

# What is Peace?

Daisan Elementary School, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Iori Goto

What is peace?

Not fighting?

Laugh and play with friends

Spending time with family

Such times feel natural

Hold back on the things you love

Some people are scared

Everywhere in the world

They can't choose my school

They can't even buy clothes

They live with lonely hearts.

Apparently there are kids like that

"What can I do?"

There are times when I think that

A small kindness will surely

It's sure to reach someone's heart

"Thank you" or "I'm sorry"

"Are you okay?" I ask.

That alone makes my heart feel warm

Peace is not something you receive

You can also give it to someone

Let's sow the seeds of courage

Let's sow the seeds of kindness

More words and smiles

The seeds of peace in our hands

To make the future bloom big

Let's live

# My Idea of Peace

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

This year marks 80 years since the end of the war.

Eighty years ago, the Pacific War, which had lasted for about four years for Japan, ended. Eighty years seems like a very long time, but to me, it happened before my grandparents were even born. However, its impact continues to this day, so it's not something from the distant past. When I think about how, if the war had continued, we wouldn't have been able to go to school or play with friends like we do now, and it makes me think about the importance of peace. War produces nothing but only causes loss. Not only do buildings, roads, and towns get destroyed, but lives are also lost. And those who lost their lives had fathers, mothers, siblings, grandparents, and friends, just like us. I'm sure those left behind were deeply saddened by the loss of their families and loved ones. It makes me very sad to imagine my family and friends dying in a war.

Moreover, it wasn't just the Japanese people who were grieving. People in the opposing countries also lost loved ones and shed tears. No matter what country we're from, we all cherish others and share the same desire to live happy lives. That's why war only brings sadness to any country. Even now, conflict is occurring somewhere in the world. People should be able to go to school and study, and play with their friends, but they can't live in peace. When I think about this, I feel even more strongly how happy my life is now.

I believe that the life we have today, 80 years after the end of the war, is protected by the efforts and wishes of many people. Those who died in the war, their families, friends, and others who grieved must have had a strong desire to ensure that something like this never happens again. I believe that these desires have accumulated and led to the peace we enjoy in Japan today. It is thanks to those people that I can sleep in peace in my own home and wake up in the morning every day.

In order to maintain peaceful days in the future, I think it's important for each of us to cherish peace. Even if we can't do anything big, I think there are things we can start with in our own little ways. For example, when you have a fight with someone, thinking about their feelings and making up is the first step towards peace. Cherishing family and friends and having a compassionate heart lead to peace. Opportunities to hear the stories of people who experienced war are becoming fewer every year. That's why I want to learn about it now. And when our generation becomes adults, I think passing on this knowledge to the next generation will be an important role in maintaining peace.

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the end of the war. I want to remember what I learned about peace this year and live my life with gratitude for my daily life. I also want to think about what I can do and act on it so that a peaceful world without war can continue.

# My Image of War

## Daiyon Elementary School, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Yuki Yasuda

I went to Hiroshima during the summer vacation.

Until then, my understanding of war was, “It’s something that’s happening in Russia and Ukraine, where people are killing each other for no reason. Japan is a pacifist country, so it’s something that will never happen again.” And about the atomic bomb was, “It’s a bomb dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II. It has a very powerful force.” That was all I knew. Until then, I had never had the opportunity to learn about war, and I had no desire to learn about it. However, when I went to Hiroshima, I learned a lot about war and the atomic bomb.

When I arrived in Hiroshima, first I went to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park. The park was built on land that had been burned down by the atomic bomb, and I was surprised at how much of the land had been burned down.

Next, I went to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and looked at photos and artifacts related to the atomic bomb. I was amazed at the power of the atomic bomb, seeing the mushroom cloud created by the explosion and the tattered clothes that remained even though people were more than a kilometer from the hypocenter. I also looked at other photos, and what I learned was that Hiroshima was prosperous and had many buildings before the bomb was dropped.

However, when the atomic bomb was dropped, the whole area was reduced to a burnt wasteland, black rain poured down, many people died, and the lives of those who survived were turned to pieces. The atomic bomb not only took away people’s lives, but also many other things. I wondered if one atomic bomb could take away all that.

So why did we create such horrific weapons, not just the atomic bomb? It was to win the war, but even after the war ended, those who died did not come back. Why do we repeat such cruel and pointless acts repeatedly? I wondered if the government at the time thought the lives of its citizens were someone else’s concern.

