

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

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【Visiting Hiroshima for me】

The strongest reason why I was applying this project was that I thought I needed to know more about the nature of war and peace by learning about various aspects of wartime experiences. I am an English teacher at a junior high school. I teach my students about the war in English classes, but I have studied about the war by myself. While I teach my students, I don't think it's enough to just teach them that war is terrifying, merciless, and solves nothing. Because of my experiences teaching about the war in English classes, I would like to learn more about the war and the atomic bomb victims of Hiroshima. The feelings I can have being immersed in the location of such a horrible tragedy will help me internalize the events and truly work hard to teach future generations about a future of peace to make sure that such an awful war will never occur again. Therefore, I was pleased to take part in "Hiroshima and Peace" and it was a wonderful chance for me to think about peace.

Again, it was a very precious experience to take part in this course. I have learned a lot from the lectures in Hiroshima City University, visiting the Peace Memorial Museum, visiting the mayor of Hiroshima, participating the Peace Memorial Ceremony.

Before going to Hiroshima, I studied about the history of Hiroshima by reading a book. However, the knowledge that I could get from a book was quite different from the knowledge and experiences of taking part in this course.

It was ashamed to say but I didn't know that "Barefoot Gen" was about the story of Hiroshima during the lecture conducted by Tomoko Watanabe, the representative of ANT-Hiroshima. When I was an elementary school student, I was heard that my friends talked about "Barefoot Gen was scary", and I tended to avoid from reading it naturally. Also, I remembered that I could not watch an anime of the war during lunch time. The moment that I realized that it was time I had to face about the war and I couldn't escape it, I couldn't help crying even though it was during a lecture. Since then, I have changed my mind. I could see the exhibitions in the Peace Memorial Museum earnestly, read the descriptions intently, and I etched these into my mind. It was a huge change for me and since then I came to watch the news something about war, peace and nuclear weapons and read some articles of newspapers about them.

I could not answer the question; what does peace mean to you? until now. I talked to my friend about this story and she said to me, "You don't have to answer the question. That's why, you need to think what peace means to you through your life." I could learn everyone from all over the world has different answers of this question. When I was asked this question for the first time, as the concept was too big for me, I could not think as if it were my own affair. However, after taking part in this course, I have kept thinking that peace is not an abstraction. I could learn that "Peace is to love somebody deeply." "Peace is to respect each other." And "Peace is in your mind." I learned that I didn't have to do something special. All I need to do is to admit each other, regard everyone as important as you.

Now, I am sure that I can teach my students about war and peace and I can emphasize how important to keep world peace in the future as I can tell what I have learned, what I felt and what I thought in Hiroshima during this program. I do think it is my mission as a teacher. I

would like to ponder on the long-lasting question with my students and continue to tell the importance of peace.

Lastly, I would like to appreciate for Mayors of Peace to give me such a marvelous chance. Thank you very much.

【Peace activities proposals to Joetsu City】

1.Promoting school excursions to Hiroshima

One student from each junior high school in Joetsu City participate in the Peace Memorial Ceremony in Hiroshima every year. However, I think it is more important many students visit Hiroshima and see the atomic-bomb dome and visit Peace Memorial Museum and listen to *hibakusha*'s testimony. It is appreciated that Joetsu City would propose some model plans of school excursions to Hiroshima and promote junior high schools to achieve and to subsidize partly.

2.Conducting tradition lectures by successors

Because of aging of *hibakusha* and war experienced people, it would be difficult to conduct these lectures. So, it is needed to give another kind of lectures instead of these. Therefore, I would propose that the people who have listened the testimony become successors to tell the testimony to other people. I would like to request to support them to become successors, for example, to have some lectures (telling the aims, giving them some points for having lectures). After some lectures, it would be appreciated if Joetsu City would fix up opportunities to have lectures in schools or local community centers for them.

3.Joetsu City has already conducted many activities for students, and I would like to add some my ideas.

Promoting peace education curriculum in moral studies and integrated learning periods

→ Promoting to conduct peace education curriculum in each grade, each student, each community and each school

Conducting peace education as a whole school

- 1) Watching an anime of war in moral studies and integrated learning periods.
- 2) Exhibiting manga and picture books of war in library (from July to September).
- 3) Making “one thousand paper cranes for peace” and sending to the Children’s Peace Monument.
- 4) Conducting the competition of compositions and posters of peace.
- 5) Planting seeds from A-bomb survivor trees. (supported by Mayors for Peace)

4.Peace Memorial Ceremony in Joetsu

On August 6, Joetsu City holds the Peace Memorial Ceremony of the Hiroshima bombing victims in the Peace Memorial Park in Naoetsu. In the PR brochures, as I proposed in 3-4) above, the poster which the prize-winner painted will be used. In the ceremony, participants offer a silent prayer for the victims of the atomic bomb at 8:15, the mayor of Joetsu will talk about peace, the prize-winner of composition contest in 3-4) above will read the composition. Also, the representative student who has studied peace at school will declare the for peace.

【Peace activities proposals to Mayors for Peace】

1. Dissemination of “The Youth Exchange for Peace Support Program” (including “Hiroshima and Peace”)

Although there are 1683 member cities (as of September 1, 2017) in Japan, I wonder how many member cities announce about this program. I am sure there are many students who would like to take part in this great program, so I think the member cities should tell them about it. As this program is for graduate and undergraduate students, it is appreciated if the member cities ask the universities in their cities to inform of this program. To make it easier, I would like to suggest asking them to use e-mail or LINE, and if it is possible, it would be appreciated if Mayor for Peace can make posters to inform it.

2. Supporting tradition lectures by successors

The government has already started the project to support successors this summer, I'd like to ask your support, too. Like Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation has been conducting a three-year training program for official A-bomb Legacy Successors, I would like to ask Mayors for Peace to support member cities to conduct.

3. Collecting signatures to request to join Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty

To achieve “2020 Vision”, I would like to propose to ask member cities to conduct a big signature campaign to join Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty and submit the signatures to the United Nations.

- a) Sending the guidelines of 2020 Vision and signature form to each member city by e-mail and ask them to collect signatures by using circular bulletin.
- b) Setting a booth to collect signatures when member cities hold sports day or any other events which many people get together there.
- c) Asking to collect signatures teachers or workers in hospitals working in member cities.

I heard the news on TV that a country which didn't join it decided to join because of public opposition. I think Japan as an only country to have suffered atomic bombs is needed to join it, so we need to begin to work for it.