopters without any fear.

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"Traveling with an Elephant in The Winter of the

# War",originally "*An Elephant in the Garden*"

Katahama Elementary School 6th Grade

Yuika Misu

I like to know about World War II in foreign countries. What did it look like? How did people live at that time? That is why I read this book. I think my life now is ordinary, but Japanese people during the war had a hard time. People in other countries might have a hard time during the war.

Next, the most impressive scene for me was that people in the story remembered the war and were fully living their lives even though it looked like they always had fun. They lived in old times, but I still want to cheer for them because they were fully alive every day. I found some common and different points with myself. I easily get disappointed when I have some problems or troubles. However, I try to think about what I can do to make things better. It was the common point between the people in the story and me.

Some of my ideas changed after I read the book. I thought people don't want to live during the war before I read the book. However, I found that people try to be happy and were fully alive without hesitating to live in the book. The life we are having now was built by people in the past. Our life became ordinary for us, but people didn't know what would happen during the war. In the past, people were trying to be happy and fully alive every day. Some of us think it is ordinary that we can live every day. The thing I learned from the book is that all people have had rights to live since they were born. It is very sad thing if there are countries having wars or fights in the world. I hope all countries will be full of smiles and laughs.

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## A Black Lunch

Katahama Elementary 6th Grade

Kanato Murakoshi

I traveled to Hiroshima with my family in summer 4 years ago when I was in the second grade. I visited Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and saw a black lunch in a lunch box which was burnt by the atomic bomb. That lunch looked fake, so it was hard to recognize it was food. I was also surprised that the lunch remained as it was after more than 70 years passed.

However, it was the evidence which tells us that the atomic bomb was dropped in Hiroshima. I was very shocked, so I can't forget about it even though I was a young child when I saw it.

I read the book, "A Black Lunch" during summer vacation. I read it because it reminded me of seeing the real one in Hiroshima when I found this book.

Shigeru was in the first grade of junior high school, which is just one year older than me. He worked for building removal. Building removal is breaking some buildings in advance to avoid spreading fire when there were air-raids. He worked for the country in his age, but I don't think we can do the same thing.

Shigeru died before eating his lunch, which was made by his mother. However, she didn't know about it, so she kept looking for him very hard. When she found him, he died as holding his burnt lunch box. I was very sad when I imagined how his mother felt at that time.

At first, Shigeru's mother didn't want to exhibit his lunch box at the museum. However, she changed her mind if his lunch box could be the evidence of the war and atomic bomb. So, we can see it at the museum now. I will never forget that I could see the real one.

I like lunch made by my mother very much. Usually, I have school lunch at school. However, I sometimes have lunch made by my mother at school. I'm very happy on

those days. I think Shigeru was also looking forward to having lunch made by his mother. He died before he could eat it. I'm very sorry and feel regret for him.

The atomic bomb took many people's lives from babies to old people. I don't want any country to use it again. I also don't want them to start any wars. We also should never forget the fact that atomic bombs were dropped in Japan.

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## Listened to the Story of My Grandparents

Kanaoka Elementary School 6th Grade

Madoka Ihori

I visited my grandparents to listen to their story on the atomic bomb Memorial Day of Hiroshima. My grandfather didn't experience the atomic bomb, but he was very impressed when he listened to the reading of the essay which was written by one the elementary school students at Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony.

I've never experienced wars, and I think that is good thing. However, it means that I don't know the fear of wars. Now, people who know the fear of wars are decreasing. I listened to the story from my grandparents, and I found many impossible things occurred during the war. I was very surprised that my grandparents experienced those impossible things. Their stories were very vivid because they experienced it, and they taught me that we should never have wars again through their stories.

My grandmother came back from Sakhalin when she was in elementary school. She was born and lived there until being in a lower grade of elementary school. She had some hard times while living there. She usually lived there calmly. However, one day, Russian soldiers came into her house with their shoes on. She had to get on the boat which was on the point of sinking when she came back to Japan. Even so, Russian people who lived in her neighborhood were very kind to her family and other Japanese families. She told me, "People can be good friends even if their countries have a war." I thought that was good. Of course, wars are not good things. However, my grandmother could find little happiness from the kindness of Russian people during the war.

