

How Should We Face Global Conflicts as Believers and Researchers

“ The Asia–Pacific War ” for Us: 80 Years After the War
Shigakukai Retreat Workshop

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How Should We Face Global Conflicts as Believers and Researchers

Introduction

It has been 80 years since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and Japan's defeat in the Asia-Pacific War in 1945. Conflicts and wars are occurring across the world in various regions and in various forms. As believers who are also researchers, how should we face them? While listening to each person's various questions and opinions, I would like us to think this through together. (Hiroshi Suzuki)

At the 2022 Shigakukai Retreat, I also led a workshop titled “International Situation.” The world's situation seems to have grown more complex, but while also valuing our stance as researchers who are seekers, I would like us to consider together how each of us should face it.

Personally, regarding the Asia-Pacific War, I have been thinking about it since my first year of high school in 1969; it seems to have occupied a very important part of my heart and my actions. I hope to share my experiences and also hear your thoughts.

Workshop Program

- ① About this workshop: on the theme by HS
- ② Self-introductions
 - Your name and affiliation, or your work/field
 - Choose one or more of the three items
 - A. What concerns you most about international affairs/international conflicts
 - B. What you think about 80 years after the war
 - C. Something you 've been troubled or worried about recently, or something that made you very happy
 - Discussion: Questions, doubts, things you want to think about
- ③ As a believer who has engaged in research and education, what have I valued, and how have I faced things by HS
— As one loved by God —
- ④ 80 years after the war: war responsibility and perpetration by HS
— As a Japanese person living with history, as a Christian —
- ⑤ Discussion and Q&A
— How should we face the world ' s challenges? —

On the Theme / On the Introduction Text

How to think about international affairs as believers

- It seems that difficulties, conflicts, and wars are spreading around the world
- (As believers ~ as Christians) + as researchers as human beings
As those loved by God, how should we face these things?

About the introduction text

It has been 80 years since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and Japan ' s defeat in the Asia–Pacific War in 1945. Conflicts and wars are occurring across the world in various regions and in various forms. As believers who are also researchers, how should we face them? After I share what I have learned, thought, and walked through, I would like us to think together, listening to each person ' s various questions and opinions.

Personally, regarding the Asia–Pacific War, I have been thinking about it since my first year of high school in 1969; it seems to have occupied a very important part of my heart and my actions. I hope to share my experiences and also hear your thoughts.

(Hiroshi Suzuki)

Self-introductions / Discussion

Self-introductions

Up to 3 minutes per person

- Your name and affiliation, or your work/field
- Choose one or more of the three items
 - A. What concerns you most about international affairs/international conflicts
 - B. What you think about 80 years after the war
 - C. Something you 've been troubled or worried about recently, or something that made you very happy

Discussion

- Questions—things you want to ask
- How should we face the world ' s challenges?

About Me

- A very difficult topic I was asked to handle at the 2022 Retreat [\[Link\]](#)
 - Be available, stay vulnerable!
- Background: My way of thinking is strongly influenced by the path I have walked
 - Even if the faith is one, it is natural that each of you will think differently¹
- ① Born in 1953, same age as Xi Jinping, one year younger than Putin **What about their lives?**
- ② In 1969, during high school, I experienced campus unrest and began to think about various questions
 - Under what conditions would one decide to break the law to appeal against what seems unjust?
 - If I had been born into a family of Islamic fundamentalists or into a Communist Party family
- ③ In 1970, I traveled in Southeast Asia for 53 days on a cargo ship with members of my church 's youth group
 - **What does war responsibility mean for those of my generation who did not experience war?**
- ④ 1977–1980 Studied in the U.S. (Ph.D. in Mathematics)
 - So different—what does it mean to understand each other? **Surprisingly, there are commonalities**
- ⑤ 1987 Taught in Manila on a government assignment one year after the Philippine EDSA Revolution
- ⑥ August 19, 1991 Stayed in Moscow during the coup associated with the

