



Long essay:

The power of education and the influence of education in the world

By Kyosuke, Mizuki and Kai

Osaka Meisei Gakuen High School, Osaka, Japan

Hello, this is Kyosuke Hiradori, Mizuki Hiramatsu, Kai Okugawa. We think, the reason of the war is "education". Then we will show some examples.

First, During World War II, Japanese children received education about wars. For example in P.E. class, all of the children who went to school were given swords and given target practice with guns every day. They got even martial arts class and practiced swordplay and shooting. Not only boys but also girls were taught these things. Their education wasn't only about war. They also received education concerning morals such as reading "Kyouiku chokugo", which means the policy of Japanese education that Japanese emperors have taught. In fact, almost all the classes were about war. Boys wished for Japan to win and hoped to be a soldier for own country. It means that education institution's students were children. Many children were brainwashed from "I don't want to be a soldier" to "I want to be a soldier". The fact that the little brother longed for his big brother to become a soldier was one of the instances of brainwashing. The compositions and letters they had written about their daily life shows one of the examples to tell how they were affected. At that time almost all compositions and letters were written about war. On the other hand, the children who didn't go to school were made to cook vegetables and potatoes. They also made many arms such as guns and bombs. They were also regarded same as the children who went to school. That's because, at that time, they listened to their parents' conversations and their parents' thoughts. As people said "Children are a reflection of their parents." Not only in school, but also education at home made many children change their thinking from peace to war. Therefore Japanese thinking was greatly influenced by war.

People in Japan think that children during the Pacific War cannot have played a role in the war because they didn't know when they were bombed. Children were given toys made from metal by the Japanese government. But the children tried to make and preferred to handmade toys instead. Children used wood, bamboo and paper. For example, they played baseball with a ball made from old cloths. In this situation, Sugoroku (Japanese backgammon and Karuta card game) was popular with a lot of children. One of the most popular card games was Hyakunin Isshu, which means "patriotic". Hyakunin Isshu is a collection of 100 medieval waka poems which is a Japanese verse in five lines of 5,7,5,7 and 7 syllables. Then, what is "patriotic" Hyakunin Isshu? It is quicker to give an example of waka poem.

身はたてひ 武蔵の国に 朽ちぬても でてめおかまし 大和魂

This waka was written by Shoin Yoshida who was a loyalist, which means that "Japan was established from the Kingdom of God, we Japanese army is invincible, Japanese remain loyal to their Majesty the Emperor, and become united in working." In other words, "patriotic" Hyakunin Isshu means giving the will to fight. War had a great influence on the daily life of children during war time.

Next, we want to talk about the present. When we were in the first grade, we learned about the civil war in RWANDA where there were same situation occurred as Japan in WWII. There were two big folks, Tsuchi and Futsu. Before the war, Rwanda was ruled by Belgium. During the Belgium ruling, Belgium controlled the balance between Tsuchi and Futsu. As a result they had a grudge. On April 6th, 1944, the President of Rwanda was killed by Tsuchi. Since this incident, Futsu people start to kill Tsuchi. Why did so many people join Futsu in this slaughter? The answer is in "education". In this case, criminal of assassinations were a part of Futsu. But they spread information through radio that Tsuchi was the criminal. Rwanda was a developing country where there were few schools at that time. Therefore, many people were not educated and they couldn't make proper decisions. Besides, during the civil war, many advanced countries ignored this war. This is another reason why this war became worse. Why did these countries ignore this war? The answer is also "education". In western countries, long time ago they educated like, "Black are low class". They didn't think "Black are low class." But in their sub-consciousness, they thought "Black were low class."

Then, I want to talk one more story about interview in America. I went to Boston this summer, and I got the chance to interview a professor in Harvard. In Japan, we heard many kinds of opinions about war. Most of them are objecting to war. Before I visited Harvard, I had heard information on TV that some or many Americans agreed to atomic bomb. Since I was surprised to hear such an opinion at the time when I was twelve, I have wanted to know more and talk to American about the war. So, I was very excited about this chance in Harvard. At first, the professor told me her opinion that she and her husband disagreed to war. This was very different from my preliminary knowledge. Needless to say, there are many kinds of opinions. But the opinion against wars by Americans was very new to us.

Up to these examples, there are many kinds of "education", toy and media. These "education" had a very big influence on people's thoughts. On the other hand, they have weak point that it will have very strong power when it is abused. So we need to learn a lot and expand the view to distinguish good and bad. It is the one way to make our world better and peaceful.