The image I had of war and the atomic bomb that I wrote about at the beginning changed dramatically after visiting Hiroshima. My image of the atomic bomb was changed to “a terrible nuclear weapon that takes away many things in one blast, including people’s lives, livelihoods, and buildings,” while my image of war was changed to “the pointless killing of people that gives birth to terrible weapons like the atomic bomb.”

Visiting Hiroshima gave me the opportunity to think about such a horrific war. It has significantly changed my image of war and other things. Furthermore, I have come to realize how important peace without war is. I hope that this kind of peace will continue in the future. And I want to continue thinking about what I can do.

# Mission to Convey

## Daigo Elementary School, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade, Yuzuki Tamura

The fact that we are able to live happily now is something we shouldn't take for granted. I want to live each day feeling grateful for the fact that I have a home, food to eat, and the ability to sleep in peace.

This year marks 80 years since the end of the war in Japan, and it has also been 80 years since the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Last summer, I went to the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum.

When I entered the building, I saw a thousand colorful cranes. Each and every one of them conveyed a wish for peace. My desire for world peace was further strengthened.

So, I went to the exhibit and the first thing I saw was a broken clock that had stopped at 11:02 AM.

It felt as if that stopped clock was telling me the time when it happened.

As I went further in, I came across photographs that immediately showed the damage caused by the atomic bomb. The people had lost their human form, and just looking at the photographs was painful. I felt like closing my eyes, but I thought it was important to know.

The Atomic Bomb Museum also had displays of melted money, glass bottles, burned clothes and other items that showed the damage caused by the atomic bomb, as well as various other materials, such as the number of countries that possess nuclear weapons.

Eighty years have passed since the end of the war, and the number of people who experienced the war is decreasing. I did not experience the war, but when I visited the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, I felt that we too have a mission to pass on the story to foreigners and future generations, so that Nagasaki will be the last place to be hit by atomic bombing.

During the summer vacation, my grandmother told me stories about how my grandparents survived the war.

My grandfather worked for a trading company in Hiroshima before the atomic bomb was dropped. On August 6th, he overslept and missed the train. He lived in Takehara, a short distance from Hiroshima, so he was not exposed to the atomic bomb.

However, a few days after the bomb was dropped, he went to an area that had been hit hard by the atomic bomb. Radiation was still present there, and my grandfather was exposed to radiation, but fortunately he showed no symptoms.

I believe that a peaceful world is one without nuclear weapons and without war, and one in which everyone helps each other, strives to live in peace, and lives happily without discrimination.

# Passing the Baton to the Future

## Daigo Elementary School, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, Makoto Katsumata

“Why do people go to war?” Is it to expand a country’s territory? Is it because leaders want to show off? Ordinary people should not want war. It is wrong that wars start because of those in power.

This summer vacation, marking eighty years since the end of the war, I wanted to learn more about it, so I watched special TV programs, read books, and talked with my family.

During the Pacific War, Numazu, where I live, was bombed in July 1945, and about ninety percent of the city was destroyed. Numazu was targeted because it had a naval munitions factory. I saw photographs and was struck by the cruelty of such widespread destruction. My great-grandparents’ family was also living in Numazu during that air raid. According to my mother, who heard the story from my great-grandmother, my great-grandmother grabbed the hands of my four-year-old grandfather and my great-great-grandmother, and, with a baby on her back, desperately fled as countless incendiary bombs fell. She saw a person nearby struck by an incendiary bomb. Just imagining it makes me tremble with fear. Because my great-grandmother fled so desperately, my grandfather survived; my mother was born later, and I am alive today. This made me think deeply about the preciousness of life and resolve to cherish it.

During the war, my great-grandfather taught geography and history at the Yokosuka and Kasumigaura naval academies and at the Numazu Naval Engineering School. He told my mother that on the day his students flew off to the battlefield he felt a sharp regret and sorrow, fearing they might never return. He said the pain of having to send his students away at the country’s command was beyond words, and he once gave a cigar bearing the chrysanthemum crest—one he had been given by the Emperor—to a soldier. Hearing this, I cannot understand the absurdity of a war in which so many young soldiers lost their lives for their country, a reality that stands in stark contrast to the miracle of my own birth. From books I learned that at the time it was considered honorable to give one’s life for the nation; I feel fortunate to have been born in this era. At the same time, we must never forget those who lost their lives in the war. I believe their memories are what have led to the peace Japan enjoys today.