As a Researcher, a Christian, and One Loved by God

Things I want to value

- Researcher^a: a seeker (one who seeks)
 - Do not fall into the feeling that “I ’ ve got it ” ; be humble. Eliminate simplification bias.
 - Train to understand different perspectives (not only a Japanese or Christian perspective—value universality and language that can be commonly shared with all people)
- Believer^b: one who lives by valuing what is important
 - As one of those loved by God: while seeking perspectives other than my own —others ’ perspectives, the perspective of the loving Creator God, the perspective of Jesus Christ
 - Live each day as one who relativizes (what humans understand as) “ rightness ” and is kept alive

^aShigakukai: a voluntary organization that encourages and supports young researchers with Christian faith and graduate (or undergraduate) students who aim for research positions or equivalent professional roles [[Link](#)]

^bShigakukai Retreat Workshop (2020) “ My 40 Years: Research, Education, and University Administration ” [[Link](#)]

Christian Faith (Religion of Love)

From the Bible

- Mark 12:29–31 Jesus answered, “ The first commandment is this: ‘ Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. ’ The second is this: ‘ You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ’ There is no other commandment greater than these. ”
- John 13:34–35 “ A new commandment I give to you: that you love one another. As I have loved you, so you also are to love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. ”
- 1 Corinthians 13:13 “ And now faith, hope, and love remain—these three; but the greatest of these is love. ”

As a Japanese Person Living with History, as a Christian

What I think about every summer—this year marks 80 years after the war—and when we speak of “war” ...

- There are many news stories related to the atomic bomb damage in Hiroshima (Aug 6) and Nagasaki (Aug 9)
- Toward Okinawa 's June 23, news about the suffering of the prefecture ' s people has increased
- There is news about air-raid damage such as the Tokyo firebombing (Mar 10)
- In peace movements, constitutionalism and upholding Article 9 are emphasized
- There seem to be relatively few articles that convey and reflect on perpetration

Let ' s verify

- In newspapers and other media, are there indeed few articles on perpetration?
- What about prime ministerial statements on war responsibility?
- What about the war responsibility of Christian churches?
- What is war responsibility for those born after the war?

80 Years After the War (Victimhood/Perpetration) Media Coverage

Part I

Asahi Shimbun

- Serial articles: (80 Years After the War) 544 items as of 2025.8.19
- Serial articles: (A Hundred Years: History for the Future) 32 items as of 2025.8.19
- Serial articles: (War and Politicians: Testimonies 80 Years After the War) 5 items as of 2025.8.19
- Shigeru Ishiba: (Tajisoron) A prime minister who apologizes—professing Christian faith, what is in his heart? by Tamayama Megumi
- Shigeru Ishiba: “Let Urakami be the last” —the prime minister’s prayer; quoting Dr. Nagai’s words “I want the world to know as well” — 80 years after the Nagasaki bombing
- (Interview) How to face Asia: Former diplomat Kazuo Ogura, expert in Asian diplomacy
- Many interviews as well: writer Hikaru Okuizumi, film director Shinya Tsukamoto, etc.
- [Reference books] (Unraveling) 80 Years After the War From Testimony to

80 Years After the War (Victimhood/Perpetration) Media Coverage

Part II

NHK

- Timeline of the Pacific War:

<https://www.nhk.or.jp/archives/sensou/special/warmuseum/nenpyou/>

- Detailed timeline:

<https://www.nhk.or.jp/archives/sensou/special/search/#year>

- Religion Hour: 80 Years After the War, a Two-part Series — How Has Religion Considered War Responsibility? Part 1 (Nobuo Kaino, pastor of the United Church of Christ in Japan, Chiyoda Church): [Link] (Sunday, August 17, 2025 (8:30 a.m.) Available until Tue, Sept 30, 2025, 11:59 p.m.

