

of mind.

## From Past Battles to Future Peace

**Daiichi Junior High School, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Saito Tsukasa**

For me, who was born in the peaceful era of Heisei and has spent the same days, August 9th is just one day. But for those who experienced today 76 years ago, it's a particularly terrifying and unforgettable day.

A wartime panel exhibition was held at the Numazu City Library. The one photo I saw there filled me with sadness. The photo titled "Boy Standing at the the Cremation Site" (photographed by Joe O'Donnell) was taken when a buzz-cut boy, about an elementary school student, put his dead little brother into the fire. It seemed that he was standing upright and staring at the fire that his younger brother was about to burn. If I were in the same position, I thought the boy was courageous, and at the same time, the boy's eyes said, "I never want to succumb to the war that robbed my dear family! If I cry, I'm losing! I'll do my best to survive as much as my younger brother on the back." But I thought the boy's true feelings were not easy to imagine. I learned that Numazu City declared a peaceful city for the abolition of nuclear weapons on March 20, 1987. The world now has more than 20,000 nuclear bombs. This is said to be the amount that will annihilate humans on the earth 5 times. I thought that if countries all over the world did not make this declaration, the same thing would be repeated somewhere.

I learned that there are some war ruins in Numazu, and I was very surprised that the place where we live now was also damaged. I spoke to my grandfather, who experienced strafing when he was a child. My great-grandmother was struck by an American aircraft at a wartime evacuation site. She said she was saved by jumping into a stream with her 3 children, including my grandfather. It seems that many adults and children have been sacrificed around them. The lives of innocent people were lost, and young children lost their parents. When I heard that story, I couldn't even imagine how a child who had lost his parents grew up. At that time, I thought that the anxiety and inconvenience felt by a deceased child was incomparable to what I feel in my life. When I heard the story again, I felt uncomfortable and painful. It turned out to be a war in which an irreplaceable and precious life was lost in an instant. War is a truly horrifying event.

We have not actually experienced a war. Furthermore, the number of people who have experienced that time is decreasing. That's why I think we have to know and tell a lot about war.

Nothing may change where I now hope that no country has a nuclear bomb. However, I think it is important for as many people as possible to wish for peace in the same way. I am

grateful that I was born in this peaceful time, and I think it is important for many people to continue to have the feeling of giving up without conflict. I am able to eat and work hard in club activities as a matter of course. I have forgotten the importance of peace because I only know it in peaceful times. In order to continue to protect this peaceful life, we must know the cruelty of war and realize the happiness of peace and spend our daily lives.

Many precious lives were lost in the war. I think that valuing lives to the extent of those people and continuing to protect peaceful times will be a tribute to those who died in the war.

In addition to Japan's peace, I hope that there will be no countries possessing nuclear bombs and that there will be a peaceful world with no conflicts around the world. Wishing no more precious lives lost in conflicts.

## **Our Days**

**Daiichi Junior High School, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Yamada Kaoru**

Today when nothing happens is over.  
While thinking that I have to do something,  
Sigh for not being able to do anything,  
Think about what to do tomorrow, meditate on the thought.  
Our peaceful days without stimulation,  
Days of living as a matter of course.

Wartime days,

Something happens and the day ends,  
Must get results for the country,  
But they couldn't do anything and sigh,  
Hell-like days that close their eyes while frightened how to survive tomorrow,  
Days when they tried to live hard

Similar but completely different days,  
Ringing sirens, roaring sound, burnt field all over their eyes,  
Lost friends, lost family, lost companions.  
The days when many lives were lost.  
The days when they still have to live.

We have to know,  
We have to think,

It must be handed down

Days of living casually

It is still smoldering somewhere,

We don't even know when we're heading.

Thinking about the days when people lived hard

Never waste it.

Days without stimulation,

Make it a worthwhile day.

That's what it should be now

Our days

## **For People All Over the World to Live with a Smile Every Day**

**Daini Junior High School, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Furukawa Kuon**

This year when the Tokyo Olympics, a festival of peace was held, we celebrated the 76th anniversary of the end of the war. The happiness of not having trouble with food, the happiness of studying, the happiness of playing baseball, and a lot of happiness are not commonplace, but I think they are based on peace. I reconsidered war and peace.

I heard there were children of junior high age just like me who joined the army to make it easier on their family, as the family didn't have enough food to go around; also about someone who died just 6 hours before the Jewel Voice broadcast, which announced the end of the war on August 15. I was surprised to see there were people who joined a life-threatening army because they were able to share their food with their younger siblings and were guaranteed some food for themselves. The inner corner of my eyes got hot when I learned about the times of food shortages and the feelings of their family.

Even in Numazu, there was an air raid on July 17, and many people lost their families in front of them. 274 people disappeared in one night, and the city of Numazu became a burnt field. In familiar places, there are traces of incendiary bombs on the Onari Bridge. I felt that the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the bombing of Tokyo were events in a distant world, but I learned that the places I lived in were very seriously damaged, not other people's affairs. I changed my mind to think of it as my own thing. There were many temples in the school districts of Daini Elementary School and Daini Junior High School, and many children were evacuated to the temples. I remember studying the story of "a postcard without letters" in a Japanese language class. It is a story that a girl who is too young to write letters

and leaves her parents and evacuates, and if she is fine, she writes a circle and posts a postcard every day. If it were myself, I would have been very anxious and lonely and would have been crying every day. The Numazu air raid also caused great damage to Shishihama, where my grandmother lives. I was able to read the materials that people who experienced the war in the area tried to pass on the war damage to posterity. Shizuura Elementary School was targeted and bombed, and many incendiary bombs fell in front of people. Shishihama was a sea of fire. It was written that during the war, he fled to the beach, carried a child into the sea, covered a futon from above, and endured desperately in the water until morning. “I will never forget the desperate feelings at that time”, “I didn’t feel like I was alive, I thought I couldn’t survive”, I thought, from the bottom of my heart, how scary it was to be in a situation where you never know if you could live or die. I thought that the situation was horrible, far beyond my imagination.

This time, I learned more about the damage caused by the war and strongly felt that such a horrific and tragic war should never happen again.

Now, the number of people who have experienced war is decreasing. And someday it will be zero. Meanwhile, in order not to go to war, I think what I can do is to listen to the stories of those who have experienced the war, learn more about it, and pass on the fear and misery of the war to the next generation. If we become a friendly world where we can hold hands and cooperate with each other regardless of country or race, and recognize each other even if they have different religions and ideas, not only in the interests of our own country, the wars that are occurring in the world will gradually decrease. However, it is very difficult for people in the world to move in the same direction. Even so, in order to gradually achieve such a world, I think it is important for each and every one of us to continue to have the idea that we should not go into war. I hope a world where people all over the world can live with smiles every day.

## **Things to Remember**

**Daini Junior High School, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Masuda Yoshihiro**

It has been 76 years since the end of the war this year. We also had a special feature on war on TV. On the other hand, fewer and fewer people have experienced war. No one around me has experienced a war. I’ve only learned about war in school classes, only watched on TV, and read books about it. Japan is much happier now than it was during the war. However, there are still many people in the world who are suffering from terrorism and poverty that causes children to work without going to school. War is an old event for Japan, but similar things are still happening in the world. With that in mind, I didn’t think there was any guarantee that war wouldn’t happen in Japan anymore. As I wanted to know more about this so

that I wouldn't have a tragic event like the Pacific War again, I researched the Pacific War.

The Pacific War began 80 years ago on December 8, 1941, when the Japanese army attacked Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, USA. Around this time, there were events such as the Sino-Japanese War and the Tripartite Pact of Japan, Germany, and Italy, and the deepening conflict with the United States is said to be the cause of the opening of the Pacific War. The attack on Pearl Harbor was successful, and Japan's first match was a good start. However, the subsequent Battle of Midway on the islands northwest of Hawaii and the Battle of Guadalcanal on the islands of the Solomon Islands northeast of Australia were all about defending. Then, atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and many victims were killed, so Japan surrendered and resulted in defeat. At that time, people in Japan were required to give everything to the country for war. There were no rice in the diet during the war, and instead people lived by eating foods that they would not normally eat, such as leaves and stems of sweet potatoes and potatoes. They couldn't choose their clothes as freely as we do now, and they had to wear the clothes designated by the country. The same boy junior high school student as me was taught various things from the Army people in school classes, such as how to march, how to shoot a gun, and how to throw a grenade. "Meet you guys next time in the middle of the Pacific Ocean." It was said by an Army person when the military training was over and parting, but there were many junior high school students who disliked it in their hearts on the other hand. The female students were forced to work in a factory, and even though they were not certified doctors, they had to engage in medical care at an evacuation site. They also witnessed the deaths of children. Even though the blood is not connected, I think it would be very painful to see a person die in front of me. Men at that time would say, "It's natural to go to war and die," they had to join the army and fight unless they had any illness. Women also had to sew military uniforms and make aircraft parts, saying, "It is natural to work for the military."

In Japan today, unlike those days when each and every citizen is inconvenient and their opinions are not respected, we can act freely on our own initiatives. However, there are some people in Nagasaki who have not been recognized as A-bomb survivors because they were damaged by the atomic bomb but were outside the damaged area designated by the government and have not yet received relief. The Pacific War is not over yet. I think that the real end of the war is to eliminate nuclear weapons from all over the world and to eliminate the existence of war from the world.

# Peace, Difference and Diversity

**Daini Junior High School, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Nishihara Akino**

Recently, I have come to realize how precious and difficult it is to achieve peace.

The tools I have learned and known about war are mainly social studies classes, television and books. Social studies textbooks describe the big wars that took place in the past. When the battles over the years are summarized in just a few pages, it's kind of dull, and on paper it's easy to think of war as just a fact. However, when I looked at the video, the way I received it changed a lot. The person is actually being killed. Since I realized that, my view of war has changed.

The Pacific War that took place in the modern era has a lot to do with Japan. There are so many people around me who have experienced the war that it is impressive to me. So many Japanese were killed in this war, and I feel very painful as the same Japanese. In addition, Japan became the only country in the world where an atomic bomb was dropped. As a Japanese citizen who knows the pain of such a war, I wanted to deepen my understanding and think about peace.

When we looked into peace, it was defined as a state in which society was not disturbed by wars or conflicts. Knowing that, I thought it would be difficult for the country and the world to become peaceful. I found that the most peaceful country in the world was Iceland, the least peaceful country was Afghanistan. Japan is 9th, South Korea which has influenced Japanese culture was 55th, China was 110th, and the United States 128th place. While there are many terrorist attacks and civil wars in Afghanistan, Iceland is very safe. It's normal not to lock your house or car. You can't think of it in Japan today, can you? Moreover, in this peaceful country, everyone is equal, with a flexible mindset about gender, no racism, and freedom to think about marriage and family. Therefore, I thought that there was no difference between people, such as racial discrimination and sexism, that is, equality would lead to peace.

Ethnic and religious differences may be the causes of conflict and war. The recent Afghanistan conflict is a religious issue. Conflicts such as wars tend to occur because of differences, but does it really lead to peace if we eliminate the differences? No one in the world is the same, and there are many good things about the differences. By exchanging the opinions of a wide variety of people, we will be able to get to know different ways of thinking and see things at different angles, which will enrich society. If you don't like this difference, it lead to a conflict, and if you think it's good, society gets better. After all, the point is how to think about it. In order to achieve peace, I think it is important to aim at coexistence without hating the differences each other. This what is call, "diversity".

The word diversity has become more common these days. Diversity has been established

as a natural right in the international community, preserving minority rights and promoting the movement towards the realization of a bright society that is independent of gender differences and values. I thought it would be the first step towards peace if we could recognize diverse people regardless of gender, nationality, race, age, etc.

War is something that people's lives can easily be lost, so there should be no war. I think it is very important to recognize the difference so as not to cause such a tragedy. We will listen to what is happening in the world, be interested in it, and think about it together. Let's cooperate with each other across the borders. To that end, I think it is important for everyone to recognize diversity in order to eliminate war and make peace.

## **My Responsibility**

### **Daisan Junior High School, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Todome Mirai**

Wanting to know more about the war, I asked my older sister, who had been on a school trip to Hiroshima. It was evening, and the sky was covered in a vivid crimson.

She muttered, "Some people fear the sunset."

The evening sky was beautiful that night and I couldn't believe that there were people who would be afraid of it. So I decided to ask my sister what she meant.

A serious look came over her, and she started to tell me about the story she heard from a kataribe (oral historian), the story of how they had been exposed to the atomic bomb, and how this left an impression on my sister.

On their school trip, they visited the Hiroshima Atomic Dome and Peace Memorial Museum, starting with an hour long talk from a kataribe. This kataribe told them that they continue to tell of their experience in the war in order to give their message that was must never happen again. The kataribe that my sister met had lost his mother and big sister to the atomic bomb. He himself had been working in a military factory that was away from the atomic bomb site and had been spared his life. He said that after the bomb was dropped, he had gone to the river to try to find his sister, and there were bodies all around the place. I cannot imagine this. My sister is 7 years older than me, and when she visited the museum, she was able to see the wax figures on exhibition, just before they were removed. My sister says when she saw the figures with their scorched skin and eyes missing, after entering the museum she was lost for words.

