

The Renunciation of War – A 69-year record.

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Translated by John and Deborah Saxon

Seeing is believing.
One truly grasps
War's horrible brutality
Only when seeing
Each appalling corpse,
Each stolen life,
Killed by weapons of war.

In wartime,
Family members, neighbors, kind people
Become savages
And do what?
Media reporting never conveys
The true terror of war.
Enemies, too, become savages.
And savages kill each other...

They kill each other
With weapons that
Multiply their killing power
Many times,
Many thousands of times.
But nuclear weapons are the worst.
In nuclear war

Civilians, the elderly,
Children, even newborns
Are slaughtered. Not just soldiers.

Yet,
The Japanese media has never shown actual corpses from war.
“They are too shocking.”
“They would embarrass the bereaved family.”
“They would be an offense to the deceased.”

Near the end of WW II ,
Having lost its conscripted male population,
Japan instituted home front “student mobilization,”
Drafting even elementary school students.
Subsequent bombings killed them in droves.

Although Japan’s killing started the war,
It was we Japanese
At the war’s end
Whose life spans fell to
23.9 years for men, 37.5 years for women. ✖
Worse yet, 60% of Japanese soldiers
Who died on the battle front
Died of hunger.
And as is well-known worldwide,
21 million died in neighboring countries,
20 million of them civilians.

Since then, for 69 years,
No Japanese has killed
A single foreigner with weapons in war.
Japan’s new postwar constitution swore,
“Japan will never again use force to settle international disputes,” ✖
A resolution wrought in

The terrible experience
Of massacring
And being massacred.

Japanese were rumored abroad
To be working themselves "to death" like ants.
Yet present day 2014 Japanese life expectancy
Has more than doubled
To 80 years for men, 86 years for women.

"Living" means
A newborn becoming a child, an adult,
An elderly man or woman.
Accident, illness sometimes halts it,
But all humans consider it their right.
Mutual killing, war
Cannot violate that right.



Our young prime minister
Minimizes Japan's role in starting the war.
But in reality, he knows nothing,
Understands nothing,
Tries to learn nothing
About the war victims and their deaths.
He has instigated a crisis, swearing that he is
"Protecting the people of Japan."
He prepares Japan for war,
Prepares Japan for more killing,
Shortening the time until
Humans hands will
Pile up mounds of corpses
Made of friends and foes alike.
Now, without Diet or citizens consultation,

Only a cabinet vote
Could reinterpret our constitution
To abolish our renunciation of war.

The exceedingly horrible footage
Of radiation victims' corpses
Has long been sealed.
No words of remorse were spoken
At the 8/15 remembrance ceremony.
Instead, to the families of the dead, they said,
"They paid the ultimate price for their country."
To us civilians, they said,
"It was war. There was no other choice,"
Then, at the end, they said,
"Rest in peace. May our world also have peace."

Unsatisfied with only economic might,
Japan aims for military might.
Preparations for war,
Preparations for Japan to kill again,
Move forward.
The Japanese media, in concert with
Generations of clever politicians,
has always implicitly agreed
In deceptive kindness
Never to broadcast
Pictures or images of the dead
From any country at war,
No matter how far away.



From now on, I want us to have
The wisdom to discern
When our politicians lie.

Nations should bind themselves,
Not to wartime treaties
For safety and security
But to treaties of friendship.
We must have
Interpersonal bonds
That transcend national boundaries.

No matter how gut-wrenching,
The government's and media's duty is
To show all photographs, all images,
Of each and every wartime death,
Whether of friend or of foe.
It is in turn
Our duty to view
Every one.
Release them all!
We don't need elegantly phrased lies
For the repose of souls.
Nor do we need
Chest-thumping reports of military victories.

Let's take seriously the lives
That war has stolen away.
Make renunciation of war a given.
Let's transcend our savagery
And be human again.

Notes:

❖ 1 From the August 15, 2014 edition of the Asahi newspaper

❖ 2 **The Constitution of Japan**

Chapter ii. Renunciation of war

article 9.

Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.

In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.