

# 2000 International Essay Contest for Young People

## List of Winners

No. of participating countries: 31

No. of entries: 423 (Children's category: 268 / Youth category: 155)

### 1<sup>st</sup> Prize

#### Children's category (1 entrant)

- *The Children Must Begin it*  
Jason Crowe (Age 13, U.S.A.)

#### Youth category (1 entrant)

- *Peace*  
Maiya Shamurshanova  
(Age 23, Kazakhstan)

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize

#### Children's category (2 entrants)

- *For the World to be a Better Place*  
Mio Onishi  
(Age 11, Japan <Living in U.S.A.>)
- *"Heiwa na Hoshi" Chikyu ga Kagayaku 21*  
*Seiki e (Original in Japanese)*  
Masatsugu Yoshino (Age 10, Japan)

#### Youth category (2 entrants)

- *Heiwa Gaku no Kakuritsu wo (Original in Japanese)*  
Kaoru Goto (Age 20, Japan)
- *The First Global Generation Living a Culture of Peace*  
Victor José Moscoso Portillo  
(Age 25, Guatemala)

## **The Children Must Begin it** (Original)

*Jason Crowe*  
(Age 13, U.S.A.)

The future. A world of endless dreams of what will come to pass. But these dreams will never come to fruition if peace doesn't become a reality. In a peaceful world, there would be no rivalries, no violence, and war would be something only heard about in textbooks. To achieve this idyllic world, we must make peace succeed in every aspect of our life. This process begins when we realize peace is more than the absence of war. Peace is a way of life, a culture in which all life is respected.



We are the youth of today and the leaders of tomorrow. But we are more. We are the youth leaders of the present and have much to offer in advancing a culture of peace. We have idealism, energy, and creativity which many adults have lost. Given tools and the opportunity, we can change the world while we are still young.

As a young leader, I can see subtle changes in thinking that everyone needs to adopt to bring us closer to a culture of peace. For example, we need to update our 20th century idea of putting aside cultural differences with an attitude of tolerance. In the new millennium, we must realize true peace requires a spirit of appreciation, not an attitude of tolerance, and true peace will come only when we stop putting aside our differences and learn to embrace them. It is only when we appreciate and embrace our differences that we realize living united in diversity is not a contradiction of terms but rather a state of peace.

Another idea that needs updating is the popular slogan "think global, act local." We live in a world where technology gives us neighbors across the world in addition to neighbors across

the street. We live in an environment in which all life depends on other life. We can no longer "think global, act local"; rather, we must think and act both "global" and "local" simultaneously.

So what can young people do at the local, national, and international levels to further the cause of peace? Locally, we can join and/or start peace clubs and multicultural service clubs where kids learn about peace and then put that knowledge to practice in the community. Nationally, we can express our desires to Congressmen and the President and join national organizations such as Students Against Violence Everywhere. Internationally, we can use the Internet to establish multi-cultural connections by creating peace web pages and participating in online international discussions. We can join international youth organizations such as Peaceways and Global Youth Action Network.

Personally, I am quite active in peace building. As a ten-year-old, I heard the story of a Bosnian cellist, who witnessed the massacre of innocent people and knew he had to act. The following day he went to the site and played his cello while snipers fired. To me, his musical harmony represented social harmony, the only answer to war. I knew I had to keep this message alive. I organized a cello concert for peace at a local university and later Harmony in the Park as a memorial vigil on the 5th anniversary of the massacre.

By 11, I had founded a not-for-profit corporation, The Cello Cries On to unite and empower youth across cultural lines to promote peace. I commissioned a peace statue to be sent to Bosnia as a gift from children worldwide to say, "We don't want more war and genocide; we want peace and harmony." Through my international newspaper, The Informer, the Internet, M.I.T.'s International Online Junior Summit, and speeches I give in schools and at state, national, and international conferences, I've united hundreds of youth to spread the message of harmony and raise money for the statue.

At 12, I created Youth for Peace in the Year 2000 an international delegation of youth to meet with Bosnian youth (at the time of the statue's unveiling) to work on peace building. This past year, I founded Youth for Harmony in Action, a multicultural group of middle/high school age youth.

