

# What Peace Do I Know

**Daini Elementary School, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Tsuchiya Mikuru**

I wanted to know what “peace” is, so I borrowed two books. The names of the books are “Piano in Hiroshima” and “Faithful Elephants”. I read the books while thinking about peace.

The first book, “Piano in Hiroshima,” tells the story of a family in Hiroshima who was bombed by an atomic bomb. A girl who has always treasured her piano until she died took care of her ragged piano after the atomic bomb was dropped. The piano is still loved by the citizens as the “Hibaku Piano” (the atomic surviving piano). After reading this book, I thought that even though it was worn out, it continues to be loved as a “Hibaku Piano” because it embodies the original owner’s wish for love and peace.

The second book, “Faithful Elephants”, tells the story of a zoo in Ueno, where there was an air attack. When bombs were dropped on the zoo during an air raid, the cages broke open and lions and other scary animals ran wild. Therefore, the keepers had no choice but to poison the animals and kill them. The poison didn’t work on the last three remaining elephants. So, in the end, the zookeepers just didn’t give them food and let them die. The keepers were very saddened by this. The book ends by saying, “Stop the war!” to the air raid planes. After reading this book, I realized that the lives of animals are just as important as humans, but that life can be empty, as sometimes it must be taken when it should have been allowed to continue.

After reading these two books, Japan was very different from what I imagined. I thought that Japan was still a peaceful country in the past, but I learned that there had been wars and tragedies. Today, Japan continues to wish for peace, not participating in conflicts between nations. We provide food, clothing, shelter, and medical support to people who are at war. If there had been no war, the Japanese might not have known the horror of war and would have continued to fight. I believe that I can oppose war precisely because I have experienced war. Many people and animals lost their lives due to wars and atomic bombs. I think the reason we are at peace now is because of the wishes of those who lost their lives to live. And I think it’s because we don’t fight wars and we value life.

From now on, what I can do for peace is, first to discuss the conflicts around us, avoiding violence, and to be able to talk to each other so that we can find answers with satisfying conclusions. I want to do my best so that the current peace and happiness will continue into the future, and that I will be happy for myself and those around me.

# Special Attack Unit is Your Brother

Daisan Elementary School, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Ando Rin

I wanted to cry. When I was holding back from crying, I felt like the back of my throat was tightly closed, and it caused me pain. I learned about the Special Attack Units for the first time from the TV I was watching with my family. I had learned about the war in school before, but I thought it was fought by people much older than me, my father's age. However, when I saw the photos of the members of the Special Attack Units, I was surprised to see that there were boys just a little older than me. It seems that the photo of the boys with gentle smiles and hugging puppies was taken 2 hours before departing for attacks. It makes me sad to learn that the boys who gently hugged their puppies flew their planes straight into enemy ships and died for the sake of Japan. I read the letters they had written to their families before leaving for the attacks, wondering why these people had to die.

"I will die keeping a smile on my face."

"Take care of yourself."

"Everyone, all the best."

"How many people will cry when I die?"

I wonder how the boys felt when they wrote these letters. If you or your someone in your family had to go out like them, your heart would break. There should be no war. I strongly believe that this should never be repeated.

When I wrote my peace essay, I talked a lot about war and peace with my mother. Why do wars occur? When I thought about how I could live in peace, I realized that it is important not to push your own ideas onto others, but to put yourself in the other person's shoes. If everyone acts as they please, thinking only of themselves, saddening wars will be repeated again. If I had lived my life as usual, I probably never would have thought about the weight of life, but when seeing and hearing about the events that happened to these boys and the reading their letters they left before leaving on attacks, I was able to think about the weight of life that I took for granted.

I believe that peace is not something that one should work on to create, but something that everyone cares about, cooperates with each other to protect. I will never forget these boys who wrote loving letters to their families just before they died.

# Towards a Society Without War

**Daisan Elementary School, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Ito Tomomi**

During the summer vacation, I participated in a war historical site tour at the Meiji Historical Museum. I went to various places in Numazu City and heard stories about the war. The place that left an impression on me was Onaribashi. There is a dent there after the bomb was dropped. Numazu was victim to many air raids. Most of them are leftovers of bombs that have been used elsewhere and dropped like trash. It's scary to think that tens of thousands of people died from those bombs.