However according to the kataribe, the actual scene was far beyond what the wax figures tried to recreate, the atomic victims in even more cruel misery. In relation to the moment the atomic bomb was dropped, the expression "picadon" is often used. The "pica" refers to the instant when the town lit up at the same time as the red sunset, and the kataribe explained that remembering it even now fills her with fear.

Each year on August 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, we see memorial ceremonies on television. I knew that Japan was the only country to have been attacked with the atomic bomb in World War Two, and that many people fell victim to it, but I didn't have a strong feeling about it. But hearing from my sister about the story she heard from the kataribe, I felt for the first time the terror of war. It also made me realize just how important it is that the atomic bomb must never be used again, and how happy the lifestyle is that we have today.

I've only heard about this from my sister, so as soon as COVID 19 settles down, I want to visit the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum myself and hear the story of the kataribe. Most people who experienced the war are over 80 years old, so we are the last generation that will be able to hear their stories in person. My big sister also said I should hear the stories in person for myself. In just a few years I will be an adult. By that time, it might be too late to fulfill my wish.

I have the responsibility of hearing the stories of the kataribe, as I'm part of the last generation with will be able to do so. And I have the responsibility of passing down to later generations that message that "war must never be repeated again."

## **The Bright Red Tomato**

### **Daisan Junior High School, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Asakura Takuto**

On January 9<sup>th</sup>, in the 20<sup>th</sup> Year of Showa (1945), the US military bombed Numazu City. As a result of the air attacks, the damage included the following: 318 people were killed and 631 people were injured, the number of people affected by the battle was 44,387 and the number of buildings damaged was 9,700.

My grandfather was one of these victims. At the time, my grandfather was 6 years old, living with his parents and 3 siblings, a family of 6. He was growing some tomatoes, and had been wanting to eat them, but the rest of the family had told him to wait until tomorrow, as they'd would taste better, so he'd gone to be looking forward to eating them the next day. That night the air attack came. The US B29 planes flew close by, causing great fear. The family raced to an air raid shelter nearby, but father, thinking it was unsafe, the moved to under Misono Bridge. Just as my grandfather and his father were talking about what to do next, a steel sheet used for dropping bombs fell down right beside them. If they had been just a little to the side, it would have definitely struck and killed them.

Waking up the next day, they found the bridge they'd hidden under to have been destroyed, and the whole city to been burned away to nothing. The tomatoes my grandfather was planning to eat were not red, but all black. Rather than no longer being able to eat them, the fact that they were all blacked saddened my grandfather.

I heard that it was a hard time for them without food. The shops had been burnt to the

ground, and to get by, people would break into any places with food and then those people would be caught by the police.

Also, they found that the first air raid shelter they had gone to had been bombed, and all the people inside had been killed. My grandfather's family had been saved by taking shelter under the bridge, but probably would have been killed if they'd stayed in the air raid shelter. If that had happened, I would not exist. Even after not being able to eat his tomatoes, my grandfather was grateful that his life was saved. He felt that the tomatoes had died in his place. I didn't know that some many people had died in Numazu, the city we live in now. Hearing the story from my grandfather made me understand that it is something that the younger people must know about.

We get up each morning and enjoy delicious food, wear a freshly washed uniform to school, have a fun school life and laugh and enjoy a lifestyle with freedom, but this can all be lost with one bomb. This is not some old story, but actually one that is being carried out at this point in time somewhere. We should not just live everyday without thinking about the meaning of it, but we should consider just what it means to be able to enjoy the happiness of eating ripe red tomatoes. I want to help to convey this to my friends and the children of the future.

## **We Must Never Forget**

### **Daisan Junior High School, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Yamamoto Mayuka**

76 year ago the Second World War came to an end. I didn't know anything about war. When we learned about the Second World War in our history class, it was very shocking to me. In the textbook I saw pictures of the atomic bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1945 and on Nagasaki on August 9<sup>th</sup>, 1945. I doubted my eyes, wondering if something like this had ever happened in Japan. Then I started to research what had happened in World War Two.

I was forced to accept that I didn't know anything about the war. The most shocking thing to me was when I read about the suicide attack units. These suicide attack units were an attack unit that was set up by the Imperial Japanese Navy in World War Two, equipped with explosives to attack by flying directly into enemies and gain results in battle. I read letters written by the suicide unit pilots and wondered what real feeling they had as they got into their planes. Some pilots wrote that it was not for country, but for those they loved. When I was watching a cartoon called "Speed of Sound Attack Unit", I learned just how war causes human suffering, hearing the line, "War treats humans as a part in a machine."

Another line that left a mark on me was, "Going to battle in the realization that death awaits is not the same as fighting to the death." I don't think I can really understand the depth

of these words. On August 9<sup>th</sup>, when I saw the war memorial ceremony at Nagasaki on television, I heard the “Vow for Peace”, presented by Oka Nobuko, representing the atomic bomb victims. “We atomic victims will as long as we live, continue to send out the message of antiproliferation of nuclear weapons and to promote peace.” This reminded me that we must never forget about the atomic bomb.

One question have is, why doesn't Japan sign on to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. On looking into it, I find there are 2 reasons. First, Japan has set a long term goal for the prohibition of nuclear weapons, however if the prohibition of use and possession of nuclear weapons were to become legally binding, Japan would find difficulties in regards to its status of being under the nuclear umbrella of America. Second, if a legal framework was put in place, the divide between nuclear powers would be deepened, and Japan's stance is that this would make it more difficult to progress with positive talks of actual reduction of nuclear weapons. But in my opinion, Japan should sign on to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Japan is the first nation in human history to have cities attacked with nuclear weapons, and Japan knows the terror of nuclear weapons. We don't want war again. When I heard that people as young as me participated in war, I just could not imagine it. But it's a fact that in wartime, it can be expected. All young people, including me, must not forget the war. We must never forget that the reason we can enjoy such peace in this time is thanks to the people who put their lives on the line, protecting their loved ones.

We must not forget the day that commemorates the end of the war, and the days the atomic bombs were dropped. I've heard that some young people think there is no point in learning history. The reason we are alive today is thanks to the people who lived before us. The next generation makes new culture. This accumulates into what we have now. We must never forget those who lost people dear to them, those who died for others and the terror of war.

## **Be Thankful for Daily Happiness**

**Daigo Junior High School, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Watanabe Mana**

In 1945, 2 bombs were dropped in Japan. They were called “Atomic Bombs” which have a massive impact and were used against Japan for the first time. They took a toll of hundreds of thousand lives. Knowing that I would like to study about war, I feel what we have to consider is not only to know about it but also to think about it for ourselves. So I decided to give a thought to what peace is all about.

First of all, the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima was called “Little Boy” and was dropped at 8:15 A.M. on August 6<sup>th</sup>, exploding in midair. The city of Hiroshima got destroyed by an instant blast leading to the casualties of more than 2 hundred thousand due to its heat

rays and radiation as well. Through the lesson and prayer that such cruelties of the A-bomb be told and that similar tragedies be avoided, in Hiroshima we have had a cultural heritage building called The A-bomb Dome. Not completely destroyed, the building was the subject under discussion to decide whether to be preserved or not. While it was in danger of collapse, some of the citizens insisted that it be taken away because every time they saw it, it reminded them of such cruelties as arose at the time of the A-bomb dropping, where at one time it was highly likely to be removed. Instead, preservation campaigns started, and it was decided that it would be permanently preserved. I believe the A-bomb dome has an influence to bring it home to people what war is all about. I hoped that in the future, that will help generations to come avoid war.

On the other hand, the bomb that the U.S. attacked Nagasaki with is called “Fat Man” and it blasted over the city on August 9, at 11:02 A.M. There were witnesses from Kumamoto Prefecture and Oita Prefecture saying they saw a ray of flashlight, felt an air blast followed by a mushroom-like cloud. Fat Man, one and a half times as powerful as Little Boy, left Nagasaki less damaged due to its indigenous mountainous landscape. It turned out that about 140 thousand people’s lives were lost.

There is a peace statue in Nagasaki. It is said to be marked by God’s love and Buddha’s mercy on its gentle face, by the threat of the A-bomb with its right hand lifted straight high above towards heaven, by peace with its left hand extended sideways, by silence right after the dropping of the A-bomb with its right leg folded horizontally, by saved lives with its rooted left leg and by prayer for the reposed of the victim’s souls.

And air raids caused huge damage. Not only Japanese military facilities and plants but also residential areas in Tokyo and Osaka were shelled. Many houses in Japan at that time were made of wood, for which incendiary bombs were used and turned the areas into a sheet of burnt fields. The great Tokyo air raid took about 100 thousand lives. Citizens in Okinawa were involved in an intense battle which cost more than about 120 thousand lives, a quarter of the then-population in Okinawa. Over 10 thousand children who were younger than I, lost their lives and I felt terrified by the fact that there was indiscriminate killing.

My research on war made me decide that we must not wage war again. And it reminded me that the world should not get to have nuclear weapons. As I think other nations do not trust each other for having nuclear weapons and war never ends, I hope the world will get to have faith in each other and help mutually little by little. Now it has been 76 years since last war. As time passes, I will fear more and more that what would happen if people should forget about the past and start war again? So I thought it was important to continue to pass down from generation to generation that we would not let war happen again.

And I thought I would go on living being thankful for the days when I live happily smiling surrounded by lots of friends and my family. I will live so as not to forget my gratitude for what we take for granted the way of life today, considering children living in war were apart

from their parents, feeling sad and lonely. And lastly I strongly hope these peaceful days will go on forever more.

## **A Life Connected to My Great Grandfather**

**Daigo Junior High School, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Ootsuki Yuuka**

In order to retrace the steps of my great grandfather, in the summer vacation of 2015, my family took a cruise ship from Kanazawa to Maizuru, to visit the Maizuru Repatriation Memorial Museum, the Repatriation Pier and others.

My great grandfather was sent to Manchuria in the Second World War, caught by the Soviets and spent 6 years in an internment camp in Siberia. After that, he was transported to Maizuru, so according to my grandmother he had a particular connection to the place. My great grandfather died 6 days after I was born, at the age of 93, so I never met him. But still my mother often commented that he was happy to have been able to witness my birth before going to heaven. Growing up, from an early age I was often told by my mother of the grand life, beyond our imagination, that my great grandfather had lived. In our house there is a copy of the war diary that he wrote.

My great grandfather was forced to live 6 years in internment in Siberia. The is the same length of time that I attended elementary school, and to think of the extreme cold of the north that he endured in the camp, I can't imagine the hardship. I heard that as he was not a particularly physically strong person, he became sick during the internment, and spent a portion of the time in a Soviet hospital, where he became extremely thin. Losing weight through malnutrition, he became so thin that it was possible to fit his waist inside a ring made by the fingers of 2 hands. He barely made it back with his life. Only given black bread to eat in the extreme cold, they were forced to live a harsh life, making bricks.

According to my great grandfather's diary, just before being caught by the Soviet army before entering Manchuria, they had come across an enemy army tank in Korea. They hesitated to attack, and it seemed that the enemy also hesitated, and both in the silence decided to let the other pass – my great grandfather felt that this had saved him from being killed on the battlefield. I feel that this was a decisive event in his life.

After the war, I heard that he, as a returned soldier, was a schoolteacher, and very much feared. He had a family with my grandmother and 3 other children, but often vented his anger on my great grandmother, and when my grandmother slept in, he would pour water over her in bed, and she'd have to go to school all wet, crying. She said that he would also punish them by hanging them upside down over the well. Hearing these stories made me think how people who have experienced the severe stress of war can never escape the pain, and how this influences their family and others around them. This causes a chain reaction of

suffering. Even though this might be so, my grandmother says she loved him, and she told me of how after being scolded he would always apologize. He'd take them to the public bath, and in his later days, she and he would exchange picture letters. My grandmother has a hard past and present, but she always treats me with kindness. If my great grandfather had not been sent to war, and my grandmother had not been subjected to such a strict upbringing within a peaceful household, then I think she would have had a much better life.

Based on this experience, I feel that even after war is finished, people continue to suffer more than we imagine. I think that in order to stop wars happening in the future, we must strive to create peace. We must also learn more about war. I think we should convey the terror of war to future generations. In my present lifestyle I have very few opportunities to learn more about war. But now I will make more effort to learn through my own family's war experience, and to think more about war.

## **We Must Never Look Away from War**

**Daigo Junior High School, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Abe Michiaki**

Here is a story that I once heard.

Wars help science to advance. In order to kill more people, science technology is developed.

