

2017 Mayors for Peace Youth Exchange for Peace: Support Program for
"HIROSHIMA and PEACE"

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I am very honored to have joined the program "HIROSHIMA and PEACE" as a representative of Akita city. As our family has always lived in Tohoku, I had not had a clear idea about the atomic bomb, which attacked Hiroshima and Nagasaki 72 years ago. However, when I visited Peace Memorial Museum last November, I found that these moments are the ones that all human beings shall never forget. This experience made me feel like having an opportunity to learn more about the atomic bomb and its damage, and discuss it with people from different countries, which is why I joined this program.

I learnt many things during these ten days from historical facts to new viewpoints on the atomic bomb. For example, we studied the nuclear aspect of the bombs from the scientific perspective in one lecture. We also learned that there were several ways of framing that the media utilized to report the incident. More than anything, however, what struck me the most was the people's effort to preserve the memories of the atomic bomb. Ms. Tomoko Watanabe, for instance, established an organization all by herself at the beginning of the aftermath. People around her, however, gradually corresponded to her passion about world peace and started working with her. I know how small I am to change the whole world, however, she showed us that people can let others know what they are believing, and eventually the power can become big enough to make a huge movement in the world.

I was also impressed by the great efforts done by the Hibakusha to pass down their experience. I can tell how hard it is to even remember the days when their hometown turned into a burned field in a second. However, they have overcome that fear and gave us chance to listen to the story. As I experienced the great earthquake in Miyagi prefecture, I also have a role to pass down our experience to the next generations. This is why I felt strong sympathy to the storytellers we met, and the greatness of what they are doing.

I suppose that it is important to learn about history of wars including the atomic bombs and keep them in mind in order to promote world peace. However, the problem in Japan is that there are huge education gaps between the regions. For example, while students in the elementary school in Hiroshima learn about the atomic bomb and its damage throughout their 6 years education, I learned only for a couple of hours in a class in the school in Miyagi. It is important and at the same time possible to give children multiple viewpoints on the atomic bomb. It can be achieved, for instance, by letting children create artwork relating to the incident in art class or reading books about the Second World War in Japanese class. These experiences will definitely inspire children to know more about it and provide more opportunity to discuss it with their family. Therefore, it is necessary to be more creative and earnest to promote the world peace, especially in the region that is far from the attacked places. I suggest Mayors for Peace work harder to support them.

As an individual, it is essential for me to share the experience during this program to the people in my university as well as in the community. Particularly because as there are a number of international students from all over the world in my university, there should be a critical chance to discuss the matter together. I will also attend the peace-related event held at Akita city next year. I am glad to have another chance to share my experience and suggest the ideas for the promotion of world peace to the city members there. I have also started thinking about my future, through which I found that I would like to work for promoting the international cultural exchange. Through working with the participants of this program, I realized that interacting with people from different countries can get rid of the prejudice and

misunderstanding about them. I honestly believe that doing so will eventually contribute to accomplish world peace.