

# 2010 International Essay Contest for Young People

## List of Winners

No. of participating countries: 144

No. of entries: 7,216 (Children's category: 3,259 / Youth category: 3,957)

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

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

- *My peaceful world and I: I won't let it be destroyed!*  
Angelina Yudina (Age 10, Russia)

#### Youth category (1 entrant)

- *Journey of All*  
Alline Kabbatende  
(Age 22, Rwanda <Living in U.S.A.>)

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

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

- *The Meaning of Life*  
Chihiro Shiga (Age 10, Japan)
- *My Role in Creating a Peaceful World*  
Olivera Pepic (Age 13, Serbia)

#### Youth category (2 entrants)

- *Through the Passion of One Person*  
Julianne Owens (Age 16, U.S.A.)
- *Of Peace and Spears*  
Violet Bangilan Lucasi  
(Age 24, The Philippines)

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize

#### Children's category (5 entrants)

- Momoi Kikuchi (Age 9, Japan)
- Yumiko Miyashita (Age 13, Japan)
- Rina Yamamoto (Age 13, Japan)
- Abir Khalid Afeef Shadeed  
(Age 14, Autonomous Palestinian Territories)
- Meghana Shukla  
(Age 14, India <Living in U.K.>)

#### Youth category (5 entrants)

- Ayano Dohi (Age 15, Japan)
- Haydn Hsin (Age 16, Taiwan of China)
- Aoi Hirata (Age 16, Japan)
- Khusankhuzha Akramkhuzhaev  
(Age 18, Uzbekistan <Living in Kyrgyzstan>)
- Silvi Syah Putri Lubis  
(Age 24, Indonesia <Living in Singapore>)

### Honorable Mention

#### Children's category (25 entrants)

- Children's category (25 entrants)
- Shinichi Brodbeck (Age 8, Japan & Switzerland <Living in Switzerland>)
- Charlene Tsen Kiaw Lym  
(Age 9, Brunei Darussalam)

#### Youth category (25 entrants)

- Reika Uchimura (Age 15, Japan)
- Krithika Varagur (Age 16, U.S.A.)
- Katsadze Ann (Age 17, Georgia)
- Kim Ye-Ji (Age 17, South Korea)
- Kenzo Kodera (Age 17, Japan)

- Vanessa Villamarín Guerra (Age 9, Ecuador)
- Jun Oyake  
(Age 10, Japan & USA <Living in U.S.A.>)
- Moeka Konagaya (Age 11, Japan)
- Ludjeyn Nazzal (Age 11, Jordan)
- Alexandra Kung  
(Age 12, China <Living in U.S.A.>)
- Hinako Irei (Age 12, Japan)
- Hiroki Kawashima (Age 12, Japan)
- Daniel Magley (Age 12, U.S.A.)
- Nathan Kuchena (Age 12, Zimbabwe)
- Yu Ogata (Age 13, Japan <Living in Bolivia>)
- Saurab Punhani (Age 13, India)
- Nika Nikolac (Age 13, Croatia)
- Vani Kapoor (Age 13, India)
- Kyoka Motoyama (Age 13, Japan)
- Moritz Blum (Age 13, Germany)
- Kana Aizawa (Age 14, Japan)
- Eilene Basu  
(Age 14, India <Living in Malaysia>)
- Ayaka Shirai (Age 14, Japan)
- Yurika Tai (Age 14, Japan)
- Kanako Tabayashi (Age 14, Japan)
- Teo Zhi Yao Samuel (Age 14, Singapore)
- Baraka Y. Lwakila (Age 14, Canada  
<Living in The Czech Republic>)
- Ena Yamasaki (Age 14, Japan)
- Cecilia Xareny Velasco Abarca  
(Age 17, Mexico)
- Marija Topalovic (Age 17, Serbia)
- Ebony Faison (Age 18, U.S.A.)
- Gimeil Odejerte Abuda  
(Age 18, The Philippines)
- Sharie Brown (Age 18, Jamaica)
- Kao Wei Xiang (Age 19, Malaysia)
- Pranay Jain (Age 19, India)
- Ajimufti Azhari (Age 20, Indonesia)
- Avinash Dhital  
(Age 20, Nepal <Living in Finland>)
- Sara Hooker  
(Age 21, Ireland <Living in U.S.A.>)
- Tigran Abovyan (Age 21, Armenia)
- Mohammad Ruhul Kader  
(Age 21, Bangladesh)
- Le Viet Gia Khanh  
(Vietnam <Living in Japan>)
- Gu Sun Young  
(Age 23, South Korea <Living in Japan>)
- Tran Thanh Thuy (Age 23, Vietnam)
- Belal Ahmad (Age 23, Afghanistan)
- María de los Ángeles Lasa (Age 23, Argentina)
- Ian Vergel B. Aagsalda  
(Age 25, The Philippines)
- Ifedigbo Chikwenze Sylva (Age 25, Nigeria)
- Yasmine Khater (Age 25, Egypt & Singapore  
<Living in Singapore>)