I also remember Ganyudo's Numazu War Evacuation School. I was given a special chance to enter a place that is not usually accessible, and I saw the room where the children who were evacuated at the time were living. It seems that about 20 people lived in one room, but I was surprised because the room was so small that I doubted it could fit 20 people. And it was shocking to me that the place I was introduced to was a place that I knew, and that the footprints of the war were still nearby.

At this event, we mostly heard about the Pacific War, but there were many other wars that followed and are still going on.

I have read a book about the experience of war. The book is about a mother with many children. The father, on returning from the battlefield as a soldier, returned home, but fell ill and was bedridden. And this mother had to raise their children alone. People like this mother faced hardships even though they didn't go to battle themselves.

Those who are living a hard life on the battlefield must think to themselves, "Why is this happening to me?" I believe many completely innocent people become victims.

I strongly feel that I am blessed to be born in this era when Japan is not at war. I also hope that the wars that are happening now will end, and that the international community will continue to be free of wars.

The world is facing serious problems such as global warming. I wanted to recognize the existence of each country, cooperate with each other to solve problems, and live a rich life together.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the employees of the Meiji Historical Museum who guided me.

Thank you very much.

# The History of War and the Futuer of Peace

## Daisan Elementary School, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Shoji Kaira

On August 15, 1945, the long World War II came to an end. Japan suffered a lot from this war. Numazu city where I live is the same. This summer vacation, I decided to investigate what traces of the history of war remain in Numazu.

First, I went to see the air raid ruins of Onaribashi. Onaribashi still bears the scars from the air raid by the American forces on April 11, 1945. I had crossed this bridge many times before, but when I touched the hard iron pillars with large dents, I realized that something very hard had been dented. And I felt a little scared to think that the war really happened, and that the damage from the war 77 years ago still remains.

The second is the former Tokyo Metropolitan Numazu War Evacuation School in Gan-yudo. This is the place where about 120 children from Akasaka Ward, Tokyo, left their parents' homes and used as an evacuation site during the war. Also, from December 1945 to March 1947, the school was run as a wartime school for children who lost their homes in the Tokyo air raids. I heard that Numazu City was also hit by an air raid, but the fact that there were children evacuated to Numazu City means that Tokyo suffered even greater damage.

In this way, just by looking at the history of wars in familiar places, I realized that there are many histories of wars in the area where I live. This means that there are many people in the area where I live who have suffered pain and sorrow from the war.

Japan is not at war now, but Ukraine and Russia are at war in the world. Even if Japan is not at war, somewhere in the world there is still war today.

I thought about how I could live a peaceful life without war. First of all, why do wars occur? I think that wars often occur due to conflicts arising from differences in people's ways of thinking or conflicts over territory. Next, I thought, how can we eliminate war? If all the people of the earth wish for everyone's happiness, we can do it. This is because territorial wars only bring happiness to ourselves, not to everyone else, and to the suffering of others.

And it is important to be considerate of each other, whether it is your own country, a neighboring country, or a distant country. All the people fighting in the war have families, parents and children. Do you want your family and friends to go to war?

During this summer vacation, I thought about war and thought that war should never be fought. I would like to create a society where people around the world can live in safety and peace while helping each other.

# There Must Be No War

## Daisan Elementary School, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Maehara Minato

One of the categories of recommended books to read at school is books about peace. I wanted to know why wars start and how we can rid the world of wars, so I chose this subject to study.

First, I tried to find out what's wrong with war. The first reason is that people should not be killed for no reason. A person's life is a one-time event and cannot be redone. So, it is not acceptable for many people to be killed for no reason.

Second, because neither the killer nor the victim can find happiness. However, when some country is invaded, it will be defeated if there no measures in place, so I think it is necessary to have the defenses to protect itself.

As I wrote before, I think one country should never attack another. However, I don't think it's right to deny a war to in defense of one's country when the other party attacks. If one didn't fight to protect our country, the result would probably be even more disastrous. I think it's better to take up arms and resist with all your strength than to be dominated without resistance when attacked.

I tried to find out why such terrible wars happen in the first place.

I conclude that when diplomacy, which is a peaceful means, cannot solve the problems between countries, war is the attempt to settle them by force. However, in the war between Japan and the United States, the United States stopped exporting oil that had been imported from the United States, and I came to think that the only way for Japan to survive was to go to war with the United States. As a result, Japan was defeated by the United States, resulting in a large number of casualties.

Also, Hitler persecuted the Jews because he blamed for the war.

