

The Truth About Kamikaze Attacks and My Justice

Daiichi Junior High School, 3rd Grade Reimi Uematsu

Planes rushing into the sky
Crashing into Allied forces
Not allowed to return alive
Overwhelming fear
Harsh fate

Order to launch
Losing one's life on the battlefield
Honor and victory
Kamikaze attacks with no chance of survival

I really don't want to die
I want to live with my family
I want to make my dreams come true
No one could stop it
The truth about kamikaze attacks

A fleeting life

In an era without war
Living as a matter of course
Going to school
Studying
Laughing with friends over silly things
Freedom and peace

Protected at the risk of one's life
As a person entrusted with hope
I have to live

The power to greatly change destiny
Infinite possibilities
I have to think about why I am alive

Freedom and peace are a matter of course
Because I believe that is justice

This Ugly World

Daiichi Junior High School, 3rd Grade Yuzuki Onuma

I hate this world.

In 1945, at the end of World War II, a battle broke out between the Allied forces, mainly American and British troops, who landed on the Okinawa Islands, and the Japanese army. This was the Battle of Okinawa. The Allied forces' goal was to seize the Pacific islands, then occupy Okinawa and use it as a forward base for attacking the Japanese mainland. In response, the Japanese army devised a strategy to hold back the Allied forces and buy time. This is how the Battle of Okinawa began. This was the beginning of a tragedy.

This Battle of Okinawa was not just a battle between armies and armies, or between soldiers and soldiers, but also involved the civilians living in Okinawa. Civilians were powerless against the armed American army. In the midst of all this, "mass suicides" occurred. In the Japanese army at that time, the idea of "choosing death over being captured" was important. It is said that there were times when many soldiers who were seriously injured and laid down in caves were given poisoned drinks.

On the other hand, there were also mass suicides among civilians like us. The Japanese military did not allow the residents to surrender to the US military, following a guiding principle that "residents and government officials, just like soldiers, must risk their lives to protect the country." It seems strange now. I think that this is proof that we are at peace now. It was not that peaceful at the time. It must have been very painful. Gunfire echoed all around, and families and friends fell, bleeding. There are many people who saw and imagined this, despaired of this world, had no dreams or hopes, and wished to go to the same place, and chose to die. Among them, there were people who miraculously survived.

Most of the mass suicides were suicides by grenade. Grenades were distributed after receiving a message from the Japanese military. Everyone around shouted "Long live the Emperor!", and immediately afterwards, the sound of grenades exploding echoed all over the cave where they had taken refuge. Many people were blown away one after another. However, more than half of the grenades did not explode. The people whose grenades did not explode were confused. They panicked and killed by any means possible. While your mother, brother, and friends are killed one after another, you wake up after being beaten and knocked unconscious to a sea of blood all around you. Can you imagine such a scene? If it were me, I would not be able to bear it and would still choose death. I don't want to live in a world without my family.

Those who survived have deep and indelible scars in their hearts.

“Every year, as the day of the mass suicide approaches, I can’t sleep. Even when I do, I dream of rows of coffins, and I feel sick. I still remember it.”

Some of these people are unable to talk to anyone about their horrific experiences and are still suffering alone under the weight of the burden. It worsens their mental state to that extent.

But there are those who are willing to open up and say, “If I don’t talk now, I’ll never understand what it was like back then.”

There are people who wanted to live even after their families are gone, and who have continued to live in order to convey the horror and despair of war to future generations. Thanks to these people, we can know what happened in the battle of Okinawa.

When war breaks out, both those who die and those who survive suffer painful and difficult experiences. And yet people are willing to sacrifice their lives for their country. War clearly shows the filthiness of human beings. Conflict produces nothing, only takes something away, and it is something that cannot be escaped.

If we can leave behind for future generations the despair and regret of war, and if even a few people have to experience it, then maybe we can come to like this world a little more.

Junior High School Students in Hiroshima

Daiichi Junior High School, 3rd Grade Marina Hagiwara

As I entered my third year of junior high school, I had more opportunities to learn about war. Of course, I learned about it most in social studies class. The First Sino-Japanese War, the Russo-Japanese War, World War I, the Second Sino-Japanese War, the Pacific War, World War II...

Also, after each war, a treaty was always signed. The Treaty of Shimonoseki, the Treaty of Portsmouth, the Treaty of Versailles, the San Francisco Peace Treaty..

To be honest, there were too many. I felt it was hard to remember them all, but more than that, I had many questions in my head. “Why did they start so many wars?” and “Why did they start another war even though they had signed a treaty?” History textbooks simply say “War broke out” and “War is over”, but behind that lies the deaths of many people. Not only soldiers, but even civilians. Yes, junior high school students like us were also victims. War is unforgivable, and it is a part of world history that must never be forgotten.

In fact, out of all the writings about war I have studied, the one that made the biggest impression on me was a diary in a third-year junior high school English textbook. It was the diary of a boy who lived in Hiroshima City and became a victim of the atomic bomb when he was in his first year of junior high school. The last diary entry he left was dated August 4,

1945. That is, two days before the atomic bomb was dropped.

His diary described the real life of students at that time. There were some similarities between their student life and ours, but unfortunately, many aspects of it were affected by the war. Around April, he wrote about attending classes. However, by summer, he wrote more about working in workshops. And for rice, he ate sweet potatoes, loquats, peas, etc. It was a small meal that is unimaginable in our current lifestyle. But he wrote that he was glad he was able to eat a lot. As I read on, my heart ached.

There were children younger than us who could not attend classes and were working for their country because of the war. They worked without having enough food to eat. Moreover, the place where they worked was only about 50 meters away from the hypocenter where the atomic bomb was dropped on August 6th. Their final moments, exposed to radiation 50 meters from the hypocenter, were crueler and more tragic than I had imagined.

I felt like I understood why third-year junior high school students learn so much about war. It is because it is something that young children can never understand or accept. Why did they have to die? Why did they have to die, working for their country rather than studying for themselves? The atomic bomb, or rather the war, is an unforgivable part of the world's history, taking the lives of even innocent people.

Many people working in Japan today, including us junior high school students, have never experienced war. Japan, the only country in the world to have been hit by an atomic bomb, should have a responsibility to convey the horrors of war to the world. Rather than viewing the many wars as events of the past, I want to view them as something that is related to Japan and that concerns me.

Regional conflicts are still ongoing in the world today. They are due to various conflicts over territory, resources, ethnicity, religion, and more. I would like to ask them, "Why do they keep repeating this tragedy, despite the fact that so many tragedies have occurred?" As a mere junior high school student, I probably can't stop them. But what if the voices of many junior high school students were heard? Even a small force can become a big force if gathered. First of all, let's start by not turning a blind eye to the current state of the world.

To Protect This Daily Life

Daini Junior High School, 3rd Grade Yako Shingai

Peace is something we take for granted in our daily lives. However, in reality, peace is protected by the efforts and sacrifices of many people.

Peace is a state in which there is no war or conflict and people can live in peace. It is because peace is something we take for granted that we can go to school, have a home to return to, and be absorbed in what we love. However, there are still people somewhere who

are suffering from war and hunger and spending sleepless nights.

This summer, I watched many war documentaries. It was heartbreaking to see people who experienced the Battle of Okinawa tearfully talking about the situation at the time. I strongly felt that war is a sad, painful, and tragic thing that those of us who have not experienced war cannot imagine. However, at the same time, I felt that it is because of this experience that our current lives are protected. This peaceful daily life is not something we take for granted. That is why I would like to think about how we can protect this life and how we can make it even more peaceful.

First of all, I think it is important to understand how important peace is. To do this, we need to learn about the many wars that have happened in the past. We need to know how they happened, what happened, and how many lives were lost. We need to take them as if they were our own problem, be grateful for the life we have now, and understand the importance of peace.

And I think peace is built by each and every person wishing for it from the heart and taking action. We need to find out what we can do and put it into practice. For example, even small things like cherishing our family and friends from the heart, caring for others, and not tolerating discrimination or bullying are important steps. Also, working hard towards your own dreams and goals is one way to build peace. Being happy and fulfilled gives you more time to think about others and allows those around you to feel happy too.

Education is also important to protect peace. By studying history at school, we gain knowledge and information, which I think can also be a force for building peace. But it's not just history. By learning morality and language comprehension unique to Numazu, we can learn a lot, such as compassion for others, thinking about things from various perspectives, and understanding different cultures and different values. In fact, I think that my mental age has increased, but because of this learning at school, I have been able to reduce conflicts with my friends, and even in junior high school, I feel that the atmosphere in the classroom is very good after language comprehension classes. In this way, education can enrich people's hearts and deepen their understanding of peace.

In addition, I think it is very important to hold a moment of silence on August 6th and 9th, the days when the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and on August 15th, the anniversary of the end of the war, and to pray for those who died in the war.

In this way, the awareness and actions of each of us will be a great force in building peace in the future. I think that in the future, I will have the responsibility to protect peace as a member of society. That is why I want to continue to cherish myself and have a heart that is considerate of others and helps each other. I also want to be the kind of person who never forgets my heart that wishes for peace and can bring smiles to everyone's faces.

To Spread the Circle of Hope

Daini Junior High School, 3rd Grade Nene Hasegawa

Today is August 6th. I woke up a little earlier than usual and watched TV with my family. Then, I heard the word “moment of silence” and we all closed our eyes. It was 8:15, 79 years ago today, peace and normal daily life were taken from Hiroshima in an instant. Beautiful nature, people’s smiles, everything was reduced to ashes by one bomb.

The first time I learned about the atomic bomb was when I was in the second grade of elementary school. There was a section in the elementary school library about books about war, so I read it out of curiosity. I was only seven years old at the time, so I couldn’t fully understand the contents of the text, but the picture of the big mushroom cloud and the people dyed red was so impressive that I was frightened and closed the book immediately, but after a while my interest won out over my fear, and I started reading books about war and the atomic bomb. Perhaps because of this, ever since I was little, I have always remembered the days when the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the anniversary of the end of the war, and I have become a person who never misses watching the peace ceremonies on television. The content of the talks changes every year, but the one thing they always say is that “peace cannot be created by praying alone.” In order to prevent painful things like the atomic bomb and war from being repeated, I don’t think anything will change if we just pray for peace.

Recently, in my English class, I read a diary written by a junior high school student who lived in Hiroshima. The diary contained nothing to do with the war, such as class, work, and conversations with friends. The diary was full of everyday events. When I read the diary, I was reminded of how cruel the atomic bomb was. I was filled with thoughts of how frightening it must have been for people who didn’t know that atomic bombs would be dropped, when they suddenly fell.

When I think of the people who experienced such a tragedy and the families left behind, I believe that we must never forget this tragic event, and that we must never repeat it. To this end, I think that the important thing is to learn about the atomic bomb. The worst thing would be to assume that the atomic bombing is a thing of the past, to not try to learn more about it, and to let it fade away. That’s why I think the first step towards peace is to know and learn about everything, not just about the atomic bomb. And even if there are people who have different opinions or ways of thinking from you, if we can understand each other without rejecting them, conflicts will gradually decrease, and we will move closer to a peaceful world.

