



Sendai Shirayuri Gakuen High School

Blog post – the Homefront WWII

Religion & Women in WWII Part 2

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Our theme is “Religion and Women in World War II Japan.” We will consider peace from this point of view. Japan was badly damaged in World War II, including Sendai. We heard that there were women who supported people in Sendai then. They were students of Sendai Girls School. This school later became Sendai Shirayuri Gakuen. It is said that they served and worked for other people, though they themselves lived a hard life. At that time, Christianity was not accepted in Japan, so they couldn't pray freely. However, they accepted and helped other people. We are sure that learning about Sendai Girls School and its students will tell us what true peace is. We want to inform people of their actions, and encourage people to consider peace and create a world in which all religions are accepted.

On April 30th, we went to the War Reconstruction Memorial Hall in Sendai to learn about life during World War II. We were able to learn about the life of the people at the time, what happened during the Sendai Air Raids, the extent of the damage and the reconstruction of the city. We found the importance of peace again.

Next, we interviewed Sr. Chieko Aoki and Sr. Kyoko Watanabe, Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres, about life in Sendai Girls School during World War II. They went through World War II when they were elementary school students. They had been bombed by the U.S. Air Force on August 10, 1945, during the Sendai Air Raids mentioned above. They ran away from many incendiary bombs by covering themselves with wet comforters. Guided by two ladies, they defended themselves from the bombs in this way. Innocent citizens were shot at close range by B29 bombers. A girl's father objected to fighting in the war, so he was killed by a military policeman in front of her.

For two hours we listened as the Sisters told us stories such as these. We asked them if they had been able to pray during the war. They told us that they couldn't pray openly, but they kept praying silently.

We will do research on Reiko Ogishima who supported our school during the war. We want to understand the truth about the past, and consider a peaceful future.