

Why Wars Happen

**Nagaisaki Elementary and Junior High School,
6th Grade Raian Hiyoshi**

Now that the invasion of Ukraine is occurring, it can be said that a serious problem has arisen. Such wars need to be resolved quickly; we need to reach reconciliation.

Why do humans go to war?

This is because the problem has developed into a problem that cannot be solved with words.

Ukraine originally wanted to join NATO, but Russia could not stand it and prevented President Zelenskyy to do so, using force.

Russia, ranked as the second strongest military power, means that Ukraine, ranked 16th is no match for her. Moreover, Russia possesses nuclear arms, making it even stronger. However, there are reports that the Ukrainian side will step up its counterattack. I don't think fighting back is a good option either.

“Can't war be eradicated?”

I'm sure some people will say this, but as long as humans have the emotion of anger, war cannot be eradicated.

People absolutely turn any new inventions that they can into weapons. One example is hydrogen. Hydrogen was discovered by Henry Cavendish in 1766 and Tsar Bomba was created in 1960.

There were others, too. I can't write them all down.

The inventors of the world today will regret it greatly when they see inventions used for weapons. I don't think humanity needs anything more.

If humans seek more than what we have, they will end up creating stronger weapons. It is possible to temporarily stop war. However, war may break out somewhere again. However, if the day comes when all countries and people achieve true peace, I keep waiting for the day when we can all sing together.

Connected Lives

Daiichi Junior High School, 1st Grade Honoka Hando

I often go to my grandfather's house. Once a month, I have lunch with my family and grandparents. I sometimes play with my younger sister, such as drawing pictures. I was playing with my sister in the room where the Buddhist altar was. Then, for some reason, my eyes met two photos hanging on the wall. One photo is of a woman and the other is a man. When

I looked closely, I realized that the photos of men looked younger than those of women. Why? I asked my grandmother questions and got answers.

The young man in the photo is my great-grandfather, my grandfather's father. My great-grandfather's job was as a war correspondent for a newspaper. He married my great-grandmother, and my grandfather was born. Shortly thereafter, he went to Luzon Island in the Philippines during the war for work. During the fierce battle, my great-grandfather died of a disease called malaria. At that time, my grandfather was only 2 years old. He says he doesn't remember much about his father. So when they were little, my grandfather and great-grandmother lived by buying food on the black market and relying on the help of people around them and relatives. While I was listening to the story, the time came for lunch. I helped make lunch and put the food on the table. My grandparents and my family sat on the chairs. And as we said, "Let's eat", my grandfather started talking. This is an old story from when my grandfather was still young. I hear it all the time, but this time I decided to listen carefully. "When I was little, we often ate rice and vegetables we got at the black market. When I was in the first grade of elementary school, school lunch was always bread. Food in those days had no taste, and people didn't think it was delicious. I'm jealous of how kids these days can eat so much delicious food. You have to be grateful for what you eat," grandfather said.

When I listened, the food I just ate tasted even better and I was grateful for it. During and after the war, food was scarce. My grandfather's father passed away at the age of 31, so it must have been difficult for him to survive. In comparison, I have a father, a mother, and both grandparents. You can eat delicious meals and school lunches every day. I can't help but feel grateful that I'm living this happy life.

Clasping my hands together and with all my heart, I said, "Thank you for the meal." I felt that the war was closer to me than I had expected and remembered that I had taken a tour of war historical sites in Numazu City. There were large air raid marks on the bridge, and there were loyalty monuments all over the place. We visited places related to the war, including factories for weapons used in the war and a testing site for sonar detection. I was especially surprised when I saw buildings that had been evacuated during the war. They were built like a school, with several rooms about the size of a double room. However, when I heard that the room was for 20 people, I thought it would be too small and I would definitely not be able to live in it for more than three months. It's also sad that I wouldn't be able to meet my parents. I wouldn't be able to live during the war. Now that I think about it, I also remember going to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. The museum has an exhibit about the first atomic bomb ever dropped on mankind. A school bag, lunch box with ingredients, and new shoes were completely black. Some of the photos brought tears to my eyes just looking at them. There were tens of thousands of photographs, drawings, and words that left evidence that people had lived their lives. It must have been hot and painful. I can't stop crying, thinking if only the bomb had never been dropped. While I was thinking about this, the

time came to go home.

When I turn on the TV during dinner, even now there are reports of war. War is a struggle that takes lives. There are many people who have lost loved ones and are grieving. I want the whole world to think about war and lives that destroy a happy future. As I thought about this, I was grateful that my great-grandfather gave me his life, that I was able to live happily ever after, and that I was able to eat three delicious meals. I got into bed and gently closed my eyes, hoping and praying that war would disappear from the world and everyone would be happy.

What is “Peace”?

Daiichi Junior High School, 2nd Grade Koga Nagasawa

This summer vacation, I went on a family trip to Okinawa. When I think of Okinawa, I immediately want to swim in the beautiful blue sea, but before that, I had a place I wanted to go to. “Himeyuri Peace Memorial Museum.”

I have never experienced war, so I don’t know much about war. Of course, there should never be another war. However, it is also true that the peaceful life we have today is because there were wars in the past. That’s why I wanted to know more about the war.

Here you can learn about the Himeyuri student corps during the war, as well as see their belongings, photographs, and video testimonies from survivors.

The Himeyuri Student Corps was comprised of teachers and students from the Okinawa Normal School Girls’ Division and Okinawa Prefectural Daiichi Girls’ High School, and primarily helped with nursing and treatment of injured soldiers. What surprised me was that the students were between 13 and 19 years old.

It seemed like they were leading a normal school life until the war started. Class notes were also on display, and they had mathematical formulas written on them, and they were studying the same way we are studying now. There was also a fun group photo. However, their lives changed completely due to the war.

During the war, they had no time to sleep and continued to work through the night, and their only food was one rice ball (about the size of a ping pong ball) a day.

There were many diaries from that time on display, and I read some of them. The inside of the trench was dark and smelled of corpses and filth, and it was said to be very smelly. It is said that soldiers with encephalopathy became violent and would even drink urine if it was placed nearby. The amputated soldier was bandaged, but the bandage was stained with blood and maggots, and he asked for the bandage to be changed. It is said that the soldiers were getting thinner day by day, and the maggots who fed on their blood were getting fatter. It is said that two or three people would carry dead soldiers outside and cremate them. It was so

intense that I stopped reading halfway through.

In the second half of the Battle of Okinawa, as the US military attacks approached, the Himeyuri Student Corps was ordered to disband. Even if they are told to disband, they might be bombed or captured by the U.S. military while escaping. More than half of the members of the Himeyuri student corps were lost, and many of them are said to have died after the order to disband.

It is said that they were taught that “it is better to die than be taken prisoner,” and there were also instances of mass suicide.

A survivor said, “I wanted to die, but I didn’t have a grenade. I thought maybe I could die if I swallowed a needle. I think I would have died if I had had a grenade.”

It’s hard to imagine that children our age would be forced to make such a choice: to run away to survive or die.

Nowadays, the fact that we can live without any inconvenience in food, clothing, and shelter is something we should not take for granted. However, I think it is difficult to really understand that and feel happy for it. Is it the case that having never had to think about peace is the meaning of living in peace?

I believe that conveying the horrors of war to future generations to experience the happiness of today is a way of repaying the gratitude to those who lived through that era.

With this in mind, I placed a flower offering on the flower stand in front of the memorial tower and clasped my hands together.

As a Resident of the “Land of Peace”

Daini Junior High School, 3rd Grade Airi Ito

Japan is a “country of peace.” To be precise, as one of the developed countries, Japan is a country that must advocate for peace and take action.

This spring, I went to Hiroshima for the first time in my life. Holding a handmade bookmark in one hand, I pushed through the crowd and boarded the tram. Then, suddenly, an old man called out to me. “Where are you from?” my father answered, “Shizuoka.” We had a conversation and said, “Nice to see you here.” The only Japanese people in the car were us and an old man, so he might have talked to us. However, I was impressed by how warm the people of Hiroshima were, willing to greet strangers.

First, we went to the Atomic Bomb Dome. At the Atomic Bomb Dome, many Peace Volunteers were explaining things to tourists. Hiroshima, the regional central city, is and has always been a city where a variety of companies and facilities are located, and where many people come and go. When I saw the Atomic Bomb Dome and the city of Hiroshima, I was surprised. It wasn’t that the cities that had been bombed by the atomic bomb had been regen-

erated and were now full of vibrancy, but that I felt the energy of the suffering of the people who tried so hard to recover from “that day”, which I wish would never happen again. On top of this is Hiroshima, and today’s Japan. Therefore, no matter how tall the building is, the Atomic Bomb Dome will continue to exist unchanged no matter how much time passes. Because I think that is the center of energy of our “land of peace.”

Perhaps because of the season, the cherry blossom petals danced in the wind and fell gently. I bought rice balls and dumplings at a nearby convenience store and had a little cherry blossom viewing on the banks of the Motoyasu River. While eating, the story of the guide came back to mind. “The 30 people inside the dome died instantly, the surrounding buildings and people were blown away in an instant, and there were countless people dying in the river saying, “It’s hot.” I shouldn’t try to imagine it. However, just looking at the cherry blossom petals falling on the water’s surface makes me feel suffocated. I wonder what the man who died without even knowing he was dead was thinking when he jumped into the river. I think about it so much that I feel helpless. I suddenly came back to my senses as I heard the echoing laughter of those around me.

Next, we went to the Peace Memorial Museum. My sister keeps asking me, “Are you scared? Are you scared?” I thought how the victims didn’t have time to feel scared. Even thinking so, I didn’t want to traumatize my sister, so I said, “If you feel bad, please let me know.” In fact, I started to feel nauseous during the process and I was shaky. What particularly caught my eye were the belongings left behind by children. Some of them were the same age as me. I was shocked when my eyes met the photos on display.

“They were just starting their lives”. Yes, that’s what I heard. Even when the victims saw the fear and reality that they were dying, they probably tried their best to live.

When I went outside, I felt a little better and took a photo of the cherry blossoms and the Japanese flag in the park. It makes me reflect on the war and truly feel that the country of Japan did not disappear, and that I am truly glad that my homeland is Japan. Then, as I was clasping my hands together in front of the Peace Memorial, a voice called out to me, “Please make way.” Surprisingly, an Austrian member of parliament came to lay flowers. I had a chat with the diplomat and carefully placed the flowers. I’ve never had the experience of having a tall person next to me, probably 190cm tall, and even a member of the Diet from a foreign country. Well, I think it’s a sign of hope that people all over the world are thinking about nuclear weapons.

After this trip, I learned a lot and made a decision. The G7 Summit was held in late May. The significance of this summit is enormous. In the first place, the United Nations, G7, and G20 cannot continue to exist unless they maintain peace.

Japan is a “country of peace.” We have a mission to advocate for peace and take action. In order to share and appeal to the world that feeling. Japan is the only country in the world to have suffered from atomic bombs. Nuclear weapons, war, and the atomic bomb are not just

scary things. The fact that Japan is the “only” country to have suffered from atomic bombings must never be changed. Since we are born into this world, we must know of it and act correctly. Humanity has overcome the coronavirus and returned to its normal way of life. Instead of just being afraid and discriminating, we created a new path at great cost. The same is true for peace and nuclear weapons. We must identify the correct information, learn, and continue to spread the message of peace. Above all, you need to act like yourself.

Each Child’s War

Daini Junior High School, 3rd Grade Miwa Wakabayashi

I read a book called “Children’s August 15th” this summer. This book contains sentences written to Emperor Showa by 33 people who experienced the war as children, looking back on August 15th, 1945. It describes life during the war, the evacuation experience, the people’s situation on August 15th, and thoughts on war and peace.

Up until now, I have learned about the war through school lessons, textbooks, books, and television programs, but I feel that I have had few opportunities to learn more about the lives and thoughts of individual people who lived at the time. Through this book, I learned that war has a great impact even on those who do not directly fight on the battlefield.

Some children said that when they were fleeing from an air raid or after learning that they had lost the war, they thought, “If I’m going to die now there’s nothing I can do about it” and “Just when will I die?” Some people seriously considered committing suicide if American soldiers came to their town. Children are greatly influenced by the ideas of the adults around them and the values of society. I believe that the reason why the children became aware of their own mortality in the war was due to the fact that the adults around them told them that they should commit suicide rather than become American prisoners of war. The people who wrote about their experiences in this book were around elementary school age at the time. There were many children who had heard stories about air raids and war from their siblings and neighborhood children and felt fear. I think it’s natural for children to want to live and to be afraid of death. War not only destroyed the lives and livelihoods of many people, but also robbed children and young people of their hopes and freedom to pursue their dreams.

It is also written that in wartime life, children at the time did their best to survive day to day, getting food and staying alive. Most of this book is about food. They remembered how little food rationing was, how they were always hungry as they only ate potatoes and beans, how delicious the white rice received was, how they ate the meat of a neighbor’s dog, and how expensive kimonos were traded in exchange for food. It describes how difficult it was to obtain food, including the sadness of change and the joy of growing vegetables in the garden. On the other hand, some people said they had no recollection of having any problems with

food. I learned that even though everyone had a general experience of war, the impact it had on them varied greatly depending on where they lived and their age. Children worry about their relationships with friends while still feeling anxious about the war, feel sorry for the headbands they left on their desks at school they can no longer attend, or secretly eat meals with friends at a friend's house. They were afraid that someone would find out. They were desperately trying to survive.