I thought about what I could do to prevent a war like this from happening. Even if I say that war is bad now, it does not mean that war will disappear from the world. However, if many people, myself included, spread the message, I think that little by little, wars will disappear.

Now Russia has invaded Ukraine and the people of Ukraine are suffering. I always hope that such wars will disappear from the world and the horrors of war will disappear.

# Baton of Peace

## Daisan Elementary School, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Yamada Shogo

Do you know about World War II?

A war is a battle between countries over the territory of a country, and many people fall victim. I read books, deepened my thoughts about the war, and wanted to convey them to everyone.

On the morning of August 6, 1945, an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima Prefecture, Japan. At that moment, a dazzling light and flames that blinded peoples' eyes destroyed the city of Hiroshima, burning it to the ground. Over 100,000 people died, including many children.

On August 9th, another atomic bomb was also dropped on Nagasaki Prefecture. Its power is said to have been about one point five times that of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima Prefecture. To date, more than 160,000 people have died in Nagasaki Prefecture. The atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki released a blast, heat rays, and radiation, causing catastrophic damage to the town of Nagasaki. Even after the bombing, many people died due to the radiation. I could not imagine this scene, but it made me feel painful and sad.

Numazu City, where I live, was also damaged by air raids. From 1:13 to 2:52 on July 17, a total of 370,000 incendiary bombs were dropped, and the town of Numazu turned into a sea of fire. I was surprised to learn that not only Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but also Numazu was bombed. And the reason why Numazu was air-raided was because the policy was changed to incendiary air raids on the each of the cities of Japan, and the highly populated cities were targeted.

I asked my grandfather about this. It is said that Numazu had a Navy Technical Research Institute and a munitions factory. I suppose this area was attacked to destroy these facilities.

In fact, from now on, we may not be able to hear testimony of those who went to war or experienced the atomic bombing.

I think it would be better if there were no more wars that killed so many people. It may not be possible to eliminate war, However, it may be possible to reduce the occurrence of war. In order for this to happen, I believe that countries should join hands and help each other, and the world will become more peaceful. I want to create a world where everyone can live happily and with a smile.

And as for what we can do, I think using methods that through the readily available internet of today, we should share stories of peoples' experiences, hold meetings to think about war at schools, etc., and pass this on to future generations.

# Never Give Up On Peace

Daigo Elementary School, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Inamo Yui

“I lost my right leg in the war when I was in the first grade of elementary school.”

These are the words of Yoshiko Iwashita. She is eighty-three years old.

During the summer vacation, I participated in the “Elementary School Student History Class” held at the Meiji Historical Museum. There, I heard about the war experiences of Ms. Iwashita. She had lost a leg, and I was struck by the thought of how terrible it would be to lose a leg, how sad.

Numazu City was bombed eight times in 1945 during World War II. Among them, the biggest air raid was the “Numazu Great Air Raid” on July 17th. Ms. Iwashita told us about that time with a serious expression.

“As time passed after the incendiary bombs started falling, our house was burned and we had to flee outside. Buildings were on fire and the sky turned into bright red.”

Ms. Iwashita continued talking with a sad face.

“Hundreds of people got their emergency hoods wet, put them on their heads and fled. They avoided the fire by jumping into the river. But there were fragments of incendiary bombs flying everywhere and one got stuck on the small toe of my right foot which was really painful, and I couldn’t walk.”

She went to the hospital but ended up having to cut off her right leg below the knee. Still in the first grade of elementary school, I felt she had suffered such a painful experience, such a terrible thing. Even when I broke my toe, it was hard to walk, and I was sad that I couldn’t play with my friends or attend my favorite gym classes. From the look on her face, I could imagine that Ms. Iwashita must have suffered hundreds of times more than that. And I felt very frustrated knowing that ordinary people who did nothing wrong were hurt a lot. I can’t even imagine that my peaceful daily life would suddenly be destroyed. But even after losing her right leg, Ms. Iwashita never gave up and kept trying. I thought that I also want to learn to be like her.

War not only destroys the towns and buildings that everyone worked together to build, but also hurts and kills people. That should never happen. Even if we have conflicts due to differences in opinions or values, we should not overwhelm the other party with force. I believe that it is important to view issues from the other party’s perspective, use our imagination, and accept the other person’s thoughts. I want us to talk to the end and resolve the issues.

The gun battery I saw in the Gun Battery Park was rusty, and I think it is a proof of peace that war has not broken out for a while. I hope that the gun battery will never be used again and will remain rusty.