Please do listen before it expires)

The site is well organized and summarized; including archives, you can also watch testimonies and video. If you don't search for it, you probably won't see it. Marking 80 years after the war, testimonies from those who actually experienced it can now only be heard or read through such records.

When we investigate, there is a fair amount—yet it is not widely conveyed. Why

Do Those of Us Born After the War Bear Responsibility for the Asia-Pacific War!?

- NHK: Prime Minister Ishiba² National Memorial Service for the War Dead — Address: “Reflection and Lessons.” I think lessons rest upon reflection, and in a sense they are a unity. [\[Link\]](#)
- Asahi Shimbun: “Subatomic Particles” column, Evening Edition, 2025/8/18 — The commonality between those who, because they were not yet born, refuse to speak of war responsibility, and those who, because they ‘didn’t know,’ shift the slush-fund scandal onto their secretaries. A ‘future-oriented mannerism’ of “forget the unpleasant.”
- “When my only daughter was in junior high school, she once asked me, ‘Why are Japan and China on bad terms?’ I explained the history of the wartime period. Her response was, ‘But we’re not the ones who waged the war, so we’re not responsible, are we?’ I, who should be a specialist in Japanese history, could not answer that question head-on; I recall giving a muddled explanation.” — Afterword to *Telling the Story of the Asia-Pacific War, Vol. 5: The Unending Postwar and the Road to Peace*, text/supervision by Hiroshi Yoshida, Shin Nihon Publishing

²Michitomo Kanamori (great-grandson of “Tsurin” Kanamori). Michitomo Kanamori (born Ansei 4, 8th month, 15th day [October 2, 1857] – March 4, 1945) was a Japanese pastor, evangelist, and religious figure, also known as Paul Kanamori. He was one of the central

War Responsibility as Japanese

[Personal View]

- As Japanese (or as those who live in Japan and live among many Japanese), we have a certain responsibility regarding present and future Japan.
- Japanese people also bear responsibility to learn about the Asia–Pacific War—which inflicted great hardship on people in Asia and beyond—learn from what Japanese did in the Asia–Pacific War and what lay behind it, question, reflect, improve, and further communicate to the world. (Is it enough merely to build tombs and monuments for the prophets saying “we are different”? Matthew 23:29–31)³
- How do people in Asia—and those who fought against Japan—see us? Considering how to build relationships with them, learning from reflection and lessons is indispensable. Our way of life is questioned. (Repent and live a new life. Mark 1:15)
- As Japan holds sufficiently great power in the world and in Asia, we have a responsibility to apply reflection and lessons so as to understand, even a little, the hearts of people who are in various conflicts and wars around the world, and to seek and put into practice what we can do. (Responsibility of those who have received grace. Matthew 7:1–2; 1 Corinthians 15:10a)

About how many Japanese soldiers and civilians—and victims in Asia and elsewhere—were there?

As Christians: Do Not Judge

Before thinking about international conflicts, first ask: where am I standing?

- Mark 1:15 — “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the gospel.”
- Matthew 7:1–2 — “Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you use will be the measure you receive.” [cf. Luke 6:37]
- Matthew 23:29–31 — “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, and you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ Thus you testify against yourselves that you are descendants of those who murdered the prophets.”
- 1 Corinthians 15:10a — “By the grace of God I am what I am.”

I want to be on the “right” side

We want to place ourselves on the right side. However, as we learn, do we not come to consider: how different am I from those who advanced toward war, and would I have been able to stop it there? In other words, as human beings we are

NHK Timeline of the (Asia) Pacific War (–1944)

