

## TITLE: On Living in Peace

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What is peace? According to the Longman Dictionary, peace means ‘a situation in which there is no war or fighting.’ When I went to Hiroshima where the atomic bomb was dropped, one woman said, “It was scary, hot, unbelievable and there was no peace in Hiroshima.” After I heard this, I better understood the meaning of peace. But in the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake, I discovered another meaning of peace. Peace also means being able to live a normal life with a happy smile and small worries.

On the morning of March 11, I remember yelling to my father, “Dad! Hurry up! I’ll be late for school.” At 2:46 pm, the huge earthquake hit. Everyone in my class started crying, shaking, and shouting with fear. Soon, there was no electricity, internet or any sense of normality. I had no way to contact my family. Someone was able to use their mobile phones to watch the news, and I could not believe the death and destruction happening in Japan. On that cold and snowy night, I stayed at school. There was no war, but there certainly was no peace.

One month after the earthquake, I was living in Nara because of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster near my hometown. At that time, my friends were still living in Fukushima wearing hats and masks because of the radiation. I felt so guilty for leaving them, and I could not eat any food. Most of my family felt the same. There was no war, but there certainly was no peace.

And now, I ask myself, “Am I living in peace?” The answer is “No!” I feel extremely sad, stressed and upset. My hands are continually shaking, and my dreams at night are always filled with sadness. I do not know if I can ever live in peace like before, nor when I will feel calm again. But everyone in Japan is working hard to rebuild for the damage of the disaster, and many people are once again smiling and feeling peaceful. If you are happy, smiling or worried about small things, then I think you are living in peace. It is a great thing to have your family and friends by your side, and you can smile with them.