# What I Think About “Peace”

## Daigo Elementary School, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Otaku Kokona

There are many countries in the world, and many people live here. Each country has its own language and culture, and the traditions it cherishes are rooted in it. The act of trampling on it is war, and it is said that this should never be done.

So why do wars occur? Since I am a child, I don't know much about politics, but I think it is important to talk until both parties are satisfied and to understand what the other side wants. I think the same thing can be said not only for countries, but also for close family members and friends.

Actually, the other day there was trouble in my volleyball club, arising from a disagreement with the coach. It started with difference of opinion about whether I should toss with one hand or with both hands. The coach wanted me to lift with both hands, but I had specifically been practicing lifting with one hand. I told the coach my thoughts and feelings. In the end, when the discussion didn't go well and I had to leave the team, I regretted that I had told him how I felt. I never thought that not being understood would be so sad. On the other hand, the coach may have been sad because I couldn't understand his way of doing things.

Recently, I had the opportunity to go abroad with my mother. First, on the plane, I was surprised by the variety of in-flight meals. Each religion had separate meals. When I asked the crew about it, they said that they were careful not to mix things that should not be eaten during the cooking process. Various considerations and tasks are carried out to obey the way of thinking and values originating from the traditions in which others were born and raised. I learned that this is significant in the sense that it displays understanding and acknowledging others and contributes to their joy. In the countries I visited, there were people of all races, some wearing long sleeves to cover their skin, others wearing few clothes and were almost naked. However, no one seemed to care much about the appearance or behavior of others. I dressed the way I liked, and it felt good to know that no one minded, in other words, that I wasn't being objected to.

The world population is said to reach eight billion people. For people of various races and religions to live in a small world, it is necessary to be considerate of people who are different from you and respect others, which will lead to respect for yourself. I believe that this way of thinking and behavior of each person will lead to peace.

There may come a time when I disagree with others again. At that time, I would like to value my own thoughts while respecting the other person. This is what I mean by “peace”.



# The War I Saw

**Kaihoku Elementary School, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Uemura Yuto**

In August, the war is often talked about in the news. I didn't know much about war. I knew that the atomic bomb was dropped, and many people lost their lives, but I only thought of it as something that happened in the past. What got me thinking about peace was the "Visiting War Historic Sites" that I participated in when I was in the fourth grade. The people at the Meiji Historical Museum explained things in an easy-to-understand manner, and there were many things that showed the reality that there had been a war in Numazu. Many incendiary bombs were also dropped, and Onaribashi is still scarred by the bombing. When I saw the dent on the bridge, I was surprised at its power. I also saw the remains of a lot of assault corps grounds. I was able to see the inside as well as the outside. I was very shocked to know that many attacks were planned with the premise that the soldiers would die. I was able to go inside and observe the Wartime Evacuation School, which usually cannot be seen. It never occurred to me that elementary school students might live apart from their parents. At the Meiji Historical Museum, there was a replica of an incendiary bomb hanging from the ceiling, which gave me an idea of what they were like.

I learnt for the first time that they had always lived conscious of having to seek shelter at any time, not knowing when these bombs would fall from the sky.

I wanted to know more about the war, so when I was in the fourth grade, I took it up in my free research. Even in Numazu alone, I was surprised to find various historical sites. The more I investigated, the more I was surprised at how different it was from my life now. It made me realize just how blessed I am to be able to take things for granted, such as not having to be afraid of air raids, not worrying about food, and being able to sleep well. Still, I thought war was a thing of the past.

Then I saw on TV about the beginning of the war between Russia and Ukraine, and I was amazed by the footage. What I had thought was a thing of the past was now on TV. I was so scared. I thought the world wasn't yet at peace. War makes a lot of people hurt and unhappy. I hope that the war between Russia and Ukraine will end as soon as possible, and that the world will become a peaceful world where war will never happen again.

# First Step to Peace

Katahama Elementary School, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Kasai Rihito

one sunny summer morning  
Flash!  
Boom!  
A violent blowback and blast  
Roof tiles blown away  
broken glass and debris  
a groaning voice  
“Hot, hot, water ... ”  
Many precious lives were lost  
I wonder what they were thinking as they passed

Seventy-seven years later  
The sky I look up at  
is blue  
we can  
face tomorrow

the richness of being able to eat  
the joy of being able to learn  
the happiness of being able to meet with others  
a variety of happy things  
I want to cherish them

don't hurt people  
Don't do to others what you don't want done to yourself  
Everyday commonsense  
Is forgotten in war  
From war in which people inflict hurt on each other  
what will be gained

When nuclear weapons disappear from the earth  
everyone in the world  
will smile from the inside  
beginning from one's immediate surroundings

a little circle of peace  
I want it to grow little by little

## War and Peace

### Kanaoka Elementary School, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Suwabe Asami

There are three things that come to mind when I hear the word “war.”