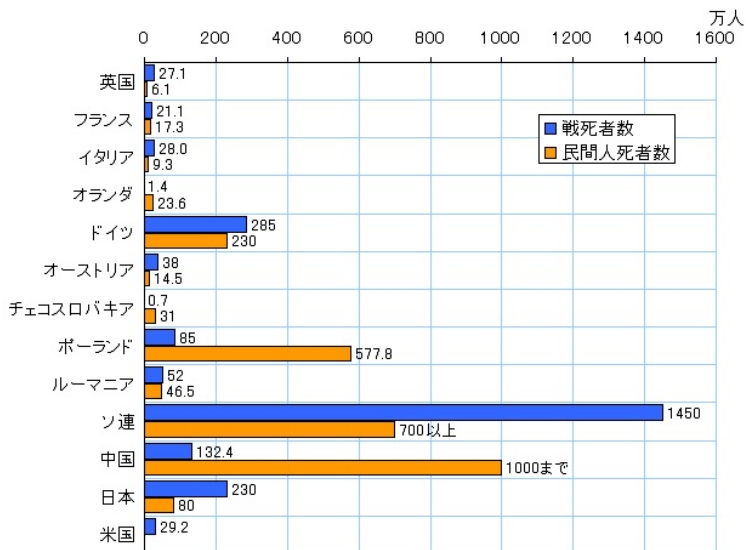
- Sep 1931 — Manchurian Incident
- Feb 1936 — February 26 Incident
- Jul 1937 — The Sino–Japanese War begins (Marco Polo Bridge Incident)
- Sep 1939 — World War II begins (Germany invades Poland)
- Sep 1940 — Tripartite Pact among Japan, Germany, and Italy concluded
- Dec 1941 — The Pacific War begins (Japan launches surprise attacks on the Malay Peninsula and Pearl Harbor in Hawaii)
- Spring 1942 — The Japanese Army occupies the Philippines, Indonesia, Burma (now Myanmar), etc.
- Apr 1942 — First U.S. air raid on the Japanese mainland
- Jun 1942 — At the Battle of Midway the Imperial Japanese Navy is defeated
- Aug 1942 — U.S. forces land on Guadalcanal
- May 1943 — Japanese troops on Attu Island “make gyokusai” (fight to the death)
- Oct 1943 — Student send-off rally for conscription
- Mar 1944 — The Japanese Army’s “Imphal Operation” begins
- Jun 1944 — U.S. forces land on Saipan
- Oct 1944 — Kamikaze (special attack) suicide operations begin

NHK Timeline of the Pacific War (1945–)

- Feb 1945 — U.S. forces land on Iwo Jima
- Feb 1945 — Yalta Conference (U.S., U.K., U.S.S.R.)
- Mar 1945 — Tokyo firebombing
- Apr 1945 — U.S. forces land on Okinawa main island
- May 1945 — Germany surrenders unconditionally
- Jul 1945 — Potsdam Declaration announced (U.S., U.K., China)
- Aug 6, 1945 — The U.S. drops an atomic bomb on Hiroshima
- Aug 9, 1945 — The Soviet army invades Manchukuo; the U.S. drops an atomic bomb on Nagasaki
- Aug 15, 1945 — The Imperial Rescript on Surrender is broadcast, announcing the end of the war
- Sep 2, 1945 — Instrument of Surrender signed; Allied occupation of Japan
- May 1947 — The Constitution of Japan comes into force
- Nov 1948 — Judgment of the Tokyo Trial (International Military Tribunal for the Far East)
- Sep 1951 — San Francisco Peace Treaty and Japan–U.S. Security Treaty signed
- Apr 1952 — Japan regains independence; Okinawa and other areas come under U.S. administration⁴

