

except for him. My great-grandfather used to say that he didn't want to talk about the war anymore. It must have been such a painful experience. And my great-grandmother used to live in Tokyo but said that she had fled to Numazu because of the terrible air raids.

Now we have food, a home, and school, but we shouldn't take them for granted. If war were to break out, we could lose them all in a moment.

That's why I don't want war. Because I don't want to lose my family and loved ones.

Ukraine and Russia are at war now. Children around my age are surely living with fear every day. When I think about it, I want the war to end as soon as possible. Knowing about war has made me think even more firmly, that war should never be allowed.

August 15th

Daiichi Junior High School, 1st Grade Matsuda Narumi

I turned thirteen on August 15th.

However, this day is not a day to say "Congratulations" casually. Because it is a day to remember the sad event of "war". Seventy-seven years have passed since the end of the war. During this time, there are many lives born on August 15th, including myself. I am writing this essay hoping that this day will be a day where I can say "congratulations".

August 15th, the anniversary of the end of the war, has arrived again this year. On TV programs on this day, many people say, "War is very scary. We must never let it happen again." Those who have experienced war express the horrors of war in concrete terms. They talk about fear when a person dies, fear when you are about to die, feeling so hungry almost to collapse without food. But I don't really understand this. So, I wanted to know, I thought I had to know, so I tried researching on the Internet.

Then, there was a video of an elderly person talking. "War is scary and frightening. That is why I became a storyteller. I don't know how long I will be able to talk about it, but even if I can't walk and have to use a wheelchair, I have to tell everyone about the horrors of war." These words stuck in my heart. "I'm sorry. I didn't understand just how serious this is," so I heard myself in my mind. The actual war is so scary that even wheelchair users will make the effort to talk about it. So I could feel that the elderly have a strong sense of mission that they must convey to young people.

I examined August 15th from a different perspective - August 15th to other countries involved in the war. Then I found out that August 15th is Korea's Independence Day. I learned that Korea was liberated from Japanese colonial rule, and it was the anniversary of independence as a country. I learned that August 15th is a national holiday, known as "Gwangbokjeol (Liberation Day of Korea)", a day to regain the lost light and restore lost sovereignty.

China celebrates September 3rd as the "Victory over Japan Day". It turns out that the day

commemorates China's complete victory in the war against Japan.

Korea was ruled by Japan. China fought against Japan. I think I understand why both countries have a bad image of Japan. In Japan, it is "the day the war ended". In Korea, it's "the day of independence from Japan". And in China, it's the "victory day of the war against Japan". It turns out that each country has a special feeling towards August 15th. It seems that each country has a different "feeling" about the day the war ended, but I can see a common point. Anxiety about not knowing what to do after the war is over. The sadness of losing so many people. The regret that life will not be like before. And the most important thing is to feel hatred of the other country.

When you go to war, you win and lose. But that's the result. It is a fact that many lives were lost in war. Can it be said to be independent and victorious? I wonder. There are times when, in the case of war, the words "independence" and "victory" don't tell the whole story. The independence and a victory were obtained at the cost of an unimaginably large number of people. I would like to think about whether the sacrifice of so many people was really necessary, or whether the war was necessary. Why was it not possible for the nations to talk to each other and think of a way to make peace? Rather than hate the past, I want to think about peace together. It is very difficult, but it is much better than going to war.

May August 15th be an anniversary that reminds us of what is important to people around the world. I hope it will be a day when I can say "Congratulations" with a smile.

To Prevent a Second Tragedy

Daiichi Junior High School, 3rd Grade Akaike Kota

What is the problem with Russia's invasion of Ukraine? There are many, but have you ever heard of the prisoners of war? The Russian military is accused of abusing female Ukrainian soldiers. However, Russia is not alone in the problems surrounding the treatment of prisoners of war. The Ukrainian side also disclosed the personal information of Russian prisoners of war, threatened Russian soldiers, and published the situation on SNS. Both of these actions should not be tolerated.

However, these problems with prisoners of war are nothing new. The problem of prisoners of war also occurred in Japan during World War II, and Shusaku Endo has written a novel based on such incidents in Japan in the book "The Sea and Poison". But this is far more brutal than the problems posed by Russia and Ukraine. Because prisoners of war in this book were victims of vivisection - they were experimental subjects. Suguro, the protagonist of the story, consented to participate in this vivisection. He consented to the vivisection of American prisoners of war, but in the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine, even if either side were to take soldiers as prisoners of war, they would not do it. Furthermore, there is no one in Japan

today who would do the same.

The treatment of such prisoners of war is stipulated by treaties. The treaty is called the Geneva Convention. This treaty was signed in 1949. The treaty is meant to protect prisoners of war who are no longer able to take direct part in combat. However, it has only been about 70 years since the treatment and rights of prisoners of war were protected. From this we can see that it took a very long time for the prisoners of war to be protected by that treaty.

The incident that served as the model for “The Sea and Poison” is referred to as the “Kyushu University Student Autopsy Incident”. This is an incident that happened in 1945. Venue: Kyushu Imperial University School of Medicine. There, the surgeons performed experimental surgery on the American prisoners of war, causing them all to die. The American soldiers who were taken prisoner here are all eight crew who were on board a US military aircraft B29 that crashed at the border of Kumamoto and Oita prefectures. The purpose of the experimental surgery was to see if it was possible to live with one lung removed. Another was to confirm whether seawater is effective as a blood substitute. After the war, 30 Japanese military officers and Kyushu University professors were indicted as war criminals, and 23 were convicted. Five of them were sentenced to be hanged, but none were put to death because they later relieved by pardons.

So why did such a terrifying event such as a vivisection take place? It really depends on how much people have been driven to do something. The same is true for the issue of prisoners of war between Ukraine and Russia. People must have made a mistake in treatment of prisoners of war because they were driven to the extreme anxiety of not knowing when they would die in the war. And the main character of the novel, Suguro, was exhausted both physically and mentally, so he made the wrong choice. When people are driven into a corner, it becomes difficult for them to make decisions in a reasonable way. When the actual vivisection was performed, the war was in full swing. This added to the difficulty of making the right decision.

So how can you stay calm and make the right decisions? As a countermeasure for this, it is important to take a bird’s-eye view of the current situation. For example, we are now in an abnormal state of war. Therefore, it is important to take a bird’s-eye view of your own country’s situation and your own actions from the perspective of the international community. In this way, just taking a step back from where you are now and looking at it will be effective enough. To prevent such a tragedy from happening again, it is important to face up to the events of the past and correctly pass them on to future generations.

Rubble on the Opposite Shore

Daini Junior High School, 2nd Grade Komatsu Sakurako

Spreading black smoke lead-colored clouds
With violently exploding sparks
A raging fire that lights up the night like day
Beyond that
Buildings crumbling while burning
The things that surrounded me are gone
All that's left is
A mountain of rubble that was once a building

Many bright colors have disappeared
That bright face
The warmth I loved
Where has it gone?

It was a shock
I saw it in an old recorded video
The end of the textbook was a
Black and white screen, but
The war I learned about from TV when I was little
Still remains in my heart

What about my surroundings
There's no big battle changes the scenery
There's no sadness that takes away the colors, either
Family, Friends, Teachers Neighbors
Unchanged
I'm spending time with them
A warm bath and rice
Always in front of me
What you take for granted
We have them thanks to peace
And must be thankful

The peace we have now

Is an accumulation of things up to today
We must be thankful
Forever on

Peace and War and True Strength

Daini Junior High School, 3rd Grade Satomura Shun

August 6th. The Peace Memorial Ceremony held in Hiroshima was broadcasted on TV again this year.

While listening to the “Pledge for Peace” made by the two representatives of the elementary school student, I learned that 77 years have passed since the tragic atomic bombing, and it reminded me that even now wars are taking place somewhere, plundering the everyday lives of people. While I was thinking about it, I remembered the work, “Message Left on the Wall” that I studied in Japanese language class last year.

At that time, I looked up “war” and “peace” in the dictionary to get the meaning of the words right. “War” is “a conflict between nations, using military power to force their will on the other nation”, and “peace” is “a state in which society is not disturbed by war or violence”. I feel that these two words are the exact opposite of each other. If I had to choose between the two no matter how you think, “peace” would be the best choice, and in order to maintain the current peace, I thought that the first thing I needed to do was to learn about the conflict-
ing “war”, so I decided to research the Hiroshima atomic bombing.

In 1945, the United States used the atomic bomb “Little Boy” for the first time in the world, on the city of Hiroshima. This was the first nuclear attack on a city in human history, and it is said that about 47% of the population of Hiroshima City at the time died within four months of the bombing. Even today, the Atomic Bomb Dome and the ruins of Shima Hospital, which show the horrors of war, remain. And there is no end to the sorrow of losing loved ones and the suffering of those who survive, saying things like, “I wish I had died rather than my brother dying.” The atomic bomb survivors, who were deeply wounded in their hearts, nevertheless looked to the future and showed determination, saying, “With the power of young people, we will surely build a peaceful world.” Despite their sorrow and suffering, the *hibakusha* (atomic survivors) never gave up on living, supported each other, and helped Hiroshima to recover. Even in despair, the people of Hiroshima never look back, always pushing forward. I found it very surprising.

I think there are many ways to maintain peace in Japan, including through television, school events, and the Internet - we need to think about how to spread the message. One way to do this is to listen to the voices of the storytellers. Now we can still hear the words of the old storytellers, and it is possible to take over and pass them on. Based on this, it is important

to think about war more than now.

In war, countries use force to fight and coexist with each other through force. But until then, There will have been issues where each side believes they are correct, and mutual acceptance cannot be achieved. It is important for both parties to agree with each other and find a method that does not use force to solve the problem. As children, there may be nothing we can do. However, if people change their focus to the direction of caring for the other person, we will all surely get closer to peace. I think it's important to focus "not only on oneself".

As mentioned in this year's "Pledge of Peace", when we think that "true strength is to recognize differences and try to understand others," we young people's awareness will change little by little. In the future, when we grow up, if we have the true strength to think about other people, war won't happen. We can create the future. First of all, I think it is important to take action from ourselves.

Baton of Peace

Daini Junior High School, 3rd Grade Murata Haruki

One morning during summer vacation, when I was watching the High School Baseball Championship on tv, the image on the screen suddenly changed to show some sort of ceremony being held. Wondering what it was, I looked at the calendar to see that the day was August 9th. Yes, I hadn't realized it was the day the atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki until I saw the footage.

Seventy-seven years have passed since the end of the war, records of those who lived through that time are being lost, and "days of peace" are taken for granted. However, some countries are currently at war, and we do not know when it will happen, but Japan might be at war sometime. To protect this peaceful and most precious place built by our predecessors, before the people who experienced the war are gone, we who live in this time should listen to the stories of this memory and the horror and misery of war. We must pass on the "peace baton" to our children and grandchildren.

I really wanted to hear stories from people who experienced war, but there are no such people close to me. So, I tried to find out what life was like back then. At that time, Japan was very poor, and it was decided what clothes people wore - girls wore loose work trousers called *monpe*, *geta* wooden clogs and *zori* sandals. Boys wore a school uniform every day, with buttons made of wood or clay due to the metal shortage. And since there was a shortage of food, they ate things that would normally be thrown away. For example, they ate mandarin peels, corn cobs, cabbage cobs, pumpkin seeds and watermelon seeds. In addition to the problem of food shortages and shortages of supplies in general, there was also the problem of air raids from enemy countries. The everyday life had been taken away from them. Some-

thing unimaginable in the Japan of today, not knowing when their lives might be taken, and many people died.

Next, I thought about how I could convey what I had researched. Three main methods come to mind. In the following order, I came up with “how to educate in school classes”, “how to record data using the Internet etc.”, and finally “how to convey through war-related movies, dramas and animations”. Among these three, I focused on the third method, “How to convey war-related movies, dramas, and animations.” Anime such as “Grave of the Fireflies” and “In This Corner of the World” allow you to see and hear what it was like back then. It would be easy for people across the generations from young to old to understand, and further for foreigners to understand because it is expressed in pictures. Therefore, I thought that this method was suitable for this era.

From now on, I believe that we should use media such as television and the Internet to convey the thoughts of those who experienced the war and lived at that time and conveying them in a way best suited to each era. And the most important thing is to try to learn about war of our own volition. This allows us to think deeper and keep a stronger memory in mind when it is taught to us.