Those who learned of the defeat on August 15th felt differently. In textbooks, we often see pictures of people crying after learning of defeat. However, some children were sad, others were not particularly surprised because they knew Japan would lose, and some children were happy that they no longer had to be soldiers or relieved that they no longer had to fear air raids. Not everyone felt only sadness at the loss. The way they felt about defeat differed depending on their location, position, and age. There were children who believed until the end that Japan would win, but there were also children who faced hardships in their lives, including grandfathers who said Japan would lose, mothers who said they thought Japan would lose after the defeat, and children who felt that the war was in its final stages. There were also people who could feel that Japan's defeat was near due to the harsh atmosphere. I was surprised that even in an era when information was not properly communicated due to state control, there were still people who looked at society based on their own opinions rather than just accepting the information they were given.

Unfortunately, Japan was a country that had set itself on the path to war and started wars. Through the experience of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and losing the war, Japan learned that war should not be fought. In order to continue to reflect on the fact that we started a war and to never go to war again, it is important for each of us to make peace and to be aware of social movements and think carefully so that we do not go down the path of war, so I think. From now on, I want to learn about war, know accurate information, have my own ideas, and become a person who can take action, even in small ways.

To Avoid Repeating the Tragedy

Daisan Junior High School, 1st Grade Kokona Ishimizu

World War II lasted for over six years, from September 1st, 1939 to September 2nd, 1945. It was 78 years ago. It is estimated that over 2.5% of the world's population at the time became victims of this war. I was very sad to learn that so many people died in this war. I began to want to live in peace without having to experience war again. In my opinion, "peace" means getting along with all kinds of people around the world. To achieve this, it is important to understand and care for each other without discrimination. Even if something happens that I don't like, I hope we can resolve it through discussion. It seems that my grand-

parents were born after the war ended. So unless you try to find out, you have very little chance of knowing what things were like back then. Not only me, but the grandparents of today's young people are not only unaware of the war, but they are also being born after the war, and I think it is becoming difficult to find people close to us who have experienced the war. How did people live during the war? Upon investigation, it appears that most men were conscripted into the military, and women were also forced to work in factories. In place of men who were conscripted to war fronts, women were mobilized to work in various jobs such as farms and munitions factories. The lives of the people were changed to a life centered on war. It is said that the children were taught that war is a good thing" and "the enemy is a bad country," and were learning how to use weapons. I found out that they were not able to speak or act freely, and I was very frightened by the fact that I couldn't imagine my life now. I was born in a country without war, have a family, and happily live every day with many friends. People during the war may have hoped for this "normal" life. There must have been many people at that time who were so frightened of not knowing when they would die that they could not afford to be dissatisfied with their lives and were just desperate to survive.

I've always thought, "How pathetic is Japan, being the only country in the world to have suffered atomic bombs and then surrendering?" However, as I researched it, I learned that Japan was the first country to try it out, and I began to wonder if Japan was also at fault. However, the idea that war is bad has not changed. A lot of damage and sadness will remain, and I don't think anyone will be happy. I hope that countries can come to terms with each other and that wars will end.

There is a non-zero possibility that war will break out in Japan in the future. Conflicts still occur in various parts of the world for various reasons. Behind the scenes, many children are becoming victims. As soldiers, they are sometimes forced to fight and kill others, which has a significant impact on their minds and bodies. Even after the end of the conflict, children may not be provided with satisfactory educational opportunities, and there is a risk that they may accidentally become infected with violent ideology.

I think it is important for each person to understand even a little bit about past wars to prevent tragedies from happening again. I want to be a citizen who can raise my voice and say that we should not go to war to protect our precious family, friends, and ourselves.

To Connect Peace to the Future

Daisan Junior High School, 1st Grade Nanaha Iwamoto

I was speechless when I saw the image projected on the classroom screen. "Barefoot Gen" is a work that depicts the main character's struggle to stay strong despite the loss of many lives due to the atomic bomb being dropped on Hiroshima. Even though it was an anime, I

was shocked by the realism of seeing people's smiles and ordinary lives disappear in an instant, and I was reminded once again of the horror of war.

I started thinking about war after watching *Barefoot Gen* in my social studies class. (I wonder what kind of wars were fought in Japan?) I looked it up and found out that about 3.1 million Japanese people died in the Pacific War, which occurred about 80 years ago. Then, on August 6, 1945, at the end of the Pacific War, the first atomic bomb in human history was dropped on Japan. In *Barefoot Gen*, the main character Gen's father, older sister, and younger brother die due to the atomic bomb. I shudder to think if I were in Gen's position. I can picture myself crying in fear, not knowing what to do. But Gen was different. He takes his mother, who survived with him, and moves to a safe place. I can vividly remember seeing a child younger than me walking with all his might, carrying not only his own life, but also the life of his mother. There was no one to help Gen, who was busy doing his best. Although I understand that there is no priority in life, I was filled with a feeling of helplessness.

Why did such a tragedy occur? If you put yourself in the other country's shoes, dropping the atomic bomb would make Japan surrender as quickly as possible and reduce the number of casualties in your own country. Furthermore, it will also lead to gaining an advantage in the world. I felt that his way of thinking was too selfish, one only thinking about his own country. I understand the feeling that your own country is more important than the other country. However, I think it is wrong to attack the other country. In a foot race, can you make your opponent fall to be the best? If it were me, I would practice more than thinking about ways to sabotage my opponent. I think it's more complicated because it's a national issue, but I think the tragedy could have been avoided if everyone had thought more about each other.

It seems that the main damage caused by the atomic bomb were the heat rays and blast wave, but radiation still remained, causing disability and is damaging the health of the victims, even long after the end of the war. For those who still bear the scars of war on their minds and bodies, there may never be an end to the war. Japan's constitution states that it will not go to war or have an army and will not even recognize the right to war. Because Japan is the only country that suffered from atomic bombings during the war, we can make the voices of atomic bomb survivors heard around the world in a way that other countries cannot. In the summer, the news broadcasts images of the time and reports about peace, giving us an opportunity to become more aware. I believe that young people like us, who will be responsible for Japan's future, need to pay more attention to the world and be concerned about the wars that are still occurring.

Precisely because we have not experienced it ourselves, we believe that thinking about peace as the only country to have experienced atomic bombings and connecting it to the future will be a step towards world peace.

The First Step I Can Take

Daisan Junior High School, 1st Grade Yuzuki Umenai

I'm currently in the first year of junior high school. I can eat a full meal and sleep peacefully. I have a fun school life with my friends and live happily. Even when I learned about war in class, or watched movies or dramas about war, it always felt like fiction. A peaceful life without war. So, when I visited Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park on a family trip, I was speechless at how different it was from my reality.

It was August, so the sun was biting into my shoulders, but it was cool inside the Peace Memorial Museum. Inside the dark hall, many belongings of atomic bomb survivors, photographs showing the devastation of the atomic bombing, and documents from the time were on display. I was shocked to learn that a first-year junior high school student like me was also working during the war. "Student labor mobilization" was held for current junior high and high school students. Apparently, young men in their prime of life went off to war, and children became laborers to fill the labor shortage. At the end of the war, work was given priority over school. Approximately 8,000 students were working outside on the day the atomic bomb was dropped, and approximately 6,000 of them died. I couldn't believe that a child my age worked for the country and died in the atomic bombing. People at that time lived their lives with death around them. Even though it was wartime, it must have been terrifying to spend each day not knowing if you would die at any moment. Looking at the charred lunch boxes and remains of uniforms, I couldn't help but think: If they had lived in this era, would they have lived a peaceful life?

A single atomic bomb killed many people indiscriminately and changed the lives of those who survived. I didn't know anything about war. I was intimidated by the large scale of words such as war and peace and had given up on the idea that there was nothing I could do. This trip made me realize how important it is to know. If you know it, you can tell it. And those who know will pass it on again. I have come to believe that it is necessary for many people to "know" to face peace and pass it on to the next generation.

In Japan today, war is becoming a thing of the distant past. People who have experienced war are aging, and the opportunities for us to be involved in war are decreasing. In places like Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Okinawa, there are classes called "peace studies" that allow children to think about war and peace from an early age. I thought that we should allocate time for "peace learning" but rather than waiting for someone to set aside time or teach us something, we should try to learn on our own.

At Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park, there were peace volunteers who gave explanations about the exhibits. In addition to giving explanations to visitors to the Peace Memorial Museum, they also provide traveling explanations for individuals and groups, touring museum

exhibits and memorial monuments in parks. When I went to the Peace Memorial Museum, there were many foreign visitors. I learned that there are many people not only in Japan but also abroad who want to know more. I think it's great that there are people who do activities like Peace Volunteers that convey the message.

Japan is the only country to have suffered from atomic bombs. As a Japanese person, there are many things that I don't know, so people from other countries probably know even less. If people all over the world learned about the horrors of atomic bombs and war, we might be able to prevent the same tragedies from happening again.

When I heard the word "peace", I feel first that, "It seems difficult to take action immediately" and second that, "I don't think there's anything I can do."

You might agree. However, I think that just knowing something is a big step.

Wish for Peace

Daisan Junior High School, 1st Grade Yuika Kimura

Recently, we have been hearing news about the various effects that war has had around the world. In addition to causing hardship and a humanitarian crisis, the entire global economy will be affected by slowing growth and accelerating inflation. In Japan, gas and electricity prices have also increased. If you accidentally leave the lights on at home, you will get yelled at. At that time, there will be no peace in our home. When I think back to when the Covid 19 spread, I don't think that period could be called peaceful either. There are still many things happening around the world that I don't know or understand. "Peace" is not something we think of only in terms of "war," but when we think about the lives of people on war zones, we feel sad. The causes of wars that are still occurring in the world are complex, and even if we obtain information, it is difficult to understand everything. If that's the case, I thought I'd at least reconsider the "peace" that we take for granted every day.

Japan is a country that is stipulated by in the constitution that we will not to go to war, but would it be okay if another country unilaterally started a war? When I told my parents about my concerns, they said, "Peace and tranquility are similar and different things, but they are closely related."

When I looked up the words "peace and tranquility" mentioned in my parents' words in the dictionary, I found that they meant "a calm state without fighting, strife, or unusual events." Battles, conflicts, and unusual events occur around the world for various reasons, and some wars have been going on for over 40 years. Even now, as we live like this, many lives are being lost. My heart tightens at the cruel truth that I don't know. I hope that "fighting, strife, or unusual events" will continue to not occur in Japan.

Japan used to be a warring country. It is said that we once invaded a rich country in an

attempt to get rid of a depressed economy. Learning about the Japan that I didn't know about makes me think, "Was there ever a time like that?"

I felt a strange feeling. It is said that Japan experienced a great economic boom due to World War I. I understand that there is a deep relationship between war and the economy, but I don't think there is anything to be gained from any war. In war, everyone loses, right?

In a book I read the other day, it was written that "Living things have irresistible desires such as hunting instincts and survival instincts, so conflict is inevitable in the first place, and it cannot be denied that it is a means of survival." I don't want that to be the case, but it is also true that I cannot deny those words 100%. If you investigate the wars and conflicts that have been recorded in history, you will find that there have been more than 10,000 wars and conflicts. Even though the total death toll from wars has exceeded 150 million people, wars continue. I feel like humans are obsessed with war.

It seems that support activities and volunteer activities are carried out in various forms around the world. There are also efforts to deter war and defend countries by signing treaties with each other.

What can I do now? I haven't found the answer yet. I live each day feeling frustrated and unable to do anything but wish for peace.

The Happiest

Daisan Junior High School, 1st Grade Yuri Suzuki

On August 15th, 78 years ago, a war ended in Japan. Every year around this time, many programs with war themes are broadcast. I believe that for many people, it is an opportunity to deepen their knowledge and learn about the misery of war and the importance of peace. In 2017, a two-hour program on thinking about special attacks was broadcast and received a great response. It featured real voices such as the surviving suicide bombers and testimonies of bereaved families, and journalists visited the actual locations where the bases were located and provided historical commentary.

My great-grandfather and great-grandmother, who live in Kagoshima Prefecture, experienced war when they were children. I think they must have been about the same age as I am now. I thought that my mother must have heard about what happened at that time, but my great-grandfather never talked about the war, saying, "I don't want to remember it." My great-grandmother also lost her own brother in the war. Even if war ends, the pain of losing your family will never end. It seems that there was no smile on my great-grandmother's face when she said, "We must never go to war again."

Chiran Town in Kagoshima Prefecture was the site of a former army special attack base at the end of the Pacific War. It seems that a special attack operation was carried out in which

a fighter jet equipped with a 250 kg bomb was used to ram an enemy ship and sink it. It was a “desperate” operation in which the pilot was sure to die. People my age were sacrificing their only lives for the sake of their country’s victory. At the Chiran Special Attack Peace Hall in Chiran Town, the wills of those who were members of the Special Attack Corps who dispersed at a young age are on display.