⁴NHK Timeline of the Pacific War, Detailed timeline

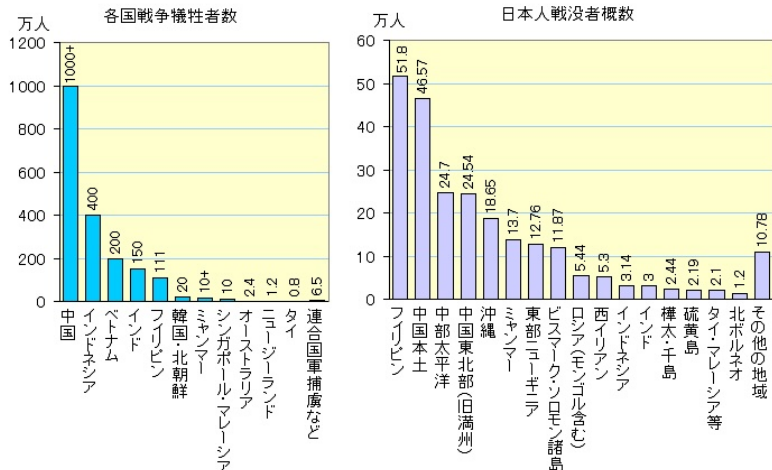
第2次世界大戦各国戦没者数



(資料) 英タイムズ社「第二次世界大戦歴史地図」、日本は東京新聞2006.8.15(厚生労働省資料など)

[Link](#)

アジア太平洋戦争における各国戦争犠牲者数及び地域別日本人戦没者数



(注) 戦争犠牲者数の+は「以上」。資料出所: 中国は、中国国務院の「中国の人権状況について」から。インドネシアは、サンフランシスコ講和会議でのインドネシア政府見解から。ベトナムは、1945年のベトナム独立宣言から。フィリピンは、フィリピン政府調査から。タイは「図説ユニバーサル新世界史資料」帝国書院。その他は「キーワード 日本の戦争犯罪」雄山閣。日本人戦没者数概数は厚生労働省調べ。

(資料) 東京新聞2005年8月7日、毎日新聞HP(2015年8月、数字は証言する～データで見る太平洋戦争～)

[Link](#)

Number of casualties in wars involving Japan since the Meiji era (Human and Nature Science Institute survey)

- First Sino–Japanese War (Jul 1894–Mar 1895): Japan 14,000; China 35,000^a
- Russo–Japanese War (Feb 1904–Sep 1905): Japan 115,000; Russian Empire 43,000
- First World War (Feb 1914–Nov 1918):
 - Allied Powers (Russia, France, U.K., Italy, U.S., Romania, Japan, etc.) approx. 5,143,000 (including 300 Japanese)
 - Central Powers (Germany, Austria, Turkey, etc.) approx. 3,386,000
- Second World War (Sep 1939–Sep 1945) [soldiers, civilians, total (ten-thousands)]
 - Axis: Japan [230, 80, 310] • Germany [422, 267, 689] • Australia [25, 93^a, 118] • Italy [30, 13, 43] • Others [164, 0, 163]
 - Allies: Soviet Union [1360, 700, 2060] • China [350, 971, 1321] • Poland [12, 591^b, 603] • Yugoslavia [50, 121, 171] • France [20, 40, 60] • U.K. [14, 24, 38] • U.S. [29, 0, 29] • Others [78, 0, 0]
 - Asia–Pacific countries: Korea [20] • Taiwan [3] • Philippines [111] • Vietnam [200] • Burma [15] • Malaysia/Singapore [10] • Indonesia [400] • India [150] • Australia [2.3] • New Zealand [1.2] • Total [912.5]^c

^a65 of whom were Jewish

Asia-Pacific War Casualty Numbers

- Japanese deaths: soldiers 2.3 million (200,000 domestic; 2.1 million overseas); civilians 800,000 (500,000 domestic; 300,000 overseas). The fractions are unknown, but nearly all statistical sources agree.
 - Tokyo firebombing 100,000; Hiroshima atomic bomb 140,000; Nagasaki atomic bomb 74,000
 - Okinawa: civilians 94,000; military and military-affiliated personnel from Okinawa Prefecture: about 28,000; Japanese military (from outside Okinawa Prefecture): about 66,000
 - Of the 2.3 million soldiers who died, 1.4 million are said to have died of starvation or disease
- Deaths in Asia: excluding China, 9 million; China: at least 10 million is certain. Some estimates put China at 30 million.
- American deaths 111,606; POWs 21,580; U.K. 5,670; POWs 50,016; Australia 9,470; POWs 21,726
 - Okinawa 12,500; Iwo Jima 6,821; the Philippines 4,200
- Sources
 - The Pacific War Online Encyclopedia [[Link](#)]
 - World War II Casualties (Wikipedia) [[Link](#)]
 - Commonwealth War Dead Memorial Service [[Link](#)]
 - Human Losses in the Second World War [[Link](#)]