In recent years, young people have been taking less interest in war. However, it is up to us to create the future. We want to learn about peace and war and take an interest in them

and act accordingly. We young people, who carry the future, want to spread the circle of hope and build a brighter world.

What Was Gained and Lost Through War

Daini Junior High School, 3rd Grade Tsubasa Katoono

First of all, why does war begin? One example is to seize resources and territory, make them the country's own, and strengthen its national power. In other words, wars are fought for the benefit of one's own country. Such factors were also a factor behind the outbreak of World War I and World War II.

Even if they do not lead to war, territorial disputes over Takeshima and the Northern Territories can be said to be conflicts that are familiar to us.

Earlier, I mentioned World War I as an example of a war that broke out in search of resources and territory. The victorious countries in this war, mainly the Allied powers such as the United States, Britain, and France, gained a lot of territory and resources, as well as economic and military advantages, and each country made huge profits. Japan is no exception. As countries around the world are in a state of war, the demand for military supplies and daily necessities increases sharply. As a result, Japan made huge profits from the war by exporting many products to the major countries in need and by expanding its business mainly in the shipping and shipbuilding industries.

However, while it produced many brilliant achievements, it must be said that war also brought far too many risks.

There are many risks common to all countries that have been involved in wars. I believe that the most notable of these is the enormous number of casualties each country suffered as a result of the war.

The number of war dead in World War I, including both military and civilian personnel, is said to be close to 10 million. The number of war wounded is also estimated to be around 21 million. In addition, there are many people who suffered damage from the war and developed a mental disorder called PTSD.

Furthermore, the enormous sacrifices that war brings to the people have a huge impact on those who live after the war and on society as a whole. Let's focus on each of these impacts and consider them one by one.

The impacts on people who live after the war are numerous. PTSD, which I mentioned earlier, also has a major impact on people. First, PTSD develops due to stress and trauma.

Specific examples include sleep disorders, palpitations due to flashbacks of trauma, hyperventilation, and memory disorders. Some people who developed PTSD due to war also suffer from schizophrenia-like symptoms, such as hallucinations and auditory hallucinations that

make them believe that the war is still going on.

In this way, PTSD manifests in a wide variety of symptoms, and is one of the root causes of suffering for many people even today.

In addition to mental illnesses such as PTSD, there are also people who have lost parts of their bodies due to the war and are unable to do things that they used to be able to do easily.

In addition, there are war orphans, people who have lost their homes and are left homeless, and the spread of epidemics due to the deterioration of sanitary conditions. In this way, war has caused enormous damage to people living after the war, even if it is not direct.

The same can be said for society as a whole. People who are unable to work due to mental or physical disabilities, and a shortage of workers due to people being mobilized and conscripted as soldiers. There are surely some historically valuable structures among the buildings destroyed by the war.

There is also the sense of discrimination caused by conflicts and rifts with enemy countries. This is something that is very close to us. For example, we have been at war with China many times in the past, and there have been discords due to differences in national character and have been in conflict with Japan for a long time. As a result, there is a danger that the Japanese people or the Chinese people will harbor ill feelings toward each other, and Japan-China relations will continue to deteriorate.

In this way, war can be considered to have a negative impact on society, politically, culturally, and in many other ways.

To sum up, it can be said that while war brings remarkable benefits to a country, it also brings great damage.

That is why I believe that war should not be justified, even if a country prospers from winning the war.

How many lives were lost because a country wanted to make a profit? Also, how many people suffered, and are still struggling with that suffering even now that the war is over.

We must not forget this and never repeat the same mistakes.

That is what I believe.

Towards the Realization of a Peaceful Society

Daisan Junior High School, 3rd Grade Yui Meguro

Peace and war. I have tried to turn my eyes away from them. Because I was very scared to know about the horrific scenes. Although I learned about them to some extent in class, I never thought of learning about them myself. However, something came up that made me interested. It was an announcement that my favorite artist was going to perform a reading play called “Reading Play READING WORLD UNESCO World Memory Heritage Return to

Maizuru “The End of the Promise””. Of course, I applied and wanted to gain a minimum of knowledge to appreciate the work, so I decided to look into the key points of the story, “Siberian internment” and the “Maizuru Repatriation Memorial Museum in Kyoto Prefecture”.

First of all, what is Siberian internment? Apparently, many Japanese soldiers and some civilians who surrendered to the Soviet army were brought to Siberia and other Soviet territories by the Soviet army, who told them they would be returned to Japan. I thought how terrible it must have been. The number of these people is said to be about 600,000, and they were forced to live in concentration camps against their will. During the detention, there was not enough food, and many people died of starvation, cold, and infectious diseases such as dysentery and cholera. Next, I researched the Maizuru Repatriation Memorial Museum. After Japan accepted the Potsdam Declaration, under the policy of GHQ and the US military, it was decided to repatriate all Japanese people overseas. Maizuru Port was designated as the repatriation port. From September 1945, when it was designated as a repatriation port, a total of 346 repatriation ships entered the port, and a total of 662,982 people landed at Maizuru Port in the 13 years up to September 1958. The Maizuru Repatriation Memorial Museum was built to commemorate the repatriation of those who escaped from the Siberian detention. When I researched the story of the Siberian detention, I felt very sad. I only knew about the Auschwitz concentration camp, which held Jewish people, so I was very surprised to learn that Japanese people were also held in such terrible conditions. I was also moved by Maizuru Port, which saved so many of those people. I think it played a very important role. August also marks the anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as the anniversary of the end of the war. I was interested in the story of the Siberian internment, so I decided to go to the Peace Memorial Ceremony on August 6th.

This year marks the 79th anniversary of the atomic bombing, with next year marking the 80th anniversary. When I think about the fact that the victims and their families are getting older every year, that the media is no longer covering the day, and that there are some who don't even know about this day, I feel that many Japanese people are starting to forget. I think it is difficult to achieve peace in this world today. This is because diversity is more important than in the past, and various ideas are accepted, so I think that conflicts will increase. However, in such a world, I think it is necessary to find common ground and differences with others, respect each other, and discuss rationally, rather than starting by denying the ideas of others. I also think that to get closer to peace, people all over the world need to know about war and learn about the importance of peace. I researched war through my favorite artists, but I think it's important to be interested in peace and war in any way. Now that the internet and other things have become so widespread, it's something we should think about more than anything else, and there are still wars going on in many regions, such as the war in Ukraine and the war in Israel, so I think Japan is no longer someone else's problem.

What can we do as we live now, about 80 years after the end of the war? It all starts with

knowing. I sincerely hope that we can create a society where everyone can think about peace as a matter of course.

As Long as I Live

Daigo Junior High School, 3rd Grade Yukimi Iga

August 9, 1945: Do you know what happened on this day?

At 11:02 a.m., the sky was suddenly illuminated with light, and a huge mushroom cloud appeared in the sky. What happened under that huge mushroom cloud, and what was waiting for us in the future? The Nagasaki atomic bombing must not be forgotten and must be passed down.

This summer, I went to the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum. It was supposed to have happened 79 years ago, but there were so many melted bottles, clothes, and even hands that remained. It was as if I had traveled back in time. It was not a pleasant sight, and it was just painful.

I think that those who died in the atomic bombing were unfortunate and lived in hell. But even more than that, those who were victims of the bomb and barely survived felt that their days spent thinking about how to survive the next day, in a hopeless situation, were hell itself. I don't know if it was really a blessing to have survived that time.

I would like to give you a little insight into that hellish life. Their homes were gone, and they desperately scavenged together burnt logs and roofing tiles to rebuild, but they had no shelter from the wind and rain. They had no money and no place to work. Unable to survive on the rationed supplies, they tried to survive by searching for edible parts of moldy grain. Their faces swelled up like pumpkins and their skin sagged off, in the worst possible condition. To quench their thirst, they searched around for water, but all they could find was water with oil floating on it. They desperately wanted water, so they drank the oily water, and some even drank river water. Soon after, all the people who drank the water that contained radioactive material died. Looking around, the buildings had disappeared without a trace, and wherever they walked there were people. Sometimes they had to be stepped on. There are many people who lived through hell like this.

Even after they got their lives back, the hell of the atomic bombing did not end. The pain of losing family and friends, mental and physical illnesses, and harsh social scrutiny caused worry and suffering at every turning point in life. This hell never ends. It haunts the survivors for the rest of their lives.

When I read the words of Eiko Hayashida, a survivor of the atomic bombing, I was deeply impressed. "My life has only been filled with darkness, suffering and pain. There is no bliss. Just being alive is hell. I have often wished I was dead. No medicine can cure the suffering

and pain of the past, and the holes in our hearts. It is a legacy we carry for the rest of our lives.”

We must not forget that there were people who risked their lives to leave a “proof that they lived” for future generations, even while facing various hardships. We should be grateful for the “ordinary” things in our daily lives.

Nuclear weapons are cruel and inhumane weapons. They should be abolished. Now, when the threat of nuclear weapons is growing, I want people to know what the atomic bomb brought to people. There are people who have taken on the will of those who died in the war and their surviving families and are working to realize a world without war and nuclear weapons.

This event must never be forgotten, and it must be passed down and passed on. I will surely not be alive by the time the world becomes one without war or nuclear weapons. Perhaps such a dreamlike world will never come to be. Even so, from the day I learned of this series of events, until the day I die, I have resolved to continue to pass on the damage caused by the atomic bomb for as long as I live.

We Vow Not to Wage War

Daigo Junior High School, 3rd Grade Ikuhisa Matsugane

A roar heard from above the clouds

A small, silver-shining aircraft

A sudden flash

The brightness of the midsummer sun is incomparable

In an instant, everything is knocked down, crushed, and blown away

The whole area is reduced to ashes

People suddenly lose their lives, families, and futures

Putting them in extreme situations

The dignity of a life taken

It’s exactly like the depiction in “Barefoot Gen”

The atomic bomb that put an end to the Japanese people’s fighting spirit was called “Little Boy”

The pain and suffering continue to this day

“We ended the war quickly,” that country says

What did the war bring about?

Nuclear power, if used properly, can advance human civilization, but if misused, it can destroy the Earth

Is it really necessary to possess the key to its own extinction?

What Japan, a country that suffered an atomic bomb, can do
Don't let the tragedy fade away
Inherit the war heritage
Pledge to never wage war
Pray again this summer at the gravestones of our ancestors who died in battle

The Day the Light Burned and Now

Daigo Junior High School, 3rd Grade Akito Kubota

A pencil fluttering through the air
Like a kite cutting through the wind
A brilliant, glittering light
Sound disappears
Vision distorts
A heat haze explodes
In an instant, a roar fills the air
Is it this world that has burned and scorched
Or is it me?
Is it this country that should burn to the ground
Or
In the scorching heat
I long for life
I long for tomorrow
I long for water
I long for you

It's not a lie
Now, the reason we exist
The lives we have spun are the product of miracles
The history we pass on to future generations
Our responsibility
So that mistakes are not repeated
So that no one grieves

Years, decades, centuries from now
Not a single person should forget
We are standing on the day that someone wished for today

We are heading towards the tomorrow that someone wished for that day
To live out our lives on this earth and in the sky
What more do we need
Peace, on that enormous path

We are living

The First Step Towards Peace

Kanaoka Junior High School, 2nd Grade Shino Ito

Around mid-July, I read a novel. It was about a modern-day high school girl who, due to a certain incident, travels back in time to the war and falls in love with a kamikaze pilot she meets there. This novel sparked my interest in war.

