

## Youth Victimized by the Wars

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Whole my school days were war time; China incident just a year after my elementary school enrollment, attack on Pearl Harbor on my elementary school graduation year, World War II ending on my girl's school graduation. Entire senior year in girl's school, we were working at Hitachi factory in Kashiwa-city under student mobilization program. On the Great Tokyo Air Raids Day, I was happened to be staying in the dormitory then evacuating to shelter. I witnessed the downtown burning and airplanes crashing over the river. I believed that I was counting one, two, three enemy planes going down along with the search lights lowering, nevertheless I found out later that they were actually all Japanese. Tokyo became burned field and refugees were crossing Katsushika bridge with such agonizing looks.

The Choshi Commercial High School students were also on the same program and working at Hitachi factory with us. They were sitting in a circle and sending out the volunteer soldiers. The students really wanted to study as their dreams, but wars deprived them.

One of my friend's parents were severely harmed by bomb dropping on their house during Tokyo Air Raids. They looked for a medical doctor all over the town however found none then died. She was the eldest to look after younger sister and brother so that she sacrificed herself getting married right away. Her life was practically over that time, she said.

The other friend became a hospital attendant to take care of invalid veteran captain whose legs being amputated. She later married him for disabled Veterans Pension benefit. These stories were quite common in those days.

I became a substitute teacher after graduating from girl's school. Our choices were limited, going to college, becoming a substitute teacher or paratroopers (single ladies volunteer labor member during World War II). In early substitute teacher's day, we had a medical check at the military post because no test equipment in the school. When we three new teachers were chatting and walking back to school after cleaning up, a soldier in airfield screamed "P52 strafing" and escaped to air-raid shelter without us. We somehow managed hiding under the tree and survived. Everyone was starving after the war. Some went out to black market or worked at night club in Ueno. Wars force a lot of sacrifices to students and women. No matter what we should not engage in any war. I am

not sure if I can live up to one hundred-year-old, but I want to see where Japan is heading if possible.

You can do whatever you wish now. I hope young people go out to the world and farther trip into the universe to fulfill your potentials.