“I’ll go with a smile.”

It seems that what was spelled out in the letter was a positive feeling toward death and gratitude for family and friends. I cannot believe that everything written in the letter is true. I think everyone really wanted to live longer and have more fun. It seems that very few bodies of the suicide bombers remain. My heart tightens when I think of the young people who disappeared into the sea.

I think the idea that “peace = no war” has become commonplace among many people, including myself. However, the number of people who have experienced war is steadily decreasing. I have never fought as a soldier, nor have I lived in a conflict zone where my safety was threatened, nor have I fled to another country in search of safety. Even if we act based on the belief that “if we eliminate war, there will be peace,” will the landscape we end up with actually match the peace desired by people who suffer from war?

On August 15th, the war ended. Just because the war ends doesn’t mean the country will be at peace. There are still many crimes that cause trouble in the world daily, and there are still many people suffering from abnormal weather on a global scale and the disasters that result from it. But I think we can spend more days laughing just because there is no war.

I don’t know about the daily lives lost due to war. However, as usual, morning comes, we eat, laugh with friends, study at school, and sleep on warm futons. I think we should be grateful that the happiest moment is right now, even though it may seem obvious.

What I Think

Daiyon Junior High School, 3rd Grade Mana Ohashi

78 years have passed since the end of the war. I read books about war and thought about war and peace.

War is a very scary thing that destroys the precious lives of many soldiers and even good citizens. It’s not just about losing your life. It destroys humanity and drives people crazy. It also makes you feel like you can casually sacrifice the lives of many people to protect your own.

Now, I can eat a full meal, go to school, have casual conversations with my friends, and laugh together. At night, you can sleep on a warm futon. That’s my normal. However, during wartime, people are starved of food, forced to work, and are in extreme situations where their

friends or family members may die every day, and they may even be killed today.

I learned about the special attack corps after reading a story. Special attack units go into battle with the premise that they will ram the enemy and die in battle. At that time, it was considered an honor for Japanese boys to sacrifice their lives and die for their country. I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that I live to die. If it were me, I wouldn't want to get on a fighter jet and get rammed and die, even though I'm so scared of just dying. I felt like I was living only for the war.

This year, we had many classes thinking about war. In Japanese class, I read *Black Rain* and learned about the horrors of the atomic bomb. In English class, I learned that there are people in Hiroshima who were not atomic bomb survivors but are working to convey the sadness of war to many people. Furthermore, I learned about many wars in society class, and learned that the effects of war were felt in every corner of ordinary people's lives, such as the evacuation of school children and the mobilization of students, and that their lives were extremely difficult. I'm sure some of the people who held the real power to run Japan knew that war should not be fought, but why did they start the war, and why could they not foresee the magnitude of the damage caused by the war? Why couldn't people listen to those who said we shouldn't go to war? Why did we have to continue fighting even if it cost many people's lives? The more I thought about it, the more questions I had. But you can't change the past.

Japan is now at peace, but there are still countries at war in the world. As I was flipping through the handbook, a photo caught my eye. It is a group of people who appear to be family members holding hands and running away from the flames of war. And behind them is a tank. What a shocking photo. One girl looks like she's about to cry. Color photos make it look clearer. This is a painting that you would never see in Japan. Even though they are not extravagant or have done anything that would make others hate them, in the end, citizens are also involved and many lives are lost. Am I the only one who thinks this is strange?

I believe that learning about war is the first step to achieving peace. Therefore, I would like to increase opportunities to learn about war and think about peace, such as by visiting the places where the atomic bomb was actually dropped, visiting museums, and listening to stories from people who experienced the war.

Peace is Something You Create

Daiyon Junior High School, 3rd Grade Toma Hagihara

Bombs fly all over the town, and people rush to air raid shelters. The city was a sea of flames, with some people lying face down and unable to move. Can you imagine such a scene?

I went to Hiroshima on a family trip in the winter of my first year of junior high school. The places they visited were the Atomic Bomb Dome, the Peace Memorial Museum (Atomic Bomb Museum), and Okunoshima, a secret island that was erased from maps as a secret island that was used as a manufacturing base for poison gas during the war.

First, at the Atomic Bomb Dome, the rubble on the ground and the bent steel framework showed the horror of an atomic bomb. At the Peace Memorial Museum, I saw various materials, including photos of patients with skin abnormalities caused by the radiation from the atomic bomb and charred lunch boxes. When I left the museum with a sad feeling, I was greeted by a landscape that didn't make me think of the tragic event that had taken place about 80 years ago.

Secondly, Okunoshima is known as a place where there are many wild rabbits, and many tourists come from overseas. Poison gas was manufactured there during the war. It is said that many people were killed in the process. When I heard this, I thought it was stupid that humans just killed people for weapons. There was also an artillery battery installed on Okunoshima, which made it clear how important this island was as a base. In a social studies class at school, I learned that poison gas began to be used as a new weapon around World War I. Although Japan did not directly participate in the war at that time, it may have been producing poison gas from around that time.

The other day, I watched the movie "Grave of the Fireflies" for the first time in my life. This is an incredibly sad story about a brother and sister who lose their parents, live on their own, and eventually both die. When I finished watching it, I was shocked and speechless, thinking, "This kind of thing happened during the war!" The brother is in the third year of junior high school, the same age as me, and I was impressed by how well he was able to find food and cook in such an environment.

I think if it were me, I would have escaped reality. It was scary to think that something like this movie could have happened all over Japan less than just 100 years ago.

At this point, I decided to think about the word "peace" once again. The meaning listed in the dictionary is "There is no war" and "The world is at peace." My idea of "peace" is similar, but when it comes to global peace, I think it can be added that "all people live equally and happily." But is it possible? Nowadays, there are conflicts such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine and religious conflicts in the Middle East, so I don't think everyone is necessarily happy.

There was a discussion on TV about war. Among the statements made was one to the effect that "peace does not come naturally, it must be created." I empathized with these words. If peace comes naturally, there will be no struggle. There will be no war. We must also make efforts to prevent the dropping of the atomic bomb and the tragic events on Okunoshima from happening again. There must be something that can be done at a time when the number of people with war experience in Japan is decreasing. From now on, I want to

become a person who can actively think about “peace.”

For the Future

Daigo Junior High School, 2nd Grade Ryosuke Hagiri

The sunlight shining brightly,
Disappeared in a flash that dazzled everything.
The breeze that faintly sings of hope,
It shattered along with the place everyone returned to.
Living in the summer, my tanned skin burns
Burned alive to ashes.
The grass on the ground where morning dew falls,
I turned into corpses soaked with tears.
Black rain that represents the heart of a foolish politician
Raining down on innocent people without mercy
Hair falling out on sore skin
Even though I was just bathed in light and rain
Somebody please give me water
Please give back my child's life.
Unfortunately, that wish will not come true
People left in a living hell
I am separated from family and I can't walk away from the pain.
Not only that
Being teased with a nickname
Being laughed at and treated
Even though each and every one of them is living a strong life.
the right to freedom and peace
Everyone has it, so why?
Why, why did you kill me?
Despite having the brains to create an atomic bomb,
Those who did not realize the possibility of peace
People who walk toward tomorrow without giving in to the atomic bomb
Ignorant people who laughed only out of prejudice
That's why we are the only country that suffered from atomic bombs.
As someone who has studied terrible history, I have a responsibility.
Leaving memories for the next generation
Advocating the meaning of peace to other countries

For all people to live as human beings
never go to war again
Come on, let's join hands
Beyond age, beyond country
freedom and peace are the norm
Let's act now for our future

What You Can Do Now

Daigo Junior High School, 3rd Grade Yusuke Usui

In August 1945, the atomic bomb was dropped. A tragic historical event that claimed over 200,000 lives. Despite having had the opportunity to learn about the horrors of nuclear weapons, 78 years later, the nuclear threat posed by Russia in the Ukraine war is increasing. Even if we don't like it, we often see it on TV and online news, and we can't afford to turn a blind eye to it. So, I started thinking about what I could do at the age of 15.

To do this, I decided to start by learning about history and international relations, and from there understanding the threat of nuclear weapons and the importance of peace. After doing some research, I learned that there was an opinion that dropping the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was the right thing to do. I was surprised, wondering what people meant by "righteousness" and "justice." It's not a matter of right or wrong, it's definitely a "no". Perhaps it was because I had just learned about the horrors of dropping an atomic bomb in history class, but I felt a sense of discomfort as to whether there was any basis for affirming this. The positive opinion is that the dropping of the atomic bomb was necessary to end the war. Otherwise, many more people would have lost their lives, arguing that it was a necessary evil. It was also argued that the existence of nuclear weapons led to postwar peace. I felt angry at such an opinion, thinking how selfish I was. Whatever the reason, there is no way we can approve of an act that caused the deaths of over 200,000 innocent people in an instant. Perhaps it is because of such opinions, but the nuclear threat is increasing due to the war between Ukraine and Russia. Everyone knows that using it can cause serious damage. About people who consider using them I can't help but think, "Are you an idiots?"

The deterioration of relations due to the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, Ukraine's move closer to the European Union (EU), further conflict with Russia, which does not like this, and other historical, cultural, ethnic and historical factors are contributing to the conflict. It seems that it is not so simple that it can be dismissed as foolish. Rather than deciding which is right, it feels like one justice and another justice are arguing and fighting. Perhaps the opposite of justice is not evil, but it is another kind of justice. The boundaries are gray, and things like anger and hatred get mixed in, making things even more complicated. The importance of

peace and the sanctity of human life are unwavering, but I feel that the weight of these things has changed due to a sense of distance from myself. The lives of those closest to us, such as our family and friends, are profound, but the peace and lives of those in other towns and countries a little further away hold less importance with distance. I understand it in my head, but the weight is different. I think it's dangerous to think of certain things in terms of race, or to assume that people are like this, and could lead to war.

In writing this peace essay, I tried to think about peace from various angles, but the theme of peace is so big that when I take a step into thinking about what I can do and what I should do, I start to hesitate. However, after doing some research, I realized that there is another kind of justice on a different side, and that it is important to deeply understand this, and that it may lead to a step towards peace.

I feel that society is complicated, with nuclear threats being used as a political tool and a bargaining card. That's why, now that I'm 15 years old, I want to share my simple viewpoints and ideas, and my thoughts and voices at student council meetings and local events whenever I have the chance. I would like to work hard to take the small steps I can now without hesitation so that we can create a peaceful future.

Fear of War

Kanaoka Junior High School, 2nd Grade Misaki Furuya

I went to Kagoshima Prefecture in the summer when I was in the second year of junior high school. There are two main reasons for this; one was sightseeing in Kagoshima Prefecture, which I had never been to before. The other reason is that I wanted to deepen my thoughts about war by actually seeing relics at the Chiran Special Attack Peace Hall in Chiran-cho, Minamikyushu City, Kagoshima Prefecture.

This place had a lot of exhibits related to the kamikaze attacks that were organized during World War II, including photos and clothes of the kamikaze pilots, as well as models of fighter planes.

I had seen and heard about wars on TV, the Internet, and in books, but I had never actually visited a place that was involved in a war.

When I entered the building, I felt that the atmosphere around me had changed.

As soon as I first entered, I watched a video. The content was about what a kamikaze attack was and what kind of people were involved in this kamikaze operation.

It was there that I first learned clearly that a kamikaze attack is an attack in which a bomb-tipped plane rams an enemy ship with the pilot still on board. Although less than 100 years have passed since this war began, the average age of those who died in this kamikaze operation was 21.6 years old, and the youngest person to die in a kamikaze operation was

only seventeen years old, the same age as today's high school and university students. In all, approximately 4,000 people lost their lives because of this operation.

My heart ached. Why did we have to go to such lengths to fight? Why did even young people with bright futures have to die in the war? I was filled with sadness because of the reality that no matter what the reason, I cannot change a person's life.

Next, when I went further into the building, I saw portraits of suicide bombers plastered all over the wall. Directly below was a letter written by the members. Many of the letters are addressed to family members such as mothers, fathers, and siblings. Some of them appeared to be letters to the same members. I'm sure it was more painful than I can even imagine, but none of them include the words "I'm in pain". Their final letters were filled with words of heartfelt gratitude and concern for the families who had raised them, and with messages that they would fight with all their might. I felt like I didn't know what to do now. However, I knew that it would be impossible for me to leave my family and fight for my life four years from now.

Next, I took a closer look at photos of the members. Until I came to this place, I had thought that all the photos of the soldiers had grim expressions on their faces, so I was surprised when I saw the photos here. In the photos of the members here, they have natural smiles, no different from those of today.

I was able to learn many important things at this Chiran Special Attack Peace Hall. The fact that I can go to school and learn about this kind of history now, and that our future is not decided by anyone and that we can carve out our own future in this environment, is incomparable to what it was during the war. I'm so grateful, and even more so, I was able to see with my own eyes how blessed we are today, where such happiness is becoming commonplace. Therefore, I realized the seriousness of the fact that there are still countries on this earth that are still at war, and I strongly felt that innocent lives should not be taken away.