Also, there were a lot of TV programs about the atomic bomb at that time, so I wanted to find out more about it.

So I asked my father to take me to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum.

There, I was confronted with scenes so horrific that it was hard to accept.

There were many exhibits, including photographs of people with burns all over their bodies, illustrations of people catching their popped-out, drooping eyeballs, and the clothes worn by children who were exposed to the atomic bomb.

When I saw all of this, I was unable to say anything right away. Instead, I was overcome with inexpressible sadness and regret, and even after leaving the museum, my mood remained gloomy and depressed.

Through this experience, I was reminded of just how peaceful and happy I am living my life.

Until now, I had never really thought of myself as a particularly happy person living peacefully, because I was scolded by my parents almost every day and had conflicts with my friends over small things.

But when I heard the story of a child who was exposed to the atomic bomb while evacuated and died without being able to see his family, I realized how blessed I am just to have my parents scold me. I also heard the story of a boy whose friend died in the atomic bombing and realized how lucky I am to be able to talk to my friends every day and exchange opinions with them.

I once again think that the wars that are happening in many countries and regions at this very moment are truly foolish and stupid.

It would be pointless to take away peace from all the people to protect the peace of the country.

Of course, it is natural that people have different thoughts and values. Therefore, sometimes people come into conflict with each other in order to protect themselves. But of course, war does not mean that we will be protected. If we go to war, our peace is threatened, and we suffer that much more.

I believe that even though it may be difficult, we can eliminate war from this world. This is because Japan has not been at war since the end of the war.

Japan is the only country in the world that has been bombed. This is why I believe that we understand the horror and cruelty of war better than anyone else, and that we are able to convey this to children yet to be born and to people in other countries. I believe that by doing so, we can one day eliminate war from this world.

The first step to preventing future wars in Japan and the world is for each and every person to learn about war. And even if there is conflict, I think it is very important to find peaceful solutions other than war.

The Peace I Feel

Kanaoka Junior High School, 2nd Grade Rinko Hirano

The peace I feel is a safe world without war or nuclear weapons. War and nuclear weapons can take a person's life in an instant, and even if they survive, they lose parts of their body, their skin gets burned, and they are left with disabilities from radiation exposure. There is nothing to gain, only loss.

I was born in the Heisei era, an era when food, drink, and everything else is abundant, and I live a life without any inconvenience. My father was able to be with my mother when I was born, and after I was born, my grandparents, relatives, friends, and many other people celebrated my birth. There was a natural happiness there.

On the news, I saw a small child bleeding and in pain being taken to the hospital in a place of war. I also saw the tragic footage of an attack that had just occurred a few hours earlier, amidst the fleeting joy of the birth of a child, soon after which the happy newborn baby was sent off to heaven. In both cases, the parents were interviewed crying after seeing their children die, and it was heartbreaking. Why should such young children, who had done nothing wrong, be involved? Why should their lives end in an instant? Anger welled up inside me.

I have also read novels and seen movies about war. I have learned that war and the dropping of nuclear weapons are hellish experiences. In these stories, there were kamikaze pilots who volunteered for the sake of their country and its people, and carried out the mission of crashing enemy ships in bomb-laden fighter planes to sink them. However, the fate of the kamikaze pilots meant "death." However, to the people, they were like "gods."

Most of the pilots were young; some were married, some were planning to get married,

some had babies and were adding to their families, and some were studying and pursuing their dreams. The pilots were suddenly ordered to launch and had to take off. They had to cut off irreplaceable time with their precious families and friends. The members of the special attack force seemed to understand that they were sacrificing their lives for their people, but some of them ran away. For us living in the present day, it is natural to want to run away, but at that time, the world was not one in which people could express such feelings. When I thought about the feelings of the special attack force members, as well as those around them, I felt that it was so painful that it was difficult to put into words.

The word “war”, in Japanese, is written with just two Chinese characters, but I strongly felt that war is a word that carries a variety of emotions, such as pain, suffering, and sadness, that cannot be expressed with such simple letters.

We take it for granted that we live our daily lives without thinking about it, but I felt that we need to appreciate that this is not something that is normal, but rather that it is an incredibly happy thing. I also felt that we who live in happy times need to convey the horrors of war and nuclear weapons to people living today, and that we need to be grateful that we can live normal lives every day and cherish the friends and family that we are with now. I reflected on the fact that I had been leaving food preferences unchecked without thinking about it, and from now on I want to cherish my mealtimes and finish all my meals while feeling truly happy.

War and Politics

Ooka Junior High School, 1st Grade Hayato Akiyama

Why does war never disappear from the world? When I watch the news, I suddenly think about it.

Wars and civil wars have never disappeared since ancient times. Even now, Ukraine and Russia, and Israel and Hamas are fighting in vain. What is the point of war? This is true not only of countries that wage war, but also of other countries. They only report the situation on the news and do not try to stop it. What’s more, they support one of the countries and escalate the conflict. Japan is the same. They send military weapons to Ukraine and do not try to stop it. Such countries would probably not be able to stop it even if the positions were reversed and they were on the side of the conflict.

I’m not saying that conflict is completely wrong. Competitions such as sports and music are for people to aim higher, and for people to see the fruits of their efforts and be recognized. There are international competitions such as the Olympics. I think such conflicts should exist.

But war is different. What comes out of sports is beautiful sweat, friendship through fighting, and tears of emotion. But all that comes out of war is blood and tears of sorrow.

Sports are ranked. I think it is essential to aim high. Wars are also ranked. There is a military power ranking, and in this ranking for 2024, Japan has a high military power index of 7th place, which is a higher ranking than the previous year. At first glance, it may seem like a happy thing, but don't you think it's a little strange?

Japan, reflecting on World War II, has written in the Japanese Constitution its determination to ensure that the government's actions will never again cause the horrors of war.

Of the three principles of the Japanese Constitution, "pacifism" pledges to forever renounce war and the threat or use of force, and in order to achieve that goal, it is said that Japan will not possess military power and will not recognize the right to wage war.

So why does a country that does not have military power have such a high military power? Don't you think it's contradictory? It is also important to have military power in case of emergency. In order to protect the country, we also need an army like the Self-Defense Forces.

So is building fighter planes also defense? Currently, Japan is jointly developing fighter planes with the UK and Italy. Personally, I think this constitutes a threat or use of force. The joint development emphasizes the diplomatic ties between the three countries, and the production of new weapons puts pressure on neighboring countries to not attack easily. I want them to reconsider what the Japanese Constitution was created for.

I have expressed a lot of negative opinions so far, but that doesn't mean I can do anything about it. I can't reconcile the countries that are at war, and I can't speak my mind to the government or other institutions. What's important is for each individual to have an opinion and a sense of crisis.

At first, the war between Russia and Ukraine was reported almost every day, but now it's extremely rare. It has become commonplace. It is absolutely unacceptable that war should become commonplace. It should never happen. This has happened because each individual has no sense of crisis. I think one of the reasons why there are fewer votes in elections is because there are people who don't have opinions. That leads to war.

It can be said that it is difficult to eliminate war. However, I believe that we can reduce war, even if only a little, by each individual taking an interest in things close to us and creating values that we consider important.

Today's Japan without War

Ooka Junior High School, 2nd Grade Mihana Miyazawa

We don't think about what war is or what peace is in our everyday lives.

This summer vacation, I went back to my mother's parents' house with my family. There are photos of my great-grandparents on display at the Buddhist altar in my mother's parents'

house. They are very ordinary, kind-looking grandfather and grandmother.

Further into the mountains from my mother's parents' house is the house where my great-grandparents lived. There, we found a thick, dictionary-like book titled "Comrades in War." When my mother opened the book with interest, it contained photos of young people in military uniforms, photos of their current, older faces, their ranks, the military they belonged to, and their family structures.

Among them was a photo of my great-grandfather in military uniform when he was young. Unlike the calm and kind atmosphere in the photo of the Buddhist altar, he looked young and serious. I had only ever seen my great-grandfather in photos of the Buddhist altar, so I was surprised because my image of him was different from the photo of the Buddhist altar. I also felt that the ranks listed were very vivid. I had only heard such expressions in war dramas and movies. I was shocked to learn that my family members actually served in the military and fought on the battlefield. If my great-grandfather had not returned alive, I would not be who I am today.

This incident during summer vacation made me want to learn more about war, so I decided to watch the movie my mother had been watching.

The movie my mother was watching was about a modern high school student who interacts with kamikaze pilots in Japan during World War II. As the protagonist interacts with the kamikaze pilots, she is shocked to find out that several of them will be sent to the battlefield. She did not understand why they would go to fight when they still had many things they wanted to do and dreams. I had the same questions as the protagonist.

The protagonist was lost about her future in modern Japan and struggled to be honest with her mother, but she grew as a person as she spent her days during the war, realizing the wonderfulness of living each day to the fullest, the importance of her mother, and how peaceful and blessed Japan was.

Kamikaze pilots are destined to die. In today's society, it is impossible to understand the idea of charging into an enemy country with the premise of sacrificing one's own life. It is also hard to believe that there were so many people who accepted this and volunteered. This feeling is quite natural for us who live today. However, in Japan at that time, they were criticized as "unpatriotic" in the movie. This is the influence of the education system and militarism based on the national policy of the time.

Japan is now a democracy, and such thoughts do not exist. There are still unresolved and serious problems due to the changes caused by World War II, but compared to World War II, it can be said that it has become much more peaceful. There are no bomber attacks like in the movie, and no escaping in the midst of war. Just as the main character realized how peaceful the present is and how blessed he was by spending time in Japan during the war, I also realized how blessed the current Japan and the environment I am in are by touching on the war.

Too much was lost in World War II. The lives of those who were sacrificed will never come back. However, I think that the peaceful Japan we have today exists in part because of the people who fought so hard, like my great-grandfather, and the hardworking feelings of many people. This summer vacation, I was able to feel a little closer to the distant war and think about it a little more thanks to a book I found at my great-grandfather's house. We must not forget that the peace we have today is built on the hopes and feelings of many people and the precious lives of many.

Spreading the word of Peace

Ooka Junior High School, 2nd Grade Mayu Kawada

I usually read interesting articles in the newspaper I get at home. In August, as the days of the atomic bomb were approaching, I saw an article about the war on TV. It was about the average age of atomic bomb survivors and the atomic bomb.

I didn't know much about the atomic bomb or the war, only seeing it on the news and reading about it at school, so it was a good opportunity to think about peace.

