

# SEISHIN GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

## WINTER EDITION



**Students look at the remains of the war victims in front of Himeyuri Monument.**

Photo from <https://www.nd-seishin.ac.jp/wp/wp-content/uploads/>

## K2 visit Okinawa in search for peace

By Saki Hamada (K2B)

Thirty eight Seishin High School second grade students went to Okinawa for a school trip from October 9 ~ 12, 2024.

On the first day, students caught an early morning flight from Okayama Momotaro Airport to Naha Airport. Upon arrival, they met a friendly and eloquent local guide. She guided them for four days. Then they went to Himeyuri Monument and Himeyuri Peace Museum. In the museum, they learned about the battle of Okinawa. There were a lot of shocking pictures and messages from people who experienced war. 📖 p.2

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## Seishin celebrates Christmas

By Ayaka Ikeda (K2B)

On December 21st, Seishin held its annual Christmas Gathering in Kinenkan. Junior high and high school students, teachers, and parents from selected classes participated in the event. Most parents came to see the Christmas tableau.

Our school Christmas gathering is different from other Christmas events. Through the Christmas tableau and candlelight service, we understand the essence of Christianity and celebrate the birth of Christ 📖 p.3



JHS students portray Mary and Joseph in the Christmas play. (Photo by Mark)

## News (continued from p.1)

By Saki Hamada (K2B)

After lunch, they went to Konpaku monument to pray for peace and offer a thousand paper cranes. Next, they went to Okinawa Peace Memorial Park. They visited a museum and learned about the war. They saw the cornerstone of peace which has the names of people who died in the war. Then they visited *Itokazu Abuchiragama*. This cave was used by the residents to hide from the enemies during the war. Himeyuri Students volunteered there to treat injured soldiers. They were female student corps who were mobilized for nursing training conducted mainly by the Japanese military in December 1944.

On the second day, the students went to Takakazudai Park where the US military base is located. It occupies 476.3ha and on the roadside station in Kadena town, there were homes, shops and schools for Americans. The presence of US military base has influenced the lifestyle of the residents.

### What is the Battle of Okinawa?

For more than three months starting in March 1945, at the end of the Pacific War, the Japanese and American armies engaged in a ground battle in Okinawa that involved the local population. The US military attacked Okinawa with overwhelming numbers in order to secure it as a base for conquering mainland Japan. The Japanese military positioned Okinawa as a bulwark for the defense of the mainland, and in order to delay the U.S. military's landing on the mainland by even one day, they conducted a sustained strategy of hiding in trenches and engaging in a long-term war. This strategy prolonged the Battle of Okinawa, resulting in more than 200,000 Japanese and American casualties. 120,000 people, or 60% of them, were Okinawan citizens. During the Battle of Okinawa, local residents including children were forced to take the place of missing soldiers and help out. The ground battle continued with both soldiers and residents mixed together. When the Japanese army was cornered in the southern part of Okinawa, both military personnel and residents lost their lives one after another to the indiscriminate attacks of the US military. For this reason, it is said that more residents lost their lives than soldiers during the Battle of Okinawa.

For example, they have to put in double windows to protect themselves from loud noises from airplanes.

### What is the US-military base?

Okinawa Prefecture, which accounts for only 0.6% of the country's land area, is home to approximately 70.4% of the facilities dedicated to the US military in Japan. Even now, more than 70 years after the end of the war, the noise, incidents, and accidents caused by U.S. military training still have a variety of impacts on the lives of prefectural residents, and the prefecture still faces an excessive burden on its bases. At Camp Schwab in Okinawa, it has been reported that noise of 80 dB (decibels) was heard more than 100 times in one day. 80dB is about the same level as a siren in a moving train or an

emergency vehicle. Japan has a US-military base because Japan and the United States concluded the "Japan-U.S. Security Treaty" in 1960. Under the treaty, the United States has an obligation to protect Japan, and in the event that Japan is attacked by another country, both Japan and the United States must cooperate to counter the attack.



Entrance to Chibichiri Gama.

The next destination was Chibichiri Gama. This is the place where 83 of the approximately 140 evacuated residents committed mass suicide in 1945 when the US military landed and a ground battle took place. This was not a decision to take their own life, but a result of the teaching at the time that if you were to become a prisoner of war in the US military, it was better to die with a clean body. It is also called "forced mass death". 🐾



## News (continued from p.2)

On the third and fourth day, they went sightseeing and learned about Ryukyu culture. They went to Nakijin Castle Ruins, the residence of the King of Kitayama who existed before the establishment of the Ryukyu Kingdom; Shikinaen, the largest villa of the Ryukyu royal family, and was used for recreation by the royal family and for entertaining foreign envoys; and Shuri Castle. This is estimated to have been built around the 14th Century. It was the political center of the Ryukyu Kingdom, which lasted for about 450 years, and played an important role as a place for diplomatic trade with China. Unfortunately, it was burned in 2019 so it is under construction. These are related to Ryukyu.