78th Anniversary of the End of the War

Ooka Junior High School, 1st Grade Hanna Suzuki

I was spending time with my grandparents on August 15th of this year. At twelve o'clock during lunch, a low siren rang out throughout the room over the town broadcast. I was surprised at first because I didn't know what the siren was, but my mother told me that the siren was meant to signal the end of the war.

I learned that it was a siren to signal the 78th anniversary of the end of World War II. At that time, I turned to my grandmother, who was with me, and saw her quietly closing her eyes and clasping her hands together in silent prayer. My grandmother was born after the end of the war and had no experience during the war, but I was curious about how she felt as she

prayed in silence, so I asked her about it later.

“Every year on the day the war ends, I hold a silent prayer. I’m glad that Japan is peaceful now. I pray in the hope that peace will continue in the future.”

So she told me. I had never thought deeply about the war that happened in Japan long ago, but watching my grandmother pray in silence made me realize once again that there was a war that happened in Japan long ago.

When I researched how long Japan was at war with other countries until the end of the war 78 years ago, I learned that it was at war with other countries not once, but many times. In Numazu City, where I live, there was a major air raid during World War II in 1945, which burned down 89.5% of the city area and killed 274 people.

The fact that we have lived in peace for 78 years without any wars is not a matter of course, but rather something special.

Even now, there are places in the world that are at war, especially the war between Russia and Ukraine, which we see on TV news almost every day. Russia appears to be claiming that the only way to protect its own people was to invade Ukraine. I think Russia also started the invasion because it thought it was in the right, but instead of using force, I thought there was a way to have more discussions with the other country and resolve the issue through dialogue.

It is never acceptable to hurt people, not only between countries, but also in matters close to our own lives. Even when your opinion differs from the other person’s opinion, I believe that communicating while listening carefully to the other person’s opinion and being considerate will help prevent conflicts. Also, as you communicate, you may realize your mistakes.

If each person is conscious of repeatedly talking and resolving issues, I believe that eventually problems between countries will be avoided.

It was the 78th anniversary of the end of World War II, and I strongly hope that conflicts between countries will be resolved through dialogue as soon as possible.

Clear Memories of That Day

Ooka Junior High School, 1st Grade Mana Yazawa

“At that time, I was really scared. I lived in Yamanashi Prefecture, which is far away from Hiroshima Prefecture, but it was such a big shock that I knew something had happened. After a while, I heard screams repeatedly. The moment the atomic bomb was dropped, the entire nation was filled with fear.

My great-grandmother told me this when I was little. I didn’t understand it all that well at the time, but I remember it vividly. Passing on the story of the war is so important that it is a baton that must never be broken. I strongly believe that everyone must continue to live know-

ing this suffering.

When I was six years old, I went on a trip to Hiroshima Prefecture and saw the Atomic Bomb Dome. It's been seven years since then, but there are still some things I remember clearly. This is how the damage spread immediately after the atomic bomb was dropped. In a room of the Heisei Memorial Museum, the moment the atomic bomb was dropped was recreated in a small model. The red light representing the flames spread in the blink of an eye and consumed the entire city. In addition, extremely powerful atomic bomb radiation was released even in areas where the flames had not reached, and the damage area was as far as 3.5 kilometers. Other war damage was on display, including suicide notes from soldiers who went to the battlefield and tattered combat uniforms.

Through this experience, I became painfully aware of the magnitude of the damage caused by war. I want as many people as possible to know that the situation is ten times more dire than what is known to the world. And now, I'm starting to think that I want them to do their best to do what they can. We have fewer opportunities to learn about it, but over the past 78 years, we have been given so much information in a haphazard manner. Fighting in war was never in vain, and it continues to be passed down in this way, giving courage to many people. I hope that we can continue to convey the memories of that day as vividly as possible.

What will happen if we forget the pain of that day and the peace we experience? I'm sure there will be no mutual compassion, accidents and bullying will occur frequently, and Japan will fall apart. It may be a small thing, but our lives may be made up of peace. So, from now on, please be empathetic and listen, with the understanding that there are wars continue in the world, and there is harassment in our lives – and they are matters we have to face. What would I have done if it were me? What can I do? Just thinking about it is enough, and that kind of compassion will give someone hope, so I hope that many people will face peace and do what they can, one by one. I hope that more and more people will be able to help, even if it's just for one person's peace.

Finally, if we reconsider what peace means, I believe that if we can bring smiles to the hearts of as many people as possible, then we can truly call it peace. I'm not saying everyone is suffering. I only need one person next to you. I hope that we live in an era where many people come into contact with peace and war and cherish many ideas, so that the deaths of soldiers during war times will not be in vain. I also want to listen to many stories, continue researching about peace, and deepen my new knowledge and understanding. From now on, I would like to contribute little by little towards a peaceful world.

What Were You Born For?

Ooka Junior High School, 2nd Grade Haruma Kagami

“I hate war,” said Takashi Yanase.

What is war?” I asked.

Imagine a wall between two people

War destroys homes and cities.

Soldiers kill a lot of enemies.

Who is the enemy in the first place?

I don’t even know your name, I don’t hate you.

How could you kill someone like that?

Protect your loved ones by fighting.

These are the things people say.

When there is peace, if you kill someone, you will be punished.

I believe it’s justice.

There’s no way I can stay calm.

Because you only have one life.

To the victory gained by losing “one person”.

What on earth is it worth?

What I really want.

Playing your favorite sport with your loved ones.

Eating something delicious.

Laughing out loud at silly stories.

If that is taken away,

is there a meaning to life?

“Why were you born?

What do you do for a living?

I can’t answer.

I don’t want that!

Not a gunshot

A day when the songs of the allies of justice will echo.

Welcome today too.

Things to Think About from War

Ooka Junior High School, 3rd Grade Nozomi Fujii

Recently, I have had more time to think deeply about “war.” During this year’s Golden Week, I wanted to deepen my thoughts on the history of war, so I went to the Peace Park and the Atomic Bomb Museum.

First, I went to the Atomic Bomb Museum and what caught my eye was a photo of a girl standing in ruins. I realized that her right hand was burned, and her expression was painful, and I felt as if I had been enveloped in darkness in an instant. Just looking at the texts and photos on display made me feel overwhelmed by painful emotions; when I tried to think about the feelings of the survivors of the atomic bombing, I couldn’t help but feel pain.

As I walked through the museum, I was struck by the clothes and things that children wore at that time, as well as the photographs of people’s skulls lined up in rows. Their clothes were tattered and had blood stains on them, as they had desperately tried to stay alive. It seemed like they were leaving a message to the bereaved families that they had tried hard to survive. At the museum, I witnessed the fact that children younger than me had died at a younger age than me, their lives had been taken away from them, and I reconsidered the way I had lived my life in an unconscionable manner.

What I found most distressing at the museum was seeing people who appeared to be family members of the atomic bomb survivors looking at the photographs with tears in their eyes, and a small child saying to his mother, “I don’t want to die.” People who had come to the museum to visit the deceased were sobbing as they left, and children as young as four years old were talking about the photos, and I couldn’t help but cry as I was there. I thought that I should never forgive the fact that the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were wiped out by two bombs. Also, recently there has been news about releasing contaminated water into the sea, and because of this, many people in foreign governments have expressed opposition, such as not eating Japanese fish, etc. I think that when there are wars and conflicts, they connect to more issues, and lead to further conflict. I don’t want the events of World War II that I learned about at the museum to happen. Also, I don’t want to compete with other people for happiness and family. To prevent conflicts such as wars, people who have the right to vote need to think of ways to get involved in politics so that they can have a better life for themselves, including children who will live in the future without the right to vote. I thought I would be asked for it. I don’t have the right to vote, so I can’t choose my future. Also, there are still many situations and worlds surrounding adults that I don’t know about. Therefore, I felt that I needed to learn about war and peace again from a young age. By doing so, we can learn from past wars and will come to the conclusion that situations cannot be resolved by force.

Moving from the topic of elections, I feel that more and more elementary school students are reading novels these days. I thought that making war stories easy to read and delivering them to elementary school and junior high school students would allow them to naturally learn about the war and leave it in people's memories. To remember peace, I thought it would be easier to understand if we could read books that simplified difficult words. In my elementary school, there were war books, so we were able to learn about various war events in the library, and some children learned from reading the books that war was scary. In the lower grades of elementary school, I think some children may be too shocked if you show them actual photos, but I think conveying to them that something like this happened in the past will lead to peace.

I would like to remember these valuable experiences and thoughts and pass them on to the next generation to reduce the number of people suffering as much as possible.

About Achieving Peace

Ashitaka Junior High School, 2nd Grade Miki Suzuki

In Japan, the shadow of the war has receded, and it remains as part of the educational content. "Peace" has been achieved to some extent, and I have become accustomed to it.

War has now become a thing of the distant past, a very distant existence. However, there are still people suffering from wars and terrorism, and various problems such as hunger and poverty. Solving these problems is not easy. As I said at the beginning, for our generation, war is a world far away, and "peace" can be said to be an abstract and too large-scale of an issue.

The first time I encountered the word "peace" was when I went to the Atomic Bomb Museum. It was a very shocking sight for me, who had lived in a safe and peaceful world until then, seeing the clothes worn by people who had been exposed to the atomic bombing and the photos of people whose flesh had been harmed from the blast. After that, through my studies at elementary and junior high schools, I was able to understand not only the history and issues of my own country, but also international issues.

"Getting used to peace" is a very fortunate thing, but I felt that we were so blinded by it that we forgot the dark history of war. From these things, I first focused on issues such as war and poverty. I believe that in order to recognize this as an issue, we need the knowledge and skills that come from a thorough education. The causes of war and terrorism are not the result of one person's decision, but are complex intertwined histories and backgrounds. This is because I thought it would be difficult to solve problems without understanding them. In addition, what you can gain through education is not only correct knowledge and skills, but also the ability to think and enrich your mind, which will help those around you. It is the foundation for building good relationships.

Receiving a fulfilling education like this will lead to tackling social issues with the correct knowledge and skills. You can also improve your ability to communicate with other cultures, or, like Japan, pass on the tragedies of the past to the future to avoid repeating them. In addition, through thinking skills, children acquire cooperativeness and empathy, which leads to deepening mutual understanding. These efforts will not be achieved immediately. I believe that efforts are often made on a country-by-country basis, such as when support from developed countries is required. In the end, the only thing we, as ordinary people, can do when it comes to “peace” is to take action and change things in our immediate surroundings. However, those of us who have been able to receive a fulfilling education in a somewhat stable environment should be able to acquire rich thinking skills, understand the positions and ideas of others, and be able to respect each other.

I think that in the end, it is the knowledge, skills, and morals that are taught in compulsory education that are important. To realize a peaceful society, I would like to firmly exercise the right to education that I have been given.

The First Step Towards Peace

Ashitaka Junior High School, 3rd Grade Sara Iwamoto

“The dropping of the atomic bomb was necessary to end the war.” Are you aware of this idea? In the summer, when news about the atomic bomb and war was flying around, I was shocked by these words written in a newspaper. A public opinion poll in the United States, which dropped the atomic bomb on Japan, found that half of the people considered the dropping of the atomic bomb an achievement for their country, which brought a swifter end to the war. Surprisingly, in a public opinion poll in Japan in 2015, about 40% of people believed that dropping the atomic bomb was justified, and people in Hiroshima Prefecture, where the atomic bombing occurred, had more sympathy for the United States than the national average; the data shows sympathy for the US was above those who saw the act as unacceptable. I was very surprised to learn this data. The media often covered the tragic events caused by the atomic bomb, and I realized that Japan was in the victim position. I was wondering what the rationale was for justifying it.

Why was the atomic bomb dropped on Japan in the first place? I learned at school that this was because Japan had refused to accept the Potsdam Declaration. For this reason, we can think that dropping the atomic bomb was inevitable. However, what if the United States had deliberately changed the contents of the Potsdam Declaration in a way that Japan would not accept? What if America wanted to show its indignity by dropping the atomic bomb? Maybe it was because they wanted to test the effects of the atomic bomb, which they had finally completed after much research. How would you feel if these were the real reasons?

Even if it was possible to hasten the end of the war, dropping the atomic bomb would still be considered a mistake. Some argue that the real reason was not that Japan ignored the Potsdam Declaration. It is also true that the contents of the Potsdam Declaration have changed. It is also believed that to achieve a precise effect, the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, which had a large population and had not been heavily bombarded by air raids, without warning. I don't know what the real intention was, but whatever the reason, the fact remains that the atomic bomb was dropped, and the victims were ordinary Japanese citizens. The lives of innocent people were sacrificed to the nation. No matter what the reason, I strongly hope that wars, nuclear weapons, and other events that take the lives of many innocent people will never happen in the future.

In a newspaper article, a young man was quoted as saying, "Knowing that many people were hurt and died in war is different from knowing in what way many people were hurt and died." I was shocked when I read that sentence. The numbers of injured and dead that appear in textbooks are not just numbers. Each of those numbers had a life, and they were precious lives that were sacrificed to the world and the country. It's not the size of the number that matters. Why did so many people have to go through this kind of thing? I thought it was important to know exactly what happened. A person who died in an instant due to the atomic bomb. People who died after being exposed to large amounts of invisible radiation. A person died from severe burns caused by heat rays. A person whose entire body was pierced by window glass due to hot air. People who lost their loved ones, family and friends. Even after 78 years, we must not forget the history in which many people were hurt and suffered.

