

Peace. What is the value of peace? And why do we treasure it so much? Recently I came to truly understand the value of peace. Let me tell you my experience.

When I went to visit my grandparents' house in Aichi, I found an old picture. It was a black-and-white picture of a man on a horse. He was in a military uniform. I asked my mother who he was. She said, "This is my grandfather, your great-grandfather. He died in World War II."

I learned about World War II in my history class. For me, it was an event from history that happened a long time ago. As I saw that picture, it made me realize World War II was not just an event from history, but it is connected with me. So when I saw a picture of Hiroshima right after the atomic bomb attack, I wanted to go there and stand at that same spot.

Last December, I went to Hiroshima with my parents. Hiroshima was a beautiful city. I could not believe it was the same city from the picture. However, when we got to the Gembaku Dome, I knew it had really happened.

The Gembaku Dome looked so different from the rest of Hiroshima. While the city grew around it, the Gembaku Dome seemed to remain as it was in that picture. It showed me how much just one bomb changed the city and how destructive war is.

I looked closely and noticed metal plates protected the building. I was impressed by the effort people in Hiroshima made to keep the Gembaku Dome safe.

Around the dome, there were many visitors from foreign countries. There were more foreigners than Japanese people. Although there were many visitors, the place was very quiet. No one was laughing or even talking loudly. Through the quietness, I felt we were sharing the same thought, "how precious peace is." The Gembaku Dome has the power to make visitors wish for peace. I hope more and more people from all over the world will come to visit Hiroshima and feel this power.

Five months later, when I came home from school, I saw the Gembaku Dome on TV. Prime Minister Abe and President Obama were talking together in front of it. I couldn't hear what they were saying, but I believe they were feeling the same power of the Gembaku Dome that I felt there.

President Obama said in his speech, "The world was forever changed here, but today the children of this city will go through their day in peace. What a precious thing that is. It is worth protecting and then extending to every child."

Some day in the future, I hope nobody will say, "I have never met someone in my family because they died in a war." My great-grandfather died without knowing how the war ended. He didn't know he would have grandchildren like my mother, or great-grandchildren like me.

I want to learn more about history, and think about what I can do for the future. I want everyone to realize "how precious peace is." I believe that is the same dream my great-grandfather had on the battlefield.

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How Precious Peace Is