These sites registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Next they could enjoy nature. They could have a panoramic view of the ocean at Kouri Ocean Tower. The sea was so beautiful. They also took a boat with a bottom made of grass and went to an underwater observation tower. So they could see a lot of fishes and coral reefs. Also they went to the Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium which is one of the largest aquariums in Japan, exhibiting 10,000 creatures from around 680 species. Sea turtles and large whale sharks over 8m long swim in the large aquarium which is 35m wide, 27m deep, and 10m deep. In addition they bought souvenirs at Kokusaidori Shopping Center.

The students were accompanied by Sister Saiko Nakamura and Mr. Hirokazu Matsumoto.



## Seishin celebrates... (continued from p.1)

with all our hearts. During the candle service, we communicate with everyone and pray to God. With the theme "Feeling God's L♡ve -

You are my beloved child", this year's program includes: (1) Christmas tableau, (2) Handbell Choir performance, (3) Christmas card exchange, and (4) Candle service.

The Christmas tableau was presented jointly by the JH 2nd and 3rd graders. Students depicted the story of Genesis in the Old Testament to show the beginning of everything leading to the birth of Jesus, the story of the Nativity. The students involved in the creation of the stage, including the performers, sound and lighting, props, and costumes, as well as the performance of the Orchestra Club during the interval, got the audience into a festive mood in celebrating the birth of Christ and Christmas.

The Handbell Club performed two songs, "Hanamizuki" and "Jingle Bells." The choir, consisted of junior high and high school students, gave a lively performance.

The Christmas card exchange was held for the first time this year. Each participant prepared a Christmas card in advance and exchanged them on the day of the event while singing Christmas songs. The participants who got the rare cards were able to exchange them for prizes.



<https://www.nd-seishin.ac.jp/topics/2024/12/post-10827/>

**Seishin Handbell Club serenades the audience with lively Christmas songs.**

Finally, the candle service. Candles held by each student were lit and spread throughout the hall. After the declaration of prayer, each grade dedicated the handmade gifts that they had prepared for the street people, and support facilities. During the ceremony, many Christmas songs were sung, giving a real sense of Christmas. In addition, we had many other activities such as making scarves, donations, and fundraising. Every year around the time of the Christmas gathering, we make scarves to donate to organizations that help people living on the streets. We also collected donations of 100 yen and set up a donation box in the hallway so that anyone could donate items for daily use. 📖 p. 5

## Opinion

By Honoka Ichimura (K2D)

# Nuclear Weapons Cannot Coexist with Humanity

On December 10th, 2024, the Japan Confederation of A- and H-bomb Sufferers Organizations (Nihon Hidan Kyo) was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, symbolizing the global recognition of the efforts by atomic bomb survivors to eliminate nuclear weapons. This award shows us the path we must take to prevent the tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki from being repeated. Listening to the voices of the survivors is the first step in abolishing nuclear weapons and building peace.

What happened in Hiroshima and Nagasaki was an immeasurable tragedy. On August 6, 1945, an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, instantly killing more than 100,000 people, and many others continued to suffer from the effects of radiation. Three days later, a similar fate befell Nagasaki, claiming the lives of tens of thousands of people. Buildings collapsed instantly at ground zero, many died immediately, and the survivors lived with acute radiation sickness, cancer, and leukemia. This is the terrifying reality of nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons threaten not only human life and health but also the future itself, and they must never be allowed.

The Japan Confederation of A- and H-bomb Sufferers Organizations has worked for many years to share the experiences and suffering of the survivors with the world, fighting for the abolition of nuclear weapons. Their work is not only about recalling the past but also about fighting to protect the future. Because the survivors

have continued to speak out about the horrors of nuclear weapons, we must recognize their importance and take action. Thanks to the efforts of the Japan Confederation, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted, sending a strong message to the world about the humanitarian wrong of possessing nuclear weapons. It is because of the survivors' efforts that we are now able to walk the path toward the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Tanaka Hisashi, the representative of the Japan Confederation, was a first-year middle school student when he experienced the atomic bombing of Nagasaki. He personally experienced the destruction and suffering caused by the bomb, and despite struggling with the long-term health effects of radiation, he has dedicated his life to the movement for nuclear abolition. What Tanaka has continued to convey is not only the horror of nuclear weapons but also the falsehood of the "deterrence theory" behind them. 🇯🇵

<https://www.shutterstock.com/image-vector/stop-nuclear-weapons-banner-atomic-bomb-2130375632>



## Opinion

The belief that nuclear weapons can maintain peace is completely wrong, and he has consistently fought to spread this message. From his experience and activism, we learn that possessing nuclear weapons leads to meaningless consequences. His personal suffering from the bombing and radiation-induced health effects was not just an individual tragedy but a powerful message to continue speaking out to protect the future. His work proves that nuclear weapons can never be tools for peace, and his message continues to reach many people today.