The first is that it is scary. I’m scared of killing people so easily. What’s more, I’m afraid that people who were kind and didn’t kill people in peacetime would become different people through war.

Second, it’s sad. For example, hundreds of thousands of people perished in the atomic bomb that was dropped on the island long ago. Also, it makes me sad to see survivors of World War II and people related to them looking sad at the Peace Memorial Ceremony on TV.

The third is why we go to war. This is because I think it is strange that killing people is usually a crime, but when war breaks out, killing people is allowed.

I would like to introduce three differences between today’s wars and wars of the past.

The first is that there are now rules that everyone must obey in wars that weren’t there in the past. Simply put, the Geneva Convention is a treaty for the protection of those who do not participate in warfare or who can no longer directly participate in combat. By the way, I found out that this convention came about on August 12, 1949.

Second, the amount of information has increased, and the speed of its spread has become faster. In the past, information was slow, the amount of information was small, and only convenient information was distributed, but now it is possible to immediately check what happened that day.

Third, the country that won the war in the past was righteous and thought to be right. It seems that everyone in the world has the chance to judge now, so it’s not based on just whether a country won or lost. So winning doesn’t necessarily mean that justice was done.

I thought that the way of thinking of the world changed after the great war. People who had nothing to do with war used to be indifferent, but now I think they are becoming more and more interested.

I thought deeply about what is happening in Russia and Ukraine. I used to think it was terrible that Russia had just selfishly invaded Ukraine. However, watching the news, it seems that Russia attacked because the climate was bad, and they could not catch fish and grow food. But wasn’t there another way?

The world may have developed because there were wars, into its present state. But I think it is strange to rely on war for development.

# Can Japan be said to be in Peace?

**Kanaoka Elementary School, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Tomono Yuna**

Japan, where we live now, is a peaceful country with no war. Since the Second World War, which caused many deaths, there have been no more wars. Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution stipulates that Japan renounces perpetual war.

But is Japan really peaceful? Can we really say that we will never go to war?

First, in 2004, Japan dispatched the Ground Self-Defense Forces to Iraq. At the time, war was going on in Iraq. North Korea is also conducting missile tests. If that missile were to fly into Japanese territory, how would Japan defend itself?

In addition, Japan has what's called the "right of collective self-defense". This is the right to use force to cooperate with a country that has close ties with Japan (for example, the United States) when it is attacked.

From this, it can be considered that there is a good possibility that Japan will go to war in the future. From now on, we may have to go to war and fight in the future. People will kill and be killed, and no one wants such a future, yet wars occur. It's not that wars are something that happened in the past and don't concern us. Rather, we are more concerned with it. So what can we do to prevent future wars?

I think it's important to have strong will that you don't want war and that it shouldn't happen. I would like to have strong will to insist that we should never go to war, even if there is an atmosphere of war going on around us. I believe that such will can create a peaceful future without war.

Until now, I thought Japan was a peaceful and wonderful country. However, it turned out that I might be wrong and there is a good chance of going to war. Therefore, it is important not to think of the war as something that happened in the past, or as something that happened in another country, but that it is deeply related to us. Think about war for a moment.

# The War between Russia and Ukraine

**Ashitaka Elementary School, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Kajikuri Fuka**

Looking at the news now: "Russia is attacking Ukraine!"

It's always this kind of news lately. I think, "Why? Why is Russia doing this to Ukraine? I have a strong feeling that other people must be thinking the same thing. But there are many Russians who think the opposite of me. So I sometimes say aloud,

"I feel sorry for the Ukrainians, stop the war!"

Saying it out loud, so I'm a little embarrassed. But I'm not lying about it, so I'm less embar-

rassed.

And now, about five or six months have passed since the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian army began. I think, “What! It’s already been that long!!” Ukrainians have done well to endure these five or six months, even though there may be attacks from Russia in the future. I think it’s amazing, and I think that I wouldn’t be able to stand it. I guess this is the reason why Japan is letting some Ukrainians into Japan.