The average age of atomic bomb survivors in Japan is now 85.58 years old, and the number of people who can talk about their experiences is decreasing. I also learned that the number of people who have the "Atomic Bomb Survivor Health Handbook," which certifies that they are atomic bomb survivors, has decreased to 106,825 as of March this year.

There are also atomic bomb survivor groups all over the country that talk about their experiences, but I learned that the current situation is that they are increasingly being dissolved or inactive due to aging. The number of atomic bomb victims in 2000, 24 years ago, was 291,824, about 190,000 more than today.

I sang "HEIWA no Kane" at the choral competition last year. I sang the song while thinking that the lyrics express the desire to convey the thoughts of our ancestors about peace and their way of life, and the desire to pass on stories of the war. This song made me think of war and the atomic bomb, and I felt strongly that the same thing must never be repeated.

The atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, and on Nagasaki three days later on the 9th. At that time, the terrible storm and heat rays caused many buildings within a two-kilometer radius of the hypocenter to burn and disappear. By the end of 1945, about 140,000 people had died in Hiroshima and about 70,000 people in Nagasaki, and the radiation released by the atomic bomb penetrated deep into the human body, destroying cells and causing various effects on internal organs.

Last year, I went to Hiroshima and saw the Atomic Bomb Dome. I was shocked to see that buildings destroyed and charred by the atomic bomb remained. I heard that the nearby Hiroshima Castle was still standing at the time, but it was destroyed by the atomic bomb. I

had seen many photos taken right after the atomic bomb was dropped but seeing it in person made me realize how tragic it was, and it made me sad to think about what it was like at the time. Now that I know more about the atomic bomb, I feel that the buildings are so impressive that you can see what they were like at the time, and that they are important buildings to convey to the future because they remain in physical form.

I was born in a peaceful era, so I don't know what war is like. I can only think and imagine what it was like and what the situation was like at the time. However, now that the number of people who have experienced war is decreasing, I want to learn more about war and create a peaceful world without war or the meaningless victims it causes. Furthermore, I don't want to take a peaceful life for granted, but I want to never forget the fact that the atomic bomb was dropped and that we were at war, and I want to convey this fact while praying for peace.

On Earth

Ooka Junior High School, 3rd Grade Mei Harada

Birds chirp

The loud sounds of cicadas

Laughing together, yelling

One life that connects all

That summer hasn't changed

On the blue, round Earth

A red and black world spreads

Each and every unique precious life on Earth

Disappears one after the other

A life erases the life of another

Who wishes it, and for whom does it die?

Is it okay to wish for someone's death?

No one can laugh, and tears flow

We close our eyes in sadness

The blue Earth remains the same even now

On the white floating clouds

With the shining green plants

Stepping firmly on the vast earth

The blue Earth and living life
The blue Earth and living life
Are you happy now?

My life shines brightly
Your life shines brightly
A new life has just been born
A life that is about to disappear
A precious life that connects us all
On this round, blue Earth
What can we do to stop it from turning red or black
How do we use this precious life on this round, blue Earth?
Today, tomorrow, and beyond
I want to laugh with everyone on this blue Earth, hold hands, and live in the present,
savoring each moment

I Will Never Forget “That Time”

Ohira Junior High School, 2nd Grade Shuto Omura

This year, my great-grandfather passed away at the age of 99. Looking at his face and reminiscing about my memories of him, who had a smile and a gentle personality until the end, I remembered a conversation I had previously. When I was a child, I said that the hematoma on my great-grandfather’s forehead looked like a pickled plum. At that time, my great-grandfather laughed and told me the reason for the hematoma.

My great-grandfather, who was small in stature, passed the conscription examination and became an elementary school teacher instead of going to the battlefield. During the war, he sang military songs in class and elementary school students also practiced firefighting, so his classes were very war themed.

At night, streetlights were turned off because enemy planes would see him, and even bicycle lights were not allowed. While riding his bicycle home on a dark road, my great-grandfather accidentally fell into a river and cut his head. His mother, worried about her son who was taking so long to return home, went to look for him, but since there were no lights at the time, it took a long time for her to find him in the river. There was no hospital, and it took a long time to call a doctor. The blood did not stop, and it seemed that he was in danger for a while, but he survived. The wound from that time has not healed for more than 75 years. I was still young when I heard this story, so I did not know much about war and was not interested in it, so I did not remember it much.

I became interested in war because I saw a movie called “*Eien no Zero*”(The Eternal Zero). The sound of the airplane engines and the sense of speed were cool, and after watching it several times, I became interested in war.

Then, my mother recommended that I listen to the story of my great-grandmother, who returned from Manchuria during the war. Her story was shocking and felt like a made-up story that I could not imagine at all. My great-grandmother spoke with the same expression as usual, but I felt that her voice was filled with various emotions.

My great-grandmother had been feeling down since my great-grandfather passed away, and when I tried to ask her about the hematoma on his forehead this time, she hesitated, saying, “That happened, too. I don’t want to talk about it because it makes me sad when I remember it.” My mother often heard stories about the war from her grandparents when she was a child, and every year on August 15th, they would hold a moment of silence.

This year marks 79 years since the end of the war. In Japan, it ended long before my grandparents were born. I hear that many people don’t know what day August 15th is now. I was lucky enough to have my great-grandparents live long lives, so I was able to hear stories from the past, but most of them were not written in textbooks. The war my great-grandfather experienced and the war my great-grandmother experienced were not the same story. I’m sure that people who experienced that era had their own experiences.

In Okinawa and Hiroshima, the people who are passing on those experiences are getting older, and it seems that it is becoming more difficult to pass them on. The other day, I saw a news report about high school students working to pass on the stories of those who experienced the war. I saw people around my age talking about the war to people who didn’t know about it, and I thought, “There are people like that. Amazing.”

I think that by learning about various wars, you can relate to them and be shocked, and you can understand the tragedy of war and why it is said that it must not be repeated. A hundred years will pass in the blink of an eye since the time of war. For me, being shy, speaking in front of others is a big hurdle, but if I have this mindset, I might be able to convey something to someone when the opportunity arises. So I want to remember the stories I heard from my great-grandfather and great-grandmother forever.

Do We Have to Work Hard for Peace?

Ohira Junior High School, 2nd Grade Amane Okawa

Every year on August 6th and 9th, I go to a nearby temple with my grandparents to ring the bell. I think I was about three years old when I went for the first time. I think it was just a casual invitation like, “Let’s go ring the bell at the temple?” I went along, drawn by my curiosity, and found that there were only adults there, and I was the only child. I remember

being treated very fondly by them, as I was a strange sight. I wondered why there were no other children there besides me, but I didn't mind being the only child among adults as much as I thought, so I somehow started to participate every year. By the time I started elementary school, I understood that it was a memorial event for the days when the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Now that I'm a junior high school student, they don't pay me any attention, but I'm still the only child there. I listen to the memorial bell with the adults, looking like I'm the representative of the children. At this time, I play the role of an innocent child who wishes for peace, but in my everyday life, I never think about Hiroshima or Nagasaki, nor do I think about war or peace. I know about Russia's invasion of Ukraine and Israel's attack on the Gaza Strip from newspapers and online news, but I don't really get it. I think of them as events that happen somewhere far away and have no connection or impact on me. Despite this, war is widely reported in newspapers and on the news, I was taught at school that war should never happen, and my grandparents told me that war should never happen again. Every year on August 6th, 9th, and 15th, memorial services and memorial ceremonies are held, and it seems like adults are trying hard to be peaceful and not wage war. Do we have to try hard for peace? Will war break out if we don't try hard?

First of all, every country has laws that prohibit murder, so is it okay to kill people from other countries when it comes to war?

I just can't understand it. It shouldn't be the case that murder by individuals is bad but murder by a country is okay. War is also a crime of property damage, trespassing, and assault and murder. The police should investigate, catch the masterminds and perpetrators, and punish them. The mastermind behind the invasion of Ukraine is Putin. Why isn't he arrested right away? There are so many things I don't understand. It's probably the same in Ukraine, but especially in the Gaza Strip, many ordinary citizens are said to be victims. If a random assailant in the streets of Japan started slashing at passersby with a knife, he would probably be quickly subdued and arrested by a large number of police officers. Why doesn't the world gang up on Russia and Israel and subdue them? We teach children that violence is absolutely wrong, yet the world turns a blind eye to it. Who will explain this situation and how? There's no point in feeling confused, so I looked up the global rules regarding war. I found it. It's called the "principle of non-use of force" in the UN Charter. That's good. War is properly prohibited worldwide. It says that UN member states will collectively take necessary measures, including military measures, against any country that violates the rules. What, we have a system to suppress street thugs. So why haven't Russia and Israel been suppressed yet? The explanation of the principle of non-use of force continued with the following. It requires the consent of the permanent members of the UN Security Council: China, France, Russia, the UK, and the US, and if even one country objects, the decision will not be made. So, in other words, wars started by the permanent members cannot be suppressed by collective military

measures. I see, if the street thug is a family member or friend of a police officer, all police officers condone the crime.

There is no way that adults don't feel the same indignation that even a junior high school student feels. There is no way we can feel safe with such incomplete international law. The world I live in suddenly seems unstable. I think we need to change these rules with such big holes. I see, we still have a lot of work to do to achieve peace. My grandparents knew this, which is why they take me out to ring the bell every year. It's probably our generation that will change the rules.

The First Step Towards Peace

Ohira Junior High School, 3rd Grade Konomi Hoshiya

The earth on which we live has sometimes forgotten peace and suffered the tragedy of war. On August 6th and 9th, 1945, the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki instantly took the lives of hundreds of thousands of people and destroyed the cities. Those who survived continued to suffer for many years from the effects of radiation. The tragic scenes are still deeply etched in our memories. Nuclear weapons have destructive power that should never be used against humanity. Their very existence is a threat to our safety.

When I was writing this essay, I thought about "peace" and wondered about it. Japan, the only country in the world that was the victim of an atomic bomb, is now ranked high on the list of peaceful countries. Why is that? I researched the history of Japan.

I learned that Japan's recovery from World War II was not achieved by its own efforts. Huge loans from the World Bank helped build the infrastructure for life, such as bullet trains, highways, and dams, and donations from UNICEF allowed relief supplies to be delivered to children. At the root of all this was the cooperation of various countries. It is important to work together toward a common goal in the international community while respecting each other's differences. Cooperating in areas such as trade, environmental protection, and humanitarian aid, and resolving conflicts peacefully through dialogue and negotiation. Peace can be created if countries help each other to build a peaceful and prosperous world. I thought that international cooperation beyond the framework of countries was desirable.

Japan has been elected as a non-permanent member of the Security Council many times in the past, and each time it has played a role in realizing peace. The United Nations Security Council was established to maintain international peace and security. This is a great opportunity to contribute on the stage of the United Nations for the peace and security of the world. As a non-permanent member, we need to cooperate with the international community to abolish nuclear weapons and work to resolve the problem through dialogue and negotiation. Efforts toward the abolition of nuclear weapons are still ongoing all over the world. There

may be times when the permanent members exercise their veto power against a resolution that has been passed by the non-permanent members through many diplomatic efforts. However, I hope that we will not give up and continue to do what we can to realize a world without war or conflict.