### **Best School Award (1 school)**

- Doshisha Junior High School (Japan)

2010 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Children's Category - 1<sup>st</sup> Prize]

## **My Peaceful World and I: I Won't Let It Be Destroyed!**

(Original)

*Angelina Yudina*

*(Age 10, Russia)*

*Language gymnasium No 23, Vladimir*

Dear people of Earth!

Dear children and grown-ups!

My name is Angelina Yudina. I'm ten. I send my most sincere greetings and wishes from the ancient Russian city of Vladimir. My city has a long history. It is more than 1000 years. In the course of the city's life its people had to go through wars and sorrows, hardships and troubles.



As you know, on May 9, 2010 the whole humanity celebrated the 65th anniversary of the end of World War II. The citizens of my city, my family and friends were happy that they have peaceful sky over our Russia. My family has the first-hand knowledge of war. My Granny was born in 1939, and in 1941 her father was missing in action. The family has never heard anything about him since that time. Unfortunately, there are a lot of such families in Russia. It is so terrible when children don't know their fathers, can't play with them or have fun.

I'm scared when I think that somewhere on Earth there are still war operations, that somewhere small children, women and old men still suffer from war! Unfortunately, not everyone thinks so. Very often we hear about terror acts in different places of the world. The world becomes ominous, much grief and many tears appear in it.

I always think over what each of us can do to create a peaceful world. It is interesting and significant that in the Russian language the two meanings—"the Universe, the whole world" and "peace"—are one and the same word. I think we must remember that peace is not a gift

for us, simple people. We must make it ourselves! That's why we need to try to live in peace with everybody and everywhere.

Firstly, everything starts from family. We must try to love each other, to respect wishes of our nearest people. My Mom and Dad never argue. There is always peace and happiness in our house. It is great! I often hear from my classmates that they have argues at home. I think such kids are more aggressive. They don't get used to live in peace and can become those who prevent the world from becoming peaceful. We need to learn how to forgive another man, to hear him.

Secondly, I think that it is necessary to bring up boys and girls correctly. My brother is 20 months. Neither my parents nor I want to buy him such toys as guns! We consider that a man is strong if he has a clever mind and love for his Motherland and family. I wish that when my little brother Herman grows up, he will want to live in a peaceful world.

Thirdly, to my mind a person of today must be vigilant and careful. It is important to be attentive to what is going on around. You can't be indifferent if you see that someone hurts animals or birds, small children or weak people! Your indifference will lead to grief and sorrow. That's why you must be ready to defend weak people, you must not be afraid for yourself, but think of others.

Fourthly, I go to Language gymnasium where all schoolchildren love language. I think that if people know their own language, they can communicate with each other, and if we know other languages we can understand other cultures, travel and make friends with our peers. We all need other languages to create the better world. Besides, there are many examples when we can say a wrong word, and it keeps giving rise to national conflicts and wars. That's why I want to tell all people to be careful with every word! There is a good Russian proverb: "A word is not a sparrow—once it flies from your mouth, you can never get it back!" I wish we tell each other only kind and warm words.

I'd like to thank the organizers of this International Essay Contest! It is my second try to think over such questions which other people don't consider questions at all. For me it's not important who will win. All the participants are already winners because children, who take part in such contests and take care of the future of our Motherland and the planet, can make the world better and kinder. I wish there will be more and more such contests and participants

each year. Only together we can create a peaceful world, and then all of us will live peacefully and happily on the planet.