In order to prevent the loss of “peaceful days” due to war again, let’s learn more about the horror and misery of war, think about it, and prepare to pass the “peace baton” to the next generation.

What Peaceful World Means

Daisan Junior High School, 3rd Grade Watanabe Hiyori

There is a war going on in the world now. When we sleep comfortably in warm futons, in a cold place, there are people who can only hold their breath and wait in fear of their lives being taken. When we are enjoying a meal with our family, there are people who can only keep walking, looking for their own family. I want to help as many people as possible who are in this situation. The best way to solve this problem is to end war. I think everyone in the world wants this. Why, then is the world not yet free of wars? When writing this essay, I thought about the war between Ukraine and Russia, which is currently attracting attention in the world.

This war began on February 24, 2022. As I was watching the news, until this war started, I had always thought to myself, “in the era when I was born, there was no war and it was peaceful”. However, one day, when I turned on the TV, I saw images that I had only seen in history textbooks being broadcast. I had no idea that this was happening in the world. The next day, and the day after that, most of the programs I enjoyed watching were about war.

“Why did this war start?” I wondered. Why can’t we just talk about it? Is force the only

solution? In that case, I think it would have been better if we hadn't made weapons from the beginning. However, I think that people until now needed something to protect themselves to survive. But pointing it at someone is wrong.

Russia is a nuclear state. It is the country with the most nuclear weapons in the world. So why aren't the United States and many other countries sending troops to this war? This is because they fear that the fighting will intensify and lead to nuclear war. That's why even if you want to stop the war, you can't. If more countries, like Russia, think that having nuclear weapons will help them defend themselves, the world will become even more dangerous. Ukraine lost a lot in this war. Many lives, many cities. As the war continues, more and more will be lost.

But in the long run, Russia may have more to lose than Ukraine. Russia is becoming isolated from the international community, both politically and economically. From now on, the country will become poorer, and I think there is a high possibility that there will be chaos within the country as well.

Using military power to force people into submission is a violation of international rules. At this stage, Western countries are trying to stop the attack by ending trade and money exchanges with Russia and isolating it economically. If you don't go that far, you can't stop the war. Even if it goes that far, the war must be stopped.

I want to quickly realize a peaceful world where wrongful conflicts can be stopped, and people can reconcile with words instead of force.

Things That Change People

Daiyon Junior High School, 1st Grade Kubota Himari

Having a house, family and friends, eating to my heart's content, being able to go to school, and sleep peacefully at night. That's normal daily life for me.

But about 80 years ago, we were in the midst of the Pacific War. Houses were burnt down, people had no food, and they couldn't sleep peacefully because of the air raids. I watched a TV program to understand better the feelings of those who struggled to survive.

The story that left the biggest impression on me was the story of a 16-year-old woman who joined the Shiraume Student Corps in March 1945.

The Shiraume Student Corps are those who served as military nurses during the Battle of Okinawa. They treated wounded Japanese soldiers at an open-air hospital referred to as trenches. By "treating", all they could do was to remove maggots gathered in the wounds and disinfect them. They also amputated rotted limbs using a saw without anesthesia. During the day, they were fired on from the sea and from the sky, so they disposed of amputated limbs outside at night. Such days continued for two months, and it seems that the fear and anxiety

about the war and the fear of the treatment that they had at the beginning, gradually faded as they became used to it.

The sad memories of those such as a baby losing his mother to a gunshot two days after birth, one witnessing his family falling victim to an air attack, and then after saying hello to someone in the morning then to hear they would never return again – all of this was burned into my memory.

Even after the end of the war, people continued to suffer. This was due to radiation. Those who are exposed to radiation are called “A-bomb survivors,” and discrimination and prejudice continue. The deep wounds not only physical but also mental remain for the rest of victims’ lives, and they still suffer. I thought that the most painful thing was the current situation of being discriminated against by their own countrymen, Japanese people. Not only Japan, which lost the war, but other victor countries have family, friends, too, with lives of the same value. Even though we should have understood this 77 years ago, I feel resentment that wars continue, that there are still countries that continue to fight without trying to face fact the preciousness of life.

I really wonder why we repeat wars like in the past, that is, why we continue to do the same thing when all that remains is the sadness of people even after fighting. Many countries are trying to support peace and sanction countries currently in conflict, but I don’t know if that’s the right thing to do. But I think we should stop taking lives.

Not only do I hope for the day when no one will have to face the sadness of war, but I would like to convey to many people that war is a terrifying thing that upsets the precious human emotions.

About War and Peace

Daigo Junior High School, 2nd Grade Sugano Mari

I believe that peace means that everyone can live happily without conflict. I believe that wars must be eliminated for people all over the world to live in peace.

In Japanese language class, we learned about the atomic bomb that fell on Hiroshima. At 8:15 am on August 6th, the first atomic bomb in human history was dropped on Hiroshima. Almost all buildings within two kilometers of the hypocenter were burned to the ground. There were about 350,000 people in Hiroshima that day. About 140,000 of them were killed by atomic bomb. Atomic bombs emit a large amount of radiation that is not produced by normal bombs. It causes serious damage to the human body. I learned that many people have suffered from the effects of radiation over the years. Even more people than I had imagined were lost, and I thought that war should never happen.

Also, after researching the Hiroshima atomic bomb, I watched a movie called “Barefoot

Gen". This story is about when the atomic bomb was dropped. At that time, even if people were hungry, they had to just put up with it and run into an air raid shelter every time the air raid siren rang. They had a tougher life than I thought.

Also, when a draft notice, which was at the time call a "red paper" arrived, you had to go to war. My great-grandfather was drafted and went to war. This red paper came to people aged seventeen to forty. I was surprised to hear that he would go to war when he was 17 years old and in his second year of high school went to war. My great-grandfather was still in his teens when he went to. He was able to return safely because he was a mechanic. My great-grandfather came back alive, but I think there are many people who lost their families in the war. Even if you didn't want to go to war, you had to go to war for your country. I believe that war, in which many people died and many people suffered, should never happen again. Also, instead of fighting from the beginning, I think it would be better to talk until the problem is resolved. That might have saved a lot of people.

Russia and Ukraine are still at war. I have no power to stop the war. However, I thought that it is important for each person to be conscious of not causing conflict so that there will be no more wars in the future. I also think it is important to tell people why war should not be fought and what will happen if war is waged.

It is impossible for me to be directly involved in war, but I hope that as many conflicts as possible will end, and that the world will become a place where everyone can live in peace and happiness.

Peace Starts from Small Things

Daigo Junior High School, 3rd Grade Uehara Deigo

Do you know what year this year is? This year marks the 50th anniversary of the reversion of Okinawa. Until 1972, fifty years ago, Okinawa Prefecture was under American rule. At that time, a passport was required to travel between Okinawa Prefecture and the mainland.

This summer vacation, I went back to Okinawa. So, I heard about the Peace Memorial Park in Okinawa Prefecture from my grandfather. The names of my great-great-grandfather and great-grandfather's brothers who died in the Battle of Okinawa during World War II are inscribed on a stone monument called the Cornerstone of Peace. I was surprised because it was the first I heard about it. I immediately made my way to the Peace Memorial Park.

First, I saw an exhibition about the Battle of Okinawa at the Peace Memorial Museum. When I entered the museum, the first thing that caught my eye was a number of photographs. The photographs vividly told us about the situation on the battle of Okinawa. After that, I listened to the experiences of the survivors. These people who had lived through the war

talked in details of the situation at the time. When I saw those exhibits, I was shocked by how cruel it had been.

What was the Battle of Okinawa like? The Battle of Okinawa is said to be the worst land battle in history. One reason for this is the high number of casualties. The army totaled 67,900, the navy 12,281, and others, totaling about 89,400. The population of Okinawa Prefecture before the war was about 490,000, and about 120,000 people died in the war. This means that one out of every four people in Okinawa died. I was surprised by the fact that so many civilians had died, even more than military personnel.

What surprised me more than anything else was that mass suicide was the cause of most deaths. Mass suicide means forced mass death. It seems that the fear of being caught by the U.S. military had been planted in the hearts of the Okinawan residents, and that they were deprived of any other option but to take their own lives.

My heart aches when I think of the residents who were slaughtered by the sudden arrival of the US military, who were so terrified in their hearts that they eventually chose the path of collectively following the group in suicide.

In addition, it seems that there was a very large difference in military power with the American army. About 540,000 American soldiers participated in the Battle of Okinawa, of which 183,000 landed, while 110,000 Japanese soldiers were in place. Moreover, more than 20,000 of the Japanese soldiers were members of the defense corps and student corps gathered in Okinawa. It seems that there were students about the same age as me of 14 to 16 years old, so I shudder to think that it was me.

And I thought that the world today, despite experiencing such wars, has not changed from the past. I refer to the war between Russia and Ukraine. I hear that even in Ukraine, terrible things like in the Battle of Okinawa are taking place. It means that a terrible war like the Battle of Okinawa is still happening in a region not so far away from us. I now think that war is not so much something that happened in the past, and it is not something that is happening somewhere in the world that has nothing to do with us. It is a global issue common to all of us, and every one of us should think about it.

Finally, I saw the names of my great-great-grandfather and great-grandfather's brothers who died in the Battle of Okinawa, and countless other names engraved on the cornerstone of peace. Seeing that, I felt that I shouldn't let these people's deaths go to waste.

How do you feel about peace? I believe that the world will change if every one of us takes an interest in peace.

Thinking from Peace Poems

Daigo Junior High School, 3rd Grade Oishi Tae

One day during summer vacation, my eye landed on an article on the front page of a newspaper. It was about Okinawa's Memorial Day, referring to a memorial ceremony. While I was reading, my grandfather came and said, "It's already been seventy-seven years since the Battle of Okinawa", so muttering sadly before returning to his bedroom. Next there was a large picture of a girl. The girl was Tokumoto Honona, who read "Poetry of Peace" at the memorial ceremony. In the poem, she tells of when she was in the second grade of elementary school, she felt sad when she saw a large picture of a war scene and felt "scared". A passage from the poem was printed next to the photo, so I read it. "Keep peace in your pocket, never lose it, never lose it, never forget it," she said in a poem.

When I read this poem, I felt many things. Peace cannot be achieved with words and thoughts alone. Keep it in the pocket of your heart so you don't drop it, lose it, or forget it. And to keep thinking about peace all the time. I felt a lot of things, and at the same time, my view of peace changed greatly.

Until I came across this poem, I had always thought that peace would soon come if we stopped wars and got rid of weapons. But reading the poem made me think, "that might be wrong." Even if wars end, even if weapons disappear from the world, conflicts will soon arise again, and weapons will be created again. I thought that the driving force that could stop the "worst situation" was "peace".

Today, there is no end to wars and tragic incidents in the world. The word "peace" is being used all over the world, with individual protests against war and many countries issuing statements. However, these appeals are in vain, and even today, there are victims of war somewhere in the world. Especially in Ukraine, there is a war with Russia, and the war-related reports do not stop day after day. Japan, where we live, has so far suffered no damage or attacks, but peace is being threatened around the world. What can we do to find peace and create a peaceful world?

What I thought was that it is necessary not only to think about "peace," but also to "learn."

As I mentioned earlier, I thought peace would soon come if we abolished conflicts and weapons. However, I have come to understand that peace cannot be achieved with such a simple way of thinking. Until then, I didn't have a solid and correct knowledge of peace, so I had taken it lightly.

So, I want to tell everyone. Learning peace is not straightforward. It might be a little hard. During the learning process, you may also see scary pictures or videos that are painful to watch. But if you have the opportunity to find out, I think you should learn about the meaning of true peace. You will surely learn something new. I also want to work on peace studies more

than ever.

“Good night.” I was so absorbed in reading the article that I forgot it was past my bedtime. After talking with my parents about what I found in the article and how I felt about “Peace Poetry,” I went back to my room. After carefully reading the article, I couldn’t fall asleep even after getting into the futon. I could not forget the image of Mr. Tokumoto reading “Poetry of Peace” with an intent look.

To Preserve “Ordinary Daily Life”

Kanaoka Junior High School, 1st Grade Uesugi Koto

“I will do one good thing each day.”