The global situation surrounding nuclear weapons continues to change, with the nuclear-weapon state Russia invading Ukraine in 2022. Even I, a junior high school student, know that it will be difficult to eliminate nuclear weapons from the world right now. However, I believe that if each of us, as members of the international community, is willing to learn from the past and others, and continues to share our experiences and thoughts about peace, we can get closer to a world without nuclear weapons, one step at a time.

What we should aim for is a peaceful world without nuclear weapons and war. International cooperation is essential to achieve this. In order to never repeat the tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we should continue to make efforts to abolish nuclear weapons. It is also important to convey the importance of peace to the next generation through education. Listening to and learning about past events and the stories of atomic bomb survivors. I believe that deepening empathy is the best way to create a peaceful world. The first step towards a future without war is for each of us to think about and act on what we can do for peace. As the only country in the world to have suffered the damage of an atomic bomb, and as a country that has achieved economic recovery after defeat in the war, there must be something we can do.

What I Learned From “Barefoot Gen”

**Nagasaki Elementary and Junior High School,
8th Grade Ryoma Okawa**

This summer vacation, I went to Numazu Civic Cultural Center to watch the movie “Barefoot Gen”. There was one scene that made a lasting impression on me. It was when Gen’s father opposed the war during bamboo spear training. He was accused of being unpatriotic by the people in the town, and even tortured by the police to change his views, but his father did not change his opinion until the end.

We who live in the Reiwa era can easily say the word “peace,” but I thought it was really amazing that he could assert that “war is meaningless” in an era when the world considers dying in war a virtue and those who do not agree are called unpatriotic.

I heard from my mother that during the war, my great-grandmother would say outside that she would be willing to die for the Emperor, but she would tell her younger brother, “Cherish your life and never die.” There is no one who does not value life. I was deeply hurt by this fact.

At the end of the first part of “Barefoot Gen”, Gen’s mother says, “Your Majesty the Emperor, why were you unable to stop the war even though you had the power to do so?” Indeed, why did the war end only after so many casualties had occurred? I would like to continue researching war in the future.

Ukraine and Russia are still at war, but why do the people of Ukraine have to get caught up in conflicts between countries when they have done nothing? It is always ordinary people who become victims.

This was the first time I had seen a story based on an actual war. I have also never heard directly from people who experienced the war. In order to prevent wars from happening in the future, I think it is important for our generation to have a better understanding of war, to remember how many people suffered from hunger and injury as a result of war, and how many people suffered from having their way of thinking forced upon them, and to firmly imprint in our minds that war is a bad thing, and to pass this on to future generations.

What is Truly Scary

**Nagaisaki Elementary and Junior High School,
9th Grade Riko Ishiwata**

I didn’t know anything about war or peace until I learned about war in class. I avoided reading war movies and books because I felt afraid of them, so I don’t think I understood anything about war. However, after learning about war in class, my view of society changed. I started watching videos and reading books about war, and every time I learned about it, I realized that I didn’t know anything about society or war. On the contrary, I started to think that not knowing anything is more frightening. As I learned in this way, I wondered how much interest Japanese people have in war and researched it.

If Japan were invaded by another country, would you fight? In a survey, 14 out of 20 people answered that they would not fight, and 6 answered that they would fight. Among them were opinions such as doing nothing, the American military will do something about it, giving up and submitting, America might be safe, and running away. I don’t know if I would be able to fight if war broke out. But I couldn’t agree with the opinion that we should easily submit to Japan, which our ancestors and heroes fought so hard to leave behind. Also, people believe that America will protect us, but will America really protect Japan in the event of an emergency? I think people believe America will protect us because Japan and America have a security treaty, but there is no guarantee that America will definitely protect us. In fact, America claims to be the world’s leading country, but when Russia invaded Ukraine, America did not try to directly intervene. I can’t imagine America would shed blood for Japan.

As I researched this, I felt that most Japanese people have little interest in war. 79 years

have passed since the end of the war. Although people wish for peace, more and more people are not trying to learn about war properly. There is no war now, but there is a good chance that we will be drawn into a war and Japan will become a battlefield in the future. I want many people to realize that we are in a situation where we know nothing about peace.

Wishing for Peace and Reality

**Nagaisaki Elementary and Junior High School,
9th Grade Ikuma Watanabe**

I am writing this essay on August 9th, the day the atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki Prefecture. My mother is from Nagasaki Prefecture, and she told me that when she was an elementary school student, August 9th was designated as a school day for a peace rally. When she went to school that day, the walls of the gymnasium were covered with photos from that time. They were all very shocking photos for an elementary school student. Mushroom clouds, burnt-out towns, piles of charred bodies, and a clock that stopped at 11:02. My mother still vividly remembers the photos she saw. At the rally, the entire school decorates the school with a thousand paper cranes that all the students folded during the first term and sings songs wishing for peace. Then, at 11:02, the time of the atomic bomb, the entire school offers a moment of silence. My mother still offers a moment of silence at 11:02 on August 9th. In Hiroshima and Nagasaki, a peace memorial ceremony is held every year to convey this tragedy to future generations. We can learn about the horror of war by watching the ceremony on television and listening to it on the news. However, I think that the number of people who know about that time is gradually decreasing, and it is becoming harder to convey. It is easy to simply think that it would be nice if there were no more war and that it would be nice if the world were peaceful, but I think that by learning about the actual situation at that time, filled with misery and sadness, we can feel a stronger desire for peace.

However, the sad thing is that even at this very moment, wars are being fought in the world, even without learning about past wars. After doing a little research, I found that there are many things called the Palestinian problem, the Afghanistan conflict, the invasion of Ukraine, and conflicts and civil wars. As I researched, there was something that most of the articles had in common. That was about children.

In conflict areas, there are what are called “child soldiers,” and they are kidnapped and almost forcibly made to fight as soldiers. It was written that this is because children are mentally immature and easily brainwashed by adults, making them easy to use as soldiers. Malnutrition and food shortages are also major problems. When food shortages occur due to conflict, children become malnourished and their resistance weakens, and many children die from infectious diseases. Conflict also deprives children of opportunities to learn. In conflict

areas, there are no educational facilities, and only a small proportion of children can receive a satisfactory education. I was surprised to learn that one in five children aged 15 to 17 in areas affected by natural disasters or conflict have never attended school, and two in five do not even graduate from elementary school. Japanese children live “childish” lives. They move their bodies, go to school with their friends, and eat hearty meals. The things we take for granted are very difficult for children in conflict areas. When I think about what we can do for such children, it’s hard to come up with anything. However, by learning even a little, I can feel grateful for the fact that I can go to school and eat a satisfactory meal. I think this is a step towards not only wishing for peace, but also thinking about how to learn about reality.

The Path to Peace

Hara Junior High School, 2nd Grade Shion Hasegawa

I took the annual moment of silence on August 6th. A moment of silence is said to be a time to reflect on yourself and organize your thoughts. On August 6th, news about World War II and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony are held. We were born in an era without war, so we did not yet know the horror of war or the atomic bomb. However, I thought it would be a good opportunity to learn more about the war through materials about the atomic bomb, such as the explanatory text “Messages Left on the Wall” that we learned in Japanese class.

Seventy-nine years have passed since the end of the war, and almost no one close to me knows about the war or the atomic bomb. Even if there are people who do know, they are at least 80 years old, so I think many of them have forgotten. The atomic bomb is very scary, and with the flick of a switch, thousands or tens of thousands of lives are taken and everything is lost. Many people have lost their lives because of it. Do not possess, do not produce, and do not bring in nuclear weapons. I hope to spread these three non-nuclear principles to the world and eliminate nuclear weapons. War is a conflict between nations, and America and other countries believe that resolving it with force is just. However, I think that is wrong. This is because I think that war involves unrelated civilians, who lose their freedom, family, and loved ones.

World War II was a global war involving Japan, America, the former Soviet Union, and other nations. It is said that 40 to 50 million people died worldwide, of which 3.1 million died in Japan. It is said that it began with the Japanese Navy’s all-out attack on the American military, the “Pearl Harbor Attack.” Without this attack, I don’t think there would have been any deaths in Japan. This made me think again about “peace.” However, peace refers to a calm state without conflict. I feel that the world is far from the peace that this represents. If I were a soldier at that time, I really feel that war is a terrible thing.

I think that the peaceful Japan that exists today is due to the painful experiences of wars such as the Russo-Japanese War and World War II. I wanted to express my gratitude for the peaceful environment, life, and family that we have today. I hope that this message will be conveyed to people around the world. By spreading this message to the world, I hope that buildings such as the Atomic Bomb Dome, which was damaged in the atomic bombing of Japan, the only country to have suffered an atomic bombing, will be preserved, and a chain of events will continue indefinitely to convey the horrors of the atomic bombing to future generations.

After learning about this war, I realized that it is best to decide things through discussion, not by force. I think it would be better for each country to express their opinions on their problems and dissatisfaction, and then decide what to do from those discussions. I think we should abandon the idea that everything can be decided by force. We have never experienced a war that was resolved by force. However, we can convey the horror of war and nuclear weapons. I think we can convey this by listening to the stories of people who experienced war, and by holding exhibitions of actual photos, documents, clothing, and things left behind at the scene.

In today's world, while some people spend their days leisurely, there are children around the world who are living difficult lives due to conflicts and wars. I think it's strange that there are people living completely opposite lives to me on this one and only Earth. I think that should never happen. I believe that the way people can live in peace around the world is to eliminate conflict, weapons, and nuclear weapons.

The first step to achieving peace is to eliminate conflict. The reason is that recently there have been many incidents of people being killed or starting fights over small things. That's why I want to make an effort to prevent conflicts and fights from starting up over small things. I sincerely hope that the world will become a peaceful place without any conflict whatsoever.

Smiles For All People

Hara Junior High School, 2nd Grade Sana Yamaoka

I want all people to be happy. Why do wars, conflicts, and other things that destroy peace happen? I think it's because of harsh environments, different ways of thinking, and cultural and ethnic conflicts. Wars and conflicts are terrible things that can happen just because the other person lives a slightly different life than we do.

Have you ever thought deeply about world peace? There are currently challenges in the world to achieve peace. The number one challenge in the world is "eliminating oppression of human rights and discrimination," the second is "eliminating war and conflict," and the third

is “eliminating poverty and hunger.” For people all over the world to live in peace, it is necessary to solve these challenges even a little. Since we live in Japan, which is the 9th most peaceful country in the world, it may be difficult for us to think about challenges. However, there are people suffering and in trouble even now.

Do you know what Japan is doing for peace? Japan is actively working on various global issues, such as poverty, climate change, global environmental issues, and disaster prevention. Furthermore, Japan is also working on disarmament, non-proliferation, and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Japan is a leader in the creation of international rules, and contributes to peace and prosperity in the region and the global community through capacity building support for developing countries. I also think that Japan’s efforts are wonderful.