I just couldn't believe it. Using prisoners from the enemy side in experiments, and then judging the development of science by the number of people killed is unacceptable. However, it is a fact that at the time of war new weapons were made and science did move forward.

War is carried out for the selfish gains of a portion of society, and unrelated people become victims. Scientists kill unrelated people. This spread beyond soldiers and even civilians become involved.

On August 6<sup>th</sup> 1945, the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. This might have heightened the status of some scientists. However, the victims were unrelated civilians, not even soldiers. Even after the scientists who gained status have passed away, people continue to suffer from atomic-bomb sickness. There is no way that a small promotion can be equal to hundreds of thousands of lives.

Today, we judge science on its advances for peace. Even though during war time it was judged on how it could kill people. These are very different types of science. Why is science that kills people valued? That is because the so-called "elite" had become crazy.

People who start war are people who have lost their minds, and lost the understanding of the simple fact that it is not acceptable to kill people. During World War Two, these people did not look at human life as human life. In America, the slogan "Don't forget Pearl Harbor!" motivated the nation. Even when they started attacking civilians in Japan, it was said that

Japan had brought it on themselves with the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. How many civilians were there at Pearl Harbor? Do we place no value on the lives of the citizens of a cowardly enemy country? In any nation, people live their daily lives, but some people value life differently.

Has this been only about America until now, and was Japan just a victim that had done nothing? Well, Japan was the assailant. Japan was the one who started the war, and it magnified because Japan didn't surrender soon enough. Humans lives were just pawns. I've heard that in conversations among the top brass, statements were made like, "If X number of people can be killed in a certain region we can make it our territory." This "X number" doesn't mean the number of the enemy to be killed. It refers to the number of the country's own soldiers who have to be killed to take over a territory. The military didn't see it population as humans. When people tried to oppose war they were excluded from society so that all supported war.

When we talk about the atomic bomb, air attacks and the Battle of Okinawa, we cannot say the America was at fault and that Japan was not. When having this conversation, I find myself to be almost under the illusion that Japan is not at all to blame.

At this very moment, I feel there are people who try to justify war. The statement I made at the start that "Wars help science to advance" is a good example of this. It's just an excuse. It makes war seem less miserable. They are just trying to justify what they did, and say it wasn't a mistake. If this kind of thinking spreads war could happen again.

No matter which way we look at war, it doesn't change the fact that it kills people. War is a bad thing. Japan should not try to escape the fact by trying to justify its acts, but to pray for the victims and vow to peace.

## **Tragedies in Those Days**

### **Katahama Junior High School, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Fujiwara Kaede**

In the year 20 of Showa Era, at the end of the Pacific War, A-bombs were dropped in Hiroshima city and Nagasaki city. It was 76 years ago when many people were killed by the A-bombs. We need to think about peace so such a tragedy will not be repeated again.

Japan is not suffering from war at present as we live in it. On the other hand, war is happening in some countries of the world. Japan got to turn her eyes to peace after the end of the war. The A-bombs killed many people and the world saw a Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as an international treaty. Japan, however, is not for it. Japan is the only country that suffered from them. There was an air-raid in Numazu city by the U.S. military at the end of the Second Great World War. The same Numazu City has proclaimed Declaration of Abolition of Nuclear Weapons and Status as a City of Peace. I think it is important to hope for peace from the bottom of our hearts and continue to make effort. My school offers

us a peace studies period as a regular class. This class helps, by watching videos and the like, to know deeply about war and think about peace. I had not thought about it deeply before. But through this peace studies period this year, I felt it poignant. I was surprised at video clips of war where lots of people were unanimously co-operative citizens. It was unbelievable that not only the government but also the nation was involved in war taking people's lives. There are still foreign countries in war, and it may take some time for the world to remain peaceful. A little step to the world peace is desirable. Even though we are not from those days, we have come to know how cruel war is, how we are not to repeat warfare, how dreadful nuclear weapons are. I wish every citizen to come to think of the world as safe and peaceful after there is no war around the world.

Many people's lives were lost by A-bombs 76 years. Hiroshima saw an atomic bomb called "Little Boy" for the first time at 8:15 a.m. on August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1945 as the U.S. military put it to use in a real battle. This was the very first time in history when a nuclear attack was directed on a city. Under this nuclear attack, 166 thousand people lost their lives within 2 to 4 months. The mushroom-like cloud from the explosion is said to be very massive. The U.S. military dropped another A-bomb called "Fat Man" in Nagasaki city at 11:02 a.m. on August 9<sup>th</sup>, i.e., 3 days after in Hiroshima city. This A-bomb is the last nuclear weapon that was used in a real battle twice in history. The number of victims ran up to about 70 thousand and about 36 percent of buildings there were completely burned or partially destroyed. The A-bomb Dome stands as famous remains of a building destroyed by the A-bomb. The blast came down almost from over straight downward, which happened so miraculously that it kept the building from collapsing and helped it stand with thick side walls and a metallic roof.

The reason why I thought of writing this essay is that our school started offering us Peace Learning classes which help us get more familiar with war. Since I learned about war in class at my 6<sup>th</sup> grade, I have watched movies and video clips concerning various kinds of war. It was very cruel and unthinkable at present. I thought it was important for every citizen to consider about peace so as not to let us repeat the tragedies of those days.

## **War**

**Kanaoka Junior High School, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Oohira Sara**

August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021. 76 years have passed since the end of the war. War is nothing in common with us as far as tv, books and textbooks are concerned. However, there may be problems leading to war and civic wars somewhere in the world even today. I have heard relatives of war victims on tv news, which was terrible and painful to listen to. My great grandmother and neighbors that used to live across the street survived the war. And I learned the area I live in was related to the war.

An old man who lived in my neighborhood was a member of “Takunan Training Facility” lying in my area and he spent a year in the southern parts of Palau Islands as a civilian involved in the development of oil and rubber, military service and maintenance of food.

Things were getting worse for the Japanese military and there was a time when a tank came along. Some accompanied him to check on it and then a tank passed right next to them, which was one of his many surprises. It was poignant to me to imagine how fearful it would have been for him to go to a foreign country as a soldier.

My great grandmother told me another story that my great grandfather was a member of a Kamikaze squad that would fly into the enemy in a plane loaded with bombs. Luckily his first mission flight was delayed due to the mechanical trouble. His second mission flight was not realized because the war had ended so he was lucky enough to survive the war. About 5 years ago, my great grandfather came on tv as one of Kamikaze pilot survivors. And he muttered, It was inevitable.

I felt very scared above all after I watched the tv show and a number of news reports as well as I heard stories from many people who experienced the war. What if war should start all at once tomorrow? What if a great war involving other countries should arise? I would feel a chill go down my spines to think everyone would vanish from the world including my family, my friends, my neighbors and my benefactors. I truly realized that war is of no use, win or lose, because many people get killed as they get saddened by death in a vicious circle of hatred. And, to the people who don't understand that we must never allow war to happen again, I would like to convey to the world the pain and sorrow that war brings.

## **Food Loss and Peace**

### **Kanaoka Junior High School, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Ueno Nagi**

We often see a massive disposal of box lunches and bread by convenience stores on tv news. I thought, “Why would they make so much of them if they throw them away?” I felt angry and sad to know efforts by farmers and production laborers went down the drain.

My grandfather living in Shizuoka city hates discarding food and making it leftover. He would scold my brother for being choosy about food when we were little. It was rare to see him in that way as he was usually calm and gentle. He went through a war. I asked him what kinds of meals he had during the wartime.

According to him, he used to get locusts and river snails to eat by boiling them down in soy sauce for preserves. Sweet potatoes and rice were rationed, and a per capita 150-gram cup of rice used to be passed out on a daily basis. The ration of rice and sweet potatoes was so insufficient that people had to go get illegal rice. To make up for insufficiency, people had to increase their intake by mixing boiled beans into rice. The Suruga gulf was rich in squid

and Pacific Saury that people could use to feel full. It took logs to make fire for cooking rice on a stove. They had soy sauce, bean paste, and salt except for sugar. Water to drink was available from taps as well as from wells. I learned from this that they only got what they needed during the wartime.

He had to be evacuated for a year. My grandfather comes from a farm in Fuji city with 7 or 8 apartments and he could have his fill of pears, watermelons or corn. August 15th saw the end of the war and found my grandfather back in Shizuoka city. They had even more trouble getting food supplies after the war. If they could find a job and earn money, they could survive by eating tangerines squids, Pacific sauries, salmon or eggs from vegetable vending places. So my grandfather went to school as he worked.

There was not too much of farm produce even if they earned money to buy some to make a proper diet. I found a great gap in food supply between rural and urban areas and between during the war and after the war. The story convinced me that it was very hard to get food to eat during the wartime and people were making every effort to get a decent amount of food by adding more water and making the most of every kernel of rice and bean. Now my grandfather feels happy to have his fill in the time of peace after experiencing severe food supply during and after the wartime. That seems why he scolded my brother for being choosy about food.

I think food loss problems come from the present peaceful time full of riches. I got a message from his talk that peace is important and that what I can do now is to avoid leftovers, to try not to be choosy about food and not to buy what is unnecessary. Gratefulness of being able to have your fill. Isn't this possible only in the time of peace?

## **To the Peaceful World**

**Oooka Junior High School, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Morioka Ayane**

On August 9<sup>th</sup>, I was watching tv with my family as usual. The Tokyo Olympics was being held and people all over Japan were excited when a tv show covered the following news: It was 76 years since the atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. Although I had learned about war and the atomic bomb since elementary school, this gave me an opportunity to think about war again.

76 years ago today. It marks the dropping of an A-bomb in Nagasaki. The number of death toll ran up to about 73,000 and that of the wounded, about 74,000 in comparison to the then-population of Nagasaki amounting to about 240,000. Apparently about 40 percent of buildings in Nagasaki city were destroyed or burned due to the heat rays of 3,000 to 4,000 degrees Centigrade emitted from the A-bomb. There is no one that experienced the A-bomb, so I tried to put myself in their shoes and picture how they felt terrified based on the information

from the Internet or news.

The news that I was watching covered the activity of Communal Witnesses. This activity started in 2016 with a view to putting hibakusha together with their next generation of youngsters to pass down their stories. Hibakusha would revisit where they were exposed to radiation and recount the audience about their ache and pain they felt at the time of the bombing. The average age of hibakusha is 83.94 years today and the time will come around the corner when there will be no one of them to narrate their experience. I was so impressed with how they have been active in giving their accounts. News reports and newspaper articles can give us a chance to imagine pains they had but then again, I figured there would have been hundreds or thousands of times of pains that I could imagine.

If you put yourself in their shoes, you would know how painful back then. Just imagine how usual things in life would be different from what they used to be only a matter of seconds before. Imagine how precious they were. Daily life like studying at school or talking with your family can be very precious. That is how I imagined. How would I live my life if I had survived alone, and the rest of my acquaintances had been killed? My broken heart would not be healed no matter how long it takes if I were to lose my loved ones. I was in a brown study watching tv. After a long time of 76 years, even today when news popular headlines include Covid-19 pandemic and Winning medals at the Tokyo Olympics, I came to realize it still is worthwhile to cover wartime stories.

Japan can tell how dreadful nuclear weapons like an A-bomb are as it is the only country that experienced them. Therefore, I insist that Japan pass down how peace should be kept through its experiences. There may be war happening somewhere in the world right now. People may be in battle with hatred hurting each other by using scary weapons that can kill people with ease. My idea is to change such a world for the better. I am not sure either what I can do or whether I can do anything. Hopefully things will get better with citizens working together in one nation as well as in another so people will be unfamiliar with war.

August 9<sup>th</sup>. The day reminds us of what peace means to us. We take it for granted to get up in the morning, go to school, study, have delicious meals, and hang around with our friends on a daily basis. But such a day is worth a fortune. Being children like us who have no war-time experience and also the axis of the future of Japan, we have to pass down thoughts of hibakusha back then to the next generation even though what is past is past. I pray that people in Japan along with those in the world will live peaceful days someday.

# A Step to Peace

**Oooka Junior High School, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Takimoto Chihiro**

This year marks the 76 year after the end of the Great World II. My idea is that we should get rid of war from this world based on our experiences. I have 2 reasons.

First, war hurts human bodies and hearts deeply. I watched a video clip of a 3-year-old boy who lost his eyesight through a Syrian war. Apparently, the boy was on a bus with his family to flee the war in Syria and all of a sudden a window pane of the bus was broken into pieces and one of slivers flew in the face and he was badly injured. The pane was reportedly broken by an air-raid. As I watched the video clip, I realized the dread of war hurting innocent children by seeing a real war victim while it brought home to me the sad fact that the boy would never be able to see things again. Also, as a grade schooler, I have heard wartime stories from my grandfather who experienced the Great World War II in his childhood. His way of living was quite different from ours. The food that he never had his fill of. The fear of air-raids. The environment where he could not play freely. It was unbelievable how his lifestyle was restrictive, which is a far cry from ours. My grandfather was telling me this story based on his vivid memory without wearing a smile. War makes people suffer and the memories will surely linger on. The war that made them stricken with horror killing many and manipulating their mind all over the world including Japan 70 years ago still go on hurting deeply the body and soul of children with a promising future. I have a feeling that war only causes people to get hurt. I want this idea known by more people. I truly wish people change their mind so there will be fewer to feel sad over new victims and that there will be more smiles.