These are the words that a junior high school girl wrote in her diary on August 5, 1945. She was killed by the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima on August 6th.

The other day, I watched a TV program on NHK titled “The Future Stolen by the Atomic Bomb: Eight Thousand Junior High School Students: Records of Life and Death.” The program told how 8,000 first-year junior high school students had been mobilized to demolish wooden buildings to contain the spread of fire during an air raid in Hiroshima, and that 6,000 of them had lost their lives.

The girl who wrote the diary mentioned at the beginning was one of those 6,000 people. She was exposed to the atomic bomb while working with others near the hypocenter and lost her life. She was just the same young age as me, a first-year junior high school student.

In her diary entry of April of the same year, she wrote down her joy at becoming a student which was something she had longed for, and her determination to study hard from now on. Even after the building demolition began, she had written of her daily life in a casual and happy manner. Until the day before the atomic bomb was dropped. I’m sure that when she put on the girls’ school uniform for the first time, she never imagined that she would die four months later. She wasn’t the only one. Many of the other junior high school students who lost their lives must have enjoyed their daily lives and had their own goals and hopes.

However, the atomic bomb took all of that away in an instant. Life itself, the everyday, the future, hope. What would it have been like for me? For me, “ordinary daily life” means going to school, taking classes, talking with friends, working hard at club activities, and having fun. When I get home, my family is there, I eat, do my homework, enjoy my hobbies, and then go to bed. A mundane but exciting, fun, and happy day. Family, friends, seniors, and teachers who spend time together. That’s it. But what if this was taken away? It would be beyond sadness. To say it was hard would be an understatement. I can’t even imagine.

But the war caused things that were far beyond sad and painful. For everyone. Not only for those who died, but also for those who survived.

War robs people of their lives, their daily lives, their loved ones, their future, and inflicts unimaginable suffering on them. For whatever reason, war should never happen; it must never happen again.

But there are still wars going on in the world. Even now, people's lives, daily lives, and futures are being taken away from them by war. The side that started the war may have their own reasons, but is it worth taking the lives of innocent people and destroying their everyday lives?

And now, the threat of nuclear weapons is increasing in the world. A nuclear weapon can take the lives of many people in an instant. With one of them, what happened in Hiroshima and Nagasaki may be repeated.

I would like Japan to become a party to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons prohibits the development and use of nuclear weapons, but neither the nuclear-armed states nor Japan participates. Since Japan is the only country to have suffered atomic bombings, I believe that we must convey to the world the horrors of nuclear weapons and take the lead in denuclearization. And I sincerely hope that eventually all countries will join this treaty and the abolition of nuclear weapons will be realized all over the world.

To that end, I believe that what we, the younger generation, can do is learn, know, and pass on the folly of war to future generations. If we forget, history will repeat itself. I believe that one of our missions is to not let the memories of the war fade away. After that, I would like to live my life always being thankful that I am able to live my "ordinary daily life".

It is a peaceful place where there is no war, where you can live your "ordinary daily life". It is my hope that this kind of place where people can spend their ordinary days will spread all over the world.

Connect

Kanaoka Junior High School, 2nd Grade Tanabe Kano

I have been entrusted to my grandmother's house since childhood. My grandmother tells of the same dream over and over again. The dream is about a Buddha which is in my grandmother's parents' house that she calls "Kubota-san of Kakita." "Kubota-san of Kakita" is the Buddha that my late great-grandfather couldn't rescue when he went to save the Honnoji Temple in Shizuura, which had been burnt down by an air raid. Later, when my great-grandfather visited Mt. Minobu, I found a similar wood carved Buddha, so I bought it, and it is still at my grandmother's parents' house. It is said that "Kubota-san of Kakita" sometimes appears in my grandmother's dreams and says various things. What a strange story.

Three generations of myself and my grandmother, mother, and I go to that Honnoji to visit

the grave. There is a long, narrow hole in the back of the graveyard. I heard from my grandmother that it was used as an air raid shelter that during the war. Around the time of the war, students from Takinokawa Elementary School in Kita Ward, Tokyo, evacuated from their parents' homes to Honnoji because it was too dangerous to stay in Tokyo. My grandmother's father and my great-grandfather were taking care of the children at the temple with the chief priest at the time. In the evening, some children, longing for their parents, and looked to the east and cried. After that, it became dangerous to be in Numazu, and the children were evacuated to another safer place. When my grandmother grew up and the war ended, I heard that the children of that time in Tokyo formed a group called "Numazukai" and came every year to Shishihama, where Honnoji Temple is located, to reminisce about the old days. Faced with the events of war, when I realized that even young children were carrying various burdens, I thought that even though people hadn't been to war, they were involved in it.

The father of my grandfather who passed away last year, that is, my great-grandfather, was also a war survivor. My great-grandfather didn't live in Japan until my grandfather was two to ten years old. At first, he went to a foreign country as an employee of the Manchurian Railway, but after the end of the war in 1945, he became a prisoner of war in a place called Chita in Siberia. So, my grandfather had thought that his father was dead until he came back. And now the present war between Russia and Ukraine. It was reported in the news that many people, from babies to the elderly have died, and that the infrastructure has been destroyed and there are cases that babies are born where there is no water or diapers for babies. What is unimaginable in Japan today is happening in reality. Even as I write this essay, I cannot accept the reality that someone somewhere is suffering. Being in peaceful Japan, I can't really fathom that cruel things are happening in other countries.

The other day, I learned on TV that plastic wrap was developed for war. During the war, it was used to protect bullets from moisture. Today, plastic wrap is used to preserve and pack food, and is an indispensable item. Advances in science are good. They can be convenient and bring about happiness. I wonder how good it would have been if plastic wrap had been invented from the beginning for the applications it is used in today. 3D printers are convenient because they allow you to quickly create whatever you want, but if they were used to manufacture guns in the war between Russia and Ukraine, the invention would be ruined. I want the development of science to be used not for weapons but to make people happy.

Of course, many people die in war. I believe that from the perspective of the person who died, and the family around them, these are lives that should have been lived, yet cut short, and cannot be fulfilled.

Last year my grandfather passed away. In this way, the number of people who lived during the war is decreasing, so the number of people who can talk about those times is decreasing. The stories my grandmother told me were also told by my grandmother and my grandfather's father; I also was told them by my grandmother and mother. As the number of people who

can tell them is decreasing one by one, I think that listening to stories like this and passing them on to the next generation is a way to convey the way of life of people who lived in the past. In order to abolish war in the future, I believe that I must pass on to my future children what I have been told.

The Wishes and Thoughts of Our Predecessors

Kanaoka Junior High School, 3rd Grade Katsumata Kenta

The Pacific War, called the worst in history, began with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Many people lost their lives, and the economy fell into recession. It's been 77 years since that war ended, but wars continue to occur. As time passes, the number of people who have experienced war is decreasing, so the number of people who can talk about war is decreasing. Under these circumstances, I still can't forget the valuable experiences I heard before, and they are ingrained in my heart.

About three years ago, during the summer vacation of my 6th grade, as part of a work experience project, we were divided into two categories: child-raising and nursing care. I chose the field of nursing care and was given the opportunity to experience working at a nursing home that offers day services. There was a wide range of ages, most of them over 60 years old. What surprised me most was that the oldest person was born in the Taisho era and was nearly 100 years old. I had a variety of experiences, but the most valuable thing was talking to an old man who was born during the war and has been living in Numazu ever since he was born. We talked not only about Numazu in the old days, schools, and politics, but also about the war. While we were talking, the old man said something shocking.

"I was called up just before the end of the war, so I couldn't go to the battlefield." Then the old man slowly moved his wheelchair, brought a notebook from his room, and showed me the actual letter of call to duty, commonly known as "red paper." However, the red paper was faded as if it told history. According to him, these red papers were supposed to be returned if they were summoned just before the end of the war, but this one hadn't been. I hope that this red paper will remain as an artifact to eliminate war and be handed down to the next generation.

I was able to hear from another person who experienced the war. He is said that he went to war when he was 18 years old.

"War is no good. All my comrades die. How painful it is to be left alone to fight. I thought I had returned safely, but the town was in a terrible state. My family was killed in an air raid. And yet the pain when people said to me, 'You're a non-patriot! You're a non-patriot!'

Each of the words he spoke with tears had their own weight. The last words, "It was painful..." is a mixture of pain and sadness, as well as frustration and anger. What both men had

said was, “War is painful. Not just to me, it’s painful for everyone.” Once again, I keenly felt that war is an extremely horrifying thing, something that should never be started.

But on the other hand, listening to their story, I also thought that war would break out again without fail. War, which most people would like to avoid, is constantly repeated. Most people believe that Japan will renounce war, adhere to pacifism, and never participate in war, as its policy is based on the Three Non-Nuclear Principles, but is this really the case? There is a high possibility that you will be involved in a war between some countries. Recently, I learned about wartime and postwar times in history class. Japan entered the war with its economy in recession and was bombed twice. Even after the war ended, it was still heavily damaged by hydrogen bombs. Countries can be strengthened by the idea of “getting even if you get hit”. War happens because both countries at war think they are right.

The second person I spoke with at the facility is now deceased. On that day, when I said goodbye for the last time,
“Well then. Thank you. Please come again. Seeing your manly figure reminds me of my old comrades in arms.”

Hearing that, I couldn’t stop crying. I said, “thank you,” and with these words of gratitude, I decided to spread the story of the war and never forget it. It was more than the pain and anger that the old men told us. It was a wish for peace.

I forgot

Kanaoka Junior High School, 3rd Grade Yokoyama Tetsutaro

This year, I often talked about the atomic bombing of Hiroshima in my classes at school and in conversations with my family. I took this as an opportunity to research the atomic bomb.

First, the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, 62 years before I was born. The atomic bomb dropped to the ground at tremendous speed and exploded as soon as it fell, engulfing the entire Hiroshima in an instant. In addition, severe damage occurred in various places. Houses collapsed, people got stuck under the rubble, and many people died. It was a picture of hell. I have visited the Atomic Bomb Dome and the Atomic Bomb Museum only once. At the Atomic Bomb Dome, there is still rubble from the time it was destroyed by the atomic bomb. Looking at the destroyed dome, I was speechless at the tremendous power of the atomic bomb. In the museum, there are things like the tattered, blood-stained clothing of survivors, and an exhibition board that shows what kind of hardships people had at that time. On the display board, memories of the tragedy that people at that time cannot forget were written in detail. There was a sentence in it that struck me deeply.

It said that you should not give water to people whose skin hurts from the explosion, even if they ask for it. For a moment I was skeptical, but as I read on, I realized that people with sore skin would want water, as exposure to radiation from the explosion caused their bodies to lose water. I knew that if they were given water, they would die because the only thing keeping him alive was the desire to drink water. This realization of people's strength gained from a desire to live, and the suffering and pain of not being able to, made my chest tighten.

My maternal grandmother happened to be in Hiroshima on the day the atomic bomb was dropped, so she was exposed. My great-grandmother ran to a bridge, and she said that the blast from the atomic bomb stopped just before it saved her. My great-grandmother died before I was born, but my mother asked her many questions about the atomic bomb. But to any question, my great-grandmother would reply, "I forgot."

She must have really not wanted to remember the atomic bomb. After that, my great-grandmother rarely talked about the atomic bomb until she died. I'm sure that my great-grandmother refrained from talking about it not only because she didn't want to remember the pain of that time, but also, as one who knew the terror of that time more than anybody else, tried to protect others from knowing and fearing it.

I hope that each and every person in the world will honor the memory of this tragedy that happened 77 years ago, and that in the coming era, we will create a happy and bright country where no one feels pain or suffering, and a world where various countries can coexist harmoniously.

Until the day the world comes to an end, I would like to live my life with a feeling of gratitude and knowledge of the difficulty, never abandoning the hope and determination to create a world where all can coexist.

The Word "War"

Ooka Junior High School, 2nd Grade Ehara Iori

How much do you know about "war"? The word war often appears in news and books, and I think many people know it. However, I think that few people understand everything even if they know the word. In this day and age, there are probably not many people who have been close to someone who actually experienced the war, or who have heard stories from them. I myself didn't have such a deep understanding either.

The reason I started thinking deeply about war was due to a conversation I had with my parents while watching the news. At the time, the news was all about the war between Russia and Ukraine. My mother, who was watching it, muttered, "Why do wars happen? Nobody gains from all the death."