I began to talk more with my mother about the war. She told me what my great-grandfather had told her when she was still in elementary school: “Although I was a teacher, I gradually began to doubt that we could win against a country capable of building so many large planes and battleships. But the pain of having to send my students off at the orders of the country is indescribable. I did not become a teacher to teach things like that. So, when you have children someday, please tell them my story so that we do not cause another war in

the future.” I cried when I heard this.

Eighty years after the end of the war, Japan has become a beautiful country, but traces of the war remain, such as the Atomic Bomb Dome. Numazu also has air-raid shelters, remains of artillery batteries, and memorial monuments. I think that by incorporating these traces of the war into our learning, we will not forget it.

Our future continues. Even during the summer holidays, many people around the world are suffering from war. I want to never forget that and to cherish every day. I also want to cherish the life passed down to me by my great-grandparents, grandparents, and parents, and pass it on to the future.

## **Weapons, Peace, and Nuclear Weapons**

### **Daigo Elementary School, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, Sakuto Sugiura**

Do you know the specific meaning of “peace”?

According to the Kojien dictionary, “peace” means “the absence of war and the world being at peace.” Peace means being peaceful and calm safe.

In other words, firstly, no war, secondly, peace and quiet, and thirdly, to be safe. Peace can be achieved under these three conditions.

Now, let’s think about nuclear issues.

Let’s take a nuclear missile as an example.

Many nuclear weapons are hidden in the ocean. They are mainly stored on submarines, and other countries do not know where they are. Therefore, even if an attack were to destroy all military facilities on land, nuclear-tipped missiles would still be launched from nearby waters. The pressure of nuclear weapons prevents other countries from acting recklessly. This maintains a balance. If this situation continues and the opposing country also possesses nuclear weapons, this is called “mutually assured destruction.” In other words, to put it bluntly, nuclear weapons contribute to world peace. I believe there is greater “evil” than nuclear weapons. These are human greed and fear. Both shape human emotions. Furthermore, it is greed that has allowed humans to develop to this point. After all, the relationship between people and war is inseparable, no matter how hard we try. However, if people could stop harboring emotions that lead to war, it might be possible to eliminate it. This would require a fundamental change in thinking, but since the Constitution prohibits interference with other people’s thoughts, this is still impossible. However, it may be possible on a global scale. If the idea that “war = evil” spreads among people all over the world, leaders will naturally become anti-war, and wars will decrease. However, there is another thing that disrupts peace: “conflict.” This can be resolved if everyone is treated fairly, but I think this is difficult due to issues such as religion. It would be best if other countries intervened, but no country is willing

to take on that role. So, I think Japan, which advocates “anti-war,” must continue to think about what it can do to ensure peace in Japan and the world for decades to come. And I, too, would like to continue thinking about peace.

## **Wishing for Peace**

### **Katahama Elementary School, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, Sana Uematsu**

This is a story I heard from my great-grandmother. During the war, food was scarce and there was no rice, so they survived on sweet potatoes. She also said that they would exchange kimonos and other clothes with farmers in exchange for sweet potatoes. My great-grandfather received a red paper during the Pacific War and went to war. He returned safely, but his war buddies and friends lost their lives. Hearing this story made me realize how lucky I was to be born in a time when there was no war, and to have grown up healthy and happy. Because nowadays, we can eat as much rice as we want. We can even eat sweets and deserts. You may think this is normal, but during the war, such things were unthinkable.

There is no war in Japan today. Everyone is living in peace.

I recently learned on the news that August 6th marks the 80th anniversary of the Hiroshima atomic bombing. I don't know much about the Hiroshima atomic bombing, but as I watched the news, I saw that many people lost their lives and that many people were making offerings. I learned that the reason for the offerings is to hold a ceremony to pray for peace so that the Hiroshima atomic bombing will not be forgotten. I believe that this commemorative ceremony brings together not only people from Hiroshima but also people from all over the world to pray for peace around the world, and to ensure that the Hiroshima atomic bombing is not forgotten and that it continues to be talked about.

When I heard stories of war and the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, I wanted to see an end to war, but at the same time, I was reminded of the question of what true peace is. I think true peace is when people all over the world can live rich lives and laugh together in peace.

Can we say that the world is at peace today? I don't think it is peaceful. Can we say that the present is a prosperous time when many countries are fighting and so many lives have been lost? When war breaks out, many lives are lost. Each person only has one life. Imagine a bomb falling during a war. Those present are caught in the crossfire and easily lose their lives. Can we laugh together in peace in such a world? Even if only one person is at peace, it cannot be called true peace. I believe that we can get closer to true peace when everyone in the world can live prosperous lives and laugh together in peace.