My grandfather experienced the war in Numazu. He was in charge of protecting the picture of the Emperor. I was surprised that he might have been killed for that one picture. If he died at that time, there wouldn't be my mother, sister, and me. He told me, "Now is the most dangerous time." People are forgetting the fear of wars, and people who understand the importance of peace are decreasing. These situations are similar to the world in present, so I sense a crisis.

From now on, we'll be in charge of the future of Japan. I think it is important for us to know the fear of wars and spread it to the world to avoid having wars again.

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## Ordinary Things are Real Happiness

Kanaoka Elementary School 6th Grade

Daito Sugiyama

Do you know about air-raids? When I looked it up in the dictionary, it said, "Attacking the ground from the sky by planes."

I looked up my family generations for my summer independent research. The first generation of my family was my great-grandparents. They lived in Shizuoka City. The Bombing of Shizuoka World War II happened there at 12:51 on June 20th in 1945. Their house was burnt completely by that bombing. When I learned this fact, I thought, "I can't imagine if my house was erased by fire before I knew it. Furthermore, if my

town had also disappeared, I might think that I would rather be dead than being alive even though my life was saved." I wanted it not to be. I knew it was meaningless if I wished like this. Even so, I couldn't stop wishing.

At that time, I learned the fear of wars for the first time.

Then, I started to think of how much peace I have in my life.

For example, I have a house to live in. I have a school to go to. I have my family. I think these ordinary things are "peace."

I wish from my heart this "peace" will be an ordinary thing forever.

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## Think of Peace

Oooka Elementary School 6th Grade

Keita Natsui

I don't know about the war. I think I've been avoiding thinking of the war since I watched the movie, "Grave of the Fireflies" and felt very sad. However, I started to think of it seriously because another anniversary of the end of the war will come soon, on this August 15th.

A trigger of World War II was the Manchurian Incident in 1931. Japan lied and broke the railway in China. I don't understand why Japan lied to take another country's territory at all. At the time of World War II, children's dreams were going to the war and dying for honor as soldiers. Their dreams were not like ours such as becoming a soccer player. I can't think of dying for my country. I don't want my life to end so soon. I visited my grandmother to listen to her story of the war. However, she was only 2 years old at the time, so she told me the story she heard from my great-grandfather. Some planes flew overhead when he worked the field, so he lied down to pretend that he was already dead until they'd gone. If I were him, I would have been nervous and wouldn't be able to stay quiet like him. He built a bomb shelter in the back of his garden for his family to be able to escape. Planes flew during night time as well. People put black paper around lights to prevent light from going outside. Since he was a farmer, he and his family had enough food. However, they knew that their neighbors didn't have enough food and were always hungry, so they thought they shouldn't eat too much. His rice was stolen sometimes. Now, we have enough food, so we are rarely hungry. I was surprised that people couldn't eat during the war.

Wars kill people, and I think we can solve problems through discussions instead. Japan can't have wars because of the constitution made after the war. We also can't make nuclear weapons. I think we must not make such dangerous things. Japan is the only country where two atomic bombs were dropped on. We must keep telling other countries to not have wars again. If Japan goes to war in future, I will strongly disagree with the act. I will try to get along with foreigners in other countries. If it didn't work, I would show some exchange conditions. Tokyo will hold the Olympics in 2020. I think it is good to compete sports which have rules to follow. I hope the world is going to be friendlier and improve each other.

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## From Small Peace to Big Peace

Ashitaka Elementary School 6th Grade

Yuuri Endo

I think Japan has many crises. Another war might start in the future. Since Donald Trump became the president of the United States, the Japanese prime minister often visits America. As a result, I think Japan and America have good relation now.