We assess local needs and then go out "diverse but united" to meet those needs, showing the community people can work together harmoniously.

I have no long-range goals such as serving as an ambassador, mediator, or my country's president. But I know whatever my vocation, my avocation will always be peace building. In the near future, I will continue raising money for The Children's International Peace-and-Harmony Statue, and writing, publishing and speaking at conferences to motivate more youth to take action. We are at a point in history where the future of the world and the future of peace lie with the children in an unprecedented way. Gandhi said, "If we are to have true peace in the world, it must begin with the children." I say, "If we are to have true peace in the world, the children must begin it."

## Peace (Original)

*Maiya Shamurshanova*  
(Age 23, Kazakhstan)

Peace... When I speak of peace I see kind eyes of my mum. I hear the laughter of children. I feel peaceful and restful. Peace is a silent ticking of my clock in my apartment. Peace is peaceful people, walking on streets. Peace is bright stars above my head. Peace is our Earth without distress and sufferings. As I write these words, it seems wild and unfair that somewhere in Yugoslavia, a five year old hungry girl cries and picks at the doll, while millions of other girls of her age are living in peace. It is wrong. We all need air, sea, stars, meadows and flowers. I need every smile, every dismissed flower, every grain of beauty. I hate war.

People are born to be happy. It is a Great Truth. And what about the Earth? It is a place of trial for Truth. How can we achieve peace? I do not know exactly but first of all we must inspire peace in our hearts and in our souls. We live in an important time. We live in the new millennium, so we must change the face of our planet. We can swim as fish, we can fly as birds, but we cannot live as people. We are self-murderers because we are dangerous for ourselves. Every day we lose one kind of plant, every week we lose one kind of animal. Our indifference is a dreadful disease. People must remember that, for hundreds of generations, millions of people that lived before us believed in fair future, loved life, dreamed of a peaceful life, fought for it and sometimes laid down their lives. But I believe that our generation is not just a murderer. I believe in the power of kindness.



I know a very clever story. On a very dark night, two men were going home. One of them looks down and sees only a dirty road. The other man looks up and sees only stars. How can we achieve peace? Hope, believe and look forward.

We think that we are the best creatures because we can think and create. But we forget that we have a heart which can feel and love. In the newspaper, there was an article about two boys from the USA. They stood near the road and began to wave to moving cars. Some drivers waved back to them too. That is all. A smile, a nod, a wish of good luck. Of course it is a trifle thing, but all kinds of things in our lives begin with trifle things. The boys began to count the number of people who answered them. Out of one thousand cars, the number of cars which answered them were 990. I think you will find such boys everywhere, on different roads, in different countries. Even if you do not see them, they do exist. How can we achieve peace? Begin the day with a smile!

I want to say a few words about my country. The population of Kazakhstan is about 16 million and only 8 million of them are Kazakh. Another 8 million people are people of different nationalities: Russian, Ukrainian, German and others. In my Peace Club also, there are children of different nationalities. I think it is a good example of the peaceful country. I was born on the 1st of May. In Kazakhstan, it is the Day of Unity of People of Different Nationalities in Kazakhstan. I think this indicates my mission, because many wars of humanity are fought between different nations. My Peace Club is the first of such clubs in Kazakhstan. In February, the number of children in the club was 20, and in May there were 40. I have spoken about our club to all teachers of my town, and have written an article in the newspaper. On May 9th, we organized a concert dedicated to our veterans. On the 1st of June we organized a concert called 'Children against War'. How can we achieve peace? All people should do their favorite business and place importance in culture, because culture of any nation holds the idea of peace.

Kazakhstan is one of the first countries that have refused nuclear weapons. All countries must do so. I dream of the Day of Peace, when all wars will cease, and many people will gather at the sculpture of Peace to pray...

I walk up the hill and see an eagle in the blue sky. The eagle is a symbol of freedom and peace. I dream that my children will never need to fight for their happiness and freedom. Because we are all one, and everything is in our hands, both strength and kindness!