Second, there is a way to soothe confrontations other than wage war. Any kind of war comes from disagreement in opinions or in ideas of religions. Is armed force the only solution to them? I doubt it. We need to be content with each other by understanding each other's opinions and the way of thinking through talks. We had the Olympic games last summer here in Japan. I had a thought after watching the Tokyo Olympics. Athletes from different countries worked together and engaged in games respecting each other. I watched athletes show their respect by hugging, shaking hands many times. I saw the reason why the Olympics is called a peaceful festival by watching the Tokyo Olympic games. Despite differences and confrontations in the religions they worship, the world was unified through sports. If the world tries to acknowledge and make much of one another, we will go without war. Diversity is being appreciated in the society today. I hope the world will be one by utilizing the Olympic spirits so it will be considered that war is not necessary in the society today.

For these reasons, I am against war. Because of being a junior high schooler, it is difficult for me to directly get involved in getting rid of war. However, what I can do from now on is

to know there are wars happening in the world now to make a peaceful future as well as there were in Japan and to think how we should make a peaceful world so the innocent will not fall victim without considering what's past is past. Also, we can make a donation for those suffering from war. There are lots of things that we junior high schoolers can do to keep war from taking place. I figure that the world should be as one through mutual acknowledgement to make the world peaceful taking away war. I would like to make a step to peace by finding what we can do and becoming a person who can respect each other before there is a new war victim.

## **To Accept the Reality**

### **Oooka Junior High School, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Nishizawa Ryouzuke**

Today we often watch news about conflicts on tv. But lots of people hardly give them a deep thought and just let them pass. I was one of them. I think it is because many people living in Japan peacefully do not regard it as their own business when conflicts or wars happen in a foreign country. I guess most of them decide they have nothing to do with them so long as they arise in a distant country. I used to feel that way, but one particular conflict changed my way of thinking greatly.

It was YouTube that brought it to my attention. There has been a great development in the information industry including YouTube for the last 20 years. Now more than 2 billion viewers use it.

Back on track, that conflict is called the Congo Conflict. Congo lies in the African continent with conflicts still taking place. Many children are utilized in the dispute. It was heart-wrenching to know the fact. To imagine they put children full of dreams, hopes and a promising future in the dispute, it would seem very scary yet telling as far as conflicts and wars are concerned. Think about how conflicts and wars make so light of human lives, and this is the very reason why they must not be repeated.

I saw pictures of children in arms for the conflict and youngsters forming a party. One look at the eyes of an armed child and you would know how sad. And it is difficult to tell if they are hopeful by looking at their expressions. Perhaps they come from their first-hand experiences of fear through conflicts in their childhood. They fall victim to the convenience of only a part of grown-ups. It was unbelievable when I got to know this fact and I refuse to believe it. However, looking at those photos made me realize it.

This conflict comes from rich Congolese resources over which they are in battle. Selling these resources to foreign countries will bring in a lot of money. That is, this is why adults take advantage of children in arms. The conflict here seems to show an insatiable human greed. All is fair in striking it rich. You may think that's only in fiction but it's real. This kind

of tragedy is taking place in the age of the developed information industry. Just a mere thought of it would scare me and I believe conflicts and wars should be avoided to keep tragedies from occurring.

And these rich resources are mainly rare metals. They are used mostly for main parts of a smartphone or computer. It takes a main part of them to make use of the developed information industry. In other words, this problem is none of other people's business which was regarded as nothing in common with developed countries. Of course, Congolese rare metals are only a portion of the whole problem but there is a possibility that more than 2 billion people are indirectly involved today. It is beyond description how I get complicated feelings to picture the smartphone I use may be a product of children's sacrifice in conflicts.

I get stricken with horror to think of a possibility of us general consumers indirectly lending a hand in conflicts while we live as if we have nothing to do with it. But if we get to know the fact and change our mind about peace while we may get to associate it with our possible indirect connection even with wars and conflicts from distant foreign countries. If we change the way we look at things, our conscience of peace will greatly differ and we will be able to broaden our horizons to think it is not solely about a country but also about the whole globe. For that purpose, I would like to be able to act taking people in various situations into account as well as avoiding prejudging I am not involved in anything.

## Peace Close to You

**Oooka Junior High School, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Yamashita Sora**

I vaguely remember seeing the picture of a young dead serviceman at the Buddhist altar when I visited my great grandparents in Toyama prefecture,

Every year when August 15<sup>th</sup> draws near, you get to see tv reports on the war-end anniversary. It was the time of the draft system that forced men of age to join the military. Books read that it was from the age of 20 to 40 at first and as the war extended, it was from the age of 19 to 45 due to the lack of manpower. I thought the servicemen were really respectable for dedicating their lives for the nation as they were ready to die separated from their family at the time of youth when their personality is shaped.

I have been to the Yasukuni Shrine before. The shrine is founded to worship those killed in battle. At one corner of the place is a building called the Yushukan. My father suggested we go see it and so we dropped by at it casually. Many pictures of young dead men are placed to worship there with a good number of testimonies and vivid pictures of them. I was deeply impressed at the sight of my father in tears who is usually very strict. Exhibits include replicas of zero fighters and human torpedoes. They are suicide weapons. They charged at their enemy with themselves inside together with a bomb. What a horrible fighter vessel, I thought.

It would have been better to commit suicide in the charge. Otherwise, you would have been a prisoner of war and suffered. Whatever thought would have made them come up with such a dreadful scheme? It is pretty difficult for people like us living today to imagine it.

During the war, their lives were taken by not only bombing but also struggling with famine due to lack of water and food and diseases like malaria. More than cruel pictures were too shocking for me to believe they were real, so I had to leave there without looking at the rest of the pictures.

I studied the reason why wars happened. Most of them were related to ethnic conflicts, religious confrontations, political disputes or fighting over resources or territory. I learned wars and conflicts lead people living in the country to lose their homes and turn them into a good many refugees traveling with no support of education.

I casually pass every day by going to school, studying feeling troublesome or disgusted while having a meal punctually, taking it for granted to get water from the tap and turn on the light. On the contrary, I learned there are many children without their parents, decent meals and schooling. I often feel my parents are bothersome, but I got to think I have to thank them for being there for me.

I would feel a chill go down my spine if war should be repeated in the time of convenience. I learned from tv news that there are still people suffering from war after 76 years have passed since the last. 84 people who got rained on by the black rain and are suffering from health problems were not recognized as A-bomb survivors. The tv news said Hiroshima High court decided that the plaintiffs won the case on its second trial as the government requested that Hiroshima prefecture and city appeal to the High Court. Recognition as hibakusha makes the plaintiffs eligible for free medical treatment, health checkups by the government after they release a hibakusha health handbook.

The more I study about war, the crueler things get, and I felt this was too much for me. There are more violent games recently. Young children are likely to be easily influenced so I think grown-ups need to join children to work on the peaceful future.

## **Kamikaze Squads**

### **Ashitaka Junior High School, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Fujii Nodoka**

This summer I got to know about Kamikaze squads. This was the first time that I had never felt so astonished, indignant and poignant.

Kamikaze squads mean special attack squads charging enemies by aircraft with the pilot and bombs loaded. The aircraft has no tires to land on with a half tank of fuel enough for one way designed so as never to return.

Kamikaze squad pilots were male and most of them were between 17 to early 20s of age.

After joining the squads and moving to the base, a commander gives each a sortie order and the pilots take flight. A 17-year-old is a sophomore of senior high school. How can you believe that youngsters of 17 to early 20s just like ones today found walking by knew they were going to face death soon?

Still, those pilots were aware of being killed completely. Long before they got their sortie order. And long after they joined the squads.

Can you imagine how it would feel living knowing you are soon to die?

They thought how honorable it would be to be able to make the most of their lives and save Japan and her citizens. There were people who even considered it worthy of pride to sacrifice their life for their country.

Still there were some who had to go unwillingly under the orders.

Reluctant kamikaze pilots had different reasons, one of which was that some had something yet to do or that many of them had a fiancée in their hometown. Some of them ran away and the rest stayed and took flight having thoughts for their family and fiancée. Some lifted off of the ground so they were never able to see their baby that was born a little before their draft.

What kinds of thoughts were they holding when they flew out leaving behind their fiancée or baby yet to see? Come to think of it, how were their fiancées feeling? I have no idea but the words painful and stressful come to my mind.

What is wrong with living and the desire to live? No one has the right to keep anyone who wants to live from doing so. I find it irrational that others took away someone else's life under the orders to sacrifice his.

They fly out in a few days after they get a sortie order. Don't you think it is insane that you are supposed to get killed in a few days? Would you believe it if someone in front of you were programmed to be gone out of this world in several days? How could I? But that was a reality back then in Japan.

There is a military song called "Doki No Sakura": Cherry Blossoms of the Same Class. It was a song which became popular during the Pacific War. The lyrics are summed up as "I'm ready to die. Let me be gone beautifully for my country." This song helped Japanese people think that death in war is beautiful.

"Yukyu No Taigi": Eternal Cause is a phrase that servicemen used favorably. They used the word "cause" to mean to die for one's country. I do not understand how dying would mean a cause if it should be for a country. I would very much prefer protecting our country being alive over doing so getting killed.

I believe that war and kamikaze squads are never ever to be. War means ending the life of many precious people. To avoid waging war, I think it truly important to know the significance of many lives lost in war, to think about war to understand better.

# Heading for Peace

**Ashitaka Junior High School, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Seto Masaki**

It was 76 years ago. On August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1945. The long-lasting war came to an end. An innumerable people fell to victim of the war due to air-raids and what's not. But Japan set about stepping forward to her restoration and peace as she kept looking up soon again. And she is still trying to be a peaceful country even today. I think Japan today owes it to how she went through atrocious experiences to be what she is today. The pain and bitterness from the war lead her to a peaceful world thanks to what she would not have gained otherwise.

It was in my 6<sup>th</sup> grade in elementary school that changed my way of thinking about war. I visited Chiran-cho in Kagoshima prefecture. It was a Kamikaze squad base located at the southernmost part of Japan. The Chiran Kamikaze Squad Peace Hall held an exhibition about the Kamikaze Squad.

The mission of the Kamikaze squad is to charge its enemy's warship on a one-way fighter. Of course, you cannot return alive. The squad members dedicated their life to the war without showing fear. The exhibition had many items and contents that can not be seen today including a model fighter, letters written to the pilots' family and sweetheart. The exhibition taught me that war is not just a battle. They showed a movie about the war. The movie was about poverty-stricken people's lives, sights of youngsters on their way to a battlefield with mixed feelings, and atrocities of air-raids that left cities burned down completely. It depicted everything in war so realistic and poignant. The freedom of not only soldiers but also the whole nation of Japan was restricted to meet demands of the war.

Things like that was taken for granted in those days. However, whether it should have been taken for granted or whether it was regarded as right is a matter of question. Of course, it should not have been. And it was not right. And I decided that such a thing not be caused.

There are more things to learn about war at school as I have turned into 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. We learned the times of war in our history class. Japan at that time was trying hard to catch up with how Europe was in its culture and politics. When Europe started colonizing, Japan followed in the footsteps. In time, Japan started to wage war with China and other southeastern countries. The victory in war enabled them to occupy the countries as they wanted and started taking over the control of them while they were not interested in listening to the citizens' opinions. When Japan was losing in war, she increased taxes taking her citizens into no consideration and drafted many youngsters as soldiers. The rest of their family were made to work under strict working conditions. Everyone bore the pain and held back the tears many times before the war ended. Whatever reasons they had, it brought home to me the truth that no one must never get anyone unrelated involved in battle.

Also, we had an English lesson about the peace volunteering activities and the spirit of

passing down the fear of A-bombs to younger generations. The A-bombs burned away Hiroshima, Nagasaki and their citizens in an instant. In addition, the victims are still suffering from the aftereffects.

What is peace? I regard it as life where people all over the world can live in the reassuring way. There are still nuclear weapons on the earth and battles are taking place even dozens of years after the end of the war. Is this world really at peace? It takes everyone's conscience to build a peaceful world where everyone communicates their opinion and respects other ones, too. By taking advantage of lessons learned through tragedies of war, we should head for a world free of nuclear weapons and battles and carry it over to the future. For that purpose, we youngsters would like to study about the war well enough to pass down the lessons to the next generation so those atrocious event will not be repeated.