However, the relationship between America and North Korea became worse. I got scared about it. I was afraid that if a war started, Japan should fight together with America. The same issues such as losing lives, destroying buildings, and having poor living conditions will occur again like 70 years ago. People will say, "We should not have had a war." Even if we won, relationships between Japan and other countries would get worse. Exporting and importing trade would stop. In that case, Japan will have food shortages.

If this situation got longer and longer, Japan would become a poorer country. The result will be the same regardless

That is why I hate wars and don't want to have them.

Numazu is the city stated the "Declaration of Peace and the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons." It was issued in March of 1987 wishing for a peaceful world without nuclear weapons. Numazu is proud of this statement.

In 1998, India and Pakistan had nuclear experiments. At that time, a civil group in Nagasaki sent their local high school students to the United Nation in New York. It was called "High School Peace Ambassadors." They were from 15 different prefectures in Japan and conducted a petition for peace and the elimination of nuclear weapons. They say, "Let's make peace for future." They were nominees of the Nobel Peace Prize of that year. I think the world accredit their continual activities for peace. I would like to give my signature if I met them around stations.

Unfortunately, Japan didn't attend the meeting of the international regulation because it disagreed with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. 122 countries of 193 countries in the United Nations agreed with it on July 7th of last year. Japan is the only country to have suffered from nuclear attacks. It means that there were many citizens who experienced fear and sadness because of atomic bombs. Even so, Japan didn't agree with it, and received complaints. I wanted the country to agree with it and shed light to the victims of atomic bombs.

I hope the small activities for peace done by high school students will be spread and lead to bigger changes for peace done by the United Nations.

My grandmother was born during the war and evacuated to Ibaraki Prefecture. She remembered how life after the war was hard even though she was very young at the time. She told me, "Japan wasn't the country which was able to win the war. However, it did and lost. The country shouldn't have war to avoid causing citizens deep suffering." When we had leftover from the day before, I complained, "I had it yesterday." She scolded me, "There are many hungry children in the world because of wars or poverty. You should think of them and not complain about your privileged life." She also said, "I wish Japan was the permanent neutral country like Switzerland. I'm afraid that the world seems to plant small seeds leading to wars. I want a world which will not bring any anxieties to young people."

When I heard my grandmother's story, I felt we were happy because Japan in the present is peaceful and has enough food. We should keep the present life, and I wish peace would last for long time.

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## The Message From Suicide Attack Units

Ashitaka Elementary School 6th Grade

Masaki Seto

I traveled to Kagoshima during this summer vacation with my family. At that time, I visited the Chiran Peace Museum and learned about suicide attack units for the very first time.

There were pictures of soldiers who did a suicide attack. I also saw the letters from them to their families or girlfriends. I felt the fear of the war, their sadness, and their feelings to their families and girlfriends. I had never thought seriously about the war until then. For me, the war was just "killing each other is scary" and "having a hard



time because of food shortages." However, the war was more fearful than I thought. I was filled with fear and sadness after I read one after another of the soldiers who died. It was unspeakable. Suicide attackers told me their fear. The soldiers had ram attack the enemy's ship with their own planes. There were also many soldiers who died on the way to the enemy's ship. I don't think anyone would want to get on such planes. Even so, they died for their country.

I listened to the story told by the son of a woman who took care of the suicide attack units. His mother said, "Everyone who left for a suicide attack was smiling." I felt we could live in peace because of their smiling. I think people during the war forgot about peace. They didn't care about others who cried for their lost families or had suffering from food shortages. They just fought in the war and lost many people. Then, sadness and suffering spread. I strongly felt, "We should never have wars."

Japan is in peace now. However, there are some countries which are having wars. Many people are suffering there. I wish all wars would be eliminated from the world, and I want a world where all people can live in peace. I think it is important for us to remember the thoughts of people who went to the war and always think that "We should never have wars."

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## Fear of Wars

Oohira Elementary School 4th Grade

Satoshi Kanaeda

73 years have passed since the end of the war. 73 years seems like a very long time ago to me.