# Visit Hiroshima

## Kanaoka Elementary School, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Ichika Sugiyama

This summer, I went to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum with my family. I knew that Japan had been at war in the past and that atomic bombs had been dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but I didn't know much about the details. I had heard on the news that "war is bad," but I don't think I really understood what that meant.

As soon as I entered the museum, I was left speechless. Burned clothes, bicycles, scorched lunch boxes, and other items were quietly displayed there. I was able to get a strong sense of the suffering that people endured when the atomic bomb was dropped.

I knew that many people died in the atomic bombing, but I was surprised to hear that it was only in Japan. The more I thought about why it happened, and how people who were living ordinary lives were caught up in it, the more helpless I felt.

What particularly struck me was the story of a girl about my age. Her normal days of going to school, playing with friends, and laughing were taken away in just one moment by the atomic bomb. Even though she was struggling with the aftereffects of the bomb, she refused to give up and continued to live. I was deeply moved by her strength.

When the atomic bomb fell, so many people lost their lives. But that's not all. I learned for the first time that even among the survivors, there are those who still suffer from physical and mental scars.

When I left the museum and saw the dilapidated Atomic Dome, I was shocked to see that it had really happened, and tears welled up in my eyes. I was scared, sad and frustrated, and all these feelings came together, and I couldn't put them into words. But the thing that I felt most strongly was,

"This must never happen again."

That's what it was.

I realized that my current life is not something I can take for granted, even though it is very happy.

I learned that even now, there are countries in the world that are at war, and that many countries possess nuclear weapons. Our world is still far from being "peaceful." I hope that the power of atomic energy will be used to benefit everyone's lives, not to hurt others.

I can't change the country, but I can be kind to the people around me and consider their feelings. If this kind of attitude spreads little by little, perhaps one day the world will be at peace.

I would like to continue thinking about peace and doing what I can.

# My Thoughts on Peace

**Ashitaka Elementary School, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, Sora Ono**

I think “peace” means that everyone can live happily.

On August 6, 1945, an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima; on August 9, one was dropped on Nagasaki. By the end of that year, about 140,000 people had died in Hiroshima and about 70,000 in Nagasaki. Even after the war ended, many people continued to suffer from radiation.

This year marks 80 years since the end of the war, so I saw many events and TV programs about it.

In “Grave of the Fireflies”, I saw people burned black by the explosion, others wrapped in bandages from severe burns. It was unbearably sad. They had no homes, no food, and many became sick and died. War makes everyone unhappy.

Even now, wars are happening in foreign countries, and many people are being killed. Children cannot go to school, and some must work instead. Because water is not properly managed, people get infectious diseases or die from malnutrition. I felt scared when I learned this.

The news also shows the war between Russia and Ukraine. Russia refuses to negotiate or keeps breaking its promises, and many innocent people are dying. This makes me very sad. I think countries should not start wars out of selfish desires; instead, leaders should talk to each other to find solutions.

I used to think war in far-away countries had nothing to do with me, but I now realize we never know what may happen in Japan. That worries me a little.

I believe if all weapons made for war disappeared from the world, wars would not happen.

If everyone around the world treated each other with kindness and lived together with smiles, I think that would be true happiness.

# Learning About the Numazu Air Raid

**Ashitaka Elementary School, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Haruto Sugimoto**

This summer, I participated in a children’s event called “A Tour of War Historical Sites to Think About Peace.” Together with a curator, we visited four historical war sites remaining in the city. There, I learned that Numazu City had been subjected to air raid.

The day that Numazu city was bombed was July 17th, 1945 (Showa 20), and incendiary bombs were dropped at around 1:00 AM. I learned that nearly 90% of the city of Numazu was burned down, with 274 people killed. There was one comment that made an impression

on me when listening to the curator's explanation. I heard that the commander of the American troops had given the order to "throw away the garbage." I was truly shocked that the incendiary bombs that took people's lives were carried out under the order to "throw away the garbage." 1:00 AM was when most people were asleep, so I imagine that there were many adults and children with sleepy eyes at that time. War hurts and kills people without any consideration for the enemy, and at any time. The people of Numazu at that time, "I still want to live, I don't want to die yet, Mom and Dad, help me!"

I'm sure they must have thought something like that. At my age now, I can't imagine it. War is a terrifying thing, so I think it should never happen again.