What does peace mean to us? Things that are familiar to us are going to school, studying, playing, and eating with peace of mind. These times that we spend as if they are natural are also “peace”.

“Peace” is also found in the SDGs. Goal 16 of the SDGs is “Peace and Justice for All”. The SDGs also aim to create a world where people all over the world can live under peace and justice. I think it is important for each individual to participate in such global efforts.

Recently, I have seen stories of the atomic bomb and war on the news and in books. Photos and videos have really conveyed the situation and pain of those times. Some people have lost their safe place to live and have lost their important things and people close to them. If I were in that position, I think it would be difficult to bear the pain. I think it would be very sad to suddenly have everything taken away from me. I want the world to become a place where no one must feel that way.

I believe that for every country in the world to be at peace, it is necessary to assert one’s own opinions and accept the opinions of others. In other words, I think it is necessary to respect each other and treat each other with an open heart. We humans have a wonderful thing called language. I thought that helping each other will lead to world peace.

From these things, I thought that human relationships are deeply involved in allowing all people to live happily. I thought that “peace” is achieved by combining various conditions such as supporting each other, clearly expressing one’s opinions, and accepting others.

I want everyone in this world to be able to live happily and in peace. I want to make it possible for people who cannot easily do the things that we take for granted, such as studying, eating, and playing, to live in peace. I would like to be of some help, even if only a little, by participating in volunteer activities, supporting donations, and telling the world so that everyone can be happy. I hope that the world will be filled with smiles.

The Horror of the Atomic Bomb

Hara Junior High School, 2nd Grade Akari Morita

Do you know the day when so many lives were taken in an instant? It was 79 years ago, on August 6, 1945. The atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, and the city was burned to the ground, killing about 140,000 people who were in Hiroshima. I visited Hiroshima this summer vacation.

First, I went to the Atomic Bomb Dome. This building was originally used as a facility to display and sell products from Hiroshima Prefecture. Now it is a precious building that remains in the same condition as it was at the time of the bombing, and it tells the cruelty and misery of nuclear weapons.

When I actually saw the Atomic Bomb Dome, I was shocked to see that the bricks had collapsed so much that there was no room to step, and the steel frame was bent to an unprecedented degree. At the same time, I was heartbroken to learn that so many people had died and suffered here.

Next, I went to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. This museum is a place to convey the horror and inhumanity of nuclear weapons to people around the world through materials on the bombing, the remains of survivors, and testimonies. Looking at the photos in the museum of people with severe burns all over their bodies, drawings of people with melted skin, and drawings of people jumping into rivers looking for water, I felt the fear of the atomic bomb, as the photos and drawings conveyed the pain and suffering that we cannot even imagine.

However, I learned that there was something even more terrifying about the atomic bomb. I learned that there were times when people who barely survived died after a few days, and people who were undergoing good treatment suddenly deteriorated, due to the large amount of radiation that had been exposed to, and there were times when it was not possible to save them. There were also people who died years later, or who died as adults. No matter how much time passed, they could not live in peace because of the atomic bomb. Even if you survive, you will suffer until the end as long as you live, and I think this is the true horror of the atomic bomb.

And when I visited Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, where the Atomic Bomb Dome and Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum are located, I noticed something. There were a lot of foreigners there. Japan is the only country in the world that was attacked with an atomic bomb. Since it is not possible to see the atomic bomb in any other country, I was happy to see that people from various countries come to Hiroshima. This is because the horror and cruelty of the atomic bomb is being conveyed to people outside of Japan. Also, I thought that it is not just Japanese people who wish for a peaceful world without war, but if people all over the

world know the importance of peace, awareness of peace will increase all over the world.

Finally, I thought it was good that I visited Hiroshima. We have never experienced war. I knew that “war is very painful and cruel,” but I learned a lot from learning in detail that it is like an indiscriminate murder in which many innocent people die, which cannot be expressed in such a word.

Thus, 79 years have passed since the day the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, and Hiroshima has recovered to the point that it is hard to tell that an atomic bomb was ever dropped, and there are fewer buildings that were affected by the atomic bomb, such as the Atomic Bomb Dome, and fewer victims of the bomb. I feel that awareness of peace and war is declining in Japan today. Therefore, it is necessary to once again learn more about what peace is, what happened in Japan in the past, and what people from the past want to tell us today. By doing so, I hope that each and every person will raise their awareness of peace and war.

What is Peace?

Hara Junior High School, 3rd Grade Aoto Tsuchiya

What is peace? How can we achieve peace?

I have occasion to think about it in class, but I couldn't find the answer. When I looked it up, I found that it is “society not being disrupted by war or violence.”

In 2022, a war broke out between Ukraine and Russia. When I heard the news, I thought, “What? Really?” In my mind, wars happened a long time ago, so I was very surprised to hear, “Are we going to war now?” However, now when I hear it on the news, I don't feel surprised, and it feels like a part of my daily life. I think it's scary that the awareness of the fear of war is gradually decreasing in this way.

Next year will mark 80 years since the end of the Pacific War, the last war in which Japan participated. It has become difficult to hear the real voices of those who lived and experienced the horror of war. Last year, I went to the Okinawa Peace Memorial Park and the Himeyuri Tower. These places had various materials about the Battle of Okinawa in the Pacific War. For example, a place called “Gama” that was used to protect oneself from artillery shells was reproduced. It was very dark inside, and even the sound of gunfire was reproduced, which was very scary, and I could understand how people felt at that time. There were also photographs from that time and video testimonies of people from that time, which made me understand even more the horror of war.

There are also facilities such as the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum that convey the horror of war so that we do not forget it. I thought it was important to experience the horror of war at such places and convey it to those of us who

have never experienced it.

So I think the most important standard for peace is the absence of war. However, I don't think that's the only standard. For example, there is the poverty problem in Africa. Can we say that there is peace in areas where poverty is occurring? I sometimes see it on the news, but it didn't look like peace to me. Also, one in six people in the world is extremely poor, and it seems that one child dies every five seconds from hunger-related diseases.

In this way, the standard of peace differs from person to person, and I thought that peace is a state in which people can live happily. These problems cannot be solved by the actions of one person. However, I believe there are things I can do, even if it is just a small step, such as eliminating food waste. I believe that this kind of awareness on the part of each individual will lead to a more peaceful world.

The Meaning of Passing on Stories

Kadoike Junior High School, 2nd Grade Aika Suzuki

Seventy-nine years have passed since the atomic bomb was dropped.

I feel like I understand a little bit more about why August 6th and 9th, and August 15th, the anniversary of the end of the war, are so important every year.

This summer, I went to the Atomic Bomb Dome and the Yamato Museum. I was deeply shocked to hear stories from survivors about charred bodies and bloodied bodies everywhere. "It was so painful that I couldn't do anything for those who were asking for help." "Am I the only one who should be alive...?" A girl who was attending a girls' school at the time and managed to survive spoke with tears in her eyes. I thought it was a sad world where people who had survived couldn't honestly say, "I'm glad I'm alive." In the first place, no one should be killed. Why did the world become like that? No matter how much I thought about it, I couldn't find an answer.

Japan's war ended six days after the atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. It should have been obvious that dropping the atomic bomb would result in many casualties, so why did no one oppose it? I think that the feelings of those who died in the war and those who lost loved ones in the war are sorrows that I, who have never seen the death of people in front of my eyes or the charred bodies, cannot imagine or contemplate. It is difficult to imagine what you cannot imagine. If you are not interested in war, you do not want to know about it. I have never wanted to know about war or the atomic bomb. That is because I thought it had nothing to do with me. There will be no war now. I thought that war was an event of the past. However, this summer I thought a lot about war and the atomic bomb and tried to learn about it. Now I feel like I never knew, and I am glad that I was able to learn about war and the atomic bomb. Now I watch TV about war and the atomic bomb on my own accord. Whether

I went to the Peace Memorial Museum or watched TV, there were many words I did not understand. I do not find watching TV about war enjoyable. It does not make me feel good. But I think it is important to pay attention to such things so that people can have a sense of crisis about war. The number of people who survived war and the atomic bomb is decreasing year by year. Looking back at the thoughts of the atomic bomb survivors I heard over the summer vacation, I felt their strong desire to “never want to create another atomic bomb victim. We never want this event to be forgotten.”

79 years have passed since the atomic bomb was dropped. As the atomic bomb survivors get older, there will be fewer people who can pass on their war experiences to the next generation. How can we pass on these events to people who don't know about war and the atomic bomb? What is the reason for passing them on in the first place? It was the first time I had ever thought so much about war and the atomic bomb. Even now, 79 years after the atomic bomb was dropped, the meaning behind the fact that the war is still being passed down is not because so many people died. I think it's because we don't want a war that will take away loved ones and destroy our daily lives. I would like to continue to increase my knowledge about war and the atomic bomb.

I don't know anything about war, but I can try to understand the thoughts of those who have shared their painful experiences. From that, I can also think about how we can create a peaceful world. We will soon become adults. I realized that instead of just focusing on the things I like and am interested in, I need to take an interest in the things that are being passed down and gradually take on the role of passing them on to the next generation.

What I Can Do

Kadoike Junior High School, 2nd Grade Shuichi Hasuike

What is peace? What can I do? I couldn't help but think this at the museum.

“There's a place I really want to go to.”

That's the place my parents told me to go to on the last day of our trip to Okinawa: the Himeyuri Peace Museum. Thinking it was some fun tourist attraction, I tried to straddle an old monument in the parking lot that said “Mensore” (welcome). I was surprised and panicked by a white maggot moving around, and I yelled out loud. I entered the museum without a second thought.

The Himeyuri Peace Museum and Himeyuri Tower are a memorial for the students and teachers of the Okinawa Normal School Women's Department and Okinawa Prefectural First Girls' High School who died in the Battle of Okinawa in 1945, and a museum that conveys the reality of the Battle of Okinawa. They were built near the cave that caused the greatest number of casualties.

Entering the museum, we began with an exhibit showing students between the ages of 13 and 19, who, like us, devoted themselves to their studies and sports, and had fun with their friends. Photographs of them playing basketball and taking English classes show that they had a school life similar to ours today. However, as we walked through the exhibition room, the students' cheerfulness turned to darkness.

When the Pacific War broke out and the Battle of Okinawa took place, students from both schools were mobilized to the Okinawa Army Hospital. However, it was only the name of a hospital, with just shabby wooden beds in a dark, damp trench. The scene at that time was intense. There was a foul stench of feces, urine, the sea, and people. Most of the soldier's lower jaw had been gouged out, and he was unable to eat or speak. He asked for food to be fed through a rubber tube, but there were no rubber tubes due to a shortage of supplies. Rice was squeezed into what was probably his mouth to feed him. A soldier asked for water but gulped down urine that had accumulated in a urinal. When I untied my tattered sash, maggots started emerging one after another. I tried to pick them out with tweezers, but it was too late. I resisted the ration of rice balls the size of ping-pong balls and offered them to a soldier, who roared, "Are you going to get full on this?" The Himeyuri students hadn't eaten anything all day. There was a lot of injustice and suffering in the exhibition room. I reflected on the fact that I had screamed at some maggots at the entrance to the museum.