I was surprised by what my mother said. Until now, I had never thought of or heard of any

reason for war. I don't know anyone who has experienced war. For this reason, even though I have heard and learned about war on TV and at school, I have always thought that it was a world far away from my own. But now the war between Russia and Ukraine continues. Furthermore, I learned that there are many people around the world who continue to suffer from conflicts and past wars.

When I heard my mother's words, I thought, "Perhaps, I might be dragged into war some-time soon." Until now, I have heard people say that there will be no war in Japan, that Japan is safe, but that is not absolute. It should be no surprise when, where, and who could be thrown into war.

The Russian-Ukrainian war is still fought between the two nations' armies to try to solve the problems that arose between the governments. Ordinary people are also affected, injured, and in the worst case, die. For many people, it is a very unreasonable thing to suddenly get pushed in a conflict that began without their knowledge. And this is the same for us. We don't really know directly what's going on between governments. Perhaps now there is a conflict, and we may be involved. And precious lives may be lost. I think that is unacceptable.

Japan used to be at war. It fought with many countries, involved unrelated people in the fight, and caused many deaths. On August 15, 1945, the war in Japan ended. From that day on, the Japanese has not been involved in war.

The number of people who actually experienced war is decreasing year by year. However, I think there are many things about war that can only be told by those who experienced it, that there are some things that cannot be conveyed.

My mother's casual remarks made me think about what war is, why it occurs, and what we need to do to eliminate war. No matter how much you think about it, there may not be a correct answer to this question.

I don't think we can eliminate all the wars in the world, but if we can little by little reduce them, I think that someday everyone will be able to avoid getting into conflicts that are not related to them. For that reason, I would like to deepen my understanding of war by finding time to share and discuss my opinions about war with people close to me. Just doing that will change the way we think about the word war. I hope that you too will take this opportunity to think about war.

Everyday Life is the First Step Towards Peace

Ooka Junior High School, 2nd Grade Serizawa Miho

Do you know what a "human bomb" is? This is the "Ouka" special attack weapon developed by the Japanese Navy at the end of the Pacific War. This weapon is a cruel weapon that has turned human lives into parts of a machine.

I first learned about this “human bomb” when it came up as a recommendation when I was watching a video on my smartphone. I was at a loss for words because it was so cruel. However, I couldn’t ignore the people who gave their lives to fight, so I decided to write this peace essay to let even a few people know that something like this happened. If it were me, I would never be able to face the enemy knowing that I would die. How did the people who got on this “Ouka” feel? If I had known that my life would be over, I would never have gotten on board half-heartedly.

In any country, soldiers who fight in wars always have families. How do families feel when sending them to war? How did the soldiers feel when heading to the battlefield ? I can’t imagine.

I wondered why, when so many people had such a painful experience in the past, why would we repeat the same thing? Most wars are caused by political issues between countries, and individuals who have nothing to do with them die. If you think about it normally, it doesn’t make sense. Even so, there are people who risk their lives and fight for their country. I hope the people who caused this war will soon realize this. And every day, I pray that the wars in this world will end as soon as possible.

I wrote an essay last year as well, thinking about what true peace is, but I couldn’t find anything that really stuck with me.

One day, when I was watching the news, a memorial service for all the war dead in Okinawa was being broadcast live. At that time, a girl in the second grade of elementary school was reciting “Poem for Peace”. When she went to an art museum with her family, she saw many scary and sad paintings. When she asked her mother about it, she was told that it was a painting of Okinawa 77 years ago. The painting made her feel scared, sad, and pitiful. At that time, she suddenly thought, “What is the opposite of war?” Is it peace, then what is peace? The thought made the girl scared and she clung to her mother. This gave her a warm feeling. Is this peace? Another day, the girl got into a fight with her older sister. At that time, their mother listened to them carefully, and thanks to that, the girl and her older sister were able to make up. Then the girl wondered if this was peace. The girl said, “I learned about fear, and I understood what peace is.” Through this story, I feel like I can finally understand what peace is. I thought that peace is to be able to feel happy and joyful, no matter how trivial things in everyday life can be. But to be able to understand that feeling, you must also understand the dark opposite feeling. This is because if you know only bright feelings, you will not recognize them.

I understand that peace is to feel cheerful, so from now on, I will treat people kindly and speak with kind words. I believe that this will be the first step towards peace.

Sending the thoughts of Hiroshima to the World

Ooka Junior High School, 3rd Grade Ono Erika

Various photographs and exhibits that capture the state of the time, and the Atomic Bomb Dome that still in its original form. When I visited Hiroshima for the first time, it was a bustling city with streetcars running in the middle of the road and the cheerful voices of tourists. I couldn't believe that the atomic bomb was dropped on this land 77 years ago, and that many people died, and the city changed completely.

I have never been particularly interested in the atomic bomb. It happened before I was born, and I thought there was nothing I could do as long as there were no *hibakusha* (atomic survivors) in my vicinity. However, when I entered the third year of junior high school, I learned and thought about the war more and more. As I gained knowledge little by little, my desire to know more grew, and I headed for Hiroshima.

The "Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum" was opened in response to growing calls for an exhibition facility to let the world know about the reality of Hiroshima. Photographs of the town and people immediately after the bombing, as well as numerous exhibits, spoke of the terror of the atomic bombing. A tricycle caught my eye. Although it was charred black, I could clearly see the wheels and steering wheel. The owner was probably a small child about three years old. I felt like I was witnessing the reality of an innocent life being taken away in an instant. I also learned that there were about 6,500 children called A-bomb orphans who lost their families and suffered alone. Although they survived, they must have felt the sorrow of losing precious parents and seen the town having been reduced to nothing. Just imagining it made my chest hurt. It is said that the atomic bomb orphans continued to live by farming, net fishing, digging for shellfish, picking up cigarette butts and shoe polishing.

In addition, along with their cries, items left by those passed were on display. There was a resume that caught my eye. I was surprised that the writing was still so clearly visible. It seems that the person who wrote it passed away before having the chance to submit it. All the dreams and hopes that young people had were lost. It made me feel that the days of taking classes at school, playing with my friends, and talking with my family were things that I should never take for granted. The daily life of each person, their dreams, and lives were destroyed by a single atomic bomb. I once again learned the fear of nuclear weapons and the reason why they should not exist.

The Atomic Dome, photographs and peoples' belongings from that time are proof that the survivors lived, and that the tragic events that occurred 77 years ago were undeniably true. These items are important to keep the memories of those days alive for decades. The memory is passed not only by the form of these concrete items but also by our minds as thoughts. Nuclear weapons have not yet gone away. To eliminate them and build a peaceful world,

various activities were carried out, including those of the A-bomb survivors. I really don't want to remember this, and I might want to look away. Still, people continue telling the story in the hope that the same thing never happens again. I think that the thoughts of such people should never be wasted. Even if the number of people who can talk about their actual experiences decreases from now on, our generation needs to know about them in order to pass on their stories; we are the only country to have suffered atomic bombings. I believe that small things such as sharing what you learned about the atomic bombing with people close to you and understanding the feelings of people at that time can be a step towards world peace.

It is said that a young girl who became ill after being exposed to the atomic bomb continued to fold paper cranes in the hope that her illness would be cured. Then there is the Children's Peace Monument, which was completed as a result of a movement to create a statue to comfort the spirits of children who died in the atomic bombing and to build peace. Paper cranes are still offered to the shrine, and the number of cranes is about 10 million each year.

I also folded a crane while looking out over Hiroshima, 77 years after the fact. With the hope that someday the thoughts of Hiroshima will reach the world and that the world will be peaceful as soon as possible.

The Victim's Perspective

Ooka Junior High School, 3rd Grade Fujimoto Aoi

Every year in August, war and atomic bombs are often featured in newspapers and TV news. It's already become something that is regularly featured during summer vacation. So instead of watching the news closely, I just let it pass without much notice.

But one day in August, while I was having breakfast, I saw an article on the front page of a newspaper. Normally, I would have passed it by, but that day, for some reason, I read it as if I was drawn to it. The article contained the story of a young woman who lost her parents and siblings to the atomic bomb when she was younger than me. When she was six years old, she lost five members of her family to the atomic bombing, leaving her with only one younger brother. Because they were evacuated, they were not exposed to the atomic bombing, but they received no compensation from the government. On top of that, they didn't even find the remains of their loved ones. After that, they were raised by their grandparents. However, life was difficult. I was very surprised when I read this article. I knew that many people died in war. I also knew that there were people having a hard time because of that, and there were people who were suffering. However, I didn't know how those people who were having a hard time lived after the war. That's why I was shocked that they didn't get any compensation even after losing their family. They lost families, houses, and property, but still had to just look after themselves. I can't understand how painful it must have been. This is because I have

never experienced it myself. But you can imagine. I think it must have been so painful that it couldn't be expressed in words.

Also, the woman in this article said, "I am not an A-bomb survivor, but I am a victim. I want people to know that there are people like me." Until now, I have listened to stories and read diaries of people who were exposed to the bomb, witnessed horrific scenes, and escaped from enemy soldiers. However, not only that, but I also learned about the suffering of those who lost their families in the war.

After reading this article, I realized once again the terror of the atomic bomb. Those who suffer from the atomic bombing are not only the *hibakusha* (atomic bomb victims), but also the families of the *hibakusha*, their children and the grandchildren who are the third generation of the *hibakusha*. Atomic bomb must never be dropped again. Nuclear weapons must never be built again. This is how I felt.

However, in the world today, war is taking place between Russia and Ukraine, which are both nuclear-armed states. Until now, since the two world wars, the countries of the world have been aiming for a peaceful world that does not generate war, by cooperating. People insist that war should never be fought again. However, war has broken out. The voice hasn't reached far enough. It is very frustrating and should not happen.

That's why I thought it was necessary to feel once again the terror of war and the terror of the atomic bomb and put out my voice. There are things we can do because we are the only country in the world to have suffered atomic bombings. Rather than a world without war or the dropping of atomic bombs, we must create a world in which we prevent war from happening and a world in which the production of nuclear weapons is stopped. I believe that this is our mission and duty, for us who were born in post-war Japan.

Knowing and Conveying "War"

**Shizuura Elementary and Junior High School,
8th Grade Shirono Yuzuki**

Every August, there are many videos about war and the atomic bomb on the news and TV programs. And this year, on the day of the atomic bombing and on August 6th, 9th and 15th, the anniversary of the end of the war, people in Hiroshima, Nagasaki and other areas held a silent prayer. Until now, I had no interest in war, and there were parts of me that thought it was someone else's problem. The figure of people praying for peace in Japan while shedding tears, of people who desperately say that war should not be started, was clearly burned into my eyes. I wonder how hard the people who experienced the atomic bomb must have felt. In the midst of a terrifying blast, blazing flames, and not knowing if survival was possible, beloved family and friends died one after another in agony. The fact that such hardships of

war and the atomic bombing were written in books and textbooks, even though it was 77 years ago, and that they are well known to many people means that those who have experienced the war and the atomic bomb told many people, such as children and grandchildren about the horror of war and the atomic bomb. Their strong belief that “war should never be fought again” has been handed down to our generation.

Around that time, a passage about the atomic bomb called “Message left on the wall” that I studied in Japanese class in the first semester came to mind. The writer of this article traveled to Hiroshima to create a special program to be broadcast on the day of the atomic bombing, and through a series of coincidences they came across a message left on the wall. The message was miraculously left under the wall near the stairs of Fukuromachi Elementary School, which was bombed. Immediately after the atomic bomb was dropped, the elementary school was used as a temporary relief station. People left a message with the name of the person they were looking for. I wonder if people found those written on the wall - safe, if they were still alive, and if they were able to reunite with their families. When I think about it like that, war feels closer to home, and my chest tightens. Also, I was able to realize once again that war and the atomic bomb were terrifying events.

At the end of the article, the author writes a “Message from the *Hibakusha*. It is a legacy and a witness that quietly and powerfully tells us about that day.” When it was written, it was a message to find someone close to you or to tell them what they needed, but when it was discovered fifty-odd years later, it became a “message” for us today in the sense that it conveys the tragedy of war. I learned that it is important to pass on the events of war and the atomic bombing to future generations, rather than forgetting them as events of the past.