Next, I think about how Ukrainian elementary, junior high and high school students are very sad that they cannot go to school. If it were me, who couldn’t to go to school, I’d be depressed all the time. So, I can understand why Ukrainians think it would be nice to go to school in a country like Japan where there is no war. That’s why we go to school, being thankful that we can.

Finally, I feel nervous almost every day because I am afraid of war coming to Japan. So I want to make sure that there will be no war. So good luck Ukrainians too. I’m rooting for you.

## **War Produces Nothing**

**Ashitaka Elementary School, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Ito Ryusei**

War produces nothing. No matter what the reason, just fighting is meaningless. Recently Russia started war with Ukraine. This is what I thought when I saw the news. “Are you not ashamed of yourself?”

In the back room of my grandpa’s house, there are pictures of the deceased, and among them is a picture of someone wearing a uniform of the Self-Defense Force. It’s possible he died in a war somewhere while still young. When I see a picture of my grandpa, he looks sad. I hope that there will be fewer people who are sad anymore.

I saw hydrogen bombs and mines on YouTube. If you touch mines, they will explode with high water spray. I can’t swim, so I’ve never seen one, but mines are often seen in shark movies. There are more than 60,000 mines that remain from when Japan and the United States were at war, and it seems that the sea was dangerous at that time.

There are also landmines. Landmines are buried to prevent the enemy from attacking when you are fighting against another country.

Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Croatia, Ethiopia, Iraq, Thailand, Ukraine and Yemen all have many landmines. The year 2019 was a year when many become victims of landmines, including 1,538 people from Afghanistan, 1125 from Syria and 358 from Myanmar.

Other countries have lost more than 100 people. There are so many mines. Please help these people. Losing someone is sad, how can the world become peaceful? Talk, play and cherish your time with your family as much as possible.

Take care of yourself now.

## Listen to Stories of War

### Ashitaka Elementary School, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Tatara Gensuke

My great-grandparents are ninety-four years old. Thinking that they had experienced war, I asked them about war for the first time.

First, I asked them about their lives back then. My great-grandfather had nine brothers and sisters, and so eleven people lived in one house. I have one brother, so I thought how it must have been fun with so many brothers and sisters back in those days. When the war started, my great-grandmother was not yet married, so she lived a short distance away. As for food, vegetables were grown on the farm, so it seems that there was no problem with vegetables. Rice was scarce, so she cut sweet potatoes and cooked them together, and they also grew wheat, so often made udon. She said that people used to knead and tear wheat into dumplings, put them in soup and call it “*suiton*”.

“It didn’t taste good, though,” she said.

It seems that everyone was thin and there were no snacks. I eat ice cream and sweets every day, so I’m thankful because it’s completely different from the old days.

In the old days there weren’t many cars, and the roads weren’t good. It seems that everyone had a bicycle or an animal to pull a cart and do their jobs in the fields.

My great-grandfather’s family kept horses, cows, chickens, and pigs, and when they were to have a feast, they would kill the chickens and eat them. They had no supermarkets or convenience stores, but I can’t imagine a life where we would raise, kill and eat our own animals.

My great-grandfather was drafted into the war at the age of nineteen, two months before the end of the war. I was surprised that even though war killed so many people and I would have been afraid, he had been happy to go. My great-grandfather had got on a train and headed for Kyushu. When he got to Nagasaki, the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, and my great-grandfather had to turn back, and then the atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. At that time, I thought that if the atomic bomb had been dropped on my great-grandfather, he would have died. And when I thought I wouldn’t have been born, I thought it was a miracle.

My great-grandmother told me that the sound of falling incendiary bombs was like the rustling of bamboo groves. My great-grandmother heard this sound in the air raid shelter. She said that when alarms sounded during the day and at night, she fled to an air-raid shelter and covered herself with a blanket because she was afraid of the noise. On July 17, 1945, there was a large air raid on Numazu, and according to the American announcement, 90% of

Numazu was destroyed. I was horrified to imagine the whole town of Numazu turning black with houses on fire, like a burning field.

I asked my great-grandfather, “Do you want to go to war again?”

He answered immediately, “I don’t want to go.”

I was surprised that my great-grandfather, who happily went to war, felt completely different from how he used to.

My great-grandmother says, “A child who does not know war is happy.”

We feel sad when someone important to us dies. I once again thought that war is really scary. It was very precious to me that my great-grandparents told me a lot about the war. I wanted to cherish my life and live, never forgetting their stories.