## **For the World to be a Better Place**

(Original)

*Mio Onishi*

*(Age 11, Japan <Living in U.S.A.>)*

If you think about the world today probably the best word that describes the world today is probably not peaceful. Unfortunately I think the words that really do describe the world are more disappointing words. Such as dangerous, revolting, fearful and enjoyable in some places. In my opinion the world today isn't peaceful enough and I don't think that the world has ever had absolute peace. Somewhere there were always places that had awful things such as war, discrimination, and prejudice. And countries throughout the world had problems after problems. Even though some of these problems weren't very big problems they can make a difference in our world. Later on they may lead to bigger problems. I feel that the world in the 21st century should change into a new world in which there is always peace and harmony. A world where every person on this earth is proud to say that we all live in peace. I also would like to live in a world where nobody is ever treated unfairly for any reason and there are no wars going on.

I think that the word peace has many different meanings. I think that peace means freedom, everyone treated equal, helping others, kindness and the most important meaning is the goal and dream of all citizens in this world. It is a goal because people try to reach a peaceful world and yet it is a dream because it is a fond hope. When kindness is valued in our world I think that, that is the point when we know that our world is peaceful. In a way peace can also mean love, and I believe that it was god's plan for the world.

I think that it would take a lot of time and effort for the world to be absolutely peaceful. It is not easy but there are little things we can do that will make this task easier. But even for a little change to occur everyone must work together. One way the world can be a better place is if people forget about past events. This doesn't mean to forget things like people of the past. This means to don't think of the terrible things that have happened in the past. An example is if the Chinese thought about the terrible things the Japanese did to their ancestors they would

feel mad at the Japanese and they may want to revenge. Little things like this may start something like a war. Or if African-American people thought about how the whites had treated their ancestors when they forced them into slavery it would make them feel upset and they may want to do disturbing things to the whites and this may create problems. Another way I can think of to make the world peaceful is if we all compromise and treat everyone the same way. This means not to judge people by their races and to share. The world can always compromise so that no one gets everything and no one gets anything. These two things may solve lots of things such as prejudice, discrimination, and wars.

Even if I do these things that I mentioned it would still not make much difference in the world because it is not everyone participating which proves that it is hard to make the world peaceful. But what kids like me can do is convince our parents. My friend lives between two houses. On the left side lives a Japanese family. And on the right side a Korean family. Both families have children around the same age and they are both the same age as my friend. So all 3 of them are friends. But the Korean girl's parent and the Japanese girl's parents are almost like enemies. So they don't want their child playing with the other child. So they can't play with each other. Things that are little as these may be some of the things that make our world less peaceful. Maybe the 3 children can convince their parents so that they can play with each other and perhaps their parents may become good friends.

A story like this told me how important it is for the world to be peaceful and I felt that when I grow up I would want this world to be a peaceful place. I want to try to prove my point of how everyone is equal and how important kindness is. Now peace will always be one of my important hopes and goals of my life and I can't wait to live and see a world where there's peace. I will always believe that there will always be a world of peace and I'll never lose my belief.



## 「平和な星」地球が輝く二十一世紀へ

(原文)

吉野 賢譜 (まさつぐ) (10歳)

静岡県藤枝市

高州小学校 5年

「ウワー、ハエがいっぱい」

「きたないなあー」

これがぼくが中近東の難民の子供たちの姿を見た時の第一声だった。戦争が長く続いて親が亡くなったり、家がやけたり、食べ物や着る物もなく、学校にも行けない子供たち。お母さんのおっぱいがあまり出ないので赤ちゃんはやせ細っていて泣き声も出ない。病気になっても十分な薬や注射もなく次々に死んでしまう。ハエが子供の頭や体にたかかっていてぼくは、腹が立ち悲しくなった。

それに比べぼくは、毎日何の不自由もなく生活している。何で同じ地球に住んでいて幸せな人と不幸な人がいるんだろう。(本当に神様はいるのだろうか)と心の中で叫びたかった。戦争はなぜ起こるのか。平和とは何か。どうすれば平和な世界を作れるのか心の奥からぎもんがわいてきた。戦争をしたい、人殺しをしたいと思っている人はだれもいないだろう。ぼくにはわからない。発展途上国と先進国では貧富の差があり、支配する国と支配される国ができるのか。また、国と国との利害があるのかもわからない。国同士の歴史上のいがみあいから戦争になることもあるだろう。