Today, the number of people who experienced war and the number of people who can talk about war is gradually decreasing. One day there will be no one to talk about it, and the painful memories of the war will just become “past events”. The main causes of war are differences of religion and opinion. That’s why I think it’s important to understand and accept people who have different religions, ethnicities, and opinions rather than just denying and discriminating. While there are still wars going on around the world, such as between Russia and Ukraine, I am grateful that I am able to live in peace in Japan. I want to convey the horror of it. It is my duty to inherit the thoughts of those who fought hard for their country, the *hibakusha* who have shed tears and continued to speak of the pain of war, and the people who pray for the peace of Japan, and to continue passing on stories to the next generation. I think it’s our role and duty.

War and Peace

Ashitaka Junior High School, 1st Grade Kobayashi Yutaro

What people think of when they hear the word war is different for each person. There are some elderly people who do not want to remember the war, and those who have not experienced the war do not have a good image of it. This is because we are learning and studying that there was conflict in the past.

First of all, war is a way of thinking in which countries try to force their own will on each other and resolve things that cannot be decided through negotiations by force. Both winners and losers will die. People should not die so easily. We should know more about war and be grateful that we are able to live in peace now. I went to see the Atomic Bomb Dome in Hiroshima a few years ago. Seeing it in front of me, my legs suddenly froze. It was as if I was there on August 6th, 77 years ago. I had seen photos of the Atomic Dome, where only the exterior of the dome-shaped steel frame remained, but I was shocked at how tragic the situation was. I could not imagine what the survivors must have been feeling as the atomic bomb took the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. This was a truly valuable experience that can only be had by seeing the place where the atomic bomb was dropped.

Next, my mother told me about my great-grandfather who actually fought in battle. My great-grandfather went to China and advanced into a town. However, it is said that his great-grandfather was stunned by the spectacle sight in the town, biting his own mouth, and causing it to bleed, deceiving everyone that he was sick and returning to Japan. Looking back at that time, what my great-grandfather did was rebellious, but I understood that the side that attacked the other country was also doing it with a very heavy heart, knowing that they could be shot and killed at any time. It is said that people who were not in the battlefield lived their lives every day while being wary of air raids that could occur at any time.

Hearing that, you may think that Japan is peaceful now, where you can sleep soundly at night, but at the beginning of this year, there was a war in which Russia attacked Ukraine. This war started with Russia attacking Ukraine to stop it from joining the anti-Russia group. In this way, even if you think that there is peace, you never know when war will break out. Furthermore, since Russia is a neighboring country, there is a possibility that Japan will be targeted.

Currently, eight countries have nuclear weapons. Every country wants peace, so why won't nuclear weapons go away? There are two reasons.

The first is that nuclear weapons are being used as a diplomatic card.

The second reason is simple: the power to stop nuclear weapons is weak. But I hope that this power will be strengthened so that someday the world will be free of nuclear weapons and that everyone will be able to live in peace.

When I thought about what I could do now, I realized that I would never be able to stop the war directly. Therefore, I believe that what I can do now is to be grateful for the peace and safety that I have been able to live in each day. I want to think hard about what I can do to prevent a tragedy like the Hiroshima atomic bombing from happening again.

Useless Things

Ashitaka Junior High School, 2nd Grade Suzuki Keita

I never thought that war would break out in this era of Reiwa. Even we junior high school students don't try to solve problems with violence, so why do people start wars?

I think war only has downsides. People die, the land is scarred, and it puts pressure on the economy of the country. And in war, there is also the possibility of losing the trust of other countries.

August 15th of this year marked the 77th anniversary of the end of the war in Japan. Those who experienced the war are getting older, and the number of survivors is decreasing year by year. In fact, I have never heard of anyone who experienced the war, and I only know what it was like at that time from special TV programs and the Ghibli movie "Grave of the Fireflies" that airs every year around this time. I thought it had nothing to do with us and it was something that happened a long time ago. However, when I saw the current state of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on TV news, I was shocked that this was happening on the same planet.

Russia was worried about Ukraine joining NATO. Ukraine wants to protect its country and continues to fight, not giving in to force. I wonder if someone should mediate this kind of quarrel. There are various circumstances, complicated problems are intertwined, and I think that it is not such a simple thing, but in the modernized world, I wonder if there is some kind of technology that can solve it.

The world has been greatly affected by this war. We are already seeing tangible effects on our lives, such as food shortages, energy shortages, and rising prices. The price of gasoline remains high, and the price of wheat and oil is rising.

But what about the people who live where war is actually going on? The daily fear of bombings and the lack of food will have an immeasurable impact on those of us living in Japan. I can feel how happy I am to be able to sleep comfortably in an air-conditioned room. Is it impossible to make a rule to renounce war all over the world?

The world must create a mechanism to end war quickly. In Japan, Article 9 of the Constitution stipulates that war is renounced.

Whether there is war or not, the earth is depleted of resources. And yet, to put it bluntly, I think it's insane to go to a war that creates weapons and tanks. I think it goes against the

current world that emphasizes efficiency. In other words, I think war is the most painful thing in the world.

One day I was watching the evening news. Then, the topic of war came up, and a woman was being interviewed. The woman's husband died in the war, leaving behind her, the wife, and children. Her husband had volunteered to fight. My heart ached when I heard this story.

So, what would I do if I was told to go to war? I'm afraid of death and I don't think I can go to the battlefield. I don't think there is a single human being who isn't afraid of death. That's why I understand that this husband had a very strong desire to protect his family and his home country of Ukraine.

War produces nothing but waste and tragedy. Without this war, there would have been no needless sacrifices. I hope that the war between Ukraine and Russia will end as soon as possible, and that war will disappear from this world.

Considering War and Everyday Life As a Starting Point

Ohira Junior High School, 3rd Grade Kayanuma Kaoru

In February of this year, there was a major event: Russia's invasion of Ukraine. At first, I was watching TV because I couldn't fathom that there was an invasion of Ukraine. However, as I read and heard various information, I was able to feel little by little that there was a war going on. Having learned about the tragedy of war in a social studies class, I thought war would never happen in modern times, so I was overwhelmed with feelings of surprise and fear at the same time.

Also, it was incredible to see the footage of what is really happening now, not the footage of the war that happened sometime in history. Buildings destroyed by bombings, tanks running on ordinary roads, and an unknown number of newly built graves. Everything shocked me. And the fact that the television images were in color and not black and white told me that it was a current event.

I'm not good at thinking about war. Far from being unable to think of anything good about it, it leaves only a bad impression. The more I think about it, the more painful it becomes, but I'm filled with frustration that I can't help in any way. However, war is an event that should never be overlooked and should never be forgotten. So, even if I can't do anything now, when I grow up, I want to be able to help people who need help.

As I learn about foreign countries through classes and personal study, I realize that even if some cultures seem difficult at first, they are not completely incomprehensible. I'm sure it's the same with foreigners. Even if you don't understand each other at first, I think it's possible to understand each other as long as you have the desire to understand. Even if we live in dif-

ferent places and speak different languages, we should not be live so divided that we cannot understand each other's pain. It hurts when you lose someone important to you, and it hurts when you get hurt. War does not make us feel the pain that we should normally be able to feel.

When I used to watch videos of people from different countries interacting with each other, I felt very warm. They all laughed together, even if there were times when they couldn't convey what they wanted to say. At those times, I could see clearly with my own eyes that even if we were born in different countries, we could laugh and have fun together.

If everyone tried to get involved each other without worrying about national borders like this, I think we could gradually move closer to a world without war. War is more complicated than I thought, and I know it's not that simple. But I think it all starts with a small step. I think it's important to take the first step and make each bigger, little by little and keep walking.

War leaves deep scars on many things. Even at this very moment, somewhere in the world, there are people suffering from severe wounds. Now that the development of civilization, I wanted people to use these tools to support people instead of hurting them.

Big Scars Left by War

**Nagaisaki Elementary and Junior High School,
8th Grade Okawa Soma**

This summer, I went to the Numazu City Library to see the "Atomic Bomb and Humans" panel exhibition. There were more than a dozen paintings and photographs of during and after the war. Among them, the one that left the biggest impression on me was a picture of a boy on a bed in a hospital room who had his whole back burned bright red. This photo was taken after the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. He somehow survived the atomic bombing, but the pain was so painful that he cried, "Kill me. Kill me."

It was recorded that he kept screaming. Later, when the boy who grew up he said, "I had to go through many hells to survive."

Someone like me who spends his days in peace can never really understand the hell that this boy talked about. Even though he was able to survive, he spent days in pain, agony, and hardships that would surely go far beyond my imagination. It is said that some people died because they could not bear the pain. I believe that both war and the atomic bomb only bring about hell. Nevertheless, there are many nuclear powers, and some are still at war. I think that's terrifying. I wish the top people of the country had more consideration and kindness.

My great-grandmother was also a war survivor. One day, when I asked my great-grandmother if she would eat sweets made from pumpkin seeds, she said,

“I don’t eat them. I don’t even want to hear the word pumpkin.”

I was surprised to find that my great-grandmother, who was usually kind and gentle, spoke so abruptly. When I asked my grandmother why she hated pumpkins so much, she said, “During the war, we ate pumpkins all the time due to food shortages, and even ate the seeds at last. She ate a lifetime’s worth of pumpkins , so she doesn’t even want to see pumpkins.

I realized that no matter how many years have passed since the war ended, those who experienced it still have painful memories and continue to suffer. Ever since I was little, I’ve been told not to leave a grain of rice behind, but I felt like the true meaning of that came from thought of people like my great-grandmother who fought and survived the war.

There is a book called “Full of the will to Die”, an essay written by Yoko Sano, the author of “The Cat Who Lived a Million Times”. This work contains a little bit about the post-war period. She lived with her mother, father, older brother, two younger brothers and a younger sister, but father and brothers died a few years after the war. In particular, regarding the death of her closest brother, Tadashi:

“Tadashi never ate white rice in his life before he died. Perhaps he was malnourished and didn’t have even a gram of energy reserves to fight the fever.”

It was a time when people couldn’t get white rice, which we take for granted now. And they died from malnutrition and from diseases that can easily be treated today. Death became a part of the everyday, and people didn’t shed tears or grief. I couldn’t live through that. I strongly believe that such an era should never be repeated.

This was the first time I thought deeply about war. And I couldn’t help wishing, “I hope that such a hellish time will never come again.” But just wishing alone doesn’t change anything. I want many people of my generation to know in detail the sad events that really happened in the past. And I want you to think. What can we do to end war? When I grew up no matter what position I stand in, I will never support the idea of solving things through conflict or war.

What is Engraved in My Heart

**Nagasaki Elementary and Junior High School,
8th Grade Kuzuno Sota**

What do you think of the word “peace”? I decided to think about peace again this summer. If I had to sum up the word peace in one word, I think it would be “smile”. A lot of people may not agree with my choice of “smile”, but I’ve always thought it was the best. Seventy-seven years ago in the summer, atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, ending the war. I wonder if people at that time spend their days with smile. There is no doubt they held some anxiety and fear. However, compared to the past, I think that

more and more people are living with a smile every day. However, we must not forget that there are still many people who cannot live with a smile.

I was very surprised to see this year's big news of the Ukraine war. At first, I took it lightly, but now it's a big deal.

There are daily news updates about the war in Ukraine. As I watched the news, I realized how much the Ukrainians were suffering. I hated seeing that kind of news every morning, telling the number of deaths each day, showing images of the war always getting worse and worse. As the bad news grows, so do the tears of the Ukrainian people. Soldiers protect Ukrainians even as they themselves bleed. These people cannot meet their families even if they want to, and they are fighting through the midst of it. The people of the world need to know that, and the Ukraine war must never be forgotten. And the indiscriminate attacks that Russia is carrying out, the attacks even on children without hesitation. About 200 children died. When I saw the death toll, I was reminded of the horrors of war. In the news, I sometimes see appeals from people on the Ukrainian side. Their fathers have gone to war, and they are living alone with their mothers and children. It is said that the children cry every day because they don't want to be separated from their fathers. Every time I see this situation, I feel sorry for them. It must be very difficult for young children to not see their fathers, and mothers would feel the same. The Ukrainian people want the war to end as soon as possible.

