

2021 International Essay Contest for Young People

【Children's Category – 3rd Prize】

Dazzling Light (Original in Japanese)

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I have a memory from when I was born. Everything around me was dazzlingly bright. The brightness was the radiance of lives yet to be born, all the stars in the universe, and all the souls living in those stars. At that moment, I spoke with another soul. I don't remember who it was. We spoke in the words of fellow souls. It is difficult to put it into Japanese, but I was asked something like, "What kind of life will you be born into?" and I answered what kind of existence I wanted to be, and how I wanted to live.

I was born in order to be happy. One part of my happiness is to live joyfully with my family. Another purpose I have in life is to convey many things to my family. Everyone is born with their own important purpose. That purpose is not always something that others would see as amazing or wonderful.

When I was in grade 1, our class grew morning glory flowers. I wondered if I could talk with the flowers, and I spoke to them often. I felt that the flowers were happily saying, "Thank you." The morning glories made beautiful blossoms, and after producing lots of seed pods, they withered and died. But as they died, they seemed to be smiling happily. Therefore, I felt that they were satisfied with their life.

In grade 3 we grew summer vegetables. The eggplants I grew made blossoms, but they died without producing any fruit. Some of the children cried because the plants died when they were still small, with only two true leaves on them. However, the plants didn't seem to be complaining that they were dying.

For example, when we see a plant that doesn't sprout, we may think that its life ended prematurely. But I see that plant as a life that was able to become a seed. I have no idea what the life purpose of the morning glories or the vegetables might be. But no matter how

small something is or how short its life is, I think everyone and everything accomplishes its purpose.

Human beings seem to unconsciously assume that some lives are worth more or less than others. When I fail at something or I can't do it as well as others, I sometimes think that I'm no good and that the kids who can do it are great. In my life, there are people who get down on themselves, and kids who make fun of others and laugh at them. But actually, I don't think there's any difference in the value of life. At times when we forget this, I want to say over and over, to myself and to everyone, "Everyone is amazing just for being alive!"

I believe that not only human beings and plants, but also animals, the earth, the oceans, rivers, and all living things are of equal value. We tend to favor certain people or think only about what benefits human beings, but I hope we can create a world where everyone cares for each other and all lives coexist together. If all of us can think this way, I believe that we will all be able to see, in this world, the radiance that I saw at the time of my birth. I am sure we can do it. After all, originally, each one of us is radiating dazzling light.