My Cargo Ship Journey to Southeast Asia in My Second Year of High School

In 1970, I spent 53 days on a journey: loading used bulldozers and machine tools in Japan, unloading them in Singapore and Penang, Malaysia; then calling at Balikpapan and Samarinda on Borneo Island in Indonesia to load timber, and unloading it in Busan, South Korea.

Both in the preparation period and during the trip, we held study meetings on the Bible, English, and Asia. We learned the history of how, under the banner of “liberating Asia’s peoples from Western colonialism,” Japan advanced into Asia, used local labor and resources as if they were Japan’s colonies, plundered for the sake of war, and, including massacres, how the Japanese military ruled the local people by force. As a Japanese person, I felt the weight of war responsibility and, to be honest, grew anxious about how I should relate to the peoples of Asia. At the places we visited, we visited churches and met various people. Many of those of a certain age disliked the Japanese, harbored hatred, and viewed Japan’s economic development with envy. Everyone lived in extreme poverty. We met children trying to earn money in various ways, and young women who could not live unless they provided sexual services. Yet, seeing people striving desperately to live, I began to think that rather than going around apologizing for what the Japanese had done, it might be more important “to live responsibly as one who

War Responsibility as Japanese

[Repost]

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What do you think!?⁵

⁵This is also related to what I thought when, as a high school student, I traveled to

Summary: Questions and Hopes

Do we, who were not alive at the time of the war, bear war responsibility? How should we face—or think about—the people who fought, and the peoples of Asia who were made to suffer and many of whom were killed? And amid the world's various challenges, how should we live our everyday lives?

- I want people to learn Japan's past history—including the history of perpetration—in order to live together in the same era with Asian peoples and with people overseas.
- As believers, I want us to think and pray about how we should live with our neighbors, with the people of neighboring countries, and with people around the world.
- I want us to think about ways of living in peace before all people and before God. What is it to love? What are God's righteousness and kingdom?
- From the Keiwa College Freshman Welcome Open Academic Lecture: Love, Faith, Hope: [Link: from 40'50"](#)

What do you think!?

References

From recent reading

- *Atlas of Borders: A Complete Record of Walls, Migration, and Conflicts in the World* — Delphine Papin and Bruno Tertrais; maps by Guez Martin Laborde; translated by Kayoko Iwata and Ellery Jean-Christophe; Japanese supervision by Masayasu Ida — Nikkei National Geographic
- *Asia's Dictators and the "Fathers of the Nation": The Formation and Shaking of Hero Images* — edited by Takashi Nemoto and Yuko Kasuya — Sairyusha
- *Why Is "Consent-based Use of Force" Justified?* — Aika Murakado — Kyoto University Press
- *The Invention of the Jewish People: How History Was Fabricated* — Shlomo Sand; supervising translator Takeshi Takahashi; translated by Yasuyuki Sasaki and Takako Kimura — Chikuma Gakugei Bunko
- *The Asia-Pacific War* — Hiroshi Yoshida — Iwanami Shinsho 1047
- *Telling the Story of the Asia-Pacific War, Vols. 1-5* — text/supervision by Hiroshi Yoshida — Shin Nihon Publishing

(See the reading log on my homepage [[Link](#)])

Thank you very much
Thank you very much!

How Should We Face Global Conflicts as Believers and Researchers?

“The Asia-Pacific War” for Us: 80 Years After the War



Link on HP



Slides [PDF]