Even now, in Ukraine or other places where there is civil war, someone is crying, someone is suffering. Our daily lives may be peaceful, but we must not forget that there are many people in the world who are suffering. Japan is now peace without war. But what will Japan do if another war breaks out? Separated from my family, my smile disappears. That's why I think it's important for each and every one of us to have a kind heart and to never start a war again.

Right now, not only is there a war going on, but there is a Coronavirus epidemic. Coronavirus hasn't lost momentum even after a few years. Coronavirus possesses an invisible terror, it is raging all over the world, and many people have died from it. It's not just the people infected with Coronavirus who are suffering, but the medical workers too. They don't have time to take a break from fighting Coronavirus every month, and they sweat it out to save people who are infected. I think it is my job to reduce the burden on medical workers as much as possible.

War, corona, there are many adverse elements in the world, and in order to reduce them little by little, I think it is necessary for each individual to cooperate, and everyone around the world to cooperate.

It is precisely because I have been to Hiroshima and Nagasaki's Peace Memorial Park and Chiran Peace Museum for Kamikaze Pilots that I value life more than anyone else, and I believe that assets that convey the tragedy of war should be treasured forever. As I have said many times, war is something that must never be fought, regardless of the reason, and to

eliminate war, each and every one of us must show kindness and consideration.

Wars of the Past and Wars of the Present

**Nagaisaki Elementary and Junior High School,
8th Grade Tsukada Sora**

Recently there is a lot of news of the war between the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Watching the news reminds me of what happened at the Atomic Museum in Hiroshima when I was in the fifth grade. Before going to the museum, I saw the Atomic Bomb Dome first. The tattered appearance of the Atomic Bomb Dome made me feel the horror of the atomic bomb even as a fifth-year student at the time. After seeing the Atomic Bomb Dome, I became afraid to go to the Atomic Bomb Museum to find out more about it, but my mother told me that I must know this, so I decided to go see it.

Inside the Atomic Bomb Museum, first, there was a commentary on the power and terror of the atomic bomb. When I saw it, I couldn't believe that something like this existed in the world. However, when I saw the real site that was damaged, I could see that it did. There were many charred bicycles and ragged clothes that people had been wearing. However, damage from the atomic bomb was not limited to physical objects. The hot air burns off the skin, and those who were far away were not affected by the hot air, but later fell ill and died due to the effects of radiation. Furthermore, it even affected the weather. Black rain fell from the clouds due to the atomic bomb. Even though they knew it was poisonous, people who had no water and were thirsty drank it. Thinking back about it now, I'm glad I learned about the horrors of war that Japan experienced at the Atomic Bomb Museum in Hiroshima.

But I'm starting to worry that the events in Japan might happen again someday. It's regarding the ongoing war between Ukraine and Russia, although it's less talked about in the news now. More than six months after it began, the Russian Federation is still invading Ukraine. There have been many deaths in both Russia and Ukraine. Other countries are imposing economic sanctions on Russia, but I don't think it's a good idea to continue like this. The reason is that the same thing as that which happened in Japan may be repeated, using the nuclear weapons that Russia possesses against Ukraine's resistance, and other countries that have economic sanctions may start a war. I tend to worry too much, but maybe it's better not to just think that it has nothing to do with us.

Think about how you can prevent war. If you compare war to something familiar, you could think of it as a kind of fight.

If you impose your own opinion without listening to others' opinions, or if you make a move first, you'll end up in a fight. If you just push your opinion through, you may be ok with it, but the other side may not be. This leads to a fight. I think this is similar to the cause of

war, so I thought that valuing the opinions of others is the first step to peace. That's why I thought it was necessary to talk with all the representatives of the world and listen to the other party's opinion as much as possible.

Today, the number of people have experienced what happened in war is declining. Since then, I feel that more and more young people are taking the war lightly, so I thought that the stories that happened during the war should be passed on to future generations.

A Future Entrusted to Us, and the Resolution of a 15 Year Old

Hara Junior High School, 3rd Grade Tomioka Masashi

“War orphans”. I think that was the most serious damage left by the war. Looking up, to see a ball of red glowing flames. The hands slipping away from the grip of their parents. When they heard the news that their parents had died in battle, I realized that their pain must have been something unfathomable to the youth of today, including myself.

Bombs rained down all over Japan, and the number of war orphans grew in proportion to them. Should we consider them lucky enough to survive? I can hardly think of it that way. Allied Forces Commander-in-Chief General Headquarters conducted general containment, the so-called “hunting”. The orphans had no choice but to run even when the Japanese government tried to round them up. According to our history textbooks, “war reforms were carried out under the direction of GHQ”. Was this also part of the reforms? What kind of reform is treating children with a bright future as a nuisance? It took many decades until people were able to say that. War is a cruel event that stirs up society.

Should August 15th be the day referred to as the day the war ended? For them, it must have been the beginning of many times more difficult and painful than before. However, the reality is that memories of such suffering are disappearing both at home and abroad. Regarding the “Invasion of Ukraine” and the “Taiwan situation”, even if Japan is not participating in the war militarily, Japan is closely related to these issues and must be involved in the resolution of them as soon as possible. At first glance, it seems that there is no impact on us, but every day we are exposed to rising prices and great anxiety. I can't imagine when Japan will be caught up in it and we will see before us the cruel scenes that until now we've only seen on TV. What we should do now, living in historical Japan, is to pass on the stories to future generations.

“Leaving for future generations”. What would you leave behind? I want you to think about it deeply. What you have in mind right now is probably correct. Some people, like me, say that the most devastating damage that the war has inflicted on our country are war orphans. Others would say that the air attacks or the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Naga-

saki, while some argue that ranking damage is inappropriate, because of the depth of the damage all round. I think you should pass on the thoughts that came into your head to future generations. “50th Anniversary of the Return of Okinawa,” “Invasion of Ukraine,” “Nuclearization,” and “Taiwan Situation” are words that we often hear in 2022. No matter how little knowledge you have or uninterested you are, when you hear these things, you will understand that they are related to war. And above all, they should be handed down to future generations. This is most important to me.

I have never experienced a war, let alone in my teens, but I wonder what kind of things could trigger a war? What kind of damage would it cause? I think that we should send out all kinds of questions to the world. I think that the strength of that thought is no different from those who experienced the war. In addition, we must not only disseminate information, but also continue to collaborate and cooperate with regions currently at war. Actions taken to prevent war are never in vain. We who live in this world are expected to actively take actions that we think are best and create a peaceful world.

Fear in Years Past

Ukishima Junior High School, 1st Grade Sugisawa Renma

Today, I wake up in the morning, eat, put on clean, washed clothes, and sleep in a comfortable *futon*. It’s been a daily routine since I was born, going to nursery school, going to elementary school, and now I’m going to junior high school. There are days when I find it boring and tedious that I can do what I take for granted, but I think that’s what peace is all about.

Currently, Russia is invading Ukraine and the people of Russia and Ukraine are spending their days far from peacefully. Even if you see it on the news or on the internet, it’s too unrealistic to fathom. It’s sad that we live in the same world at the same time, but there are so many differences in our lives. Also, when I see footage of North Korea launching ballistic missiles, I feel terrified because I can’t say that the possibility of that happening to us is absolutely removed. There is a pacifist principle in the Japanese constitution, and although there is the Self-Defense Forces to protect Japan, there is no army. However, even if Japan does not attack, there is a possibility that it will be attacked. This means that we are at risk of being attacked.

I have visited Hiroshima. Until then, I only vaguely knew about the war from the stories “*Chi-chan no Kageokuri*” which I had studied in elementary school and “Grave of the Fireflies” which I had seen on TV. For the first time in my life, I felt like I learned the importance of peace.

(Building a peaceful world is a very difficult thing to do.)

So I thought. In Hiroshima, I also visited the Atomic Bomb Dome and the Peace Memorial Museum. Before I went there, I knew only that there was a terrifying atomic bomb that wiped out an entire city. At the Peace Memorial Museum, there are exhibits depicting the atomic bomb being dropped and buildings collapsing in an instant, an infant clinging to a mother who does not seem to move, and a mother who continues to call her child's name. Many paintings were displayed. Seeing the scene in which people were wiped out the moment the atomic bomb fell, I learned the intensity of the atomic bomb and the terror of nuclear weapons. The Atomic Bomb Dome, which is still standing today, conveys to future generations the fear that the people of Hiroshima felt that day, and I hope everyone can live in peace.

As long as there is war, we cannot live in peace. Countries around the world, including Japan, and the United Nations are conducting various activities aimed at maintaining international peace. For example, Costa Rica decided not to have an army and encouraged other countries to do so. In addition, the SDGs, which are goals to be achieved by 2030, also include the goals of "peace, justice and strong institutions."

Currently, there is no major war involving the world, and measures are being taken all over the world. However, there are still some wars. There is almost nothing I can do to end war, but I think it is important to know the horrors of war and to cherish peace.

Voice and Memory

Ukishima Junior High School, 2nd Grade Kubota Aoi

I still vividly remember that moment on February 24th when I was horrified by the media reports.

I had heard about my great-grandparents' war memories from my mother. When I read about the suffering of people in books and reports and think that 77 years have passed since the war, and that in this era peace has become the norm, I feel anger beyond fear. However, the war is happening now in a place far away from Japan. Moreover, with the combination of the coronavirus pandemic and soaring prices, it has become difficult to provide support for others. In the first place, there may be nothing I can do as a mere junior high school student. With such a vague feeling, I didn't think about it to any depth further than that, and just stared blankly at the news.

About half a year had passed since that day, and something happened that cleared up my gloomy feelings. It was learning about the book "Message left on the wall" in Japanese class.

This is the story of a mysterious black message written in chalk that miraculously remained on the wall, written more than fifty years ago. The story is about how the message remained, the miracle it remained legible for so long, that there was a photo of this message, and further

it told of the state of the people who were written about. Those who had been there at the time and their families, who read the faint message in modern day, shed tears saying, “Oh, is that so?”

When I read this, I was moved by the fact that people were connected over a long period of time, and I felt a strange feeling that I had grasped something. However, I couldn’t think too much about it during class, so I started discussing it in my group, which was our homework, with that uneasy feeling. The assignment was exactly what I was thinking of, “Why did the people, after reading the message, mutter “Oh, is that so?” As expected, I found it hard to join the discussion because I couldn’t agree. Then one of the group members said, as if just talking to himself,

“These people never forgot.”

For me, it was an important key to unraveling my uneasy feelings.

“Never forget” – obviously people don’t want to forget. But in fact, at this moment, I realized that this, by not forgetting, a bridge is maintained that connects people living in the past and present.

I couldn’t forget it, so I was able to read the message. I didn’t forget, so I muttered to myself, I now could get it.

I never forgot my grandparents, and my mother told me about the war. Because they did not forget, people continue to strive to create a peaceful world. Everything was connected. Perhaps the origin of today’s peace is “not forgetting”.

Thanks to this class, I found one thing that I can do for peace and to protect what is important to me. “Don’t forget the war”. I retain people’s memories and the fact that there was a war, inside me like a library. However, the memory of war is an important element of history that all of us living in this era should not forget. That’s why I want to be able to not only store books but also communicate them to people like a library.

And there is another thing that I realized. It’s that junior high school students may be thinking more about peace than those who are in positions to rule the country.

I don’t know the real reason why the war started. Maybe it’s to protect the people living in the country. But for whatever reason, you’re doing it wrong. I think there are many people in that position who know they are wrong but are unable to raise their voices for some reason. If so, I think we should raise our voices and move ahead. Even if there is little that one person can do, if everyone’s voices gather together, someday surely, something can happen.

I raise my voice here to pray for the end of the war, which has been going on for more than half a year with no end in sight.

What We Must Not Forget

Ukishima Junior High School, 3rd Grade Narushima Mei

When I started junior high school, I often thought about war, for example, through history classes and novels. Before I learned about war in class or read books about it, I had never really thought about it.

The wartime situation that I learned about in class was too cruel. Children were raised to be good soldiers. The food was meagre. People at the time say that their greatest wish back then was to be able to eat a full bowl of white rice. It hurts my heart to think that they had to persevere with so much as small children. It seems that training to attack enemy countries was also carried out at school almost every day, including practice of advancing on the enemy, making formation and presenting arms, using bamboo instead of a rifle. Also, during air raids, they built underground bunkers and performed evacuations. They couldn't know when their lives might be taken, and I think they must have been anxious and scared. I think it was hard not only for children, but also for adults. I think it's very sad that there were men who were drafted into the army and died in action. It makes me sad to think that my family... I don't want to fight, but I'm going to keep memory of appreciation to the people who fought at the time.