There was a 102-year-old woman on TV on the anniversary of the war. She lost her husband at the Battle of Okinawa when she was young. She said, "73 years already passed? I'm still very sad and suffering." She still has a hard time. It has been 73 years since she lost her beloved husband. I think she must have a difficult time.

My great-grandfather went to the war when he was young. He came back alive. I have two relatives who went to the war when one of them was 19 years old, and the other one was 21 years old. Both died. I thought the war and the people who died in the war were things that happened a long time ago. However, I think the war isn't over yet after I listened to the story by the old woman on TV.

If my great-grandfather died in the war, my grandfather, my mother, and I wouldn't be living now. I'm very happy that he could come back alive.

I visited Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum during this summer vacation. I clearly saw and felt fear of the war. Only one atomic bomb burnt and killed innocent people in a moment. There are still hundreds of thousands of people suffering its after-effects. They have some difficulties or stay in hospitals. They're still suffering even though it has been 73 years since the atomic bombs were dropped. Wars are cruel and inhuman. They take people's peaceful and happy lives away in a moment. Those people might have had something they wanted to do or dreamed about. Wars easily take those things.

I got sad when I heard the story of Sadako Sasaki. She was irradiated when she was 2 years old and it led to leukemia when she was 11 years old. She made paper cranes from the packages of her medicine every day. She dreamed that she could recover if she made 1,000 of them. She died after she made 1,300. 11 years old is almost the same age as me. The atomic bomb gave her leukemia, cancer of the blood. I think she might have had painful treatment because she dreamed to recover. Her dream and hopes were taken away.

I was born in this peaceful age and live without any difficulties every day. I think it is because there were many victims in the past. I hope this peaceful age will continue forever.

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## Thinking About Peace

Hara Elementary School 4th Grade

Chisato Yamamoto

Now, Japan doesn't have any wars with America. However, we had the war and many people were killed a long time ago. I felt sorry that many people including parents and children were suffering in the past, though the present time is peaceful.

Today, August 15th, is the anniversary of the end of the war. There was an article about one's experience of the war in a newspaper for children. The article was written by Mr./Ms. Hoshino. Hoshino lost parents, 15-year-old old brother, and 6-month-old younger sister in the Bombing of Tokyo. Hoshino, 11 years old at that time, was safe because of living apart from them due to evacuation. Hoshino didn't feel anything because every day after the war was very hard. Hoshino wished that nobody would have the same experience. Hoshino also wanted everyone to think of others, not only oneself, for peace. There was a picture of a boy standing at a crematory in another newspaper. According to my grandmother, that is a picture of the boy holding his young brother on his back without any movements. He was waiting his turn at the crematorium and biting down on his lip when the picture was taken. It was a sad picture. I thought wars are very cruel.

The atomic bombs were dropped in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. More than 200,000 people died in total. It is also said that more than 600,000 people have died up to today. Japan doesn't have any nuclear weapons, but there are 9 countries that have them. More than 90% of those nuclear weapons belong to Russia and America. Nuclear weapons have not been used in wars for more than 70 years after being used in Japan. However, there are 14,500 atomic bombs in the world. If they were used for wars, the earth would be destroyed. I wondered why some countries make nuclear weapons even though they don't use them.

There are battles and conflicts in the world now. They were caused by problems between ethnic groups or borders between countries. Many people don't have things to eat or live because of these battles and conflicts. I think I'm lucky that I could be born in peaceful country. I like to get along with other people without any fights. I think it is possible to be in peace if we care about others.

I understood that wars would take many people's lives and bring lots of sadness after I learned about the cruelty and misery of the war. I will not forget about the war.

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## Wish For Peace

Kanuki Elementary School 5th Grade

Sachi Tashiro

August 6th. In the morning, I watched the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony on TV. The Japanese Prime Minister and other foreigners were there. I asked my mother, "What day is it today?" She answered, "Today is the anniversary of the atomic bomb dropped in Hiroshima 73 years ago." I also heard the fact that one bomb took 140,000 lives away.