One place that made the biggest impression on me during my tour of wartime historical sites was the "Onaribashi Air Raid Scars." I'd passed by it many times before, but I had never known about it. There were bumps on the bridge's support pillars. These were traces that proved the dropping of incendiary bombs during the air raid. I was surprised that they remained like this, even 80 years after the war. When I touched them, I realized that the iron support pillars were very hard and wouldn't easily become bumpy. I realized that these were traces of the harm done to the people of Numazu.

This time, I participated in a tour of historical war sites and realized that when there is war, many people die and the lives that have been passed down are lost in an instant. I think this is very sad. To continue to make the world a peaceful place, I think it is important to conclude treaties with countries around the world that state that we will never wage war again.

I learned one more thing from this experience. It was a lucky charm called "Senninbari." Senninbari is a lucky charm that 1,000 women each stitched a piece of cloth with red thread to make a ball of stitches, which they gave to soldiers going off to war, to pray for their safety. After experiencing Senninbari, I thought, "I'm happy to receive something that contains everyone's thoughts like this. But I imagine it must have been difficult for them to go to the battlefield with such high expectations on their shoulders."

I think we must never again repeat the war that makes people unable to see their precious families.

## **War, Kamikaze, and Peace**

### **Ashitaka Elementary School, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Kanna Kumagai**

I have never experienced war myself, so I didn't really know what happened during war-time.

To learn more about war and peace, I read a book titled "Ano Hana ga Saku Oka de, Kimi to Mata Deaetara." (If we could meet again, on the hill where that flower blooms) It is a story

about Yuri, a second-year junior high school student, who travels back to Japan seventy years ago during the war and falls in love with a kamikaze pilot named Akira.

I had heard that there were pilots who crashed their planes into enemy ships, but I didn't know they were called "tokkōtai" (kamikaze). In the story, when the sortie order for the kamikaze pilots is issued, almost all the pilots and townspeople say, "Congratulations," or "That's wonderful." Even though they were about to die, they celebrated it. I felt that was impossible to understand. Some pilots had joined because of pressure from those around them, and although they had people they loved, they still said, "I want to live." If I were in their place, since I also have a precious family, I think I would feel the same.

I still wanted to know more about the kamikaze, so I researched it. I learned that "tokkō" is short for "special attack." From that, I realized it was different from other attack methods. Next, I researched why the kamikaze units were formed. I found out that Japan's military began using them as a counterattack method when facing overwhelming American forces. I also discovered that the kamikaze missions continued even after the war had essentially ended, and that around 6,000 pilots died through these operations. The number—about 6,000—was far more than I had imagined. It saddened me to know that so many people died by deliberately crashing into the enemy.

Thinking about the kamikaze helped me learn new things and reflect deeply on war and peace. When I imagine how the things we take for granted today were impossible back then, I strongly feel that maintaining peace is necessary in every era.

## **After Learning About War**

### **Ohira Elementary School, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Yumi Sugiyama**

On August 15, 2025, Japan marked 80 years since the end of the war. Because of this, newspapers and television covered many stories, reminding us of the fear, sadness, and lessons of war—things that must never be repeated.

Although I had heard the word "war" many times, I never had the chance to truly think deeply about it. But at school, I learned about the Japanese Constitution, which includes a principle called "pacifism." I learned that Japan has a strong determination never to wage war again. In class, we watched a video about *The Diary of Anne Frank* and saw that tragic and cruel events happened not only in Japan but around the world. Many precious lives were lost, and countless people carry emotional scars.

However, I came to wonder: If so many people want to eliminate war, and international organizations work for peace, then why do wars continue? Why must people hurt each other and lose so many precious things, even though we are all human?

I researched using books and the news. I learned many things - that major causes of war

include differences in religion or culture, disputes over resources or land, and dissatisfaction or desires of the people. But if countries talked, cooperated, and resolved these issues early, maybe wars - which cause deep wounds and countless losses—could be avoided.

Right now, conflicts such as the war between Russia and Ukraine and the Israel–Palestine conflict continue. While I spend my days peacefully, people in those countries live every second wondering when bombs or tanks might come. They live with death constantly beside them.

Thinking about that, I feel strongly that war must never happen again. I hope countries at war end their conflicts quickly so people can return to peaceful days with their families and friends. I hope that someday, the word “war,” which takes away all happiness in an instant, disappears from the world entirely. I want the world to become a place where everyone—regardless of birthplace, age, or gender—can be accepted and live richly and happily.