A novel I read included a detailed account of the dropping of the atomic bomb. There was a girl about my age who was working and living a life without freedom. She was faced with physical punishment from the military police and bullying from my neighbors, things that I could not persevere. The grief and anger of losing a family member to the atomic bomb and worrying about the aftereffects of the atomic bomb must have been very stressful.

I have seen the situation after the atomic bombing in class. Buildings were destroyed and corpses were strewn everywhere. The temperature around the hypocenter was about 3,000 degrees Celsius, and it seems that people in the vicinity died instantly. People within two kilometers were said to have been conscious for some time. It's so sad to hear that they passed away in excruciating pain. Many of the people who lived within 3 kilometers were still alive, and some were moving around in search of water. And it seems that there were many people who, seeking water, and jumped into the river and drowned. For this reason, in memory of the many people who died in search of water, a "Fountain of Peace" was built near the "Statue of the Atomic Bomb" in Peace Memorial Park, and the "Peace Memorial Ceremony" on August 6 includes the offering water.

I believe that we must not forget the war that took so many lives. What can we do to prevent this memory from fading? For example, I think it is one way to think about war by writing peace essays like this. I also think it is important to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which suffered from the atomic bombings, and listen to the stories of the people who lived

during the war. I hope that we can pass on what we have learned to the next generation, and future generations. I would be happy if we could live in a world where people all over the world can live happily.

Thoughts on “Kamikaze Special Attack Corps”

Kadoike Junior High School, 1st Grade Onuma Kohei

What would you do if one day you suddenly received an order from the government saying, “Please die on (insert date here).” I refuse, and because I think that’s what normal people think.

However, Japan during the war about 80 years ago was different. I first learned about the existence of kamikaze corps after watching the movie “The Eternal Zero”. It is a film adaptation of the original book, and the author, Naoki Hyakuta, conveys family love and human love through this film.

The Pacific War broke out between 1941 and 1945. The Imperial Japanese Navy formed a fighter unit called the “Kamikaze Special Attack Squadron”. The tactic was to ram the enemy, the U.S. Fleet, with the fighter plane, and from the start it was a given that the pilot would die in battle. About half of the fighters were young people around the age of 20, the youngest being 17 years old. I was shocked to hear that this had happened.

After the war, MacArthur standardized the kamikaze special attack unit to be called “*kamikaze*”, and it came to be referred to as “Kamikaze Special Attack Unit” in Japan.

The fighter used at this time was called “Zero Fighter”, and the official name was “Type Zero Carrier Fighter”. The designer was Jiro Horikoshi, the main character of Hayao Miyazaki’s animated movie “The Wind Rises”.

Most of the Zero Fighters were shot down by the enemy’s artillery during attacks, falling into the sea one by one. It is believed that only about 10% of the 3,300 were able to reach the warships, and they sank about fifty enemy ships.

I don’t understand why young people gave their lives to participate in kamikaze. Researching now, it seems there was a reason.

The first reason is that in physical training, young people were better suited and had the mental capacity to learn new things faster.

The second reason is that they were taught that even if they died in battle for their country, it was an honorable and splendid thing to do. It is said that there was “system of coordinated pressure”; a general consensus that everyone would carry out a suicide attack to protect their country. Couldn’t they have stood up to the pressure and refused?

In those days in Japan, those who opposed or objected to military orders were treated as “non-citizens” or “war criminals” according to national policy, and not only themselves, but

also their families and relatives were treated as such. They would have a hard time in life. They had no choice but to die in battle and protect their honor rather than make life hard for their families and being stigmatized. It is sad and frustrating that young people were involved in the war; 3,000 to 4,000 kamikaze pilots were killed. I can't imagine what it would be like to live the time that's left with a kamikaze order issued to me, having to prepare to die at any moment.

I saw an actual photo taken two hours before a kamikaze mission. It is a picture of several people aged 17 to 19, all smiling. I could see there was a time there, a moment when they were having fun, talking as friends.

If they had been born in a time when individuals were allowed to live with themselves in mind, they would have gone to school and studied, had fun with friends, enjoyed going out with their families, enjoyed delicious food and slept in warm futons. To borrow the words of Kyuzo Miyabe, the protagonist of the movie, "My life is built on their sacrifice."

The fact that we can enjoy this everyday society of today is something that we owe to those who paid the sacrifice, some just the same age as us back then, so it could be handed down to us. I am so happy that I have the choice of living my own future at my own free will.

The Brown Thank You Note

Kadoike Junior High School, 2nd Grade Nakamura Ayane

It was when I went to visit my father's parents' house. My grandmother came to me with an old frame and inside was a certificate that had turned brown with age. Taking a closer look, I could see the words "Certificate of Appreciation", and there were many more words written that I didn't know, so I asked my grandmother and father what it said.

"In 1945, a Japanese Army supply plane crashed during transportation, and Lieutenant (name) died in the line of duty, and this is to express appreciation for cremation of the body being provided free of charge. During this time of prolonged war, which has caused a disturbance to social morality, we are grateful for this uncommon act."

August 2, 1945

Master 34201 Unit Commander Hiraoka Tomizo Hiraoka

A plane crashed on the hillside near Ogawa-machi, Hiki-gun, Saitama Prefecture, where my great-grandfather lived. It seems that my grandfather had transported the body to a hospital then had it cremated. It is said that the Army gave him a letter of appreciation for performing these series of actions without charge.

I wondered why the plane crashed. When I researched it with my father, we learned that the 34201st Division was an army air transport unit whose mission was to airlift fighter

planes and bombers completed inland to the first battle unit. However, in 1943 and 1944, there was a rise in factors such as bad weather, being shot down, the planes being poorly finished and maintained, and together with lack of experienced pilots, the number of casualties increased. This plane in question may have crashed due to a problem with the aircraft.

Today, Japan is known to the world as an economic superpower, but at the time of the Pacific War, there were few resources and food shortages.

Even when it came to making weapons, men went to the battlefield as soldiers, so even female students were making weapons. Towards the end of the war, large and medium-sized cities were hit by air raids all over Japan, destroying buildings and killing many people. Numazu, where we live, was no exception. Today, we study, join clubs, and hang out with friends, but seventy-seven years ago, people lived a life of patience in the hope that we would win the war.

But now, when I watch the situation in Ukraine on TV, I see buildings destroyed by missiles, etc., and people in sorrow beside them. They are repeating the tragedy that Japan has experienced! How much do we have to see people's sorrow, how much destruction do we have to see?

My great-grandparents, who experienced the Pacific War, say, "War is definitely not good." I think my late great-grandfather would say the same thing.

Ogawamachi, where my great-grandfather lived. It seems that there are few traces of modern warfare, but I would like to visit once and imagine my great-grandfather as I walk through the city, imagining his mindset when he went to the rescue. There are no winners in war. It is an act that hurts everyone. Once again, I want to learn the importance of peace while holding the relic of my great-grandfather's "Brown Certificate of Appreciation".

The Constant Battle

Kadoike Junior High School, 3rd Grade Kosaka Kyosuke

Why do people repeat the same mistakes? After studying about war in history class at school, when I go home and watch TV, I see the topic of war on the screen. Recently this has been going on for a long time. Living in the midst of this, I sometimes think about what peace is. The present war in Ukraine is absolutely unacceptable. This war has served as an opportunity for people all over the world to reconsider what war is all about, and perhaps they have realized that peace can be lost in an instant by even the slightest of trifles. Let's think about "peace" again.

First, in regard to repeating the same mistakes. Throughout human history, there have always been conflicts. And each time, many lives were lost, and the environment was adversely affected. Further, weapons become more and more deadly. An example would be

the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In 1945, an atomic bomb was dropped on the city of Hiroshima. In an instant, the old townscape turned into a sea of fire. I think it's truly unforgivable. However, if one's position is different, the perspective and way of thinking will change greatly. From our Japanese point of view, this atomic bomb attack can only be seen as barbaric. However, if the victorious nation, the United States, asserts that this is an act for justice, the defeated nation, Japan, will have no choice but to pander to the American side, and dropping the atomic bombs will be justified. But for the same reason, there is no such thing as a just war.

I believe that the prevailing trend in the world where the opinion of the winning side is the correct one will create a source of conflict. Six months into the Russian invasion of Ukraine, many people continue to die, the economy deteriorates, and the world situation worsens. No one gains a thing, and this battle should stop now. If people's lives and resources of the nation are used to in regard to these clashes, I feel that wars among mankind will take over the earth.

I sincerely hope that humanity will join hands and aim for a world where we can support each other. In order to realize such a world, the cooperation of people around the world is indispensable. Japan, the only country to have suffered atomic bombings, should take the lead in activities to eliminate and condemn nuclear weapons. Through this war, many people must have understood that ordinary life and peace can suddenly end at any moment. We, who are experiencing in real time an event that should never happen again, should pass it on to future generations, just like the people who fell victim to the atomic bombing. I think it will increase. And I sincerely hope that a dream world where people from all over the world join hands and cooperate without conflict will someday become a reality.

About Peace and Politics

Imazawa Junior High School, 2nd Grade Toyama Ran

I recently read a book about war. The sight of Japan during the war was so horrific that I never want anything like this to happen again. Japan lost the war in 1945 and surrendered, and the other day was the anniversary of the end of the war.

However, many countries are still at war, and the war between Russia and Ukraine is such a big war that the world is paying attention. I don't know when Japan, where I live, will be faced with war. War began as a small thing long ago, and as time passed, civilization developed, and it grew bigger. A group fight is set up, and those who lose will retaliate with frustration, lack of resources, etc. Such wars are happening all over the world, and they have become unstoppable. On the other hand, it is also impossible to ignore the fact that people who have nothing to do with it are involved in such scenes. Therefore, I think it is important

to support such people through fund-raising and other means.

In order for Japan not to participate in wars that claim so many lives, it is important for each and every one of us to acquire knowledge about war and think about it. To that end, it is necessary for the younger generation to take more interest in politics and think about where Japan is headed in the future. At school, we learn a lot about the war, but we all think it's about things from the past and doesn't affect us now. In fact, that's how I took it. However, when I was researching various things in writing this composition, I also learned that there is a strange rule for Japan. There may be a future in which Japan is forced to participate in war. It means that the day may come when Japan is no longer peaceful. I was very surprised when I saw this. I thought there might be a future where the Self-Defense Forces who work to protect Japan, their families, friends, and children could kill innocent people and be killed. When you watch the news, you see that the Ukrainian people have nowhere left to live due to the war with Russia. The young people forced to take part in the war are forced to take the lives of the innocent. So, we have to think about this. We must think about this country called Japan where we live. Right now, I can only think and share with others, but when I turn 18, I will be able to take action to reflect my opinions in politics. Therefore, I will rethink Japan and change Japan with my one vote. After correcting Japan so that it can be a peaceful country, I will think about other countries. I'm sure there will still be wars. Somewhere, innocent people are being killed. I'm sure it's very difficult to get rid of all conflicts. However, if each and every one of us raises our awareness of war and thinks about it, the future should change. It is important not only to appeal for peace, but also to look at the political situation and exchange your thoughts with people from all over the world. Instead of just thinking about war, why don't we look ahead and think about the future and think about peace again?

I Want to Protect My Little Happiness

Imazawa Junior High School, 2nd Grade Hitosugi Tamako

The other day, I saw the police helping a spot-billed duck parent and chick move the nest, on a TV program. It made me smile. Neighbors and TV viewers watched the spectacle. I felt deeply that Japan, where I could see this heartwarming atmosphere, was peaceful. But in other countries the situation is dire.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine since February 24, 2022. There are two reasons why this happened. These were "Because the countries have the same roots, Russia wanted to make Ukraine its own" and "Because it wanted to prevent Ukraine from joining NATO." To put the former simply, "Russia wants to make its own country bigger." As for the latter, NATO was originally a military alliance created by the United States to counter the Soviet Union. That is why Russia was so afraid of its immediate neighbor joining NATO. "I had no choice but to

defend my country and my people,” said Russian President Vladimir Putin in his speech announcing the invasion of Ukraine.