## **Let Us Not Forget What Happened in the War Time**

**Oohira Junior High School, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Oomura Nene**

A few years ago I was shocked to hear a story from my great grandmother. The story is as follows:

My great grandmother spent the end of the war in Manchuria because their father was a professional soldier. Since the Soviet Union attacked after the end of the war, they went south from Manchuria with a minimum of luggage. They protected themselves by lying down on banksides being attacked by the Soviet army while fleeing to survive. They ran away desperately with their little brother on their back. At that time, there were many people in Manchuria who wanted Japanese children as workers. There were times when people offered work to the younger brothers and sisters of my great grandmother, but her mother always refused, having strong resolve to take all the children to Japan alive at all costs. They finally got on a ship returning home, but an infectious disease spread on the ship and many people died. My great grandmother had to volunteer to throw some bodies into the sea.

My great grandmother occasionally wept while talking. The experience made me feel like I was there and got goosebumps. Also, listening to the story made me more interested in the war.

76 years after the war, I heard that war-experienced people are aging and there are less chance to hear about the war. I'm sure there are hundreds of millions of people who have experienced the war. My great grandmother is one of them. I think there is no doubt that they have lived desperately in a difficult world. We need to pass on to the next generations not to let this experience fade away.

I think what I can do now is to listen to the stories of those who have experienced war

and to know about the scars of war we can still find around us. For example, there is the site of Numazu Navy Craft School in Shimizu Town. Here, an aircraft repair shop, mechanized civil engineering education and training were held, and many recruits gathered from all over the country gathered. There are things in our lives that tell us about the war just by not knowing it. I would like to learn from the remains and tell the history to many people.

I saw the footage of Auschwitz camp in a social class this year. I heard about what happened, but it was the first time to see the footage as it was at that time. I felt like I could hear their breathing, and my heart was throbbing with fear.

I think many people don't know about Auschwitz camp. Before the class, I had only heard the name. Unless it is well known all over the world like the atomic bombing, there are things we don't know even if it happened during World War II. We live in Japan and we are familiar with the bombing of Tokyo, the Battle of Okinawa and the atomic bomb, but the incidents in distant places like Auschwitz are probably not so much known to us.

I believe that war should not occur in any country, which is why I think it is necessary for people all over the world to know and think deeply about war.

On the other hand, we were born in an era when it was natural for us to be peaceful without knowing war. It is said that Japanese people are peace addicted. I think that what is left as a video is useful for us to know more about the war. Recently, technology has advanced and you can easily colorize old black-and-white images. I think it is important for each person to get a sense of what it is like by watching the images at that time.

Now that the number of narrators of the war has decreased, the memories of the war will be forgotten if someone does not relay to the next. We are the final generation who can hear first hand from those who experienced the war, and I want to hear as many stories as I can. I would like to become one of the narrators of the war, recognizing that it is the life that my great grandmother has relayed.

## **What We Can Do Now**

**Nagasaki Elementary and Junior High School,  
9<sup>th</sup> Grade Ishikura Yuuto**

The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony is held every year. Every time I watch this ceremony on TV, I think about the meaning of waging war. Now 76 years have passed since the end of the war, and now that more and more people who have actually experienced war are dying, what can we do to pass it on to the next generation and prevent it from happening in the future? I thought about it myself.

First of all, it means that the video and audio will be stored firmly and will be passed on to the next generation. In this modern age video and audio can be stored securely. Now that

the technology to store such information is developing, I think it is important to make the best use of these technologies.

The second is to think of war as “our own affair”, not as “someone else’s affair”. Generations like ourselves who have never experienced war inevitably think of war as someone else’s affairs. The reason is that Japan has no war and everyone can live with peace of mind.

So what about overseas? Currently there are 194 countries in the world, and 24 countries and regions are experiencing wars and conflicts. In those countries and regions, young people are being sent to battle. It seems that some countries are educating young children by forcing them to carry weapons. I don’t think that should happen, and we need to have a firm grasp of the current situation. Shouldn’t we think about such things and make “other people’s affairs” “our own affairs”?

The third is to actually step into the place where the war broke out. There are 2 cities in Japan where the atomic bombs were dropped. It’s Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I think it is also important to actually visit such a city. Everyone knows that the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. However, some people may not know much about what kind of damage actually occurred there. At the Atomic Bomb Dome Museum in Hiroshima, there are also people who explain the situation at that time. I think it is important to learn more about the war by having explanation from such people.

Fourth, be interested in politics. I think young people’s interest in politics is steadily declining. Even though the right to vote has been lowered to 18 years old and over, I have felt watching TV that many people who are voting for elections are middle-aged.

For example, it is not uncommon for students to play a central role in demonstrating overseas. But what about Japan? Many people, including ourselves, will be satisfied with what they are told and what they are taught. But I don’t think that’s the way it should be. It is necessary to have an attitude of learning by oneself, and sometimes an attitude of “aggressiveness” that can be transmitted from oneself, rather than oneself becoming an “accepting” attitude. I think it is important to be interested in politics so that you can vote firmly on those politicians who make claims that are in line with your opinion.

I think these 4 things can be done now. By firmly connecting not only to ourselves but also to the next generation, we should be able to raise the awareness of each and every one of us.

I think that each person’s actions will change the future.

# To Be a Forerunner of the World Peace

**Nagaisaki Elementary and Junior High School,  
9<sup>th</sup> grade Kuzuno Sho**

August 6, 1945 Atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. August 9 Atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki. August 15th, the day of the end of the war. In August there will be a lot of talk about war and peace. That time will be the only time to think about peace.

I visited the Chiran Peace Museum at the southern tip of Kagoshima Prefecture. The small town of Chiran was built 76 years ago as a sortie base and flight school for special attack units, so-called special attack units. At that time, about 600 pilots were trained, and 439 people were dispatched from Chiran to the Battle of Okinawa as a special attack base. In the Peace Hall, the relics of many members who died in the special attack operation are carefully stored. There were also many suicide notes left by the young soldiers who died for the country to their loved ones. The suicide notes contain the thoughts of the members, such as gratitude, aspirations, self-confidence, and fear, parting with loved ones, as the last thing they can leave.

What surprised me most about the Special Attack Units was their age. Only 1 or 2 are different from me. It was unthinkable that a young man at the time would board a fighter plane, cross the sea, and fight against an enemy country. I couldn't believe the courage to stand up to the wall that they had to challenge. The machine gun normally attached to a fighter is also removed, and you cannot save your own life. Only 1 big bomb is attached. Therefore, he had no choice but to ram the enemy ship while being unilaterally attacked. Still, its strong will to confront is so great that it cannot be measured. That doesn't mean they were not afraid to go dead. I heard that when they were ordered to sortie on the following day, they cried and cried and couldn't sleep. I also heard that soldiers' pillows and blankets were wet with tears. As time approached death, the fear would have grown. They would have wanted to meet their families, but that wish cannot be fulfilled, just disappearing with death.

It is said that the morning of the sortie was early. They went up to the sky with the sun, exchanged a farewell cup, saluted with a smile while regretting farewell to their friends, and flew straight to Okinawa.

In today's peaceful Japan, we are alive now because there were young soldiers who fought for the country at that time. The tears of the soldiers make up the present world. However, some countries are still fighting with weapons. There are still some refugees are starving for food. Even now, 76 years after the Greater East Asia War, world peace has not been realized. We Japanese have no difficulty in living, and we naturally feel happy and live.

That happiness is because everyone knows the horror of 76 years ago. I hope that Japan will be at the forefront of appealing for world peace. Therefore, we must convey the events

and fears of the war. The number of survivors such as former military personnel who have experienced the war has decreased sharply. We younger generation will be the key. We must acquire a solid knowledge of war, accept the idea of peace with the words of the survivors, and pass it on to future generations. That would be the duty of those who live in the present. We must learn so that the events of 76 years ago do not fade, so that the memories of those who have experienced the war become our memories. People think of others, and Japan thinks of other countries. I think that is important for world peace. As the only country where the atomic bomb was dropped, I hope that Japan will be a pioneer in appealing for world peace so that we can live without fear of life, such as the abolition of nuclear weapons and the support of refugees.

## **Thoughts on War and the Current Situation**

**Nagasaki Elementary and Junior High School,  
9<sup>th</sup> grade Kuzuno Ryo**

“Let’s remain silent,” I tell my brother. Then I got a reply like this. “I refuse.” I was silent involuntarily. As time went by, I felt that the feelings for war diminished. Yes, 76 years have passed since the war. It may be natural that the feelings for war are fading, but that shouldn’t be natural.

I have been to the Chiran Peace Museum. I found the place that would make people feel empty if they went there.

More than 76 years ago, before the Pacific War began, the Army airfield was completed in Chiran, Kagoshima Prefecture, and it became the Tachiarai Army Flight School. Overcoming difficult challenges and tests to realize their dreams, young people of the same age as us were fighting for the country. At first, they were educated and trained to become an aviation soldier, but as the Pacific War intensified, the content of the lesson has changed. It is a “special attack” aimed at hitting the opponent’s ship. I think it would have been very painful. The day to go to the special attack was not told. In the meantime, they just spent the time for training. It seems like a convict on death row waiting for execution. When I think about it, I really appreciate the peaceful life I have now. The students who go to the school live in the triangular barracks. Inside them, there are only futon and dim lamps. They just talk with their friends and wait for the dawn. I think it’s only scary to sleep if you live like this. In their lives, they write suicide notes to their families. When the day of the special attack comes, they will be sent off by their friends. I imagine that only tears can be shed on the plane. It would be indescribably sad to think that I couldn’t meet my family and friends anymore. Despite the fact that some people have fought for the country with such thoughts, we are not interested in war, just eat delicious food, study, and play games. It feels pitiful to live. Now that 76 years

have passed, I think we must pass on such events to future generations. Unless we leave everything alive while the victims of the war are alive, the story of the war now and the story of the war 100 years from now may be different.

Today's society is incomparably more developed than it was during the war. Unlike in the past, you can leave it as a video instead of an image and send it anywhere in the world. I think it would be good to utilize that technology and record the actual experience of the victims of the war as a video and send it out. And what I think is most important is that each person learns the misery of the war. And I think we have to think about the feelings of the people during the war, think about it, and learn the significance of the war. If only Japan thinks about war, it will not make much sense for the society of the world in the future. If they take up learning about war in the United States, Europe, and other countries, war may be reduced or eliminated in the future society. By doing so, many people will be able to feel gratitude for their normal life, and I think that even one feeling of compassion for others will increase. We must not waste the lives of those who have died in the war, including those who have died in the kamikaze corps. Never waste people's lives.

## Thinking about War

**Hara Junior High School, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Sato Misaki**

During the summer vacation, I went shopping at the supermarket with my mother. I noticed "Sakuma Drops" at the sweets corner. I remember seeing the "Tomb of the Firefly" on TV when I was in the first grade of elementary school. When I saw it, I felt the horror and misery of the war for the first time, and I remember crying and tears never stopped.

At the Himeyuri Memorial Tower, which I stopped by when my family went on a trip to Okinawa, I directly heard the valuable stories of those who experienced the war. There I could strongly remind myself that war is horrific and should never happen again, and that life is precious. Actually, I don't know the fear of real war.

At the present time we can eat rice every day as a matter of course. We can also wear clothes and go out as a matter of course. We can laugh and talk with our family and friends as a matter of course. It is the war that no such "natural" thing was allowed. I live my life without any inconvenience in my daily routine.

When I am living such a happy life, I can't believe that there were people who were fighting for their lives more than 70 years ago. Nowadays in Japan the number of people who have experienced war is decreasing. As a result, I rarely hear about experiences and what the war was like. So I didn't really understand how painful the war was and how much they didn't want to do it again.

However, when I was in elementary school, there was a class to think about war during

the Japanese language class. We learned the horror of war by seeing horrific pictures of war and tragic pictures we cringed involuntarily in the school library. The books and photographs told us how terrifying the war was.

What we can do without knowing the war is to appreciate “every day for granted”. Our future task is to correctly convey the misery of war, the true horror of war, the preciousness of life, and the wishes for peace of those who have experienced war.

To that end, we will learn, feel, think, and connect to the future as much as possible, which will create peace in the future. Peace is not something we wish for, but something that each of us protects and nurtures every day. I want to cherish this feeling and connect my thoughts to the future. I think this is the great responsibility of those who do not know the war.

The lives of those who died in the war can no longer be regained, and the time of those who suffered from the war is no longer returned. In order not to waste the history of war, we must never forget that we, who live in the present without war, must create a world where we can cherish the lives of others and ourselves.

## **Letter Rack**

### **-What My Great Grandfather Left behind-**

#### **Hara Junior High School, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Shinohara Sousuke**

My grandfather’s room has a wooden letter rack with a bitter color. It’s sturdy, but it’s quite old.

One day, halfway through the summer vacation, I asked my grandfather about the letter rack. I was wondering how long it had been there. Then he told me that it was handmade by my great-grandfather, who was a dexterous man. My grandfather took out a photo. The old black-and-white photo showed my great-grandfather for the first time to me.