One elementary school student gave the vow for peace. Those words impressed me a lot.

Peace is that people smile by themselves.

Peace is that both others and one are happy.

Peace is that people have a future to be able to have dreams and hope.

I thought these things are ordinary. However, when I think about 73 years ago, they weren't. I feel sad when I think of the feelings of the people living during the war.

I visited my grandfather during this summer vacation. I asked him about the war. He told me, "I was born in 1947, so I didn't experience the war. However, I know about the times when Japan was very poor after the war."

There were many children who lost their fathers in the war. Many of them didn't have enough food and couldn't go to school. I said to my grandfather, "Families had a hard time." He told me, "They couldn't say 'No' to going to the war because it was decided by the country. Their families didn't have any other choice than giving up, although they still felt sad."

I think there were many things both people who went to the war and their families had to give up because of the war. "And, this..." My grandfather took out something from a drawer. It was a small notebook covered with a dark green cloth. "Military Notebook" was written on the front of the notebook. There were many dispatch records of troops inside of the notebook. He said, "This notebook belonged to your great-grandfather while he was in the war. He went to the war when he was 20 years old and, fortunately, could come back. However, many of his troop members died."

It was the first time I saw the notebook related to the war. I was very surprised that people close to me also went to the war.

I think a war would make a big change in people's lives. There is no future in a war.

I didn't know that Japan is the only country to have suffered nuclear attacks. I would like to tell people in the world about what Japan experienced, so that nuclear weapons will not be used in the world, and to eliminate death by wars.

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## Everyone Has Only One Life

Nishiura Elementary School 6th Grade

Sho Kuzuno

Countries and the world can be changed a lot by words of a person in a high position. American soldiers landed on Okinawa in 1945. Smiles disappeared from the faces of people living in Okinawa after that. America started to attack it from the middle of its west coast and moved toward the south. People died one after another. They had no way to resist or fight back. All they could do was escape.

The Okinawa Female Normal School was in the south area. Those students, called "Himeyuri Students Corp," usually studied and trained. However, they started to take care of people who had died or were injured by the attacks of America after American soldiers reached there. They were so busy even during nights and didn't have any time to sleep. They had to cut many people's legs or arms. Sometimes, they had to do those operations without anesthesia. They did their best night and day. People who got injured only could shout, "Help!" Himeyuri Students Corp tried to cure people as fast as they could do, but they always needed more human hands. The things they did were jobs for doctors, so there was a lot of risk. The order of their dismissal was told on July 18th while they were working for their patients as usual. They were allowed to decide what to do after. However, they couldn't avoid the attacks by American soldiers, so many of them died. Many people died in Okinawa during the war. Most of them died in a very cruel way. They died struggling. Some of them died holding bombs around their hearts, and others dived into big waves after losing places to escape. I don't want to die like them. I think most of them wanted to live long and try many things. Going to die was terrible. However, there were some people who suffered because they couldn't die. Others killed themselves because they thought it would be much better than being caught by American soldiers. There were no smiles and happiness in Okinawa at that time. I understand it was the truth of that time.

I visited Himeyuri Peace Museum. The view there was very beautiful. However, once I got into the museum, the atmosphere was very different. I understood there was

no peace at that time. My heart got hurt more and more as I went inside the museum. Other visitors didn't smile, too. Some of them cried. I think the fact of the Himeyuri Students Corp is also hard for people living in the present.

Japan in the present is peaceful. I think peace is enjoyable and I feel happy. It is a very happy thing that everyone is smiling. Everyone has only one life. There is nothing more important than life. I hope a battle like this will never happen again. People should not die in these ways. I think it is the most important that everyone is smiling and getting along with others in a peaceful world.

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## Peace

Kadoike Elementary School 6th Grade

Kouyou Kawamura

"We must not use atomic bombs again." I became interested in atomic bombs when I heard these words. As I searched about atomic bombs on the internet and in books, I wanted to visit Hiroshima.