The philosopher Hobbes said, “Everyone goes to war for their own gain.” In other words, people are arguing for their own convenience and tormenting the other country. This will never end war.

I thought it was important for everyone in the world to know the preciousness of life as one way to reduce war. For example, if someone important to you is lost, no matter how much you hurt others, you will feel sad. You should know the pain, but you’re hurting people who are precious to someone else. Does this mean that we can forget the preciousness of life just by saying the someone is “a stranger to me”?

Of course, both Russian and Ukrainian soldiers have families and loved ones. Some of them may want peace like I do. But when people go to war, they can hurt their opponent because they want to protect their country. This is the horror of war.

I think Japan is a peaceful country, and I hope that it will continue to be a country that does not start wars. In fact, Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution stipulates that Japan “forever renounces war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.” It has declared that it will not wage war and that it will not possess nuclear weapons. There are pros and cons to this. Some people think that it is important not to go to war but to live in peace, while others think that if we do not have nuclear weapons, we will be attacked like Ukraine. Now other countries are trying to build better nuclear weapons than their rivals, and the threat of nuclear weapons is increasing.

Japan is well aware of the suffering, since being bombed twice in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The fact that Japan continues to say that it does not have nuclear weapons will play a role in calling on the world, where the threat of nuclear weapons is increasing, to create a world without nuclear weapons.

On TV, I saw a high school girl explaining a picture of the atomic bombing to an audience at an exhibition. When she saw the painting, she was shocked and felt a sense of mission that she had to convey this painting to many people. Until now, when people talk about their experiences in the war, they usually talk about elderly people who experienced the air raids and the atomic bombing, but I found it stimulating to learn about the atomic bombing in this way.

Japan is said to be a “peace-obsessed country”. However, I think that a heartwarming scene like the spot-billed duck episode can only be seen in a peaceful country. That’s why I want to protect such a heartwarming sight.

A Real War Story

Imazawa Junior High School, 3rd Grade Serizawa Maika

We were born without knowing war and have never experienced war. What I know about the war is the tragic events that killed many people and about the day the war ended that I learned in class.

After the war, Japan decided on November 3rd, 1946 that it would never go to war again. It is a blessing to be born in a peaceful world without war. What is the meaning of “peace”? It is often used in daily conversations, such as in “It’s peaceful today, isn’t it?” and “Japan is a peaceful country.” Eating until I’m full, going to school, talking with friends, studying, and spending holidays with my family.

War is cruel, and countless precious lives have been lost. Air raid warnings are issued many times in the middle of the night, and many people are unable to sleep and welcome the morning. It is unthinkable now to live in fear of the sound of sirens.

Looking up at the sky, Japan should have been a blue sky with no clouds. It was covered in thick black smoke and a large black mushroom cloud was dissipating ominously. The bombs that fell from the sky and the mountains of corpses piled up on top of each other made people feel more pain than death. It is said that it was very difficult to get a satisfying meal in such a situation, and that there was no choice but to obtain food by self-sufficiency. At that time, we were so poor that people would call us “non-patriots” if we ate rice, which we now take for granted.

I think it’s normal to have time together with my family. When I saw an article in a magazine about children who were unable to see their fathers when they went to war, I thought it would be difficult to think about the safety of myself and my family in a situation where I did not know if we would all be together again. I also found the following line: “Why are we going to war?” It was a heavy and sad sentence for a third grader to think about.

I believe that wars occur when people with different ideas oppose each other and impose their values on each other. I think it happens because they assume that their opinion is correct and have self-righteous thoughts. In other words, if we respect ourselves and each other and communicate with each other’s sense of values, war will disappear. And we should further convey that war is a tragic event in which many people are slaughtered. However, the number of people who experienced war is decreasing as the times change from Showa to Heisei to Reiwa. That being the case, it may become difficult to connect the truth and the thoughts of that time to the next generation.

When I was in elementary school, there was a person who told us a song and a story about war in the gymnasium. In today’s world where the Internet is developing, you can easily find out about war by searching. I was able to quickly find out about the air raid shelter using the

internet the day before. I took the story of the war lightly because I thought it was a common story and I looked it up on the internet. However, I thought that the story I read on the internet and the story of the person who experienced the war were different. In fact, there were many things I had never heard about the air-raid shelters in Okinawa, more than what I had researched. I regretted my first rash thought when I saw the pained face of the speaker. It is only natural that the number of people who have experienced war will decrease as time passes. I want to eliminate war by listening to what I can't learn from my own research and connecting it to the next generation.

We need to be grateful for the most obvious things. It's easy to get used to them and forget them. Being able to sleep on a warm futon, eating delicious food, and being able to study. Being normal is happiness. I think that peace is to be able to spend happy days without forgetting gratitude.

Would You Die For Your Country?

**Secondary School of Numazu-Ichiritsu Numazu High School,
2nd Grade Kawamura Kei**

Load a fighter plane with only one-way supply of fuel and bombs and ram it into an enemy ship. The pilot must "die". This was a special attack operation that took place during World War II about 77 years ago.

Japan had a winning streak at the beginning. However, Japan gradually lost the war, and the war situation deteriorated. In order to hide the fact that Japan was in a disadvantageous situation, newspapers and radio put out more and more reports that deceive the public. It was a dirty way that is unthinkable in today's Japan. However, the people endured miserable lives and continued to believe in Japan's victory. The air raids became more serious, and many lives were lost.

Even though so young, he was to ram an enemy ship. In other words, going to death, but he could not accept it. As the day of the suicide attack draws near, he spends each day feeling his own death approaching. It's scary just to think about it. But the kamikaze corps you see on TV or in books are all smiling happily. In every photo, every person has such a bright smile that it's hard to believe that he's prepared for death.

"For the sake of the country," "Long live the emperor," and "relaxing cause." These are wartime words that young people today do not understand. Young people around the age of 20 at the time used this as a matter of course and were proud to die for their country.

But even if they were happy, I don't think Japan was right at the time. When I think that these people also had someone they loved, and someone who loved them, I was overwhelmed with feelings of loss. What was Japan trying to gain, even to the point of letting young people

in their teens and twenties die, and depriving them of their futures? Sacrificing many lives for the sake of the country does not mean protecting the country. Protecting people's lives, regardless of age or gender, is protecting the country.

War is terrifying. People's lives are more important than anything else, and even such an obvious fact no longer applies in war. War can easily change the world, common sense, and people. Kamikaze pilots rejoice from the bottom of their hearts to die for their country. That was the norm. It's completely different from today's high school students and working people who sweat in club activities and go out to work.

In addition, today there are few people who have seen someone die with their own eyes, rather than through a screen or a photograph, and they do not feel that their lives are in danger as they go about their daily lives. Even if you look up at the sky and see an airplane, you just think, "Oh, it's an airplane," and don't run away. That's why death isn't the everyday occurrence it was in the past. That's why we use the word "death" so lightly. "Hot to death". "All of these jobs to do is giving me an early death!" The word "death" is commonly used today in everyday conversation as a word that exaggerates feelings.

Born in a peaceful Japan, we must never forget that there were lives that were taken unfairly in the past. It is necessary to understand that there were people who gave their lives for the country, and to continue to carry the weight of the word "death".

Important Things My Grandfather Taught Me

**Secondary School of Numazu-Ichiritsu Numazu High School,
3rd Grade Watanabe Kira**

"A place where you can work hard."

When grandfather quietly began to sing these words, I asked him,

"What song is it?"

"It's an old school song, nostalgic to me."

The first time we had such a conversation was when I was only six years old.

August 15th, the anniversary of the end of the war. Every year when this day comes, my grandfather's face becomes strong and courageous, unlike the usual soft smile. Tracing the memory of a distant day, he gently opens his mouth and sings the school song, as if he had returned to the days when he was a small boy. After singing, he tells me many stories about war, which are different every year. My grandfather sings the school song and tells a story. Since this had become kind of a yearly routine, I was looking forward to hearing such a story this year, but I was also afraid that I would have to imagine the tragic past, so I listened to my grandfather's song with mixed feelings. After the song ended, my grandfather was ready, but he didn't start talking and asked me slowly.

“Is there anything you want to know?”

I couldn't answer anything. I felt pathetic in that until now I had just sat there listening to stories about the war, thinking I had a good understanding about it, but I realized then that I had drawn a line separating myself in “the present” with those who had lived in “the past”. Reflecting on myself that I had not been able to think deeply about the war, I decided to start the beginning and learn about war again.

First, I touched on various works such as novels and picture books related to war and decided to think deeply from various perspectives. Among the many deeply moving works, the one that left a particularly strong impression on me was the painting “Family” by a young man named Hiroshi Izawa. He died in battle at the young age of 26 after being drafted while still in art school. This is the last painting he left before enlisting in the army, of a happy family reunion. How much did he want to live forever with his beloved family in a peaceful world? However, my heart ached when I thought about how he felt when his wish was not fulfilled and even his dream was taken from him.

I also felt that this painting overlapped with the story I had heard about my grandfather before. Since my grandfather had eight brothers, they suffered food shortages. At home, they made fertilizer and share around the sweet potatoes that they grew themselves. To make up for the lack of food, they would look after children of other families and work in the fields to earn some food. In this difficult life, there was lesson time for his family to enjoy time together and communicate. My grandfather said that he first felt the horror of war when he saw his family gradually change. What do young people today think of when they hear the word ‘family’? Families survives while always looking out for each other. They can have light conversation together, enjoy having meals together. These are the normal things that families do together, but they are taken away by war. I once again was reminded that was should never be allowed to happen again. I suddenly remembered the school song that my grandfather used to sing. “A place to work hard”. Until now, I had ignored why he was going to “work” at school, but when I thought about it more, it seemed strange. For some reason, I felt like I could answer that question now. I thought that children at that time went to school for the sake of the country and for the purpose of working for their own lives. It was precisely because I thought deeply about this those questions arose, and I strongly felt that I was glad that I had re-learned about the war.

What can we do now? If my grandfather hadn't given me the opportunity to think about the war for myself, I don't think I would have been able to face it as a “something related to myself.” I felt that the best I could do was to listen to the “voices” of those who experienced the war, think about their stories, and pass them on.

A Hope Passed Down to Us

Gyoshu Junior High School, 3rd Grade Omaki Karen

It was on my way home from school one day. When I was riding in my mother's car, the topic suddenly changed to the war, about which I had learned in class that day. When I told her that all the pictures I had seen in my textbooks were shocking and tragic, my mother told me this story. It was about my Filipino great-grandfather actually walking the Bataan Death March during the war. The Bataan Death March was the movement of the Japanese army to invade the Philippines during the Pacific War, and many locals lost their lives during that process. At that time, my great-grandfather, who was a soldier in the Philippines, had to see his fellow soldiers die one after another during the march.

My mother said that because of that war experience, my great-grandfather was very against my grandmother marrying my Japanese grandfather. Until now, I had never heard from my family about their experiences or memories of the war. So when I heard about it, I was surprised. Now that my great-grandfather has passed away, I felt like I was being told a valuable story that I could rarely hear. Also, when I was in elementary school, I once talked to an old man and woman who used to ride the bus with me. They both experienced the war and said to me.

“The whole area was really a sea of fire.”

I still remember their serious expressions. I believe that the reason my mother and the old man and woman told me these stories was because they wanted me to remember and pass them down. I believe that being taught about the experiences of the war means that at the same time I inherited that person's hope.

For some time now, I have been seeing news of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on TV and the Internet. On the screen, I saw many times the people who lost their precious families, friends, and even their hometowns. Not only that, but conflicts also continue in many parts of the world. You may have heard about the Afghanistan conflict and the Syrian civil war. These conflicts have been going on for decades.

I think we should not turn a blind eye to the problem. So what should we do? I think that there are more ways to reach out now that the world is connected through globalization. Donations and charities are good ways. This can be done even far from conflict areas.

We must not repeat the wars and conflicts of the past. This is because even after wars and conflicts are over, the wounded hearts will not be healed, and the lost lives will not be restored. I believe that the pain and tragedy left behind by war are not things that can be easily erased but are deep scars that affect people for the rest of their lives.

This year marks the 77th anniversary of the end of the war. Now, we, the younger generation, need to think about how to pass on the stories of war that we have inherited. I would

like to aim for the reality of world peace, not just in my own country.