During the war, when the Korean Peninsula was Japanese territory, my great-grandfather worked on the Korean Peninsula as a railroad worker. He lived with my great-grandmother in what is now Wonsan, North Korea. At that time, many Japanese people lived there, and they lived in harmony with the local people who lived there. However, as Japan’s defeat became more intense, the attitudes of the local people there changed, and he started to feel ashamed.

Then the Soviet Union broke the truce pact, attacking Manchuria and then the region of North Korea where my great-grandfather lived.

Apparently, my great-grandfather and great-grandmother had got straight onto a train, escaping with just the clothes on their backs. It seems that they just managed to get onto the very last departing train. As the women faced the risk of being abused, they shaved their

heads to look like men. People who couldn't escape were taken prisoner by the Soviets, put to forced labor in Siberia and a large number of Japanese people died.

According to what I have heard, my great-grandfather and great-grandmother took a train to Pusan and from there a ship to Yamaguchi Prefecture, where my great-grandfather's home was.

Until hearing this from my grandfather, I don't know about my great-grandfather and great-grandmother, and I'd never thought deeply about war. This is because I thought myself to live a life unrelated to war.

But now when I see the news, I realize that at this very moment, there are innocent citizens and children somewhere in the world, falling victim to war, as it continues.

A world without war is an ideal. But the reality is that it is difficult. What we of the younger generation can do is to know about war, and to place significance on it.

I thought that I would like to pass down the story that I heard from my grandfather to the next generation. And I will continue to hope to move one step closer to a world without war.

## **Knowing and Thinking about the War**

**Ukishima Junior High School, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Kubota Aoi**

What inspired me to think about peace was my mother's talk about my great-grandparents' war experience. My grandparents evacuated to Hiroshima to escape the air raids, and they were caught in the black rain that was falling due to the atomic bomb. My great-grandfather had been fighting for a long time on the front lines of the war. But my mother said he didn't seem to want to remember that much. I was very surprised to hear this story. I've never met him, but I'm not familiar with the war my family has had such a hard time. I felt like it was very sad. So, in order to learn about the war, I decided to go to see a panel exhibition held at the Numazu City Library.

The panel exhibition included photographs of the town during the war and panels explaining the mechanism of the atomic bomb. The most shocking of these was a picture of a charred mother and child lying on the tracks. Someone had covered their bodies with a futon quilt. The photograph which told the severity of the atomic bomb was the one that I wanted to turn my eyes away from instinctively. But I think they wanted to convey the cruelty of war by displaying such photographs. Taking that into account, though Japan today has a hard time with the spread of the new coronavirus, I think that we are quite in peace now when no one dies by war any more. Moreover, the Olympic and Paralympic Games, which are symbols of peace, have been held in Tokyo since late July.

However, what if you broaden your horizons from Japan and look overseas? There are still many countries where war is still taking place and countries that own and manufacture

nuclear weapons such as atomic bombs. What I often hear these days is the war in Afghanistan, a country in the Middle East. Afghan forces and armed Taliban clashed, and the Taliban changed the country greatly. I am very concerned that we have to see such things repeatedly as women's rights not be granted, residents panic, innocent civilians die, under Taliban rule. Seeing this information is reported along with the topics of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, which is a symbol of peace, I think it cannot be said that the whole world is in peace. Therefore, it should not remain as it is. I can't stop war directly, but I can look into, think, tell people about it, and appeal to people. If the circle of ideas expands, it should lead to a step in stopping and eliminating war.

76 years since the end of the war, the aging of people who experienced the war has progressed, and the number of people who do not know war is increasing. There may not be much time left to pass on the memories of the war that really occurred in Japan from those who experienced it. This memory should never be weathered. So I want to do it little by little from what I can do.

## **The Importance of Knowing**

**Ukishima Junior High School, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Miwa Kokoa**

My daily life is living with my family, eating breakfast, noon and night, studying at school, and having fun talking with friends. I felt that the ordinary days for me were very peaceful for people about 76 years ago, when I examined the atomic bomb and the war.

The atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima Nagasaki by U.S. forces in World War II. Japan is the only country that the atomic bomb has been dropped. There are many countries in the world, but Japan is the only country that has been attacked by the atomic bomb. It is said that many people's lives were lost, and Hiroshima and Nagasaki were just blown away. The photos and materials were very shocking. I couldn't face up to some photos. I felt very sad. I learned that the Japanese people at the time of the war were restricted from their daily lives in various ways. Important family goes to the battlefield and fights against other countries for Japan. Considering that many people lost their lives in the war, I felt that the ordinary daily life with my family was not a matter of course, but a very happy thing.

In the war, many lives are lost to both one's own country and the other country. I learned that both my country and the other country fought for their own country and fought desperately to survive so that they could meet their loved ones again. Knowing that, my heart got hot. However, on the other hand, I was wondering why human beings can do this. It is a war that kills many lives, but there are still some countries where the war is still going on. Terrorism can also occur. The world where wars are repeated due to differences in politics and religion and a chain of retaliation attacks is scary. It would be very scary to think that Japan

would be attacked by another country, or that the town where bombs would fly and live would become a sea of fire as seen in the photographs and materials. It may be unrealistic, but I'm still scared. I want a world without war, a world in peace, and a world without nuclear weapons. I thought about what I needed to do to achieve peace. Isn't it mutual understanding? I think dialogue is important for understanding. Isn't it possible that dialogue and deepening relationships will lead to mutual understanding, which will be one of the triggers for avoiding war and approaching world peace? I hope that happens.

I felt like an old tale about the war and the atomic bomb, but what I learned from the photographs and materials was cruel sights and cruel facts. There were things I wanted to look away from, and I felt scared a lot, but I feel the importance of knowing what the war victims and the atomic bomb survivors want to convey. I want to have a desire to know including the shocking part. I think it is necessary for us who have not experienced the war and the atomic bomb to create and know the opportunity to know. I think that knowing is one step that will lead to peace that we can do, so I will continue to know about the war and the atomic bomb that fell on Japan.

## Things to Pass on

### Ukishima Junior High School, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Komori Yuu

At 8:15 a.m. on August 6, I dedicated my silence with the bells of peace at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony projected on TV. Scenes were shown of the Atomic Bomb Dome and the Cenotaph, and the Prime Minister and the Hiroshima Mayor appealed for the abolition of nuclear weapons, "there are many people who are still suffering from the aftereffects 76 years after the atomic bomb was dropped. No one else should suffer from such pains".

About the Hiroshima atomic bomb, I learned for the first time that there is an A-bomb survivor called A-bomb microcephaly. A-bomb microcephaly is the birth of a fetus in the tummy of a mother in early pregnancy with a brain and body disorder due to a large amount of radiation. It was said that head circumference was more than twice as small as the standard and easy to get sick, so he/she could not live until the age of 20 at that time. The mother whose child was diagnosed with microcephaly of the atomic bomb said tearfully that she kept hiding it not only in the surroundings but also in the child, because there was a situation where people who did not know were prejudiced and discriminated against. A-bomb microcephaly is not hereditary nor contagious. If the people around us understand it properly, I don't think they will turn away. People with microcephaly of the atomic bomb have had other sufferings such as "discrimination prejudice" as well as "radiation exposure" since birth. They were sometimes showered with terrible words and fired from the companies. I was terrified that a moment's exposure would afflict people so long. I would like people who have preju-

dices and discrimination to think carefully about how hard it is for their lives to be lost by the atomic bomb and why they must suffer double triples.

I was not a little prejudiced until I learned about the atomic bomb. It didn't matter to me, it happened before I was born, now we are having peaceful everyday life, that is how I felt. However, when I learned that the suffering that is not peaceful for those who have been exposed to radiation is still going on, I was ashamed of myself. I have never been to the Atomic Bomb Dome in Hiroshima, I have never heard directly from people exposed to radiation, but now I could see how horrible the atomic bomb was.

The first grader of Hiroshima 2nd Junior High School who was exposed to the atomic bomb 500m from the bomb drop point had burns to the whole body and some students were blind. They still escaped from the looming fire and jumped into the river and swam desperately. Some students walked home miles away without drinking water. They were all fighting hard to live. I want many people to know the desire of this junior high school student to live, the life that could have lived without nuclear weapons, and the people who did not have to suffer. We can tell by knowing. Of course, we must not forget it, but we need to correctly tell the people they don't know about it.

On January 22, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which completely prohibits the possession and use of nuclear weapons, came into force. However, Japan, the only country to have suffered atomic bombings, has not signed this treaty to ensure the safety of its own country. Why can't nuclear weapons be eliminated? Is it really dangerous for Japan not to have nuclear weapons? I feel frustrated that it is taking so long to solve the problem. As time passed, I became worried that the horrors of nuclear weapons would fade away from people's memories. The important thing is for each person to have a desire for peace and to pass it on. I strongly hope that this will lead to the realization of the world free of nuclear weapons.

## **A Peaceful World**

**Imazawa Junior High School, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Yaginuma Yuria**

The peace that we now live in is an amazing thing that cannot ever be replaced by something else. For me, peace means all of us being able to live with their dear family, and live with a smile and without anxiety.

Just hearing the word "war" sends a chill down my spine. War is a sad and empty thing. As for the soldiers who fought at the risk of death, those who were killed, and those who escaped the risk of death – their lives were not put to waste. I respect them, and to me, they shine. However, war is something we must never allow to happen again. Soldiers received the red paper (a written summons to fight in the war), and after they went, their families had no

guarantee that they would return, and could only wait. A certain person said, “Japan will win. It is only a case of waiting for them to come back home.”

But the reality was no so simple. When people received that someone had died in battle, they were not allowed to grieve, having no choice but to accept the death. After a loved one leaves with a parting “I’m going”, and this becomes his final words, the family left must feel as if a hole has been opened in their hearts.

In Japan, atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These were the first nuclear weapons ever deployed in a war, and due to the fact that they possess a destructive force much more than other weapons, there are even treaties in place to prohibit the use of them. At the drop of just one, hundreds of thousands of people were killed. At the instant of the explosion, powerful radiation spread, creating an intense expansion of the surrounding air. 20 to 30 minutes after the dropping of the atomic bomb, it is said that over a large area, there fell a black rain. This black shower rained onto people. This was radioactive matter, and the people did not know that it was so. The people who were victim to the atomic bomb, even now, 76 years later, suffer an unerasable scar on their hearts, one that they will probably never be able to forget. This is something that nobody must ever have to face again. To this end, we have a constitution that states, “we will not participate in war.” If other countries around the world shared this constitution, then we could stop all countries from fighting and causing sorrow.

Is war really something that we need? I thought about the reasons that wars start. Wars start when countries decide to solve divisions that are caused by differences of interests or opinions, through violence. Just what situation brings about war? For example, one of the reasons of wars is fighting over land, from which food supply can be obtained. This kind of a fight is one for survival. Another reason might be invasion of another country because of some kind of international dispute. Even after thinking about different reasons for wars starting, I couldn’t think of a reason why countries would go as far as to physically hurt each other. When people fight and the reasons are clear, it is important that the government and its citizens concentrate on ways to work it out. People should understand that they must work to continue to pass on peace into the future. Just imagine what it would be like if war was to happen in Japan. War brings about damage that cannot be overcome by the government alone. What does it aim to achieve? In these changing times, how can we avoid the risk of war in the future?

We can’t just accept that a nation was “drawn into war.” We should all become more conscious of the risk of war, and think about it seriously.

# What I Can Do

**Imazawa Junior High School, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Ichikawa Mifuu**

What does the word “peace” bring to your mind? 76 years have passed since the dropping of the atomic bomb and the end of World War Two. 76 years ago, neither my mother nor I were yet born. Even my grandmother was born after the war, so there is nobody in my family who knows the war directly.

Since a young age I have been blessed with opportunities to hear about the war. Some people who told these stories would cry as they did so, probably because they didn’t want to remember. Each and every time I heard these stories, I felt pain. But it makes me think. No doubt, hearing these stories make me think that we should never have war again, but have I actively worked toward peace? Everybody thinks that war is bad, and peace is best. However, the number of people who actually take action for peace is a tiny portion. Most people just say it. And I am one of them.

The dictionary definition of peace is a state of calm in the world. We could say that war is bad, and a world without war is a world with justice. But is this the way it is? During the time of war, people might have thought that the war was for another kind of justice. Justice comes in different forms. This is what I think.

Next, I thought about the time we live in now, separate to the topic of war. For example, the number of people suffering from poverty is around 736 million. Around 21 million people are victims of human trafficking. The number of children who cannot go to school is around 264 million. What does this information mean to you? By all means, remembering that war must never again happen is important. Of course, that is important, but isn’t it just as much to consider the people who can’t enjoy the kind of lifestyle that we do? I don’t have any idea just how long it will take to save all of those people. It might take hundreds of years to save them. And over the rest of my life, I might not be able to do anything that directly helps them. As junior high school students, there is probably not much we can do. But if we do some things, little as they may be, this will accumulate and have meaning.