I strongly oppose the proliferation of nuclear weapons. As long as nuclear weapons exist, there is always the risk of nuclear war, and peace is threatened. Many countries around the world possess nuclear weapons, but this does not guarantee peace. On the contrary, nuclear weapons create fear and anxiety, leading to an arms race. Furthermore, if used, nuclear weapons could cause irreparable tragedies, with the potential to destroy all of humanity. To prevent the tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki from repeating, I am



convinced that the only way is to abolish nuclear weapons.

The work done by the Japan Confederation to promote nuclear abolition plays a crucial role in transforming the memory of the past into a warning for the future. Carrying the pain of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the survivors continue to raise their voices, warning the world about the danger and inhumanity of maintaining nuclear weapons. Their efforts form a strong foundation for building peace. We must deeply recognize that nuclear weapons are not just the problem of a few countries but of humanity as a whole. As long as nuclear weapons exist, true peace cannot be achieved. To create a world where all people can live safely and peacefully, we must stand up and act now. Nuclear weapons cannot coexist with humanity.

### References:

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## Seishin celebrates... (continued from p.3)

We can learn the essence of Christmas through this Christmas gathering. I think that Christmas gatherings in Japan, where people spend time together to play games and eat sweets, are good, but I think that it is better to learn the essence of Christianity. I would like to enjoy the Christmas gathering again next year, praying that people will have a good Christmas.



## STAFF AND CONTRIBUTORS

Saki Hamada  
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Iria Kato





## Literary: Poems

Compiled and illustrated by Sumire Seita (K2E)

# WINTER ACROSTICS

Windy day

Ice skating on a frozen lake

Neck warmer to keep me warm

Turkey at lunch time

Events on Christmas Eve

Russian traditional matryoshka dolls a plenty!

- Saki Hamada (K2B)



Wind is blowing as I  
Ice skate on the thin ice in  
Norway, I can still taste the  
Turkey I ate this morning. I felt  
Excitement, as a family of  
Reindeers walked past me.

- Hanami Elliott (K2B)



Sound in winter  
Nothing can be heard  
On the land  
Would be snowing soon  
Man is walking on a  
A road  
Next to snowman

- Ayaha Inukai (K2D)



Sunny yet cold

North Pole preparing for Christmas day

Ornaments of snowman I bought

Went to the backyard to

Make a snowman

Auntie came to join me.

Nothing like a winter with a snowman

- Hiroyuki Kudo (K2D)