I'll do my best to make the world to be peaceful forever. I won't let it be destroyed! I call on you, dear people of Earth, to do all your best to live in a peaceful world!

2010 International Essay Contest for Young People  
[Youth Category – 1<sup>st</sup> Prize]

## **Journey of All** (Original)

*Alline Kabbatende*

*(Age 22, Rwanda <Living in U.S.A.>)*

My name is Alline Kabbatende and I am a 22 year old from Rwanda. I just graduated from university in the USA. Every time I tell people where I am from, the first thing to spring to their minds is the 1994 Genocide. It feels like I am yoked heavily to my country's dark past. When I landed in the US for the first time, the immigration officer glanced at my passport and immediately posed the question, "are you Hutu or Tutsi?" My answer was simple, "I am Rwandan."



I did not respond to the officer that way just to avoid deeper questions regarding my experience but because indeed, it has taken me years to come to terms with the fact that I lost a lot of family in the genocide for no sound reason other than that we are Tutsi. I bring this up because I hated Hutus regardless of who they were as individuals. This realization opened my eyes to the fact that I had the capacity to do the same to others and also because I have learned painfully, that my country has no hope of living in peace and harmony until we stop looking through the ethnic lens.

I am one in six billion people worldwide and Rwanda is a minute country and yet to me the reality of what race, color and economic status can do to the fabric of society is flesh and blood—it is lost friends and family. My story is enough to fuel in me a vision of a world whereby race, color, religion and caste are not merely tolerated but openly celebrated; a peaceful and harmonious world will only be one where we choose to discuss our differences with an open mind to learn from one another. Peace might translate into living together in a conflict-free world but harmony will only be possible when diversity is welcomed and not viewed as a threat.

One way to work on this vision is to be open. It is a reality that I have been raised to think that the Hutu is a murderer or that the white man is my oppressor. That is because this has been passed down—drawn from experience of our ancestors—the generations. As impressionable youths, we have fed on these ideologies but we also have the power to change this by opening up and talking about it. Three years ago I sat down with the daughter of a genocide perpetrator and we shared how much we hated each other's ethnic groups. After sharing experiences, we both realized that we are not different at all; we share the same aspirations in life and tastes in chocolate. I have ever since realized the shallowness to profiling people based on race or color, but I am where I am because I confronted my warped views.

Poverty tends to provide fertile breeding ground for conflict and corruption among many things. Economic stability is probably the first step closer to a peaceful, harmonious world. I am an engineer looking forward to a successful career but I also know that I possess the skills to make a difference in my third world nation. I plan to use those skills in a non-profit fashion as a means to be instrumental in the fight against poverty. A rapid ascent out of poverty will take much more than acts of philanthropy but the problem of brain drain—which is draining skill power out of poor nations—is one that cannot be blamed on profiting wealthier nations. It is the responsibility of these young people to realize their power to change the economic situations in their countries and make a choice to enrich their countries and by doing so, enrich themselves.

No one can claim to know the perfect formula for a peaceful and harmonious world. I have come to accept the power of 'one'—my power not only to change myself for the better but by doing so, change those around me. I have felt deep hatred before, and I continue to struggle with prejudices everyday, but the mere effort to pay attention to these feelings have helped me fight and at times, overcome them. That is what my vision really is—a journey, not a destination. We do not know when the entire world will be peaceful and harmonious but as young people, we still have time to make a difference. Investing our energy in living in peace and harmony with our neighbors each day will ensure a better world for our children. We however know there is never enough peace and harmony and they too, will continue this visionary journey.

## **The Meaning of Life**

(Original in Japanese)

*Chihiro Shiga*

*(Age 10, Japan)*

*Hino Dai-go Elementary School, Tokyo*

I know of war only from books and pictures. But there are people close to me who have gone to war—the president and vice president of a Japanese folk song club that I belong to. Both of them are still happily singing songs, but I don't think they ever forget their experiences in the war. The president was badly injured on an assignment to check for land mines on foot. The vice president was supposed to crash his plane on purpose, but the war ended just in time, so he didn't have to do it. I couldn't believe that something so sad could really happen. I think that being forced to throw away your life at someone else's command is the same as not realizing that you have a life at all.