## **What I Can Do**

### **Ohira Elementary School, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Omura Shuto**

Last year, when I asked my great-grandmother about her experience of the war, I was surprised at her poor life without freedom or rights. In addition to the peoples’ lifestyle during the war, I was curious about, the beginning and end of World War II, so I researched it.

First, I researched the cause of the war. The war began on September 3, 1939, when Britain and France declared war on Germany after it invaded Poland on September 1. And there are six main reasons why World War II happened. The first was the Great Depression. The second is that each country always put themselves first in terms of trade. Third, the Great Depression put countries without land and resources in a predicament. The fourth was the rapid spread of the idea of fascism, which prioritizes national interests over individual interests. Fifth, the League of Nations did not function well. The sixth is the collapse of the international system intended to contain Germany. This were the causes of the beginning of World War II, which took away both freedoms and rights.

And we move on to actions taken by Japan. The first things that Japan did were the surprise attacks on Pearl Harbor and the Malay Peninsula, starting war. Next, Japan suffered a crushing defeat in the Battle of Midway, the fall of Saipan Island, the failure of the Battle of Imphal operation, the devastating damage in the Battle of Leyte Gulf, and the fall of Iwo Jima. Then more misfortunes came, such as the Great Tokyo Air Raid, the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, the Soviet invasion of Manchuria, and the atomic bombing of Nagasaki. Finally, on August 15th, 1945, there came a radio broadcast announcing the end of the war.

When I researched World War II in detail, I thought it was strange that the people would be involved in war, when it put national resources and territory on the line and killed so many people. The reason why this war started was because of problems between Japan and other countries. I think it is the worst that more than 3 million people die, or that people are killed

indiscriminately, not thinking about the human rights of citizens. War is the worst thing that can happen. Therefore, I believe that there should be no war. If there had been no war, many lives would have been saved. We must convey the horror of war, the war that takes away people's lives. We must convey the wishes of those who experienced the war. My great-grandmother is ninety-two years old. She doesn't talk much about war because it pains her to remember. But last year my great-grandmother talked about it to me. The next issue is how to communicate this. Therefore, I would like to distribute information about the war on SNS that is familiar to young people and see programs about war TV. This is all I can do, but I would like to think about what else I can do and convey the wishes of those who experienced the war.

## What is Peace

Hara Elementary School, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Sano Tatsuaki

What is peace for me  
Even if you think of peace  
You can't know everything

What is peace for me  
You can't know everything  
I know peace is crumbling little by little  
But thanks to everyone  
I learned that we cannot let peace go

What is peace for me  
thanks to everyone  
I now know that there are people protecting our peace  
I want to protect it too  
thanks to everyone I now know  
that peace is good

What is peace for me  
I learnt from everyone  
That peace is  
something good that continues on and on  
What is peace for me



# The Sadness and Horror of War

Hara Elementary School, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Kasahara Yuta

People make mistakes. And they may repeat them again. But I don't think there is a bigger mistake in this world than war. Indiscriminate attacks and murders between countries are dangerous things that can happen in any country at any time. Nuclear weapons may also be one of the causes. If there were no war, there would be no need for such things. I feel sorry for people who want to carry weapons because they are always thinking about being attacked or fighting.

But if you don't have anything to fight for, you have no choice but to surrender when attacked. Then the whole world should have no weapons. Because this simple thing has never been achieved before, there will continue to be battles, regrets, and more battles. Some people think there would be peace without this. Victims and their families can never be truly happy. The past cannot be changed. No matter what happens, the future can be changed in any way. If all the people who exist now just get along with the people around them, they may never feel miserable again.

Few people really know the horror of war. Just knowing about the horror and the truth from childhood makes a big difference. My great-grandmother was one of those who experienced the war. At the time, anti-disaster hoods used for disaster prevention today are said to have been a necessity. They never knew when they'd be attacked even while at school. It seems that people then were always aware of being attacked. My great-grandmother lost a lot of her friends. Not only humans, but also all animals and plants can be destroyed by war. And war can cause people sadness for the rest of their lives. This should never be allowed. But right now, there are people who are suffering from war. I think the biggest crime in the world is that all innocent people, not only those who fight, but also civilians, are put in danger.

If you don't know war, read the story of "the Glass Rabbit". You can learn the intensity, sadness, and fear of war. Because it actually happened, I can sympathize and cry. I want everybody to help get rid of war because it could happen to any one of us. I believe that comforting and supporting each other will lead to freedom.

