

## **The Power of Dreams**

(Original in Japanese)

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When you hear the words ‘peaceful world,’ what kind of world do you imagine? A world where there is no conflict or poverty, and where no one’s human rights are violated. Many people are taking action on today’s problems in the hopes that such a world will be realized. However, I also think that dreaming of a peaceful world is meaningful in itself. If someone is pushing us or forcing us to solve social problems, our motivation won’t last long. But the power to dream, which is active and voluntary, lasts much longer. The power to dream about the future is the greatest power that young people possess, and it should be the driving force for world peace.

The year before last, I was a member of a Japanese delegation that had the opportunity to discuss social issues with American high school students. All the participants talked about their ideal future. Listening to them, I looked forward to the future that each of them wanted to create, and at the same time, I started to think, “What is my ideal future?” I also felt that I wanted to support them in making their ideal society a reality.

Incidentally, not only do I take part in out-of-school activities myself, but for the past three years I have been active in an organization called The Off-Campus Program Portal. The organization is run entirely by high school students, and provides information on its website about summer programs, internships, competitions, and other activities for high school students. The website also features articles interviewing high school students who are involved in starting businesses, setting up organizations, or conducting research to address social issues—for example, “Myanmar Support Project Established by High School Students” and “What Are High School Students Doing to Spread the Word about Orthostatic Intolerance?”

In other words, these articles are spreading the 'power of dreams' of high school students. In some cases, other students read the articles and are inspired to take action themselves. By spreading the message, we can influence young people who do not yet have their own dream.

Through these experiences, I realized the importance of openly discussing our vision for the future. By sharing our dreams with others, giving each other advice, and encouraging each other, we become more determined to make those dreams come true. Anyone who has a person to talk with or access to the internet can experience this. It takes courage to speak our mind, but if we take the first step, we can potentially influence not only those around us, but people on the other side of the world, and even those who think they have no interest in the subject. If young people recognize this potential, I think the power of dreams will spread to more and more young people. And if young people who share the same dream gather together, it will convey to society that this is public opinion among young people, and we could influence society.

To make this a reality, we need to draw out the power of dreams in more young people. We also need to ensure that young people who are trying to realize their dream don't give up halfway. It is, of course, important for governments and large organizations to reach out to and support young people. But it's even more essential for the young people involved to support each other. This is because large organizations do not necessarily have more influence in communities, or on social media. After all, not just young people but all people tend to resonate with the voices and support of their peers. Creating lots of friends, colleagues, and role models who take the same view of society is a shortcut to spreading the power of dreams.

I, too, would like to share the power of dreams with many young people through my organization, even if the scope is limited to Japan. My own dream is to use theater education to improve the communication, expression, concentration, and imagination of children around the world, and to create a society in which everyone can live their lives in their own way. In order to realize this dream, I would like to take action and become someone who emanates the power of dreams.