

2017 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Youth Category – 3rd Prize]

Standing Tall like a Mountain

(Original)

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I was born in the lap of the Himalayas, in the land of Sherpa's. Playing in the field and sketching on the muddy floor, days faded by. Life was so good during those days, waking up to the mild breeze and spending my entire day taking long walks to the nearby forest. Every day, I would discover that my tiny village was so much larger than I imagined it to be. Fascinated by my new discoveries, I was always motivated to walk further into the woods to discover what lay on another side of the hill. Sometimes, I would be mesmerized by the strong rushing of rivers, and other days I would be dumbfounded to bestow the humongous conical tree. I was completely oblivious about my future, only dreaming about soaring through the clear, blue sky and wanting to be free like a bird that swooped past us sometimes. Having spent around 2 years of my life in my village, I finally landed in Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal. With my arrival in Kathmandu, a new life dawned upon me.

Here I was, standing alone in the hallway of my new school, then in a corner of the dining room. Everything seemed to shadow over me, new place, new faces, awkward smiles and abrupt conversations. I was lost in my own world, only reminiscing the pleasure and magic I had while standing proudly on the top of a rock like a roaring Simba. I felt like a cut-down tree or an animal that was isolated from the jungle. I was bullied in my new school, for having a very distinct Himalayan facial structure. Every moment I got bullied, I thought about those animals that were teased at the zoos. At night, I would stare at the dark sky and would ponder on the pattern of a glimmering sky.

Trees become susceptible to different changes. The autumn welcomes the tree by changing the green leaves to red. When winter arrives, the leaves fall. Amidst all these changes, trees stand tall, deeply rooted by spreading the branches of vulnerability. Just like these trees, I build a strong receptive to new beginnings of my life. Amidst all the bullies, I stood tall and firm like mountains of my village. I believe it was my Himalayan instinct that allowed me to come out of my comfort zone to speak about my religion and express my rich mountain culture. Like

a free bird soaring through the sky by spreading its wings, I took a risk to speak freely about my culture during school programs. I started flowing like a river. With the overflowing currents of the river, my dreams grew bigger. As the river finally met an ocean, my dreams of conserving the nature became more real. I'm an environmental science student now, with an aspiration to contribute to the conservation of the environment.

When the earthquake shook Nepal in 2015, its catastrophic power turned my village into the thick pile of rubble. However, after going through such severe calamity, we have learned to face the adversity with strong will power and mental toughness. I believe these events have made me grateful for the life I'm living as it taught me about being resilient in times of adverse adversities. I believe natural disasters such as this, enlightens us about the power of our existence and how we should use this power to educate and pass on our learnings to the ones who are less unfortunate to acquire education, like a river flowing from high altitude to low.

We will never have the constant protection of the river banks, but in order for us to make our dream bigger, we have to sail into the vast stretches of ocean to conquer our life and dreams. I owe all my success so far to the valuable time I've spent in nature during my childhood as it has transformed my life into a wild rollercoaster ride. No mountains are too high and no obstacles are too difficult to overcome. Thus, as long as the sun is shining, I will continue learning from nature to stand tall like a mountain.