I have visited Hiroshima and Nagasaki prefectures, both of which were atomic bombed areas. I was overwhelmed by the Atomic Bomb Dome in Hiroshima Prefecture, and even though it was supposed to be just a half-destroyed building, I could almost hear the voices of the people at the time the atomic bomb was dropped. It seems that everyone who worked in this building died instantly, but at that moment, everything that had happened seemed to be coming from the building, and I was filled with fear. I want many people to know about the atmosphere that emanates from the Atomic Bomb Dome, which is known as a "Legacy of Tragedy."

To avoid repeating a mistake, you must first be aware of it. For those of us who will be responsible for the future of the world, I believe that deepening our knowledge about atomic bombs and war will be the most connected to creating a peaceful world. Sharing experiences creates empathy, and that empathy creates peace. First of all, start by knowing. To create a world where everyone can live in peace.

What We Can Do Without Experiencing It

Ashitaka Junior High School, 3rd Grade Koki Uematsu

A certain English class. I opened my textbook. It's about the Atomic Bomb Dome. The Atomic Bomb Dome has maintained its shape for over 70 years. At that time, I was thinking deeply, "Why did the war even happen?" and "How many people had to suffer?"

Time passed and it was summer vacation. As a student taking entrance exams, it was difficult to balance studies and sports, and I was exhausted every day. However, I was motivated to write the essay for the assignment. I had always decided to write a peace essay. Today is August 9th. It's the day the atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. When I was in the second grade of elementary school, I went on a trip to Nagasaki. When I was little, I didn't think about anything and just enjoyed being in this place for the first time. Among many experiences, there are some that left a very strong impression on me. Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum. Nearby was Nagasaki Peace Park. Therefore, when I was young, I thought it was just a park. Until I entered the Atomic Bomb Museum, I had no idea why I had come or what I had come to see. While listening to the sound of the streetcars running through the city, when I entered the building, the inside was completely silent. However, the atmosphere felt strange to me, just being on a trip. My father and I slowly looked around from the entrance. I didn't know much about atomic bombs and war, but it didn't take me long to understand that they were dangerous and very tragic. The edge of a letter is burnt and blackened. What the city looked like after the atomic bomb was dropped. There were many documents left behind that made my heart hurt the more I looked at them. Among them, the one that particularly left an impression on me was a photo of a girl and her clothes that were torn in places. It appears to be a child who was exposed to the atomic bombing and the clothes she actually wore. It was a far cry from the "clothes" we were wearing, and how much it hurt. I could feel it just by looking at it, and it was firmly imprinted in my mind.

And now I'm in front of the TV. When I picked up the remote control and turned on the TV, a special feature about the atomic bomb was on. While looking at it, I prayed silently. The person behind the TV screen is someone who has lost a loved one. People who no longer have the town that they cared about. There were all kinds of people, and we cannot imagine how much pain and frustration they must have felt. However, I think you can consider it. It's already over, so if you think about the cause or drag it out for a long time, you won't make any progress. However, I think it is something that should not be forgotten. Although we have not experienced this, we must pass this on to our future children and Japan. We must also ensure that such tragedies never occur again. As someone who oversees creating this kind of Japan, I want to look for even more things I can do.

Wish for Peace

Ohira Junior High School, 2nd Grade Yuki Eto

Why is there such a thing as war? What is true peace? What did we gain by fighting the war? I don't understand the point of fighting a war. After all, after a war, someone is bound to get hurt. The sadness of losing family and friends, and the feeling of being left behind. Above all, hatred for war will never disappear no matter how many years pass.

Many people were sacrificed and died in World War II, which occurred 78 years ago. Atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima Prefecture on August 6th and on Nagasaki Prefecture on August 9th. This incident claimed the lives of innocent people. In the end, Japan surrendered, and the war ended. But has anything been gained from this war? I think both countries that fought in the war lost far more in the war. I have never personally experienced a war, but I absolutely do not want it to happen. In fact, a battle that would waste so many lives should never occur.

I once saw a story called "In This Corner of the World" on TV. The story depicted the grief of the families of those who were victims of time bombs. I realized once again that the sadness of loss from war will remain with me forever. Even now, 78 years later, I sometimes watch programs that look back on World War II. Nowadays, it is easy to express in words, "He passed away," but from those who experienced the war at the time, I thought that it must be a suffering that cannot be expressed in words. Even if children like us who have never experienced war hear the same word "war," the weight we feel from that word will be completely different for adults who have experienced war.

So, why do wars that cause so much suffering to people occur? I think it is very unfortunate that there are still wars going on in the world today. Each country is full of wonderful places, so why don't they stop fighting? People have mouths, so why don't they try to solve the problem through talking? I think that the causes of war are related to things like desire. Everyone has their own opinions and thoughts. Sometimes there are differences of opinion. That can't be helped. However, if one of us takes a step back, things can go away. But what do they want by going to war? Why do we have to kill each other even though we are the same people? Is it okay for people around me to do what they want for my own desires? That's what's scary about humans. I don't understand. No, you shouldn't understand that. Human lives are not the only things lost in war. Animals, plants, and even nature will disappear. That's very sad.

What is peace? Will there be an end to war? Is there a world without discrimination? Or will countries become friends and major problems will disappear? If you think about it, many things come to mind. There may be things that you would like to improve. But improving it is not so easy. This is because, although there are people who advocate peace, the same prob-

lems have persisted for decades. The world is crying out for peace now. I too would like peace if possible. You can't change the past by looking back, but you might be able to change the future, even if it takes some time. "War." As a human being, I absolutely do not want war to start. I don't want another sad battle. And I wish for world peace. As a human being living on the same earth.

Know the Past, Create the Future

Ohira Junior High School, 3rd Grade Yuma Oyama

For those of us who have never experienced war, it is important to learn and understand war. However, no matter how much I learned about war, I still felt like it was just a pipe dream. During this time, I read in my English textbook the diary of a fellow junior high school student living in Hiroshima during World War II.

Instead of studying and playing every day, he spent 10 days cleaning roads and living in fear of explosions even though he was a middle school student. But he was always positive in his diary. There was no hint of weakness or sadness. I say this because all I could see was him living single-mindedly and valuing the many small happinesses in difficult circumstances, such as receiving loquats from his friends and playing hide-and-seek.

In his diary, what stands out to me the most is his words, "What a horrible noise!" upon hearing the explosion. I realized realistically that the explosion was frightening for those who were alive at the time, and that his fellow junior high school students had witnessed it as well. At the same time, I wondered what I could do if faced with the horrors of war in my own reality.

The war in Ukraine is ongoing. Knowing the past is very important as it leads to creating the future, but I thought we must first pay attention to what is happening now, so I decided to research the Ukraine war.

The Ukraine war began in the first place because Ukraine, a wealthy country within the former Soviet Union, attempted to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Because Russia had a conflicting relationship with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, it is thought that Ukraine's accession was seen as an act of betrayal, leading to the current Ukraine war.

Now I don't see much of it on the news anymore, and I thought it was over, but it seems like landmines are being discovered and air raids are happening. Something like what was written in the diary the boy left behind is happening in the world today. On July 25th, two people were killed and 10 others, including children, were injured. More than 500 days have passed since the war in Ukraine began, yet there are still people who have lost their families and are unable to return to their normal daily lives.

I think more people should know and think about the fact that similar things are happen-

ing in 2023 to what happened in 1945. Just as all the small happiness that was in his diary in 1945 was taken away on August 6th of that year, I realized once again how important and cruel it is that so much happiness is being taken away even in 2023. I think we should apply what we have learned from the past to the future. This is because I believe that it not only means making use of assets from the past, but also leaving behind evidence of people's lives for future generations.

Furthermore, as the only country in the world to have suffered from atomic bombings, I believe that Japan has much to contribute to world peace. For example, I think it would be possible to convey the contents of this boy's diary and the voice of a storyteller who talks about his war experiences to people all over the world in various languages. Monuments and buildings such as the Atomic Bomb Dome convey the horror of the situation, but I believe that the voices of those who have experienced it are the easiest to convey. Furthermore, I think it connects people who have experienced war with people around the world who have not and allows people to feel the connections between people.

However, the current situation is that even if I have many ideas, I cannot do anything by myself. Therefore, I think it is important to convey my thoughts to as many people as possible. Of course, there are many people other than me who have ideas about peace, and their ideas vary. That's why I think we need to communicate and share our ideas.

We are living peacefully every day now. You must know how precious and happy that is. In addition to expressing my thoughts, I also want to cherish the everyday lives of people around the world. I believe that this will lead to world peace.

Happiness to Everyone

Ohira Junior High School, 3rd Grade Satoshi Kanaeda

When someone asks me, "Are you happy?" I answer, "Yes." The standard of happiness differs from person to person. People who feel happy in small things, people who feel happy in the joy of others... At least I feel happy now. For me, the standard of happiness is being able to eat the food I like and being able to go anywhere I want. Also, I believe that happiness equals peace. So, how many people in this world feel happy?

When I was in the fourth grade of elementary school, we went on a family trip to see the Atomic Bomb Memorial Museum and Atomic Bomb Dome in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and I couldn't help but cover my eyes. A single atomic bomb instantly destroyed the happiness, peace, and lives of many people, and devastated a city. 78 years have passed since the end of the war, and the city has recovered and achieved further development. People's lives have become more convenient and comfortable. For example, in daily life, I don't worry about tomorrow's food. I can sleep peacefully at night. This would have been unimaginable 78 years

ago. However, as we live now, we are faced with a reality similar to what happened 78 years ago.

In February 2022, a piece of news shocked the world. Russia attacked Ukraine. The normal daily life that I thought existed collapsed in an instant. This problem was not limited to Russia and Ukraine but had ripples throughout the world. This continues even now, a year and a half after the war began. Lately, I've seen news about the damage caused, and each time I see it, I feel strongly that war should be abolished as a means of resolving problems among people. War deprives many people of their normal lives and even their loved ones. Is there really anyone who is happy fighting a war? There can be no such person. Both the attacking country and the attacked country will have a lot to lose. Everyone should know this. No one feels happy fighting a war. If that's the case, then shouldn't we stop fighting? Is it okay to have a war? Therefore, I would like to live in a world filled with happiness where everyone can answer "yes" to the question, "Are you happy?" There is no need for war to achieve that goal. Conflicts arise due to differences in ideas such as religion and culture. It's natural that everyone has different ideas, and instead of taking in the other person's ideas, we impose our ideas on what we think is correct. This is not mutually beneficial. I believe that by respecting others and looking at things from a broader perspective than before, we can create better things than we could have done with our own ideas.

Finally, to protect the happiness of the people of today and the people of the future, we must eliminate the means of war from among people. War takes a lot of things away from people. The reason we can feel happy in a country called Japan today is because people in the past made use of their experiences and made efforts to avoid making the same mistakes. But we have no experience. To preserve the happiness of future people, we need to thoroughly learn about war and pass it on. I want everyone to work together to create a world where everyone can feel happy.

What We Can Do About War

**Nagasaki Elementary and Junior High School,
9th Grade Sota Kuzuno**

When I entered the third year of junior high school, I started watching a lot of news. The most impressive recent news stories are North Korea's missile launches and the war in Ukraine. Of these, the news that is directly related to Japan is the news about North Korea's missile launches, but the one that left the biggest impression on me was the news about the war in Ukraine. The war in Ukraine is still ongoing, with nearly 1,000 people losing their lives or being injured every day, and to date approximately 354,000 people have been killed or injured. When I first learned from news reports that Ukraine and Russia were at odds, I

thought, “There will be no war. It will end soon.” Once the Ukraine war started, it was reported every day, and I gradually learned about the damage caused by the Ukraine war. People who are crying or angry, I have never experienced war, so even if I try to sympathize with their feelings, I cannot. However, when I watch a lot of news, I also feel sad. When I think about the war, I think of Hiroshima.

I have been to a war museum. The museums in Hiroshima and Nagasaki have many materials that show the damage at the time. In the museum, there is a wall clock that has stopped and shows the time of 11:02 when the atomic bomb exploded. This wall clock was located in a private house 800 meters away from the explosion site, but it is the clock at the time when it broke even though it was 800 meters away. It was scary just seeing the damage. There were also the ruins of a school 1.2 kilometers away from the hypocenter, photographs of destroyed residential areas, human hand bones and glass that had melted and stuck together due to the high heat, and lots of tattered clothes. Every time I see them, my heart hurts and I feel like crying. When I looked around, I saw many people with dark expressions and people crying. It was four years ago that I visited the museum, but I remember it very clearly. I think the impact of war is something that remains in people’s memories.

The year 2023 marks 78 years since the end of the war. Most of our generation living today has never experienced war, and it is becoming difficult to listen to the stories of those close to us who have experienced war. If times continue like this, I think the importance of the words “avoid repeating the tragedies of war” will become less important. It’s scary to think that if those words fade, we’ll start fighting wars again and again.