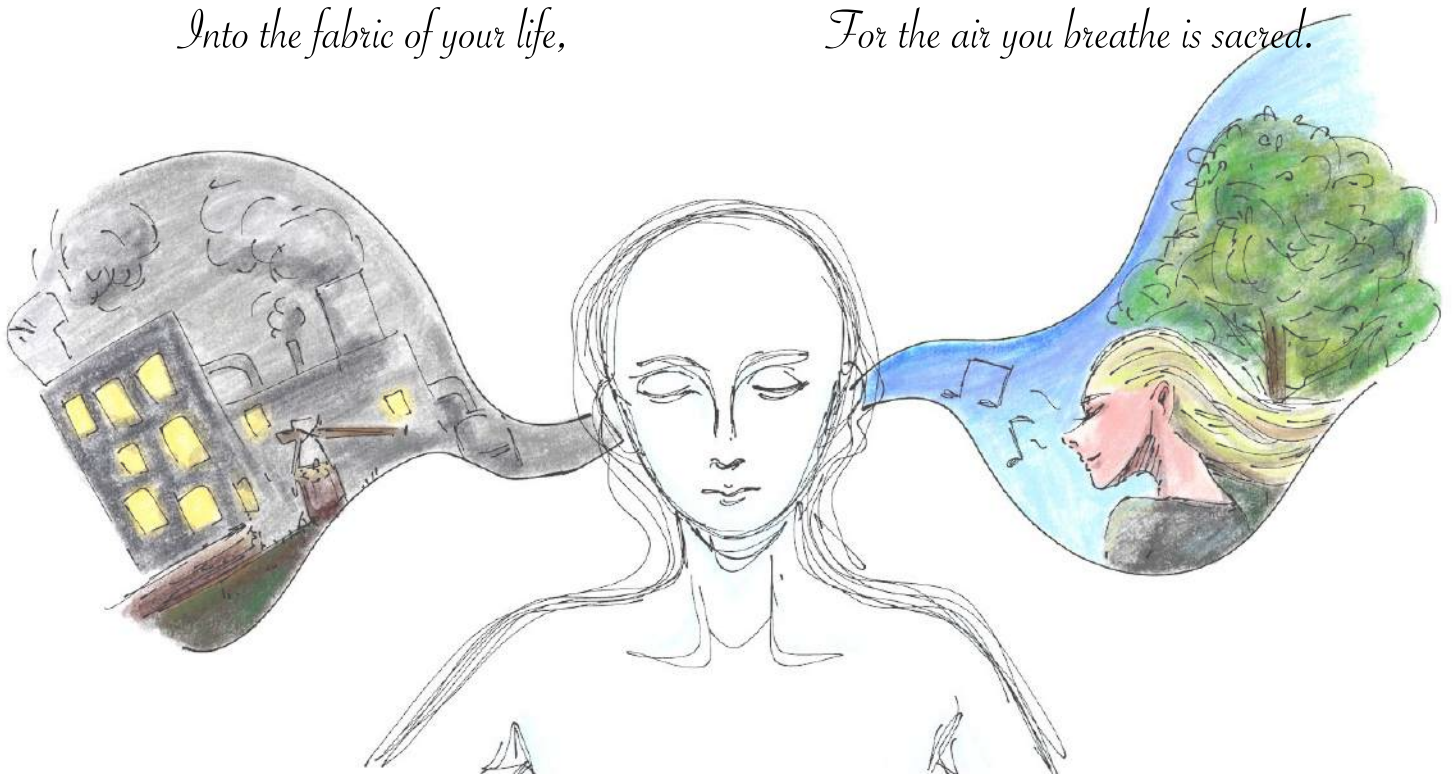
## Literary: Poems

By Honoka Ichimura, Mao Shidara, Riko Namba (K2D); Illustrated by Sumire Seita (K2E)

### ≈ I Am the Air ≈

*I am the air.  
I exist all over the world.  
Invisible, yet always around you.  
I am the oxygen you breathe,  
The breath of life you need to survive.  
I am also responsible for the formation of  
weather patterns,  
shaping the climate and leading the winds.  
I carry the sounds of the world,  
transmitting every voice, song,  
and whisper across distances.  
My presence is woven  
Into the fabric of your life,*

*Yet you often forget me,  
Treating me as if I'm unneeded  
Smoke billows from factories,  
Each puff a wound upon my being,  
Contributing to a global warming,  
While trees are cut down,  
Taking away the breath I give,  
Creating a suffocating future.  
I am a part of you,  
An essential existence of your life  
So please, cherish me as I do you.  
Reflect on your actions,  
For the air you breathe is sacred.*



## Feature: Interview with MJ

By Iria Kato (K2D) and Honoka Ichimura (K2D)

MaryJane Hume-Erceg came from Kati Kati College in New Zealand. In November 2024, she came to Japan to study at Seishin Girls' High School for three months. This is our interview with her.

**Iria: Please tell us about yourself.**

MJ: I am MaryJane. I come from NZ. I'm 17 years old. I like sports, arts, animals, and learning different languages.

**Iria: Please tell us about your school in NZ.**

MJ: My school is very chaotic and it's a both gender school. Actually we have more boys than girls. And we have two lunchtimes. And we do not have clubs.

**School Life in NZ and Japan**

**Iria: How did you feel about this school when you first came here? What was the surprising thing about this school?**

MJ: I was very nervous to come to this school but I was shocked to see how many people can speak English.

**Iria: Do you have a uniform in New Zealand?**

MJ: We do have various uniforms. I wear my uniform here. But this year, I don't have to wear mine in my country.



(Photos by Astrid)

**Iria: Are there subjects taught in NZ that are not taught in Japan?**

MJ: Lots of clubs are taught, including drama. Different kinds of wood work, metal class which is working with metals. We have an outdoor class which we only do outdoors.

**Iria: Does your school have any big events? And how is that different from Japan?**

MJ: Sports day which is not much different from Japan. We also have cross country which is basically running past a few blocks. The other one is that other schools come to do volleyball.

**Iria: Did you find any unique points with each of our schools regarding school rules?**

MJ: Only thing is would be that students get to vote for various different things. Where in NZ it is all based on teachers' decisions. Not so much the students.

**Iria: How do you feel about the relationship between teachers and students? And how is that different from New Zealand?**

MJ: I feel like the relationship between the teachers is very friendly like you're a big family. In NZ we are a two gender school. I feel like we have a mismatch between teachers and students. Everyone likes a certain teacher and people don't want this teacher. So it's very opinionated.

**Iria: Would you be interested in studying in Japan for a long time? Or would you rather go back to NZ and finish your studies there?**

MJ: I wouldn't mind studying abroad in Japan. See this is my last year. I will go back to NZ to finish my studies. I will not go to university. I have a career waiting for me actually. It's a racing industry.