## **Lives Being Taken Away**

### **Ukishima Elementary School, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade, Mizuki Hirayama**

What do you think about war?

I think war is something in which many lives are taken, and everyone ends up feeling deep sadness.

The reason I first learned about war was by watching the news on television. I heard people on TV talking about war.

In that program, they said that on August 6, 1945, an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, and three days later, on August 9, another atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki.

When the numbers of people who died are added together, more than 210,000 people lost their lives. The places where the atomic bombs were dropped turned into seas of fire. Houses burned down, people nearby were blown away and crushed under debris, and some people were burned to death. Others desperately searched for water, entered rivers, and died there.

I also learned that many bombs were dropped on Shizuoka Prefecture, where we live.

When I learned these facts, my heart hurt. I think there were many people who lost their families and friends because of the war.

Even now, wars are happening in many parts of the world, such as between Ukraine and Russia, and between Israel and Hamas.

By watching the news, I learned that many people have died and that many others have no food and cannot eat. News like this is shown almost every day, and it hurts my heart so much that I can hardly bear to watch.

I thought about it carefully. When war happens, nothing good ever comes from it. Families and friends die, houses burn down, and people are left only with sadness. Lives are taken

away, and everyone ends up crying.

I want to live in a world without war, where families and friends do not fight or argue, and where everyday life is peaceful and calm.

That is why I hope that Ukraine and Russia, and Israel and Hamas, will stop fighting, and that everyone can live together peacefully.

What do you think about war?

## War and Peace

### Kanuki Elementary School, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, Kiki Fukuda

Eighty years have passed since the end of the war, and now more and more people do not know what war was like. Even people who experienced it are becoming fewer. I also didn't know much about war, so I watched "Grave of the Fireflies".

Bombs were dropped from the sky, houses were burned, and people died from severe burns. Horrible things happened that are hard to imagine now.

Children who lost their parents had to survive alone. The older brother in the movie stole crops from someone's farm and broke into empty houses to steal things he could sell, all to feed his hungry younger sister. They had been living ordinary lives before the war, but when war came they resorted to stealing and even hurting others — I felt sad seeing how desperate they became just to survive. Even people in the kamikaze units, who crashed planes into enemy ships "for their country," must have been terrified and surely did not want to die.

I also learned that the city where I live – Numazu - was bombed. American aircraft used Mount Fuji as a landmark when flying toward Japan. Numazu was on that path and had military facilities and many factories. More than 9,000 incendiary bombs were dropped from about 120 aircraft, causing many casualties.

The reason we are alive today is because so many people worked, prayed, and struggled for peace.

We must never forget war, and we must continue learning about it and passing the stories on to the next generation.

Even today, wars and terrorism continue around the world, and many people live in fear. We must think about how to eliminate conflict and how to help everyone live peacefully. Even small actions - like considering others, not being negative, and listening to their opinions - can connect to peace.

There is still much I don't know about war, but because it is something we must never forget, I want to keep learning. I pray that someday everyone in the world can live peacefully with smiles.

# Peace and Justice for All

## Kanuki Elementary School, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Saya Nakagami

I decided to write about peace after researching the SDGs and learning how many wars, past and present, have happened around the world.

Japan also once went through a period of war. Many people lost their lives, including children who had done nothing wrong. I also learned that many wars happened around the world. The event that shocked me most was the Holocaust in Germany. The Holocaust was the persecution of Jewish people by Nazi Germany, and countless tragic stories remain.

I wanted to learn more, so I watched the movie “Schindler’s List” and other videos about the Holocaust. I was horrified that innocent people were taken to concentration camps just because they were Jewish. Their heads were shaved, their clothes and belongings taken, small children and the elderly were killed in gas chambers, and the adults who could work were forced into hard labor with little food, in unsanitary, freezing conditions, until they died. I couldn’t believe such cruel things had happened in the world, and it terrified me.

In today’s Germany, they teach openly in schools about the terrible war they caused. I learned that they teach this so they never repeat the same mistakes again, and I thought that was admirable. Admitting wrongdoing and reflecting sincerely is essential to building peace.