ぼくは、二十一世紀は戦争のない平和な世紀になることを望んでいる。なぜなら、二十一世紀はぼくたちの住む世紀でもあるし、戦争が起きたら人類の未来はないと思うからである。では、平和とは何だろう。ぼくは、生命が安全で生活に不安がなく、安心して暮らせること、国と国が文化やそこに住む人々を尊敬しあい、理解しあい仲良くすることだと考える。

それでは平和な世界を築くためにぼくにできることはあるのだろうか。なくても役に立ちたいと思う気持ちが、今いっぱいふくらんできている。将来医者になるのがぼくの夢だ。国際協力としてボランティアでもいいから、困っている国に行って治りようをしながら世界の国の人が自由に心の交流ができるような縁の下の力持ちになりたい。手紙や救援物資を持っていたり、現地の子供たちを集めて世界の文化や病気の予防などを教えたりする。そして、自分の国にほこりを持たせほかの国を尊敬することの大切さを教えたいと思う。世界中の子供たちの交流が広がれば、友達の輪が鎖のようにつながる。この子供たちが大きくなったら戦争なんて考えないと思う。一人一人の力は小さくても、みんなが心をつなげて力を集めれば不可能も可能になると思う。

人間にはみんな生きる権利があるんだ。安心して暮らす権利もある。世界中の人が国レベルで考えないで世界レベル地球レベルで考えていくことが二十一世紀を「平和な世紀」へ導くことだと思う。ぼく一人では無力だが、ぼくにしかできないこともあると思う。

あのハエの中に飛びこんでいこう。

「世界がより良い場所になるように」

## 平和学の確立を

(原文)

後藤 薫 (20 歳)

岐阜県岐阜市

立命館大学 1 年

教科書で覚える単語や西暦年がある。「東条英機」が組閣した年とか、「終戦」の年。国民総動員令、日中戦争が、朝鮮合併とか。それらの単語は、私にとって受験用に暗記したものだ。単語があって、その中身は学ぶ必要がなかった。それが「戦争」が何故始まったのか、平和主義者が拘束、あるいは冤罪で処刑された歴史など考えも及ばなかった。

それを私に指摘したのは、米国からの「帰国子女」(この単語には違和感がある)の、私の大学での同級生の A 君だった。彼は中学二年から米国で教育を受けた。彼だけが特にこの国の現代歴史に興味があった訳ではない。米国は歴史に学習の重点をおいている。日本の古代から現代までの歴史教科書の十倍近い詳細な教科書を必須科目としてある。移民国家にとって、数学以上なのだと聞いた。勿論、彼は私の歴史認識を上回っていた。

それは、人間の行為である歴史が、現在を語り、未来を予測する知恵なのだ。だから、平和のあり方が最大のテーマだと言う。政治学・経済学・地政学など多くの学問の集大成が「平和論」へと向かって研究され、原子物理学の第一人者すら、究極の回答を「平和」への論証だとしている。そのため、知恵者たちは平和教育を強調している。

私はその意見に同調する。これまで、人間は教育によって新しい時代を作ってきた。

この国が世界に比せる程になった大きな要因は教育だ。平和教育を義務教育での必須科目として導入し、世界における平和教育の金字塔を建てるべきだ。人は学び実践する。平和は決して単なる自然体でない。「戦争論・戦略論」を優先するより、「平和論」が識論される機会や場所が必要だ。算数から数学へと高度になるように「平和」から「平和学」への確立をすべきだ。単に、「戦争反対」とのアピールだけでは何も生まれないのだ。

つまり、私たちが教育として学ぶことによって、多くの価値観を持つ者への共通の価値観を生み出せる。「平和」はその典型だ。平和には思想性も宗教性も入り込む余地はない。仮にそこにイデオロギーがあるとすれば、人間性を否定したものであることは歴史が論じている。

算盤を学ぶように、九九を学ぶように平和を学ぶ。屁理屈ではなく、人間にとって平和である意味を学ぶことは、多くの学問を取り入れた総合学なのだ。逆に、戦争での勝ち方すら学ぶ必要性も出てくるかも知れない。正論があれば、その逆説を学ぶことでも「平和」を知らなくてはならない。

ただ、時の感情で平和を学んでいけない。人間の記憶の不明確さと時の経過に流されてしまうからだ。そのためには、時の政治権力の意図から解放された「平和」を学ぶことが必要だ。それは人間として永劫の価値を確立できる機会でもあるからだ。

2000 International Essay Contest for Young People  
[Youth Category – 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize]

## **The First Global Generation Living a Culture of Peace** (Original)

*Victor José Moscoso Portillo*  
(Age 25, Guatemala)

*"I am a citizen, not of Athens, nor for Greece, but of the whole world."*

— SOCRATES

The future of humankind and nature depends on ourselves!