I was able to go to Hiroshima during the summer, and I realized how terrible and horrible the atomic bombs were. I was told, "Atomic bombs mean death." If there hadn't been a war, we wouldn't have had hundreds of thousands of victims on August 6th. I think those people could have had a calm life. However, the atomic bomb was dropped. Many people including children who were going out, babies with their mothers, children at school were killed by the atomic bomb. If Japan had won the war, what would be different? I think Japanese people would be happy and proud of themselves. However, if we were American people, what would happen? Would we still feel happy? Both people who fought and even those who didn't fight died during the war. I thought about the words "Atomic bombs mean death" and how it was a message to let us know that both atomic bombs and wars mean death.

Atomic bombs afflict people and take their families and houses away. Not only did they lose lives, some people suffered after effects of the atomic bomb. Their lives were ruined, and they were going to die, suffering and struggling. Atomic bombs can take everything away from people. However, I have heard that there are more powerful weapons than atomic bombs in the world. I felt how horrible the world is.

We should not start wars and use nuclear weapons ever again. I feel sorrow for the people who lost and had their lives ruined after visiting Hiroshima. I feel sorry that many people's lives were taken away.

Hiroshima in the present isn't the same as it was on August 6th during the war. It is a place to show "peace." I would like many people to visit Hiroshima and learn how terrible the atomic bomb was. I would also like them to appreciate peace.

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## What is "Peace?"

Kadoike Elementary School 6th Grade

Yua Hanada

"What is peace?" I asked my grandfather. He answered, "You can go to school every day. You also have meals, play, and sleep every day. All of them are peace." I asked him again, "What? Why are those things peace? They are ordinary things." "What are wars?" I had read some written materials about wars, and I found out that war is the fighting between countries. I was very surprised that many people are killed, and that those people's lives are not important at all during wars.

Why can people do this? Besides, entire nations have the same thoughts and minds

toward wars. Why? What is it for? I don't understand it well. What can people get after wars?

I heard the story of my great grandparents' childhood on my grandfather's side. They had to escape into the air-raid shelter with their family when they heard the siren of the air-raid. They spent times shivering. The sire of the air-raid was the alarm to let them know that American battle planes would come and drop many bombs. My great grandparents experienced the loss of their friends on the way to the air-raid shelter. They couldn't predict when they would hear the siren. They didn't have enough food. I don't think I could bear such an unstable life.

I learned this war occurred 70 years ago. I learned more about the war and found out that there are still many people who are suffering from the war in Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Okinawa, and so on. I think we shouldn't have wars again because wars would make people suffer such long time.

However, there are still countries having wars in the world. I wonder how the children of those countries live. I hope all the wars in the world will end soon.

I can have an ordinary life. I realized that that is very happy thing. Peace is people being able to ordinarily smile. I will not forget it and will appreciate my life.

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## The Terrible War

Harahigashi Elementary  
School 4th Grade

Seiryu Nishizawa

I borrowed two books about the war at the library during summer vacation. I often watched and read about the war on TV and newspapers every summer. So, I wanted to know more about it. That was why I chose those books.

While I was reading those books, I sobbed a lot. I couldn't finish reading as usual. I sobbed for a while after reading.

"Can any wars start in the future? I hope not." I said to myself.

In those books, there were stories of those that experienced the atomic bomb. There was a child whose mother was crushed under the broken house. She was helped by people passing by, but she already couldn't move. Fire broke out before long. The mother taught her child the importance of living. Her last words to the child were, "You should survive and study hard to be a good person." I was impressed a lot by this scene. I thought about if I were that child. However, I couldn't find any answers. I don't want to experience such a sad thing, so we shouldn't have any wars again.

There is no war in Japan now. However, there are countries having wars in the world. I feel sad and regretful when I think of innocent people being involved and killed. I would like to have a world without wars. I must appreciate the everyday life I can have now.

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