

## Ninety-five year old *kataribe* shares war experience

Masayuki Kanagawa (95), a member of Houshinji Temple (Rev. Shinsai Yoshida, resident minister) located in Tamano City (southern Okayama Prefecture), shared a narrative of his experience as a World War II veteran as part of the temple's Kids Sangha activities. The event was entitled "95-year old *kataribe* storyteller — 77 years since the end of war~ Recollecting the battlefield that I saw with my friend."

An online conference system was set up between Houshinji's temple hondo and Tamano City's public elementary school, Chikko Elementary School, where a total of 26 fourth and six grade students participated in the storytelling event learning about Mr. Kanagawa's war experiences.

Kanagawa was born in 1927. With the Pacific War, he entered the Imperial Japanese Naval Air Service at the age of 15. Dispatched to China, he was assigned as a crew of the two-seat carrier-based dive bomber name *Suisei* (trans. "Comet," allied code name "Judy") where he was re-



sponsible for communications and bombing. During the lecture, he spoke about his experience in losing his comrade. Kanagawa was in the cockpit with his friend who was the pilot before he was killed by a strafing enemy aircraft. After the war, Kanagawa delivered clippings of his friend's hair and fingernails to his friend's family. Sharing his story with the children, he advocated against war: "The death of my comrade was the saddest and most painful experience throughout the war. War results in only sadness and grief. No matter what, war must not take place."

Reflecting on Mr. Kanagawa's experience, a student

shared: "Although I would hear on the news about people being shot, I never thought much of it. But after hearing Mr. Kanagawa's story, I learned that there are people in the world who are very sad." A few days later, a letter written by a student was received: "I shall never forget Mr. Kanagawa's telling us to put an end to war." Rev. Yoshida shares, "When I go to Mr. Kanagawa's house for services, he would often share his war stories with me. I had arranged for this gathering, wanting the children to learn about his experience and for it to serve as an opportunity for the children to cultivate their wish for peace."