Japan also did terrible things to people in other countries during World War II. But I realized that I had never learned much about Japan’s wrongdoings from textbooks. At the library, I found many books about the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but only a few about what Japan did to others. I think Japan should also teach children more about its mistakes, just like Germany. Different countries have different values and realities. Things that seem normal to me might not be normal elsewhere. Understanding these differences is important. When we realize something is wrong, we must admit it and correct it. Being grateful for equal relationships is also important. Helping people suffering around the world will take time, but listening to the news, learning proactively, sharing what I’ve discovered, and continuing to take action are all important steps.

# I Knew Nothing

## Kadoike Elementary School, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade, Jun Taniguchi

“I still don’t know anything about war.”

I only knew one thing: that war must never happen.

For this summer homework assignment, I watched movies and read books to learn about war for the first time. That was the beginning of my learning.

War takes many lives. People have no food or clothing, must live in fear of bombs, and endure a sad, painful life. This shocked me deeply. It is nothing like our everyday life. War steals away all the things we take for granted. I felt terribly sad realizing how cruel war is.

For example, if we want food, we can buy it at the supermarket or find it in our refrigerator. During war, there is nothing to eat, and people are hungry all the time. Being with family feels normal today, but during war, families were separated or died. School feels normal too, but children couldn't even attend. We sleep comfortably in warm beds without fear, but during war, people had to run or hide at the sound of air-raid sirens and could not sleep peacefully.

Learning that war takes away everything we consider normal, I began to wonder:

Why does war happen?

Why doesn't it end?

Why do innocent people get involved?

If another country attacked Japan now, would Japan go to war?

These were all things I had never questioned before, and suddenly I wanted to know everything.

My mother told me she once heard war stories from her grandfather. I don't have grandparents who can tell me such stories, so war felt like something from another country's story. But through this assignment, I realized something: if I don't learn about war, I can't say anything meaningful about it.

We must learn why war happens, how we can prevent it, and what peace really means. Then we must pass this knowledge on to the next generation. I now understand how important that is.

## **Learning the Horrors of Radiation Exposure from Victims About Seventy Years Ago — Feelings Con- veyed by Survivors and How They Moved Us —**

**Kadoike Elementary School, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Kyoma Matsuda**

The Bikini Incident occurred when the United States conducted the Castle Bravo hydrogen bomb test in the Marshall Islands. The "death ash," made of coral particles, fell onto the Japanese tuna fishing boat Daigo Fukuryūmaru, and one of its crew members later died because of the radiation exposure.

Because nuclear weapons can take lives through radiation exposure, the World Conference Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs was held. Nuclear bombs contain strong radiation, which causes nausea, vomiting, radiation sickness, cataracts, heart disease, and other health issues. They also cause environmental damage such as air and soil contamination. In

response to radiation-exposure incidents like the Bikini Incident, movements spread calling for a ban on nuclear tests and similar experiments, not only in Japan but worldwide. In September 1955, the Japan Council Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs was formed, and survivors demanded that such weapons never be used again.

The council continues international activities today, such as collecting signatures for the “Petition for the Total Ban on Nuclear Weapons.” Nationwide efforts have also expanded, including rescue and support for atomic bomb and hydrogen bomb victims. Locally, activities that are easy for anyone to join are organized each year, such as the National Peace March for the Ban of Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs. This march is a regional and prefectural initiative aimed at increasing the number of people who call for a ban on radiation exposure and nuclear weapons.

Seeing people march while appealing that nuclear weapons are unnecessary made me realize again that these efforts are what create a peaceful Japan. I hope everyone will participate.

Although the causes of atomic and hydrogen bombs are tied to relations between nations, one of the three fundamental principles of the Constitution of Japan is popular sovereignty, meaning the people hold sovereignty. I want to begin with small actions close to home—watching my language, not committing crimes, and doing what I can steadily.

In Shizuoka Prefecture, there is also an organization for atomic bomb victims. I read an article about Mr. Kawamoto, who is currently an advisor there. At age eight, he lost his father, Kanichi, due to the Hiroshima bombing and was himself burned while being two to three kilometers away from the blast.

He said, “Fewer people remain who can share their experiences directly, and it seems peace education is declining. I want people to continue visiting Hiroshima and Nagasaki to learn the reality of the bombings.”

Although I have never been to Hiroshima or Nagasaki, I want to go someday and hear survivors’ stories. I value peace education.

There is a place I recommend to everyone who wants to empathize with victims’ feelings: the Shizuoka Peace Materials Center. There you can see an exhibition titled “Shizuoka’s War and Air Raids,” which features wartime materials, drawings by survivors, and explanatory panels focused mainly on the air raids on Shizuoka and Shimizu. I want to empathize with the feelings of those from our own prefecture who experienced those air raids.