When I consider “peace”, I think that peace comes in many forms. Peace without war. Peace without poverty. Peace that we can simply expect to have, but may not. Me, as just a third-year junior high student in just an island on some planet – there is only a little that I can do. But I will think about what I can do, and try, together with my friends around me, to keep my word. I might not be able to save people in other countries. However, I want to start with the small things, and protect what is near to me. I might not be able to see with my own eyes the peace that is created. But I will work for a day when this may happen, by building on small pieces of happiness. This is what I believe peace to be.

# A World That Respects Others

**Imazawa Junior High School, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Tamura Natsuki**

Today is August 10<sup>th</sup>, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Year of Reiwa (2021). For Japan, this is the 76th year after the end of World War Two. On TV there are programs commemorating the end of the war. I have never thought of war as something related to myself, thinking of it as something vaguely scary. The atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the bombing of Tokyo and the Battle of Okinawa – each of these cruel events was to me fearful beyond imagination. What had happened in my own town of Numazu?

According to Numazu City documents, on July 17<sup>th</sup>, Showa 20 (1945), there was the Bombing of Numazu. 130 US military planes attacked Numazu, dropping 9077 incendiary bombs. This caused the destruction of 9523 buildings and killed 274 people. This air attack destroyed 89.5% of the city area.

Today I heard the story from the mouth of a 92 year old person who experienced this. During the Pacific War, oil incendiary bombs rained down on the town of Numazu, and the whole area became a field of fire. Oil incendiary bombs are a type that carries a gelled oil, which sticks to the roofs and walls of buildings, and can't be washed off with water. Most of the houses of Numazu City were burned, and the ocean could be seen from Numazu Station. This was because all buildings in between had been burned to the ground.

The Numazu that I live in now has many houses and tall buildings, schools and shops. Many people of course live here. I try to imagine what it would be like if incendiary bombs were dropped, destroying 90% of the buildings by fire. My own house might be destroyed. I would lose all of my clothes and bedding. I'd lose my place to live and all the things I need to live. Without any shops how could I find something to eat and all the other things we need to live? We might not be able to go to school. And the damage is not only to buildings – people were injured and their liberties taken away. Even if you were unhurt, your family and friends could be injured. I have parents and big brother and during the day we are all out at school or work. What would happen if we were all in different places and an air attack occurred? When the roads and railway are on fire it is hard to move around. Back in those days there were few cars so people had to walk. Without cell phones, it must have been hard to get in contact with others. Separated from their families, people didn't know if they were out of harm, or even if they were safe themselves. I'm not sure if I'd be able to act calmly in such a situation. I'd probably break down into tears from the fear and disillusionment.

By studying about the damage that actually happened in the town that I live in, I've come to feel that war is real and more familiar to me. We can relax at home, go to school and enjoy a lifestyle with freedom. We can enjoy delicious food, in a blessed time in history. I am compelled to feel happy that we can enjoy this life. I feel strongly that we must never allow such

a war to happen again.

What causes wars? National differences, race, culture, differing philosophies or religion? I think these things cause divides that lead to war. However, getting rid of differences is not the way. I think it would be boring if all of us were the same. Isn't it important that each acknowledges and accepts the differences of others? There is something that I was often told when I was smaller. "Don't do to others what you would not have them do to you." If all the people of the world could base their actions on this philosophy, we would see people respecting others more. I am wishing that war will be erased from the world.

## The Ring of Peace

**Kadoike Junior High School, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Suzuki Koharu**

2 children are making speeches about peace with a tense look.

Today, August 6, 76 years ago, the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima today.

I knew the name of the atomic bomb. However, I haven't investigated it in depth, so I thought it was a good opportunity to investigate it on the Internet and in books.

First, I searched the Internet for "Atomic Bomb in Hiroshima".

I couldn't bear to see them. Burnt-blooded people are lying with hollow eyes. I hated everyone involved in the creation of the atomic bomb. People are crying out for victory when they see the same human being in a different country but in a miserable state.

At the same time, I was also angry with myself. I didn't even offer a moment of silence until the 4th grade of elementary school.

Why do they wake a war? I can't come up with a convincing answer. When people are dissatisfied with others, they should express it with words. I wish they could solve things through discussion. Or is it not enough to communicate by words? Is it alright to cling to weapons and kill those who get in the way?

I would never think that way. I'm sure many people have the same opinion.

But just because we don't think that way, it's a sin to turn away from the mistakes of humankind in the past. We have to learn something from the behavior of our ancestors. We have to make progress. Then we should be able to create a peaceful world where war never happens again.

Then I read several books about the atomic bomb. There were words of the A-bomb survivors in these books that made me squeeze my chest.

"I'm sorry I survived."

Yes, the atomic bomb causes not only physical pain but also mental pain. Perhaps the wound pierces much deeper than the wound from a weapon and is a lifelong one that can never be cured.

Imagine it once. What would it be like if you were separated from your family and friends at this moment and left alone by yourself? Perhaps indescribable fear and despair will strike. And you will blame yourself. “I have survived.” “I wish I had died.”

Is it okay to listen to their sorrowful cry and the song of precious life? Is it okay to make the same mistake and dye history with blood?

I think that there is a key that can be utilized in the present age not only from the actions but also from the feelings of the people at that time. And I think it is our role to live in the present to realize or get closer to the realization. In other words, the baton of peace was handed over to us.

We can't do big things. Even within such a limited range, I think that what we can do is “remember.” And the circle of “I will never forget” expands. The Circle of Peace, in other words in Japanese, it is a “Heiwa”. From “don't forget” to “pass on”. That's how the “Heiwa” spreads. We have taken over the role of expanding that from the previous generation. We should do our best to fulfill our mission and connect “Heiwa” to future generations to create a bright future together.

## **July 17th**

### **Kadoike Junior High School, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Nakamura Ayane**

“Today is the day that in Showa Year 20 (1945), during the Pacific War, there were air strikes in Numazu”, said my father on July 17<sup>th</sup>.

When I was an elementary school student, when I visited the Numazu City Archives of Meiji History, I joined a tour called “Visiting war affected sites, to be aware of peace” with my father, and saw the damage on Onaribashi Bridge, which was caused by airstrikes. My father knows a lot about history, and each year when we come to the day the atomic bomb was dropped, and the end of the war, he always remembers, and makes a point of bringing up the topic. This reminds me that here in Numazu there were air raids at that time.

When we think of air raids, the Bombing of Tokyo is generally the first to come to mind, however over 200 cities across Japan suffered air raids, and 9.7 million people fell victim to them. Among these air raids, it is said that in terms of the rate of devastation to buildings, the bombing of Numazu was second only to the attacks on Toyama City. (89.5% of the area of the city was destroyed, and 270 people were killed.)

When I visited the Numazu City Archives of Meiji History, with my elementary school class, we saw items from the wartime on exhibit, and learnt of the frugality of people's lives, and the misery of air raids. It fills me with fear to imagine countless firebombs raining down from overhead. When people tried to escape from the sea of fire so many must have been caught up and burnt in the fires. Just envisaging people burning to death takes the power out

of my legs, and I cannot move.

Filled with fear, I look at the exhibits and ask my friends if they know about the bombings in Numazu. Most of them reply that they don't. Even in my case, I only recently first knew about it. I think to myself that it's not surprising. However, children who grow up in Hiroshima and Nagasaki where the atomic bombs were dropped, and Okinawa which saw the Battle of Okinawa, are taught about what happened in their locality, by their families and people in the region. It's customary for people to hand down the stories to the future generations.

The scale of the air raids in Numazu may be smaller. However that doesn't change the fact that it was a part of the war. Many people fell victim, many precious things were lost and many buildings were destroyed. We cannot allow this to go "unknown". 76 years have passed since the end of the war. People of the generation who experienced it are falling in number and memory is fading.

If people were to stop talking about the war.. if the war was all forgotten. I worry that we would be able to maintain the peace that we have today. There is a need for more people to know about the air raids on Numazu, and for people to tell the story to future generations. War should not be left behind as something that happened in the past but should be a tool that keeps us from repeating the same mistakes in the future. We, the younger generation must learn about the bombings on Numazu, and understand the terror of war. We must know that right at this very moment there is fighting happening in numerous places around the world.

What does it mean to take a human life? To people who have lost somebody dear, all that remains is sadness and grudges.

I myself want to make effort to learn about the war and bombings in Numazu, and to protect our peace. Next year on July 17<sup>th</sup>, I will be the one who says to my father, "This is the day of the bombings of Numazu".

## **The Terror of War**

**Kadoike Junior High School, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Nakazawa Eigo**

"You should have died together with your parents."

This is something that I read in a newspaper article. This is something that an aunt said to a child orphaned by the Tokyo bombings. During the constant war of the time, many orphans, left to fend for themselves were taken in by relatives. Many of them suffered harsh treatment. This article showed me just how much suffering is caused by war. So many people, through no crime of their own, have their freedom taken away, and orphaned children are treated like they are a burden on others. War creates this situation, war causes sorrow in the

utmost, and I feel strongly that we must never allow a return to this dark past.

A few years ago, I visited the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and saw numerous pictures and photos. As some time has passed, my memory is not very clear, but I do remember the strong impression it left me of the destruction and terror of the atomic bomb. Wanting to know more about the atomic bomb, I decided to go to see a panel display at the city library, entitled "The Atomic Bomb and People". The display included pictures of people who were killed by the atomic bomb and people who suffered from the black rain, and other items that told the sheer scope of the damage caused. According to the display panels, the heat ray produced a temperature of over 3000°C and many people suffered burns beyond any treatment, some being burnt black all over. The injuries did not end there, as soon large scale fires lit up and the change in air pressure caused people internal organs to burst from their bodies. When I heard about this, the tragedy of it caused me to feel deep sorrow. It made me understand the terror and image of hell that nuclear weapons can instantly bring about.

Nuclear weapons possess power to cause destruction and death, to hard indiscriminately, and further to continue to cause pain to its victims for a much- extended period of time. And just as the terror of the atomic bomb was imprinted on me, it inflicts deep pain on many others. I am reminded again that in order to stop such a cruel weapon from ever again being used, we must never forget the events of 76 years ago.

In regards to preventing use of nuclear weapons, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was in the news when it came into effect in January this year. Even now there are nine countries that possess nuclear weapons, and they are being further developed. It is said that there are 13,000 nuclear warheads around the world, and some of them have destructive power thousands of times over what was dropped on Hiroshima. In the newspaper it said that in the event of a nuclear war several of these could be used, and just imagining this send chills through me. Abuse of weapons with such amazing power would without fail send the world into terrible confusion. This is a scenario that cannot be allowed to happen. As long as nuclear weapons exist, there will be the possibility of it happening. Countries that choose not to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons probably do so out of concern that when the give up their weapons, other countries would attack them. But is that really the best strategy? Aren't there other ways to work it out, such as discussing with other countries, and giving up nuclear weapons simultaneously? I ask for the complete giving up of nuclear weapons before the situation reaches a point where things cannot be undone.

Until now, I had never thought so deeply about war. After getting some information, the most important thing that I have found is that war and the atomic bomb are a tragedy and a time in history that we must never allow to repeat. This might be obvious to anyone, but I didn't know it until now. There are probably many others of the younger generation who have never experienced war. Wars start when leaders carry out selfish acts. In order to stop this, each of us must understand the cruelty of war. We should not always just focus on our own

gain but lend a hand to those in need. I think that is the kind of world we should try to make.

## **In Order to Make Peace**

**Kadoike Junior High School, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade    Katsumata Koutaro**

When I hear the word “peace” there is another phrase that quietly sounds in my mind. It is “Forgive but never forget”. I come across this phrase when I was abroad.

2 years ago, I traveled to Singapore. Singapore is one of the world’s most advanced nations in terms of education, entertainment, finance, medicine and logistics, and modern buildings line the city. I had already heard that the country was occupied by the Empire of Japan during World War Two, but I couldn’t see any signs in Japanese in the city, nor any remnants of those days.

I asked our tour guide, Richard, to take us to the Old Ford Factory, a national war monument. I thought it was a good opportunity to learn something about the war. Richard was an Overseas Chinese, who could speak 5 languages and looked after us very well.

The Old Ford Factory War Monument is a museum that tells us a lot about the history of Singapore before and after World War Two. Not really being a tourist spot, when we arrived the only other people were an older Caucasian couple. As it has few Japanese visitors, the pamphlets there were only written in English.

In 1942, during the colonization of the Great British Empire, Singapore went through a change to control by the Japanese military. For the next three years, the country was given the Japanese name, “Shonanto”. On display, there were pictures from during Japanese occupation of anti-Japanese factions being executed, and textbooks, from a time when people were forced to learn Japanese.