I want each and every one of us to at least make a donation, for us to work together and get over it. Could you please give me some hint to help me find happiness?

## **“Ecchan’s War”**

**Kadoike Elementary School, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Iwasawa Sho**

Ecchan moved to Manchuria, China, and happily went to school each day with Tacchin, but then the Soviet army attacked. Then, the Chinese people started to run out of water one by one. At times like this, Ecchan takes action. As a baby was going to be born in Tacchin’s family, they needed hot water to bathe the baby. Ecchan breaks down the wall of the closet that leads to Tacchin’s house and tries to save the baby. Just when he was about to be discovered by the Chinese people, father stepped in and hides them, carefully breaking through the wall, and was able to deliver the baby’s bathwater.

I thought it was amazing and continued reading. But that’s not the only amazing thing.

Ecchan’s family was poor. Ecchan gets 10 yen from her mother to buy candy. She then sells the candy to help the family for next time. Ecchan said to her homeroom teacher, Uehara-sensei, “How about four candies for one yen?”

When asked, the teacher put 12 yen and 50 sen on Ecchan’s palm and bought all the candies. If it were me, I would have been so scared of war that I couldn’t do anything. And so, I thought Ecchan was kind and brave. But not all was fine.

Ecchan and Tacchin’s families decided to return to Japan by ship. On the way back to Japan, Tacchin became ill. He was resting on a futon. Then, Tacchin gave Ecchan the marble that he treasured. I thought “It’s just weird to give something so precious to someone!” The next morning, Tacchin’s parents were crying. When she asked what had happened, she was told that Tacchin had died. While she was sad and crying, they arrived in Japan. And the story ends with Ecchan saying to the marble given to him by Tacchin, “Look, it’s Japan!”

I learned the horror and sadness of war by reading this book.

Right now, Ukraine is at war with Russia, so I want to teach them the importance of human life.

## **War and Peace, People’s Wishes**

**Kadoike Elementary School, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Nogi Yuzuna**

War. It’s sad and cruel to people. I also think that war is a very bad thing.

So what is war like? And how do peaceful people see it?

War comes suddenly. I think that war is a very sad thing. Countries are plundered, innocent people are forced to fight and kill, and precious lives are lost.

“War is so cruel.”

But not all people think so. For example, in cases such as the war between Ukraine and

Russia that we see on TV, there are always people planning war.

This war was planned by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

So why are Russia and Ukraine at war?

For those of us living in Japan, I didn't know why the war was happening now, or why Russia was attacking another country, so I did some research.

President Putin says, "Ukraine and Russia used to be one country, like brothers."

But Ukraine was about to join a group called NATO, which has many of Russia's enemies, so Putin thought that someday Russia might be attacked by NATO, and before Ukraine joins NATO, he would make Ukraine a part of his country. What is happening now is that Russia is breaking the rules of the world, invading Ukraine, and trying to take part of the country by force. War is so sad. If you watch world news, I believe most would think, "I feel sorry for them. War should never happen."

So what is peace, the opposite of war?

I think peace is a wonderful thing that everyone wants.

Iceland is the safest and most peaceful country in the world. In Iceland, most people don't lock their homes or cars. It's such a peaceful country that it has not had an army since World War II.

Japan is the tenth most peaceful country in the world.

War is so sad and cruel, peace is a wonderful thing that every person wants. From now on, we will cherish peace and cherish our country.

## **To Know About War**

### **Kadoike Elementary School, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Futami Ema**

I knew nothing of war. Therefore, during the summer vacation, I learned a lot by watching the anime "Barefoot Gen".

I learned for the first time that atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki prefectures during the Pacific War. Atomic bombs are terrible weapons that take the lives of many people. Victims suffer burns, their skin melting away, glass stuck into them, and even having their bodies melt away. Even if they were lucky enough to survive, they died in a fire, of malnutrition, or fell ill from being exposed to radiation. After watching the anime, I wondered why the war broke out, so I decided to do research.

I learned that the Pacific War began with Japan's surprise attack on Hawaii. In that attack, Japan lost 64 people, and America lost about 3,500 people including civilians. I was surprised. The war had been started by Japan.

Wanting to know more about the war, I asked my family about it. My great-grandfather had gone to Burma in the war. The war was fierce and everyone in my grandfather's unit died,

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, 1<sup>st</sup> 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