I thought about why wars happen. Because countries want to expand their resources, protect their country, and expand their territory. However, many people lost their lives in the war, and their relatives also grieved. I believe that wars should never be waged, no matter the purpose or reason. I can’t directly do anything for war, but I think what we can do is to think about war and teach our children about the fear of war and why we shouldn’t fight.

What We Need to Know

Hara Junior High School, 1st Grade Oto Kawaguchi

First, when I thought about the theme of war and peace, I realized that I had no idea what war was.

I somehow knew from the news on TV that Ukraine and Russia were at war. I just felt like it was someone else’s problem and I never really thought about it. So, when I searched the internet to learn about the war, I learned that there was a facility in Shizuoka called the “Shizuoka Peace Materials Center.” I went there during my summer vacation and was able to learn about war.

At the facility, you can actually learn about the bombs used in the wars that took place in Japan in the past, the things people used at the time, and the voices of people who experienced the war.

Where I live, Numazu, was also affected. It is said that more than 9,000 homes were burned down by incendiary bombs used in the air raids, killing nearly 300 people. The reason for the air raid on Numazu is that Numazu had many military facilities, munitions factories, and port facilities, and was also an important junction on the Tokaido Main Line.

The purpose of the attack by America, the opponent in war, was to undermine Japan's fighting spirit.

Not only Numazu, but other parts of the country were also affected by air raids, and many people were killed. The most frightening thing I heard about was the atomic bombs dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

Even now, 78 years after the end of the war, there are still people who were affected by the atomic bomb and are still suffering from the aftereffects. Currently, nine countries in the world have nuclear weapons capable of producing an atomic bomb: the United States, Russia, France, the United Kingdom, China, India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea. Approximately 70,000 people died in Nagasaki and 140,000 people died in Hiroshima, where the atomic bomb was dropped during the war between the United States and Japan 78 years ago.

It's scary to think that nine countries in the world still have such terrifying weapons.

I believe that it should never have happened that the things that I always take for granted, such as learning at school and having a safe meal, could be taken away so easily because of the war.

I think the only people who actually experienced the war and remember it are those over 90 years old. My great-grandmother passed away four years ago at the age of 83. So, I can't even ask about what happened back then.

There will be many people in the world like me who have not been able to hear the stories of war from people who have actually experienced it.

I think they will repeat the same thing again because they are not aware of the horror of war. That shouldn't happen.

What I think is that we, who live in the future, must pass on the words left behind by those who were victims of war in the past.

To that end, I think the best thing I can do now is to pass on what I learned at the Shizuoka Peace Resource Center to as many friends as possible.

I hope that by spreading this idea more and more, we can create a world where there is no war, and everyone can live happily.

I want nuclear weapons to disappear from the world as soon as possible. I want the war to end as soon as possible so that the people who are still suffering in Ukraine and Russia can smile someday. Yes, I wish for peace.

Baton of Life

Hara Junior High School, 2nd Grade Daisuke Shinohara

Have you ever seen the monument of Chiune Sugihara and his wife, Yukiko Sugihara, at Minatoguchi Park in Numazu. This is a stone monument inscribed with the words of Chiune Sugihara and a song by his wife Sachiko. It says this:

“I did what a normal human being should do. I am still convinced that I faithfully did what I was supposed to do, fearing nothing and risking my job.”

Chiune Sugihara is a diplomat who issued visas to Jews fleeing German persecution, risking his time and even going against the orders of his home country of Japan.

I recently learned that his wife, Yukiko, had deep ties to Numazu, as she was born in Numazu and had temporarily lived in a relative's house in Numazu.

I first learned about Chiune Sugihara when I read his biography when I was in the lower grades of elementary school. If I were in the same position, I don't think I would have been able to do anything out of fear of power or what my future would be like. At that time, I learned of Chiune's faith and courageous actions, and I remember being deeply impressed.

Chiune is said to have saved as many as 6,000 lives. But there's actually more to it than that. This is because the total number of descendants of those 6,000 people is said to be 100,000. That's 1% of the world's Jews. I believe that the 6,000 lives that have been saved have been connected to the present day and are truly the “baton of life.”

Although I am in a different position, I have inherited the “baton of life” from my ancestors. My great-great-grandparents lived on the Korean peninsula as railroad workers during the war when the peninsula was occupied by Japan. After Japan lost the war, they were forced to leave the Korean peninsula and fled to Japan. It is said that he escaped by train from Wonsan in present-day North Korea to Busan, and from there returned to Japan by boat. Those who could not escape were taken prisoner and forced to do harsh labor. It is said that many people died from malnutrition because they were not given enough food. What if my great-great-grandparents had not been able to escape and lost their lives... If the “baton of life” had not passed, I would never have been born into this world. The people who are alive today are important beings who have been entrusted with the “baton of life.” And this time, in order to pass on that baton to someone else, I thought with even more surety that we needed to pass on this “baton of life”.

Even now, many lives are connected by Chiune's “baton of life.” And what can our generation, who inherited this life, do? Isn't it about passing on a peaceful earth free of war to future generations? Life is not the only thing that connects us. Just like Mr. Sugihara tried to save the Jews, I believe that the image and desire for a peaceful earth connects us, regardless of age, country, or race.

Conflicts and wars are still occurring all over the world. Whenever I see such news, I feel very empty.

I want to remember and pass on the stories of my great-great-grandparents and continue to think about peace.

Tragedy in Okinawa

Hara Junior High School, 2nd Grade Aoto Tsuchiya

Do you know the term “Himeyuri Gakuen”? It’s about an old school in Okinawa that a girl about the same age as I attended. I learned from a DVD I watched at a relative’s house that during World War II, the lives of the students at Himeyuri Gakuen changed completely when the American military invaded Okinawa. I love Okinawa. It’s a very fun place where you can play in the sea and pool and see lots of beautiful fish. Curious about the sad events that occurred in Okinawa 78 years ago, this summer I visited Peace Memorial Park and Himeyuri Tower for the first time.

The museum has many exhibits that give you a detailed look at what was going on at that time. For example, there was a recreation of a place called “gama” where people at the time hid to escape from shells. My sister, who went with me, said as soon as she entered, “It’s scary!” and left. Even though it was just an exhibit, was she really that scared? When I entered the room, it was pitch black and I felt very scared. Considering that people at the time could hear gunshots inside, I think it must have been more frightening than I could have imagined.

It’s not just that their living environment has changed. Himeyuri Gakuen students helped nurse and treat injured soldiers. Life there was not only limited to food, but also the hard work of removing maggots from the bodies and burying corpses. They even had friends shot and killed right in front of them. Some people decided to commit suicide rather than be captured by the American military. Seeing such a sad history, my mind was filled with the feeling that no one seemed happy, so why and for whom was the war fought? Until now, I knew that there was a war, and I also felt that it should never be fought. However, I feel like there was something unrealistic about it. However, after actually seeing and hearing the stories, I truly believed that there should never be another war.

However, the situation between Russia and Ukraine continues to be tense. It is very sad to imagine that scenes like those seen at Peace Memorial Park and Himeyuri Tower in Okinawa are still happening today.

Also, our class is currently singing a song called “heiwa no kane” in chorus. Some of the lyrics in that song include, “The sound of gunshots rings out and the sea and the earth shatters,” and “We will forever carry on the voices of our ancestors who told us not to bear arms.”

When I learned about the events in Okinawa, my understanding deepened, and as the lyrics say, I wanted to carry on forever the voices of our ancestors who said that war should not be fought.

Okinawa was filled with many sad events. When I visited Himeyuri Tower, I offered flowers. At that time, I was surprised to see so many flowers placed in front of Himeyuri Tower. This happened 78 years ago, and many people visited here and laid flowers. I believe that this large number of floral tributes is proof that many people have taken this sad event to heart and strongly feel that war should never be fought again. I also want to keep this feeling in my heart and continue to wish for a peaceful world without war. I only donated one bunch of flowers, but I hope that just like the many flowers that were donated, I will receive as many wishes as possible.

Wish for Peace

Ukishima Junior High School, 2nd Grade Moe Watanabe

August 6, 1945, 8:15 a.m. It was a day with a bright blue summer sky. It destroyed everything in Hiroshima in an instant. When the atomic bomb exploded, it hit people with intense heat rays and blast waves, and the updrafts generated by the tremendous energy caused black rain to fall on the ground. This was a terrible radioactive rain.

By the end of December of the same year, approximately 140,000 precious lives had been lost. Dreams, hopes, and bright futures. Everything that was important to them was taken away, and I felt an immense amount of sadness.

However, there are some things that were not lost in the atomic bomb.

It is the will to live. Even though the people of Hiroshima were in ruins destroyed by the atomic bomb, and even though their minds and bodies were in tatters, no matter how painful the times were, they continued to have the will to live. Hiroshima, which was revived after many sacrifices, has been rebuilt in hope of making it shine even more after it was destroyed by the atomic bomb. Today, Hiroshima has become a very peaceful city full of smiles, rich in nature, and filled with people.

Last year, Russia began its invasion of Ukraine. The invasion destroyed many Ukrainian cities with missiles, killing not only Ukrainian and Russian soldiers, but also civilians. Many Ukrainians, including children who lost their parents in the invasion, have been forced to flee to other countries, and a horrifying reality that I can't even imagine is happening in Ukraine right now. A loved one dies in front of one's eyes. The place where they were born and raised is being destroyed. Everything about everyday life that they cherished disappears. There is so much to lose in war.

The lives lost in the invasion of Ukraine, the lives lost in the atomic bomb and the war.

All of this would not have been lost without a fight.

What exactly is “peace?” No war or conflict. No poverty or hunger. Learning at school with peace of mind. I think that each person has different thoughts and feelings, but I think that the daily life that we are now living as a matter of course is “peace.”

So, what is necessary for any country in the world to be “peaceful?” Humans have words. If we could communicate our ideas to the other person, accept the other person’s ideas, and have an open heart-to-heart dialogue with each other, conflicts would disappear.

Moreover, we need strength and kindness to break the chain of hatred and sadness within ourselves. I think it is important to overcome cultural and historical differences, to acknowledge each other’s differences, and to understand the other person’s point of view.

I am grateful that I am now living a peaceful life where I can do things that I take for granted, but I also believe that I need to learn more about the horrific facts of war and pass it on to as many people as possible in future generations. I feel it.

I hope that the world will become a peaceful world without war as soon as possible so that no more important things will be taken away from this world.

Something That Never Fades

Ukishima Junior High School, 3rd Grade Reina Watanabe

Have you ever heard of the word “special attack?” “Kamikaze” is another word for “special attack”, and simply put, it is an attack in which the crew rams an enemy with an airplane or submarine equipped with a bomb. People call the organization that conducts suicide attacks “special attack units”. The most famous of these is the kamikaze attack force. Many people have probably heard of them.

I learned about special attack forces in social studies class. A kamikaze attack is said to be a desperate operation that always results in death, and the soldiers who carry out the kamikaze attack never return.

So why did they launch a kamikaze attack even though they knew there would be many deaths?

This is because Japan had lost many aircraft carriers and carrier-based aircraft, and had lost its mobility, and it was determined that it would be unable to counter the Allied forces, which had gained the upper hand in the Pacific War, with conventional attacks. In other words, to win the war.

There are two other things that shocked me, as well as the fact that they conducted suicide attacks in exchange for people’s lives.

The first is the age of the soldiers who carried out the suicide attacks. I had assumed that people in their forties and fifties would have gone there. However, all the soldiers were

“young people” around the age of 20. My older brother is seventeen years old, so the thought of him going to war is just terrifying. The life of such a young man was destroyed by a single attack.

The second is the “thinking” of the young people who conducted the kamikaze attacks. If you were in the position of conducting a special attack, you would probably have negative opinions such as “I don’t want to do it.” However, this is how the special attack team members thought at the time: the idea is that it is an honor to go to war for your country, and it is an honor to die on the battlefield. Can you believe it?

If I were to be asked, “Please risk your life to protect the country,” I would probably refuse. This is because they believed that it was not certain that they would win the war, and that nothing would change even if they lost their lives. Even so, I would like to survive.

If someone who participated in the war were to ask me if the world is at peace now, I would not be able to answer that it is. This is because there are various problems such as wars, conflicts, hunger, and racial discrimination. To solve a problem, I think it is important to first learn about the problem and take action.

I currently belong to the student council and am involved in fundraising activities. The money collected will be donated to aid organizations such as UNICEF. I am also making a small donation. It’s good to start with the little things you can do like this. Even small things add up to make changes little by little. Let’s take a step away from the current situation. This will become a bridge to peace.

This year marks 78 years since the end of the war. Memories of the war are fading. Still, there are things that people desire that will never fade. That is world peace. The reason why we think so is because there was a war, and there are people who experienced it and have continued to talk about it to this day.

Therefore, I would like to say to all those who lost their lives in war: “Your lives were not in vain. Thanks to you, people all over the world hope for a peaceful world, and a peaceful world has become a reality.” Yes, I hope that the day will come when I can proudly say that.