In particular, I felt like I wanted to look away from the pictures of Chinese residents of Singapore being killed in large numbers. It is said that these Overseas Chinese were gathered together, interrogated and then transported by truck to the seashore or into the mountains, and shot with machine guns. Besides this even there were records of numerous unthinkable and cruel acts on display.

I read the English explanations on the displays, using my electronic dictionary to work out the meaning. While Richard was talking about the pictures on display his faced turned to one of anger, and at times sadness, and for a moment I felt I should stop asking him questions. Then it the thought came to me: what if the staff and the other visitors at the museum realized that I was Japanese? What would they say to me? This thought frightened me and I regretted visiting.

Alone, I was having these thoughts of how ashamed I was to be Japanese, when my eyes fell on the last panel: “Forgive but never forget”. Imagining the translation into Japanese, I

repeated it over in my mind. At the time, I didn't really understand the meaning, but somehow these words gave me a feeling of salvation.

The people of Singapore see the occupation by the Japanese military as a negative thing, but I don't think they hold a grudge towards the Japanese people of today. Here the display showed historical facts of the war in a matter-of-fact way. Now, 76 years after the war, the people of Singapore show a friendly attitude towards Japanese people, and are very kind to us when we visit. The Singapore of today is wealthy, bright and highly advanced.

I realize that forgiving means to put something past you. World War Two was, as the name suggests, a war that started among western countries and spread all over the world, and became a terrible event that brought about pain, sadness and sorrow to all involved. But if the people of present day were to continue to feel hate towards each other for it, wars will never end, and people will never recover from them. Even in the case of my own daily life, "forgiving" is something that is not easy, but some things require forgiveness to move on. I think that knowing about the war and learning history can help efforts towards peace. I believe that we who live in this day should forgive each other and move on to create a new future.

## **A Message from 76 Years Ago**

**Secondary School of Numazu-Ichiritsu Numazu High School,  
1<sup>st</sup> Grade Onoue Mari**

Recently on television I watched a documentary about volunteers who collect human remains. Volunteers who collect human remains refers to a group of people who excavate from the earth, the remains of soldiers and civilians who died in World War Two, and return them to their families. This documentary paints the picture of the hard struggle by a man who worked for almost 40 years as a volunteer at "Gamafuya", a group that carries out this work.

The word Gamafuya comes for the Okinawan language. "Gama" means a natural cave, and "fuya" someone who digs it out. This man is, as the name suggests, digs inside and around these caves that are thought to have been used during the war, collecting human remains.

Even 76 years after the war, he will do his best to find from the earth a part of a bone or human tooth even under the size of a centimeter. From just looking at this, he can tell whether it belonged to a child or adult and how many people were there. This scene showed just how many human remains he had come across until now. I thought it was amazing. He also showed the military swords, bombs and hand grenades are found with the human remains, telling of the reality of war.

In order to return human remains to the original family, it is necessary to carry out DNA analysis, on both the remains and the living family. Besides actually collecting the remains,

there is the task of visiting the family, explaining the situation, and then asking them to apply to take a DNA test. The man explains that this job will continue into not just the next generation, but the one after that as well. He says, “As long as I have the stamina and money to continue, I want to keep on going.” I was surprised to hear just how long a process this is – that it takes at least 1 year to get the results of DNA tests. The fact that this man has continued this hard work shows such a strong motivation towards war, death and human remains – it’s amazing that he’s continued so many years.

On another television program I heard about people who experienced World War Two in Okinawa. They saw people who, while trying to somehow survive, were killed indiscriminately. They also told of people among corpses who, carrying shot wounds somehow managed to limp away, and of families who were burnt by the US flame throwers right there in front of them, as they tried to get a food supply from farm fields. And even 7 years after the war, there were human remains scattered around. All of this made me understand just how terrible a thing war is. Over 200,000 people were lost in the Battle of Okinawa, and one thing that survivors share is the hope that remains of those lost are returned to their families.

Now, 76 years after the war, there are many remains that have no place to go. This, and the fact that there are some people who have a clear memory of the war makes me see that the war is not completely over.

On August 15<sup>th</sup>, when the end of the war is commemorated, at the ceremony to respect those fallen in war, the Japanese Emperor noted, “In the 76 years since the war, thanks to the relentless efforts of many people, our country enjoys peace and prosperity, however when I think of the hardships in the lives of our citizens, I am deeply moved.”

The words helped me to understand that it is thanks to the people who fought and died for their country and family that we can now enjoy the peace and wealth of today.

Okinawa is known for its beautiful blue ocean, and so it is hard to believe that such a terrible war played out there. If I had been one of those who experienced this war and survived, I would feel the need to pass the stories on to the next generation. I believe that we must vow to never again allow war to happen and to never be involved in war again.

## **Maintaining the Memory**

**Secondary School of Numazu- Ichiritsu Numazu High School,  
1<sup>st</sup> Grade Serizawa Fumika**

When you turn on the television in summer, it’s common to see programs about war. It’s possible to learn about war through pictures of children in wartime and stories of people who experienced the war.

August 6<sup>th</sup> is the day that the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, and then on

August 9th it was dropped on Nagasaki. The atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima was 3m long, weighed 4ton and had a diameter of 0.7m. All buildings within 1.5kms of the bomb epicenter were totally destroyed and those within 2.5kms were partially destroyed. The blast wave, heat ray and radioactivity caused great injury. In particular, the radiation caused injury not only to those who were exposed at the time, but also over a long period thereafter.

I only know of the atomic bomb through records such as photos, but to lose what is dear to you in an instant, is something that fills me with sadness just at the thought. Even if I was to survive, how much guilt would I feel if all my family and friends had been killed?

I have a great-grandfather who actually went to the battlefield. He liked taking photos and showed me some that he took at the battlefield. In some of these photos my great-grandfather was smiling with another man, both of them wearing military uniform. There were also photos of a man who wore a splendid uniform, showing him to be a Captain, and pictures of the sea, etc.

The place that my great-grandfather went to was the Philippines. When my mother was a child, he told her stories about things like when he had no food, he would steal produce from farms and once a local person gave him bananas to eat, and how he spent the days with bullets flying above his head, and coming across dead bodies, and how this all became a normal situation to him. My great-grandfather had wanted to put these experiences into a book but couldn't realize this dream during his life.

This year marks 76 years since the end of the war. There remains very few people who experienced the war first hand like my great-grandfather. So I believe that it is important to record in the form of essays and by archiving items from those times what we have heard from people like my great-grandfather, to inform people who don't know about war. I think my great-grandfather wanted to put his experiences into a book was for people of the future. I now understand the feeling that he had of wanting to tell his story of war, for it not to be forgotten.

Recently on television I saw a person giving their personal account of war experience. It was an old woman whose husband had gone to war.

"You haven't experienced it, so you don't know about it, do you?" she commented.

I accept that those of us who didn't experience the war can't understand the harshness and sorrow of it, but we can learn something from hearing about it from people who experienced it. And now as there are so few of them, their stories are all the more precious and must not be put to waste.

As I wrote at the start, war is unforgiveable and it confuses peoples' values, making survivors feel guilty that they survived. As technology advances, new bombs have a force much more than over those used in the past and could kill a number of people many times over those of previous wars.

I feel this way because I heard about it through my great-grandfather and the old woman

on television. These memories of war must continue to be told to many people. I believe that passing these stories down will help to create a peaceful future without war.

## **Let All of Us Be a Kataribe (oral historian)**

**Secondary School of Numazu- Ichiritsu Numazu High School,  
2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Yoshikawa Io**

Watching the evening television news, I heard the phrase “black rain.” Briefly wondering what it meant, I let it pass. The next day on the front page of the newspaper I read the big headline: “Black Rain - Government abandons appeal.” On reading the article, I learnt that the “black rain” was in reference to the rain that fell after the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. This rain contained radioactive matter and soot from the fires caused by the atomic bomb, making it black. The article explained that in a class suit, it had been acknowledged that all plaintiffs who were outside the zone of protection designated by the government, including Hiroshima City, would now be classed as atomic bomb victims. This was all new information to me.

The article included the story of an 81-year-old who had been exposed to the black rain at the age of 5, and this had just been acknowledged. I was surprised that this happened when they were only five years old, and they had suffered for 76 years. Honestly, as somebody who has always lived a life of peace, I found it difficult to imagine the feeling of somebody in that position. But it’s a reality that there are people who continue to suffer even now. 76 years have passed since the war, and the people who experienced the war and the atomic bomb have grown old, many already having passed away. Why couldn’t a helping hand have been extended to them sooner? I hadn’t known that there were still people in suffering. I am now ashamed that I didn’t know, and had thought that the war was all over, something in the past. It made me think that for the people who experienced the war, it is something that continues to this day, as long as they are still alive.

Every year in August there is a lot in the news about the war on television and in the newspapers. Until now I always saw it as something unrelated to me, but after knowing about the black rain, I’ve become more interested in the subject and listen more carefully. One thing that left a strong impression on me is a documentary about the war orphans of Nagasaki. The first image I saw was one of a boy with his dead younger on his back, standing at a place to cremate bodies. The boy is standing straight, with his lips tightly shut, looking forward. There is no tear from his eyes. Of course, he must be saddened by his younger brother’s death. So why this stance? Anyone would expect him to cry, even if he tried not to. Was he just so overwhelmed by the sadness that his heart has become empty, and he’d lost the way to think? Or was it something even more miserable than this? My head is full of questions. The picture

eats at me. Even though it is just a single photo, it moves the beholder, fixing itself in his mind and will not go away.

The program was about the topic of war orphans. After the war, all over Japan, there was a large number of so called vagrant orphans, who'd lost their parents. Under the order of the US military, these children were raised in facilities. The smaller children called the older children "big brother" and the women who ran the dormitories "mother." Further, they referred to people in the facilities as "family." These people maintain the feeling they has toward each other at that time, even know, 76 years later, calling out "big brother" with tears. One person raised there said that when he came out of the facility he felt lonely, and wanted to soon start a family of his own. Him with his own real family all laughing around a dinner table left an impression on me. I wondered if the boy who had carried his brother on his back had also been able to start his own new family. What kind of life had he lived? By all means I hoped that he had a happy life.

It only took 1 atomic bomb to cause so much loss of life and hurt to so many people. This cannot be allowed to happen again, but even at this moment there are places in the world where missiles fly through the air, and innocent children are killed. However, the opportunities to hear about terrible wars from those who experienced it are quickly becoming fewer. My great-grandfather received the red letter when he was 21 and was dispatched to Manchuria. Last year at age 96 he passed away, so I cannot hear about it from him. I regret that I didn't ask him about it. I want to listen to the stories about the war from the so-called kataribe. And then I'd like to become a kataribe. I'd like to start by telling my little brother and sister about what I've seen and heard.

## **Aiming for a Peaceful Future**

**Secondary School of Numazu- Ichiritsu Numazu High School,  
3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Oka Nonoka**

When hear the word "peace" what do you imagine? Many people say that they think it is a situation without war. And many people also think that because Japan is in peace, we are happy. However, even right now there are many places around the world in war, and innocent people are dying. If a world without war was to come to us, would this be real peace? There are differing types of peace, including pessimistic peace without violence and war, and positive peace without poverty, oppression and discrimination, but with cooperation and harmony. I think if all wars stop, unless we achieve positive peace around the world, we can't call it real peace.

So, why do wars start? Why don't people use their mouths to talk and find a solution? There are various reasons that wars start, including differing philosophies of religion and

culture, reasons relating to politics and resources. I think that in order to avoid wars starting, each country needs to respect the other's opinions. Japan is the only country that has experienced nuclear attack, so we have the 3 Non-Nuclear Principles. However, there are other countries that continue to prepare for war, developing nuclear weapons and other new weapons. As long as the thinking is "just in case there is a war" and not "to avoid war", then we will never have a world without war.

At present there are many profound issues such as Covid 19 and global warming and no matter how hard we try to put measures in place, we can't overcome. These issues should show us that in the present situation, we should be working together rather than thinking only of our own benefit and criticizing others. I believe that only by showing consideration for each other can we get rid of war. In my English class, I learnt the word "greedy." Greed comes from an insatiable hunger, it means to want more and more no matter how much you have already taken, whether it is money or power. With this kind of thinking, people become only selfish and lack any hint of charitable notion. The people of the world have to work together to achieve the goal of peace, and to get rid of greed.

I am not yet an adult. So, I cannot visit regions of the world that are at war to try to help. However, I can try to learn what's happening and find something to do to help, such as collecting charity money. If all of us start to do something, little by little peace will come to the world.

People like us who have ever experienced war just don't know how terrible it is. Without knowledge, it is possible that we could repeat the same mistakes. Although we can't change the past, we are the ones who will make the future. Therefore, we must know the past, and make sure that we don't repeat the mistakes. In order for this to happen, I think that we should hand down stories of the terror of war to the next generation.