What is war? What is peace? On the flight back, I read a book called "Himeyuri's Battle of Okinawa" in one go.

"They taught us to sacrifice our lives. Fight to the end and die in supreme sacrifice." "The greatest feature of the Battle of Okinawa was the number of civilian casualties, far more than that of soldiers. Also, an extraordinary situation occurred in which civilians were killed by their own military, which they called friendly forces."

These sentences made a lasting impression on me.

My conclusion. Peace is not something that happens naturally. Peace must be created, and it is important to think about what peace is for, and for whom.

So I thought about what kind of peace activities I can do now. One day at dinner, while talking with my family about a fight I had with my siblings, an idea came to mind. It's simple, but it's about treating the person in front of you with warmth. I think it's about forgiving and accepting people. This summer, I felt that peace is not something that is prepared for us, but something that we must consciously create.

The Horror of War

Kadoike Junior High School, 3rd Grade Hibiki Tochiyama

When I went to the summer festival in Numazu, I noticed an unfamiliar sign on a bridge. Looking closely, the sign read, “Onaribashi Air Raid Scars.” It was apparently a sign that was installed to preserve the scars of the large-scale air raid by the US military in April 1945. I knew, of course, that atomic bombs had been dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but this was the first time I had heard that Numazu had been the target of a large-scale air raid. I was a little curious, so I looked into it and found out that about 89.5% of the area of the city that the US military had targeted had been destroyed and that many bodies were floating in the Kano River, which surprised me.

When I went to my father’s parents’ house and told them that I was thinking of writing a peace essay, my grandmother told me about the Numazu air raid. She was in the first grade at the time. The school had burned down in the air raid. Back then, there weren’t many lights and lamps like there are today, and it was so dark that it was difficult to go out at night. When American bombers flew over, you never knew when they would drop bombs, so when the air raid siren sounded, people would take refuge in the air raid shelters built behind their houses so they could escape quickly. Nowadays, it’s normal for it to be bright enough that you don’t have to worry about anything even at night, but back then, if it was bright, you would be a target for bombing, so people deliberately turned off the lights or covered them with black cloth. She also said that on the day of the air raid, when she was waiting for the bombing to end by the bridge over the Kano River, the sky was burning red in the distance, and she was so scared that she shivered. If I had been born in that era, I might not have had any hope of living, and my heart might break. I thought my grandmother was a strong person to have survived such a terrible time.

And as I was listening to this story, I learned that my great-grandfather had died in the war. At my grandmother’s house, there is something like a medal that shows that my great-grandfather fought on the battlefield, but I felt pained when I thought about how bitter it must have been for him to be killed and have his life taken from him, even though he didn’t want to die. Even if you receive a medal after death that says “you are a great man who sacrificed his life for your country,” it doesn’t mean anything. I’m sure what his family wanted was not a medal, but his life and his unchanging smile.

My father and grandfather once went to Iwo Jima, the island where my great-grandfather died, to collect the remains of those who died in battle. They say it was very muggy inside the cave that he dug before fighting. In extreme conditions where death was close at hand, with no water at all, my great-grandfather crawled on the ground and fought simply for his country. What on earth was my great-grandfather thinking as he left his family behind in

Japan and fought on a faraway island?

I spend my days peacefully as usual, and of course I don't fight. But when I think about the time when war was close to home, like my grandmother and great-grandfather, I realized that I need to cherish the days that I can spend as usual like this.

There are conflicts happening all over the world right now, between Russia and Ukraine, Palestine and Israel, and more. These are conflicts over ethnic issues, national interests, and other issues, to assert their own righteousness or to obtain something. However, I believe that using force is wrong to resolve these conflicts. The sadness and suffering of those who have lost family members to war is immeasurable. It is unacceptable for people to live a life where they cannot find hope in life, their hearts are broken, and they can only hold themselves together through resentment and hatred. After the war, Japan was under American rule, and was able to learn ways to resolve issues other than fighting. I believe that countries currently experiencing conflicts and civil wars can resolve their problems by talking to each other and making rules, rather than fighting with force. I hope that everyone in the world can hope for days when they can imagine a bright future, rather than living every day in fear of death, not knowing what tomorrow will bring.

What We Should Know Now

Kadoike Junior High School, 3rd Grade An Katsumata

I will be 15 in September, and of course I have never experienced war. I felt that it would be difficult to think about peace without having experienced war. So, I decided to talk to my grandmother, who experienced the war.

My 85-year-old grandmother experienced the Pacific War. Before entering elementary school, people and buildings in urban areas were evacuated to places where there was less risk of air raids. As the war situation worsened, children in urban areas were evacuated to unfamiliar places such as rural areas, away from their parents. As written in "Postcards without Words" that was in the Japanese textbook two years ago, food was hard to come by, rice was scarce, and there was a rationing system, so we exchanged the tickets we were given for rice and sugar. Instead of rice, we ate soup made from flour dumplings called *suiton*, sweet potatoes, and potatoes as our staple food. White rice was only eaten on special occasions such as birthdays and New Year's Day. As a result, many children suffered from malnutrition.

During the war, many men had to go to war whether they wanted to or not when they received a so-called "red paper" from the government. Women were sent to work in factories that made weapons.

My grandmother built a hole called an air-raid shelter in the garden of her house to protect against bombs, and when the air-raid siren sounded, she would close all the curtains, turn

off the lights, and run into the shelter. She was so scared of the siren that she cried every day.

My grandmother started elementary school in 1945, the year the war ended. They didn't have a school bag, and all she wore were *monpe* (baby clothes) made from untied kimonos. School lunches immediately after the war consisted of skim milk powder received from the United States, bread with dried seaweed in it, and hardtack.

My grandmother, who experienced the war in this way, told me, "I still can't forget the loss of two close relatives, my uncle who died of an illness on the battlefield at the age of 21, and my cousin's father, and the hardships my family endured for a long time. War doesn't make anyone happy. I never want to go through that again, and I don't want my children or grandchildren to have to go through it either." Hearing my grandmother's story made the war stories I'd heard so many times feel like completely different stories, and it made me feel very sad. Why do we fight? Why do innocent people have to die? Is there any reason to kill each other when we don't want to? Surely only those who have experienced war, like my grandmother, can understand the true horror of war. So what can we do now, who have never experienced war? Today, we often hear that Japan is a peaceful country. But I don't think that the absence of war equals peace. Even fights are a kind of war that occur due to differences of opinion or selfishness. Someone is hurt. I think it should be taken seriously, as it is the same as casualties in war. Therefore, before an argument breaks out, the first thing to do is to listen to the other person's opinion. Even if there is a difference of opinion, it is important to respect and accept the opinions of others.

And the other thing is to examine the past. Not only Japanese people, but people all over the world, need to know the facts of wars that have happened in the past and think about how to maintain peace. I think that there are many people who will change their way of thinking if they examine the past, as I did this time. If you do this, you will surely understand that war should never happen and that no one can be happy. Every single life of every person in the world is irreplaceable, and not a single life can be taken. However, once war breaks out, countless lives are sacrificed. I think that it is our mission to connect the current peace to the next generation by touching even a little on the pain and helplessness of those who lost so much in war and learning these painful facts of the past.

Humans are creatures that repeat their mistakes. But I feel that my grandmother's sad, yet strong face taught me that war is the one thing we must never repeat.

The Importance of Peace

Imazawa Junior High School, 1st Grade Soara Emoto

In August 1945, before I was born, atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima on the 6th, and on Nagasaki on the 9th. As a result of the bombs, about 140,000 people died in Hiroshima and about 70,000 people in Nagasaki. Many people suffered from the radiation of the atomic bomb even after the war ended. When I learned this fact in the sixth grade of elementary school, I thought, “War involves people who do not harm anyone and brings irreparable damage.”

Since the Yayoi period, long ago, there have been conflicts over territory. Wars have occurred throughout history for various reasons, such as religious differences, ethnic and cultural differences, unclear borders, and dissatisfaction with policies. Even if a country wins, it is not clear who will benefit from the war, but innocent people have been forced to become soldiers in wars they did not want to participate in under the pretext of “for the sake of their country.” They have lost their precious families. Even though we suffer and grieve and think we no longer want war, for some reason it keeps repeating itself.

Two years have passed since Russia invaded Ukraine. Every day, horrific images of war are broadcast on TV. At first, I was filled with fear. People covered in wounds, mothers crying with young children caught up in them, houses destroyed beyond recognition. Images that make me want to cover my eyes are still broadcast, but I don’t feel the same way I did before. I know it’s scary, but it seems like something from a faraway, unknown world. I don’t know what justice is, but I know that it’s wrong for someone else to become unhappy for the sake of someone else’s happiness.

This summer, I went to the “Hiroshima and Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Photo Panel Exhibition” held at Numazu City Library. This is the landscape of Japan in the past. It was like something from a special effects movie. Even thinking that, it was scary. The mushroom cloud of the atomic bomb. There is a person in it. There was a person. Standing in front of this motionless photo, I imagined so many things and my feelings became so mixed up that I nearly went crazy. There was a photo of a child running with his mother on his back. How do children live when they lose their parents in war? If I lost my family in an instant...I’m sure I would feel lonely, sad, or in pain; words like that wouldn’t be enough to describe it.

We feel peace now, after so many sacrifices, and we desire to avoid war. But the fact that wars continue in some places around the world, that is some places are not at peace, then it means that despite so many sacrifices and a history woven with so many wishes, we have still not learned anything and have not been able to realize a peaceful world. What should we do? It’s not up to someone else to think about it, it’s up to us.

The Value of Peace Shining Through the Cruel Flames of War

Imazawa Junior High School, 2nd Grade Kazuki Tomoda

War takes countless lives and tears apart ties between family and friends. The sound of explosions, the disappearance of people's smiles, and the sight of cities reduced to ruins leaves an unforgettable fear in our hearts. To prevent such tragedies from being repeated, we must come together, understand the importance of peace, and act to build a future. Peace is never something to be taken for granted, but a treasure that we must continue to protect.

I sailed the vast ocean of the Internet in search of the unknown truth of World War II. This war was a grand tragedy that involved the entire world for six years, from 1939 to 1945. Approximately 70 million precious lives were engulfed in the flames of war, and people were forced to say goodbye to their loved ones. It was a moment when countless families were engulfed in sorrow and dreams for the future were dashed. In particular, the Holocaust took the lives of more than six million Jews, and their history and culture were erased. These numbers are not cold statistics, but the stories of people who actually lived through them. Furthermore, the atomic bombs that the United States dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki symbolize the horror of war. Now the atomic bomb was dropped, while people who knew nothing about it went about their daily lives, the sky lit up for a moment, and a light spread across the earth as if the sun was shining down on it. The next moment, an explosion roared, and a violent shock wave hit the city. Buildings collapsed in an instant, and many people were blown away and lost their lives. The city was turned into a sea of fire, and the screams of the people around echoed throughout the city. Hot winds blew, and the sight of people engulfed in flames running around desperately trying to escape was just like hell. The survivors were stunned by the devastation unfolding before their eyes and could not understand what had happened. I believe that the moment of the atomic bomb is an event that strongly impresses upon us the horror of war. And we must never forget this tragedy. I think we need to keep the importance of peace engraved in our hearts so that we never repeat the same mistake again.