The Entrusted Baton

Kadoike Junior High School, 2nd Grade Hina Fujishima

The other day, it was reported on TV news that this year marks the 78th anniversary of the end of the war. According to the news, there are fewer people who have experienced war in recent years, and the fear of war is waning among the people. It is true that there is no war in Japan today, so it may be unavoidable that there are not many people who do not know what war is and have no fear of war. However, in many parts of the world, many people are losing their lives due to terrorism, air strikes, and conflicts. The war that is most familiar to

us right now is probably the war between Ukraine and Russia. Almost every day, the headline “Invasion of Ukraine” appears in the newspapers, describing the war situation between Ukraine and Russia. This war has cost many lives. Survivors are likely to have many emotions piled up in their hearts, including anger, sadness, and hatred due to the loss of their family, home, and loved ones. It hurts my heart to think that 78 years ago, there were many people in Japan who felt this way.

The war in Japan began in December 1941 with the attack on Pearl Harbor, when the Japanese Navy launched an all-out attack on the U.S. Pacific Fleet that had assembled at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. When I learned that Japan had caused the war, I wondered why they had done such a thing. If Pearl Harbor hadn’t been attacked, fewer people would have died, and no one would have had to mourn the loss of their families. From there, the war began, with Tokyo suffering air raids from April 18, 1942 and continuing to March 10, 1945. An atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. Approximately 84,000 people had died in the Tokyo air raids. And nine days after the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima Japan surrendered and the war ended.

The war between Ukraine and Russia will definitely end someday. But can’t we end it now to avoid causing many more victims until then? As children, we cannot do something big like stopping wars. However, we can convey the horrors of war to those around us. Why do so many of us know about the Tokyo air raids and the Hiroshima atomic bomb? That’s because there are people who have passed on the baton to the generation we live in today. From one person who experienced war to the next, and then to the next. This baton has now been entrusted to us. I think it is important to pass on the baton to the next generation in any way we can. You might be able to express it in an essay like I did. About the cruelty of war and how happy peace is. I hope that as many people as possible will realize that peace is the happiest thing for us both now and in the future.

Peace

Kadoike Junior High School, 3rd Grade Himari Miyaguchi

On August 6, 1945, an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, killing approximately 140,000 people. I was born on that day 63 years later. Since I was young, I often listened to my mother talk about the atomic bomb. When my mother talked about it, I couldn’t imagine the horror of the atomic bomb, and thought it was someone else’s problem. However, this summer, I toured the Atomic Bomb Dome and Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and witnessed the horror of the atomic bomb firsthand. I started thinking about what really happened that day, and whether the war could have been prevented, something I had only vaguely thought about until now.

When I first toured the Atomic Bomb Dome, I focused on the cause of the atomic bomb being dropped on Hiroshima, which left an impression on me. At the time, the United States wanted to force Japan to surrender as quickly as possible and reduce American casualties. At the time, Hiroshima was the only target city considered by the United States that did not have an Allied prisoner of war camp, and at the same time, the city's size and topography were suitable for testing the destructive capabilities of the atomic bomb, so I understand. Also, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum was filled with people from other countries. That's why people around the world are paying attention to this war. What was even more eye-catching was that the everyday items that were probably used at the time were still preserved in a charred black state. In particular, I felt a deep sense of sadness as I looked at the items left behind that were probably used by boys and girls back then, such as the ashes of bento boxes, bicycles, bags, and writing utensils.

140,000 people died in the blink of an eye, 43 seconds after the bomb was dropped. It is said that those who survived the bombing had a difficult time, and even now, decades later, they continue to convey the threat of war as atomic bomb survivors. I felt that the photographs of burnt clothes and people suffering from burns continued to convey the power of the atomic bomb and the horror of war. I strongly felt that as many people as possible should visit the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and learn about this tragic event.

Now, 78 years after the end of the war, Japan is living in peace, but some countries are still at war. Lately, we've been hearing a lot about the war between Russia and Ukraine. The war began in 2013, when the Russian government persuaded the then-president to stop signing an association agreement with Ukraine that would strengthen political and economic relations with the European Union. Many people in Ukraine objected to this, and large-scale demonstrations are said to have continued to this day. The path to a "world free of nuclear weapons" is becoming increasingly difficult due to Russia's nuclear threat. It is necessary for each individual to make efforts to realize a world free of nuclear weapons. To that end, as the only country to have suffered atomic bombings in war, we must continue to convey the horror of nuclear weapons.

What is Peace?

Kadoike Junior High School, 3rd Grade Ai Yamanashi

"Peace." If you look up this word, it means calm and tranquil, and the absence of war. If this is the case, we will not be at peace now. There are two reasons why I think so.

The first is that there is currently a war going on between Russia and Ukraine. This war started in February 2022 and is still ongoing. Approximately 344,000 people have been killed or injured in both Russian and Ukrainian forces to date. We only see it on TV, but cities are

being destroyed, young innocent children are dying, energy and food prices are rising, and our lives are being disrupted. That's not all. In the wake of this war, calls have been made to revise the Constitution. This is stated in Article 9 of the Constitution: "The Japanese people sincerely aspire to international peace based on justice and order, and forever renounce war as an exercise of national sovereignty and the threat or use of force as a means of resolving international disputes." Due to the wars in Russia and Ukraine, there is a growing trend to revise the constitution and allow the Self-Defense Forces to operate freely, as it is unknown if wars will break out in other countries at any time. It is true that Japan is close to Russia, North Korea, and other countries, and is in an unstable situation where we do not know what will happen at any time. In fact, there are still American military bases in Okinawa and other parts of Japan.

I am against this constitutional amendment. This is because Japan experienced war during World War I and World War II, and many precious lives were lost. And that's because I learned from people who have experienced war that we should never go to war. As a member of the younger generation living today, I have not actually experienced war. Therefore, it may be difficult to fully know and understand war. That is why I believe that the Constitution, which was created by people who have experienced war and states that "wars should not be fought," should be cherished. I believe that what we must do as we live on into the future is to communicate that intention and do what we can for peace.

The second thing is that our hearts are not rich. Before writing this essay, I read a novel about the Pacific War called "Eien no Zero". In the novel, there is a word that struck me. This is something that an old man who had been a suicide bomber told the main character after the war ended. "Japan became a democratic country with a peaceful society. It entered a period of high economic growth, and its people enjoyed freedom and abundance. However, in the shadow of this, it lost something important. With postwar democracy and prosperity I believe that the Japanese people were robbed of their "morality." Nowadays, the streets are full of people who think that all they need to do is be good." This sentence made me admonish myself for my current situation. I am very happy now, surrounded by many things and my family. However, as having these things and people are now commonplace, I realized that I no longer felt appreciation for them. "As long as I'm good enough for myself" means not caring about the other person or considering their feelings. And I think the biggest one is slander on SNS etc. I think the key to enriching our hearts is to feel gratitude even to those things we can't see. For example, I think it's very important to donate money to someone you don't know, to pick up trash and take it home, and to express your feelings of "thank you." Each of us must change our consciousness, be considerate of others, and enrich our hearts. I think this is important to eliminate war and create a peaceful future. As a first step, I want to change my heart.

Grave of War Dead

Imazawa Junior High School, 1st Grade Mamoru Asada

February 1, 1943, Guadalcanal Island

June 12, 1944, Saipan Island

June 16, 1944, Hunan Province

December 20, 1944, Leyte Island, Philippines

On August 15th, as the smoke of incense wafted through the air, I took note of the dates, place names, and names from the tombstones one by one. I learned for the first time that 17 people from Imazawa who died in the fierce battle are buried in the Shounji cemetery. I wonder how they died. I thought about how many tears the families must have shed at that time.

Now, 78 years have passed since the end of the war, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to hear from those involved in the war about what actually happened during the war. The clues to how we think about war are found in the notes of those who experienced it, wartime videos and photographs, and existing structures.

So, I started by reading articles written by people who experienced war.

This is a recollection of a comrade who was run over and killed by a tank while marching north from Harbin in northeastern China in the winter of 1942. The bodies of their comrades were soon obscured by dust and left where they were. All they could do was secretly remove his fountain pen. After the war ended, the fountain pen was given to the comrade's wife as a keepsake. In other words, only the pen was returned to Japan. His remains are still left behind in China.

According to the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare's war dead memorial service, approximately 2,400,000 people died overseas during the Sino-Japanese War and the Pacific War. Of these, approximately 1,120,000 remains have not been recovered. Approximately half of the remains are yet to be found, and collection of these is currently ongoing as a national project.

As I researched this, I was surprised to discover that 520,000 people died in the war in the Philippines. Moreover, more than 30% of their remains are still unclaimed in the Philippines.

This means that the remains of the Imazawa people who lost their lives in the Philippines and other Pacific islands may not have been returned.

You can also see videos and photos from the war. In particular, many photographs may still be preserved in private homes. It appears that there are commemorative photographs of soldiers who went to war, photographs of soldiers who returned home, and photographs of village funerals. According to the Meiji Museum's special exhibition catalog ("Numazu and

the War”, 2005), there are family photographs left by soldiers who returned from the battlefield.

In the story of the soldier who died in Harbin, mentioned earlier, there is a scene where he talks about his family in detail to his comrades. Soldiers must have thought about them on the battlefield and talked about them all the time.

There were also many facilities built during the war in Numazu City. The ruins of the Numazu Naval Arsenal north of Numazu Station, the Naval Technical Research Institute at the Third Junior High School, the ruins of the Takunan Training Center in Ashitaka, the ruins of the Naval Experiment Station in Tahi, the ruins of the anti-aircraft gun battery in Sawada, and the ruins of the Kairyu hangar in Shizuura and Uchiura, the air raid shelter of the Numazu Imperial Villa. I learned that Numazu City had many naval-related facilities.

I believe that by being on the ground and comparing the historical background and records of the time, we can think about the wartime situation and the future of peace.

According to the Numazu City Survivors’ Association, the number of war dead in the city was 3,384. It is very important to know when and where these people died. Every time I discover the name of an unknown island in the south on a tombstone, I can imagine the people who died and their families. The inscription on the tombstones of the war dead is also a “silent witness.”

Aiming for Peace

Imazawa Junior High School, 2nd Grade Rin Inaba

“Wars which repeat themselves over again, and can only be preserved by threats; the foolishness of power, the memory fades.”

As the school festival approaches, our class’s choral song “Heiwa no Kane” is gradually becoming more enjoyable to listen to. This may be because the image of the lyrics has become more familiar.

The concept of “peace” differs from person to person. When I thought about peace, that’s what I suddenly thought. For me, “peace” means being able to sit around the table laughing with my family, smiling and talking with friends at school, and being able to do what I like as much as I like. Of course, there are not only fun things to do, but also worries, but my idea of “peace” is to live a normal life, including all of those things. Of course, what is written in the dictionary as “the world being in a peaceful state without war or conflict” is true, but I think that “peace” is the small happiness that each individual has. If you ask me if I’m at peace now, I can proudly say that I am, but I can’t say that for Japan as a whole or the world as a whole. There are many people whose happiness has been taken away by someone, who have lost their families, and who are unable to eat or spend quality time with friends. The most repre-

sentative of these is war. Why do wars happen? Does this mean that each person has a different way of protecting their own small happiness? I want to spend my time smiling, but I feel depressed when people around me don't smile. On the other hand, we often feel happy when we see people smile. I thought everyone had the same wish that everyone would be smiling. However, as the lyrics of this song suggest, there are some people who can only protect their own happiness by threatening the happiness of others. Otherwise, there would be no war. "War" is the opposite of "peace." Once a war begins, the person who started the war is no longer at peace. Putting the cart before the horse. Isn't that really stupid?

The war between Ukraine and Russia is on the news. At first, I was scared, but as I continued to watch it every day, my fear began to fade. That's the scariest thing. I don't want to get used to things that aren't normal. It is said that more than 354,000 soldiers from both countries were killed or injured in this war. Many young children's lives are also lost. Will the war never end until one side wins? What are the benefits of winning? First of all, who is the war for and why? No matter how much I searched, I couldn't find a satisfactory answer anywhere. Among them, there was an opinion online that the incident started because Russia opposed the situation because of its differences with Ukraine. It is natural for people to have different opinions due to differences in the environment and culture they have lived in. On a country-by-country basis, the differences are of course huge. If a war breaks out because we cannot accept each other's differences, it would be terrible if we ended up stealing lives and destroying each other's happiness. When I watch the news, I get the feeling that people have raised their fists out of emotion and don't know how to bring them down.

"Open your fists and connect, our hearts will become one."

Ending a war does not necessarily mean peace. But as long as war continues, there will never be peace. Other countries are providing weapons and bombs to help Ukraine. Is this correct? Is it not possible to resolve this through discussion? Even though it may be difficult to have discussions between people with different values, I feel that it is important for all kinds of people to keep knocking on closed doors. Otherwise, we won't be able to open each other's fists. What should I do? What can you do? I don't know the answer to that question right now, but I'm going to take what's happening now as my own, accept the facts, and sing with my friends. We pray that peace will become a common thought throughout the world as Heiwa (peace).

