

No.10 Air-raid Warning (417W)

Do you know the school chime in Japan?

Ding-dong ding-dong, ding-dong ding-dong.

Yes, it's the chime of Big Ben, the famous clock in London.

Why is it heard every day at many schools in Japan?

There's a history about it.

Soon after the World War II, school bells went Whooo.....

Some students remembered the air-raid warnings and a difficult time when they heard the sound. So teachers changed the sound and chose the chime of Big Ben.

One of the Ondoku members has also remembered its sound and made a speech about it. Unfortunately, she can't take part in the contest today, because of her husband's operation.

So let me introduce her speech, Air-raid Warning.

Can you imagine terrible siren? Whoo~ whoo~ whoo~.

I'm scared of the siren ringing three times even now.

After more than 70 years, it still reminds me of air-raid warnings or Kushukeiho.

I was 5 years old when World War II ended. So I think I'm the last generation that knows it.

When enemy air planes were approaching, the siren always rang three times.

I can't forget such an unusual tense atmosphere.

When the siren rang, I was awoken even at midnight, put on an air-raid hood called Bokuzukin, wore a rucksack with roasted rice, hardtack or kanpan inside and hung a water bottle on my shoulder.

Then I escaped in my house's shelter called Bokugo or the graveyard with grandparents and sisters.

My hometown Hagi in Yamaguchi Prefecture has a lot of temples which have their own graveyards at the back.

Graveyards were completely dark at night. So I guess my father thought the places were safe from enemy air planes.

Window-glasses in my house were pasted some paper and electric lights were covered with cloth not to leak light.

So my house was dim inside all day long.

Fortunately my family didn't suffer war damage.

But my husband's family had serious damage.

They lived in Osaka city. His father went to a battle field and was interned in Siberia for a long

time.

He himself was evacuated to Yoshino in Nara with other school children.

His sisters went to relative's house in countryside. At the end of war, his house and all the neighborhoods were attacked and burned down.

Recently the world smells something burning.

I'm afraid Japan may be stepping into war again.

“No more war!” To do so, we must keep “The ninth article of the war-renouncing constitution.”

No more children have the same experiences as mine.