My generation will build in the 21st century a peaceful global community of individuals respecting their rights, enriching their lives and working together for society's well-being. Although we inherit a memory of both shame and pride, we must review the lessons of history. We'll need inspiration, courage and solidarity to remedy past mistakes, take wiser advantage of our assets, and envision the future with faith and optimism.

Our ancestors, a hundred and fifty years ago, witnessed world wars that left us a shadow of cruelty and death. The 20th century shows the darkest models of conflict that will prevail in our memory: the nuclear bomb in Hiroshima, the Holocaust in Europe, the Apartheid in South Africa, and the genocide in Guatemala. We owe our progeny a new moral will to avoid violence and reject war, engage to dialogue and peace to make gentle the life of future generations.

We are a poor society living in a rich world. Although scientific and human progress, our political system and market economy are not working according to our moral principles. Poverty is not a result from the lack of resources, knowledge or creativity; but linked to inequity, exclusion and relations among nations and individuals lacking solidarity and justice. The challenge is distribute wealth more equitably and advance in the quality of life of all members of society through an ethical commitment.

The responsible combination of science and ethical values can improve people's lives, taking into account the natural limits and balance of the environment, respecting its rich biological

and genetic diversity. Technology offer us the possibility to create a global village to learn from other cultures, religions, genders, generations. The promotion of peace, dialogue, tolerance, solidarity, freedom, democracy, respect and mutual appreciation among cultures will create the atmosphere to accomplish the basic human rights and balance among nations and within nations. The effort's synergy from international community, governments, NGO and civil society will welcome and celebrate the differences that make our planet such varied and richly human experience, guiding us to the welfare and progress in a unique and remarkable way.

I belong to a small and poor country, but rich in culture and nature diversity . I had a family member murdered, members of my community killed, and thousands fellow countrymen died by genocide in a civil war; but we learned that violence is the wrong way to solve our conflicts, although tolerance and dialogue let us achieve accords to peacefully work together to reduce inequalities and recreate the confidence between us. I do volunteer as leader of the Youth Movement for Peace and Democracy, research on younger generations' living conditions, belong to an international network of social entrepreneurs (the Common Futures Forum) and currently creating a Youth's foundation. I learned that strengthening the links of confidence, care and love among our society requires a strong commitment to consolidate peace, extend democracy and promote sustainable progress in the society, economy, culture and environment.

Youth is a stage to learn and discover our vocation in life, integrate our own family and contribute to our community. It is a wonderful time to develop our capacity to think, write, criticize, speak, dream and create. But we need to avoid selfishness and isolation, be cautious and wiser, overcome our doubts and look deep inside ourselves for the answers to our fundamental questions. I have confidence in my generational colleagues. Our generation will change paradigms, advance in the spiritual and moral revolution, and inspire others to join a global alliance to achieve something greater: the peaceful human coexistence and progress.

## **EPILOGUE**

My generation will be the first to have the knowledge, resources, liberty and will to reshape the world. We must take the lead -with courage, wisdom and creativity- to create our common future in the next millennium: caring for the planet and its biodiversity and sharing opportunities to enjoy happy, healthy and peaceful lives among all genders, cultures and generations.

We will live most of our lives in the next century, so let's open our minds and horizons, share ideas, interest and values, and build cooperative relations to enrich a new culture of peace. Let's put our hearts and work to fight human poverty and exclusion, overcome our memory of desolation, discern our ethical commitment and sow for the welfare of future generations.

It is the time for the full development of the capacities and quality of life of all citizens on Planet Earth. The peaceful and prosperous society-our utopia dreamed with hope and love- is waiting for us in the 21st century!