If I believe that our efforts can someday transform Japan, then I want to become someone who leads the country—perhaps even a member of parliament.

# Cats and Humans

Sawada Elementary School, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade, Hana Sugiyama

Why do people  
go to war?  
There must be  
a reason, right?  
Maybe humans are  
worse than cats—  
maybe humans can be  
cruel creatures.  
If you compare  
human wars to cats,  
they start from  
tiny things,  
like fighting over fish.  
But cats don't kill each other.  
Humans, however, take the lives  
of hundreds, thousands,  
even tens of thousands.  
They kill people who  
did nothing wrong.  
People who leave to fight and never return.  
People who leave because of hunger.  
People who die after being attacked.  
If there were no war,  
so many people  
would still be alive.  
True happiness is found  
in ordinary everyday life—  
gentle days where  
everyone is healthy.  
A war that must not happen—  
stop it, end it,  
make sure it never returns.  
May true peace  
someday come

to our Earth...

## The Wooden Carving

### Sawada Elementary School, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade, Yusei Itokawa

At home, I have a wooden carved ornament that my grandfather gave me. I didn't know what it was, so I asked him. He brought out several photographs and said:

"It's a souvenir from Papua New Guinea."

The black-and-white photos showed a baby in his mother's arms and a father wearing a military uniform. That baby was my grandfather. The woman holding the baby was my great-grandmother. In the photo, she wasn't smiling. The man in uniform, my great-grandfather, was smiling—probably forcing himself to smile so his wife wouldn't worry. After that photo was taken, he died in the war in Papua New Guinea. My grandfather told me through tears that his father died on a ship during an American bombing attack.

That is why there are no bones of my great-grandfather in the family grave. Only the hair and nails he cut before leaving for war were placed there.

When my grandfather was young, he traveled to Papua New Guinea to look for traces of his father. He brought a memorial plaque made of Japanese cypress. He also brought home white sand and coral from Papua New Guinea and placed them in the family grave. I learned for the first time that the wooden carved instrument ornament he gave me was something he bought on that trip.

When I heard that the country Japan fought against was America, I couldn't believe it. This summer, our family hosted a homestay student from Kalamazoo, Numazu's sister city. I lived with Pamela, an American grandmother. We played card games, made sweets, and had a wonderful time together. On the last night, we watched fireworks at the Numazu Summer Festival and were moved. On the day she left, we hugged while crying, and I waved as hard as I could when her bus pulled away.

I couldn't believe Japan had once fought a war with a country where such kind people live. How did the war ever end? Instead of firing tanks and missiles, I wished they had just launched fireworks.

Before finishing, my grandfather said to me, with tears in his eyes:

"Never, ever start a war."

Whenever I look at the wooden carved instrument, I think about wanting a world without war.

# Something That Never Goes Away

**Harahigashi Elementary School, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Aira Imoto**

There is one thing in our world that never disappears: war.

To put it simply, I hate war. War creates many victims.

But no one knows when war will break out. No one knows which country might attack another. Still, I don't believe anyone truly wants war. Once war begins, countless innocent people die.

Yet war continues somewhere in the world even today. I always wonder:

Why does war happen?

Why is it necessary?

Why must people suffer?

Whenever war happens, only sadness increases. I cannot understand phrases like “a war for peace” that some politicians say.

If someone starts a war without thinking of the consequences, I will never forgive them.

Taking lives, injuring people, and causing deep sorrow—I cannot forgive that.

I absolutely hate war. I hope it never happens again. But even if a few people feel this way, the world will not change. Everyone must understand how terrible war is. If we all raise our voices, I believe our message will reach the leaders of many countries.

If people around the world can unite, I believe we can create a peaceful world without war.

# A Thousand Dolls

**Daiichi Junior High School, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade, Reika Suzuki**

I wake up to the sound of my alarm clock in the morning. Without thinking, I get out of bed. I eat breakfast as usual and talk with my family. To me, these things are everyday life. They are happiness. They are peace.

One of the opposites of peace is war, and today marked the eightieth anniversary of the atomic bombing—Atomic Bomb Day.

I thought I should talk about this with my family. But when I really stopped to think about it, I realized that I actually knew nothing concrete about war. When I said this to my family, they replied,

“Then let's go to Ōfuna Kannon Temple.”

And so, I was given a precious opportunity to learn about war and the atomic bomb—to see them, to feel them, and to think about them.