Peace is an essential and important value for us in our world. The significance of peace is immeasurable. In a peaceful society, people can live in peace and pursue their dreams. The development of education and culture and the promotion of economic growth make the whole country prosperous. Above all, peace gives people peace of mind and brings a sense of happiness. But why does war occur? There are many factors behind war. The struggle for territory and resources, ethnic and religious conflicts, and political interests are all intricately intertwined to cause war. The impact of war is also extremely serious. The impact can last for generations. To prevent such tragedies, I believe that we need to understand the importance of peace and make efforts to maintain it. I personally feel strongly about the importance of

peace. It is because of peace that we can learn and grow freely. On the other hand, when we think that war can completely change our lives and close off future possibilities, I realize how great the value of peace is.

The realization of peace is supported by our mindset. In daily life, valuing the consideration of others and speaking small kind words can help close the distance between our hearts and prevent conflict. Deepening the bonds of mutual support through participation in local communities and volunteer work also contributes to maintaining peace. Our small actions come together and create big changes.

Without peace, we cannot build a future. That is why we want to protect and nurture peace with our own hands.

The World We Inherited

Imazawa Junior High School, 3rd Grade So Iwamoto

On October 25, 1944, nine Zero fighters took off from an air base in the Philippines. They were *kamikaze* attacks. During World War II, Japan promoted “100 million *kamikazes*” and this became the hope of the people.

What a frightening world it was. *Kamikaze* attacks involved loading bombs onto the fuselage of an airplane, boarding it and crashing into the enemy’s warships. Why did they have to fight in such a way that once they took off, they would never return alive?

This summer, I was shocked when I saw a documentary about *kamikaze* attacks on TV. The footage of planes with people on board crashing into warships seemed so unrealistic. Having read the novel “If I Could Meet You Again on that Flower-blooming Hill,” I thought I knew what a *kamikaze* attack was... But somewhere along the line, I guess I hadn’t fully accepted the fact that it was real. Watching the footage, I felt my body go cold.

(There was a person on each and every one of those planes. Young people about my age.) I was scared.

“They are living gods who sacrifice their young lives for their country,” said a woman in the novel, seeing off the *kamikaze* pilots.

At the time, the *kamikaze* pilots were also called “military gods,” “divine eagles,” and other names, and were praised. But in the end, it was decided that normal attacks would not be able to counter America, which already had the upper hand in the war, and it was concluded that the only option was to ram the enemy. They were taught that protecting their country with their lives was the highest honor, and even a movie was made about it.

I felt my blood go cold when I realized that the *kamikaze* pilots in the novel were not fiction when they said, “We will definitely inflict damage on the enemy and end the war,” or “We will end the war in Japan’s favor, even if only a little.” I was shocked to learn that some

of them had to take off even though they felt that “Japan cannot win with ramming.”

While most of the people involved at the time are now deceased, the documentary included an interview with a former member of the *kamikaze* squad. According to the person, young people in their late teens were said to be “ready to be used.” When the order to launch a mission was given, they had to take off at the specified date and time without any choice. They were not allowed to say goodbye to their families or friends, or beg for their lives, and they died. It was too cruel to call them “ready to be used.” I was filled with anger at the injustice of treating people like objects.

Moreover, the higher-ups at the time said “well done” to the people for starting the *kamikaze* attacks. It made me realize how strange Japan was at the time. There must have been people who thought it was strange just because they couldn’t say anything or resist. I can’t help but feel regretful when I think about the regret of those people.

“Is it okay for someone to die to save someone else?” “I don’t think loyalty fulfilled by dying is the right thing to do.” The words of the protagonist of the novel from the future were exactly what I was thinking. The officers who wrote eagerly on the survey to volunteer for suicide attacks. The young people who came from the student war effort had no choice but to write “hope” in small letters. I cannot imagine the situation at that time, when they could not write “no.”

I live in a world that was created with the sacrifice of such young people. I am only able to live thanks to the protection of many things. I will firmly accept the facts of the past, so that the justice that I cherish will not be distorted by someone else’s intentions. And I will pass this world that I have inherited to the next generation in peace. As those who bear the responsibility for this country that they loved and tried to protect.

A Peaceful World

Imazawa Junior High School, 3rd Grade Kaede Katsumata

Two years ago in February, Russia launched a full-scale military invasion of Ukraine. Until then, I had learned about history from textbooks and videos in history class, but I felt tremendous fear and anxiety at the fact that war had actually begun.

War. How many people make that choice? There must be many more people who don’t want war and want to protect a peaceful life, so why do wars happen? What good will come of so many people being caught up in it? Wars are repeated. I can’t understand it. Why don’t we make use of the lessons of the past? Was it because the important people at the time were controlled by their emotions and couldn’t make calm decisions? “Let’s express our feelings in words. Violence doesn’t solve anything.” Parents and teachers tell their children this. Even children can understand this, so why can’t adults solve it through discussion? I think there are

many different reasons why people start wars. But when I study history, I can't help but feel that in the end, there is a selfish desire to "run politics the way I want" and "make the other party listen to me." Otherwise, I don't think one would conclude that "there can be no peace without bloodshed." Taking the lives of innocent people and forcing young people with promising futures into the battlefield under the pretense of "patriotism." I wonder what kind of imagination it takes to think that peace will come after such cruelty.

My great-grandfather worked in a factory that made parts for fighter planes. Because he worked in a factory, he never went to the battlefield, but what were his thoughts as he made those parts? I can't ask him now, but I'm sure he must have had mixed feelings. The atmosphere in the world probably wasn't one that would make him feel lucky that he didn't go to war. I'm alive today because my great-grandfather survived. I can do what I want to do, pursue my dreams, and work hard for myself. It's the same for the people fighting the war now. We are alive today because people in the past survived the ravages of war, so why have we chosen war again?

Large amounts of money are poured into military power, which evolves day by day. We hear news of high-ranking officials inspecting new weapons or unveiling them at parades. I don't think that countries arming themselves in the name of protecting their own countries can "join hands and help each other." We live in a frightening world where weapons are used for diplomacy and business. If the money spent on developing weapons were used to tackle environmental issues and save people who are suffering now, wouldn't the world be a much easier place to live in? Do we lose the feeling of discontent with such injustice when we become adults?

I once read an article that said that the period without war anywhere in the world was only six years. Perhaps it's because we can't see it as something that concerns us, so we don't learn any lessons from what has happened up until now. I too no longer feel the anxiety and fear I once felt when I hear news about Russia and Ukraine. I think it's because I've realized that it doesn't have much of an impact on me or my family. How many people can see this as something that concerns them personally? I think that is the first step in eliminating war.

"Let's make an effort to compromise by talking to people who think differently from us over and over again,"

"No matter how close we are, let's maintain a relationship where we can point out each other's mistakes."

"Let's not forget that we are here today because many people have protected and connected our lives."

These are obvious, overused phrases, but I think that in the end, it all comes down to this.

I intend to continue putting into words my feelings when I find something to be out of the ordinary, or that something may be wrong, and spreading the word.

Prayer and Peace

Secondary School of Numazu-Ichiritsu Numazu High School,
2nd Grade Kanon Watanabe

Prayer on the river in Hiroshima
A large mushroom cloud rises
Loved ones taken in an instant
A voiceless cry rides on the wind
Countless souls wander the sky

Prayer on the hills of Nagasaki
Flames engulfing the city
With the sadness of that day in our hearts
The light of our hearts praying for peace
We join our hands together so that it will not go out

Peace descends on a wounded land
Strong hearts looking to the future
The voices of people seeking peace
Forging ahead with love and hope

The unprecedented destructive power brought about by the power of science
Takes away people's futures
Throws them into suffering

Memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki
Stories to never forget
The day when tears rained
The tragedy that is passed down
Until the day it becomes the foundation of peace

So that it will never be repeated
The terror of nuclear weapons, the power of science
Looking at the reality
Learns the importance of peace
And becomes the power to build the future

A quiet promise for the future

Believe in the Future

**Secondary School of Numazu-Ichiritsu Numazu High School,
3rd Grade Kanon Ikai**

Can we say that the world is at peace now? I think of peace as people all over the world living their normal daily lives and living freely. Sleeping in a warm futon, eating delicious food, and going to school or work every day are things that most Japanese people take for granted. Our country has been peaceful since the end of the war on August 15, 1945, and there have been no wars since. However, there are still conflicts in the world. When watching TV or social media, there is a constant stream of talk about Russia's invasion of Ukraine and Israel's attack on the Gaza Strip. These conflicts have caused many casualties, and even in Japan, which is not directly involved in the war, there are effects such as rising prices of food and crude oil. War is truly tragic, as many people are sacrificed and things that are important to people are lost.

I spoke to my grandfather to gain a deeper understanding of such wars. He was born in 1944 and was one year old when the war ended. He doesn't remember much, but he clearly remembers hiding in the bomb shelter. Life after the war was tough, and rice was not easy to eat, so he ate wheat and other grains instead. It was normal not to eat until you were full, and it must have been really tough to live a life of repeated endurance.

I once watched a movie called "Barefoot Gen" in a peace study at school. I had seen this movie in elementary school, but it was even more moving to watch it after learning about war in social studies classes and peace studies. What made the biggest impression on me was the black rain that started to fall 20 to 60 minutes after the atomic bomb was dropped. When I was in elementary school, I didn't understand why it was falling, but now I understand that it was a sticky rain like oil that contained mud and soot. I remember very well a scene where a person who had suffered great damage to his body from the atomic bomb and was feeling at his limit drank the black rain and died without feeling relieved. I was also impressed by the main character, who was suffering from the aftereffects of his hair falling out due to the destruction of his cells caused by the radiation released from the atomic bomb. Above all, the sadness and regret of losing a loved one right in front of your eyes is immeasurable. In the midst of all this, the protagonist's mother gives him positive words, saying, "This is not the time to be sad," and I felt that people at that time were truly strong.

In this way, by taking the initiative to learn about the tragic events that once occurred in Japan, we feel grateful for our modern lives. Apart from war, we may suffer from disasters that could happen at any time, such as earthquakes or the eruption of Mount Fuji. We don't

know if we will be alive tomorrow. It is important to spend each day savoring the fact that peace will not last forever. We cannot say 100% that war will not happen in Japan in the future, but I don't think it is impossible to make the world peaceful.

I thought about what we can do to prevent war and create peace. Now that 79 years have passed since the end of the war, the number of people who have experienced war and the number of atomic bomb victims are decreasing year by year. As there are fewer people who can talk about the true horror, I believe that it is we who should carry on the story. I know it would be difficult for me to do it alone, but I think the first step to creating peace is for the younger generation in their teens and twenties to work together to learn about war. I believe that what we learn from the deaths of those who died in war will never be in vain, and that the future of the world will be peaceful.