Be Grateful for Happiness

**Secondary School of Numazu-Ichiritsu Numazu High School,
2nd Grade Kurea Ono**

This is a sudden question, but I have a question. Do you feel happy in the times we live in now? I feel happy. There is a reason why I feel this way. When I thought about what happiness means, the word “peace” came to mind first. Today, we can say that Japan, where we live today, is peaceful and there is no war. Then I became interested in the old days of Japan and decided to look into it. At that time, I saw on TV that they were actually interviewing people from the war era. I felt a lot from this interview.

That was about 100 years ago. At that time, each country was in a state of complicated intertwined desires to expand their power and expand colonies. Then, World War I began against the backdrop of “global depression” and “imperialism.”

What I am going to talk about from now on will be the experiences of people who lived through the era of war. The first one is the one who moved to Manchuria as part of the Manchuria pioneer group. Before the Pacific War, Japan expanded into China. Japan also established Manchukuo and sought to take over the resources and food available in Manchuria’s vast land. The workers were the Manchurian pioneers sent from all over Japan. These people gathered because they heard that if they went to Manchuria, they would be able to live a rich life.

However, the reality was harsh as the wilderness was vast. Because the pioneer group was shipping rice to the military, they were unable to get enough food for themselves, so they had to live life as best they could just to survive. During this time, their families supported them. However, they lost the will to live and families were gradually torn apart. Even so, they all supported each other and lived together.

If I lived in this era, I might have run away. Children who lived during times of war are made to work even though they have done nothing wrong. I was able to learn the importance of life from stories of the sadness and painful days of those losing precious family and siblings. I was also very impressed with how the people had the strength to look at their past and overcome various obstacles to live in the present.

The second story is of a woman who experienced hardships that continued even after the end of the war. Some lay women were married to soldiers. As a result, some children were called “children of enemy soldiers” and discriminated against. There was an orphanage called “Elizabeth Saunders Home” that took care of such children. The children gathered here had roots from various countries. This woman was one of them. She was separated from her mother because her father was a US soldier. This facility was essentially a place where parents and children parted ways. From the child’s perspective, it was sad to be separated, but

the mother wanted her child to be saved and protected, so she left her in this place.

I think the child didn't know what was going on and it may have been just a sad day, but the mother had her own ideas and the only way to help the child was to leave her at this facility. I think the mother was also desperate to see her child. Therefore, I was acutely aware that both the children and mothers of enemy soldiers were victims.

War is something that affects the lives and traumatizes the lives of innocent people. That is why I believe that for those of us who live today, carrying the thoughts of those who lived through the era of war, learning more about war and passing it on to the next generation will lead to peace. I strongly wanted to find out what I could do to preserve peace. So now, I want to live my life with a sense of gratitude every day, without taking for granted such ordinary things as waking up in the morning, starting my day without any incident, and being able to eat and sleep normally.

From Chiran

Secondary School of Numazu-Ichiritsu Numazu High School, 3rd Grade Renka Kakuta

I have been to Kagoshima with my mother. When we arrived at the airport, my mother rented a car, saying there was somewhere she really wanted to go. After driving for about an hour, we finally arrived. When I got out of the car and went ahead, I could read the words on the sign. It said Chiran Special Attack Peace Hall. "Special attack" is a phrase I saw in a history collection. When it came time to enter the building, I hesitated for a moment. Learning about war is scary. I felt the urge to leave without looking at anything. I scolded myself for that and gathered up the courage to go inside. The person at the reception gave me a pamphlet, so I will quote it and explain about the Chiran Special Attack Peace Hall.

"The Chiran Special Attack Peace Museum collects valuable materials such as photographs, mementos, and records of the Army special attack personnel who rammed enemy ships with a bomb-loaded planes, unprecedented in human history, during the Battle of Okinawa at the end of World War II. By preserving and displaying these items, we will accurately convey the true feelings of the time to future generations and contribute to lasting world peace."

What I saw at the Chiran Special Attack Peace Hall was something I will never forget. Among them, the scene in the relics room is especially memorable. I was shocked, a shock that cannot be expressed in words. For the first time, I experienced not being able to move my legs from the spot. The first thing you see when you enter the memento room is the young men's faces. When I entered, their eyes caught mine. That's the way it felt. In any case, a large number of face photographs cover the walls of the room. All of them were wearing

military uniforms or flight uniforms, making it clear that they were soldiers. In the memorabilia room, photographs of the 1,036 soldiers who died in the Okinawa special attack are displayed in order of the month and date of their death. The name and rank are written next to the photo. I couldn't see their faces well at first. I didn't know how to feel about these people who died defending this country. I look at the photos as if I'm determined to make eye contact again. Some had dignified expressions, some had their arms crossed, and others had gentle smiles on their faces, all of them looking refreshing and intelligent. If anything, I get the impression that they are nice young men. Were they already prepared for death when the photos were taken? What kind of thoughts did they have in mind when the photos were taken? As I looked at each person's face photo and name, I felt it was clear that they were both alive and now dead. There is a three-dimensional case below the face photo. There, wills, letters, death certificates, and writings left behind to their families and friends are on display. I found it a little difficult to read because many of characters were written with extra flair, but when you look at the letters, you can tell the personality of the person who wrote them. This person must have been serious, this person must have been full of a sense of justice, this person must have been a truly kind person, as I continued reading the book. Over and over again, I cried as I read the words written, looked at the age of the person who wrote them, and marveled at how young they were. I felt a clear will and strong spiritual strength, and I couldn't help but think that losing so many of these people was a terrible loss. I was filled with indescribable feelings of anger, sadness, regret, and even respect. I looked through the other exhibits and by the time I came out, my face was soaked with tears.

I thought it was obvious that peace was precious, but on this day, I feel like I understood it for the first time. Learning about war is terrifying, but living without knowing what happened is even more terrifying. What else can we do to repay those who died in suicide attacks by creating a peaceful world?

A Pig is On the Road

**Secondary School of Numazu-Ichiritsu Numazu High School,
3rd Grade Akiko Nakamura**

“The pig is on the road.
Bunchacha, Bunchachaa
A car is coming from the other side.
Bunchacha, Bunchacha
Because pigs don't want to die,
It'll avoid the car.
Bunchacha, Bunchacha”

What do you think when you hear this song? Do you think it's a scary song or a good song? Do you want to sing it with all your heart? This is the story of my late great-grandfather, who found in this song his hope in life.

My great-grandfather trained as an underwater commando during World War II. He was to board a submarine and attack enemy submarines as a human torpedo. Of course, there is only enough fuel for one trip. There were many among his friends who were willing to die for the sake of their country. That's what they were taught, and they believed that doing so would protect their families. But my great-grandfather was different. He didn't want to lose his life over such an ugly fight. He had promised to be with my great-grandmother, whom he had just met. He also wanted to support his younger brother and sister, who were still young. My great-grandfather couldn't die here easily. However, it was wartime. If the instructor found out about this, it would be the end. They would be labeled as non-citizens and killed by their allies. Because he knew this, he hid his true feelings and desperately endured training for the sake of his country.

The opening song, "The pig is on the road" was secretly sung by friends who wanted to return home alive. This song has up to three verses, and the things that are heading towards it change in that order: a car, a submarine, and then a plane. Both the lyricist and composer are unknown, and the lyrics and melody vary depending on the region, but it seems that it was originally a song sung with hand movements. However, I don't think it's a song that I would enjoy singing and dancing to with young children. My great-grandfather probably compared himself to pigs. When my mother heard my great-grandfather's song, the lyrics changed to the part that said, "So and so is coming from the other side," so cars became tanks and airplanes became fighter jets. "Pigs don't want to die, so they avoid so and so." They don't want to die, so they avoid them. In those days when the command was to run into the enemy and defeat them at the risk of one's life, how much did this commonplace statement of avoiding death because you don't want to die save you? My heart aches when I think that he sang this song with the feeling that he didn't want to die in the war and that he would definitely return home alive. Fortunately, the war ended on August 15, three days before his deployment, and he was able to return to his family. It is said that my great-grandfather told his mother, his grandchild, that many of his singing companions had become victims of the war. "As long as you're alive... Just being alive is a blessing. Grandpa will live his life without regrets, just for his friends."

The outline of that hideous war can be found in textbooks. Every year on the day the war ended, I watch a TV special about it. There were so many people in the flames of that bomb, that air raid, and their lives, their precious families, their loving feelings, and their bright futures were all reduced to ashes. I cannot imagine now that there was a world where death was considered a merit. I will definitely pass on the thoughts and facts that my great-grandfather passed down to my mother to my children. Because I think that's what I can do to

prevent another war from happening again. I want to learn more and more things and pass them on. Because I am allowed to run away, move on, and choose.

My Grandfather's War Experience As Told By My Father

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

I was born when my father was 50 years old. Therefore, he is much older than the fathers of children of the same age. Therefore, if my paternal grandfather were alive today, he would be around 94 years old, and at the age of 16 he experienced war and went to the battlefield as a soldier. At that time, my grandfather encountered an American soldier, shot him to death with the gun he was carrying, and buried him under a nearby pine tree, crying. Even though he became forgetful many years later, he still remembers what happened. At the hospital, he was lamenting that he couldn't go to heaven because he was a murderer. After hearing this story from my father, I understood the true meaning of the phrase that people have chanted over and over again: "War brings nothing." In reality, it creates a lot of negative thoughts such as sadness, hatred, and regret, but nothing good comes from it. Even though they were forced by the government to participate and fought, they accuse themselves of being murderers. I thought that soldiers from countries that won a war and soldiers from countries that lost are no different from murderers, even if it is for the good of their country. I want people to realize that just as we all have loved ones, soldiers from enemy countries who are ordered to kill are also someone's loved ones. I think most people are not enthusiastic about the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine. Even though we have been taught so much that war is wrong, I still wonder why the world can't get along. I'm surprised they don't throw away their weapons. Why don't we realize that there will only be more people like my grandfather who lament that they are murderers? At the very least, it is important for us to convey the fact that war does not bring about anything, and if Japan were to go to war, opposing it and persuading the country not to fight would be the most peaceful thing for the people. I think this is something we must never forget.

Returning to my grandfather's story, my grandfather was from Hiroshima and was on the battlefield at the time of the atomic bombing, so he was not harmed, but when he tried to return home after the war, his house was gone.

It seems that there was a blank piece of land left with no debris. Ironically, Hiroshima's reconstruction was so incomplete that it ended much faster than expected. Five years after the end of the war, about half of my grandfather's acquaintances and friends had died due to the effects of radiation.

When we think of war, we often think of the atomic bomb, but I had never heard of any other war experiences other than the atomic bomb. So, when I looked at the war from a different perspective, I suddenly felt horrified when I thought about what if the American soldiers on the other side had shot my grandfather first. It's unfair to think that I was born because my grandfather pulled the trigger earlier than his partner, but all I can say is that it was a good thing. I am here now because my grandfather lived. However, this applies not only to me but also to your ancestors, and we are where we are today because we were able to survive the killing of each other. When you think about it, don't you think that war is related to us?

After hearing the story from my father, I realized that I am alive today because of my grandfather. So next time I'm going to visit the grave and bring an offering to say thank you. I also want to vow that I will never again cause a war where people kill each other.

Think About Peace

Gyoshu Junior High School, 3rd Grade Barnard Hiroto

Last year I went to Hiroshima Prefecture for a fencing tournament. Since I had some free time, I decided to visit the Atomic Bomb Dome, which I had really wanted to visit for some time.

There are several things I thought about as I experienced the destructive power of the atomic bomb.

First, let's talk about the construction of the Atomic Bomb Dome. Unlike many buildings in Hiroshima city at the time, it had a unique steel frame construction. The Atomic Bomb Dome was originally a facility called the Hiroshima Prefectural Products Exhibition Hall, which displayed and sold products from Hiroshima Prefecture. It was a building with an unusual dome-shaped roof, so I thought it might have been a landmark and a target.

Next, let's talk about the horror of the atomic bomb. I was extremely saddened by the fact that there is a single thing on this earth that could have shattered Hiroshima.

After seeing the Atomic Bomb Dome, I visited the Atomic Bomb Museum. Inside the Atomic Bomb Museum, I saw the suffering of many atomic bomb survivors. Everyone from children to adults was covered in blood, body parts melted, and it was a hellish state.

Now, 78 years after the end of the war, is the fear of the atomic bomb over? I don't think so. Currently, the world is exposed to nuclear threats such as the war between Ukraine and Russia.

I noticed something after reading an article. According to an article in the Asahi Newspaper on August 10, 2023, an American soldier who was a radar engineer on board the Enola Gay, the American fighter jet that dropped the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki,

later said, “I did not intend to use the atomic bomb. It was the most inhumane act,” he told his grandson. When the grandson heard about this, he began to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki frequently as he grew up, connecting with the grandsons of atomic bomb victims over their commitment to becoming nuclear-free.

The grandchildren who were above and below the mushroom cloud at the moment the atomic bomb was dropped are now “comrades” and strongly desire a world without nuclear weapons.

I was deeply moved when I read this article. I also realized that to create a world free of nuclear weapons, we must first build relationships. I think this applies not only to past wars, but also to the current war between Ukraine and Russia. We would like to take the first step towards eliminating conflicts by getting to know each other and building good relationships.