I thought about what we could do to eliminate war. Wars are fought between countries, but it is people who do the fighting. I remembered a time when I got into a fight with my friend at school. It started with some common, trivial thing, and turned into an argument. Both of us said things that we didn't mean to say, and we developed heavy feelings toward each other. Although I have decided not to practice violence, I have been kicked and punched at times. But I do not fight back because I know that if I can take it, even if I get hurt, it will heal. However, fighting with words is different, because when you hurt someone's feelings, it never heals. I don't want to get into either kind of fight. It is easier to be friends with someone than to fight with them. First, you find the other person's good points, and you tell him or her about them. I think that when you do this, both of you will feel better and get along better, and you can understand each other's feelings.

However, that is only when you and the other person speak the same language. With people in a foreign country, the language and culture are different, so it is harder to communicate, I think. We can express ourselves with gestures, but bowing and bringing our hands together to say 'thank you' like we do in Japan may not have the same meaning to the other person. I like



being patted on the head, but I have heard that there are countries where that is not allowed. Different countries also have different foods and different rules around eating. And, the most difficult thing to understand is people's ways of thinking.

It is almost impossible to standardize everything. But, there is no need to make everything the same. This is because, if we make everything the same, countries will lose their individual cultures.

I am learning folk songs and kendo (Japanese fencing). They are both Japanese cultural traditions. Cultural traditions are handed down from a country's history, so I think they show a country's unique qualities. I am sure that people in all countries value their traditions. Therefore, I think that if we share the things we value with one another, we will become friends, and wars will not take place.

I think it would be great if people around the world could care for others, learning their languages, cultures, histories, gestures, and so on.

I would like to become friends with people from all over the world. And, I hope that together, we can discover that there is meaning to our precious life.

## **My Role in Creating a Peaceful World**

(Original)

*Olivera Pepic*

*(Age 13, Serbia)*

*Primary School "Jovan Popovic"*

Constantly I hear people claiming that "they have found themselves." However, I don't believe that you can magically and suddenly realize who you really are and what your purpose on this earth is. Nobody can be changed in a day and the world can't be changed in a day as well. We don't try hard enough to change ourselves and we don't try hard enough to save our beautiful planet and the people who inhabit it. It is hard to imagine, but every individual's attempt is very important. In order to make the world more peaceful, harmonious and better place, we have to start from ourselves and to change our behaviour. We have to learn how to become conscience-driven individuals, instead of being selfish self-promoters and social climbers.

It is my belief that one "finds himself" by living one's life. Through everyday experiences, whether it is the people I meet, or through the challenges I face on a day-to-day basis, I think that self is not something I will find, but something I will create. I have personal ethics and morals, and I try to live my life by these values. When I come across a decision I have to make, I contemplate my morals and ethics and make my decision based on what is deemed the right thing. In my opinion, we should all be kind, honest and caring individuals and that is the type of person I strive to be. In my mind, helping others and living our lives to the best of our ability is all we can do and then hope for the best. Becoming a better person is all I can ask for, and if I continue doing what I think is better not only for me, but for all the people around me, I will contribute to the creation of more peaceful world.

When I was in the first grade, I saw a tiny girl from my class who looked very frightened. As I was walking, I saw a bunch of kids running towards her, and tripping her, so she fell in the dirt. Her glasses went flying and landed on the grass. She looked up and I noticed terrible sadness in her eyes. My heart went out to her. So I approached the little girl and as she crawled around looking for her glasses, I said, "Those kids are real cowards and losers." She looked at me.

There was a big smile on her face. It was one of those smiles that showed genuine gratitude. Her name was Sophia. We talked all the way home, and I carried her bag. She turned out to be a really nice child. I asked her if she wanted to come to my house and meet my family. The more I got to know Sophia, the more I liked her, and we became best friends. We were in the fourth grade, and we had to write for homework an essay about kindness. When our teacher asked who wanted to read the essay, Sophia raised her arm, stood up and read her essay. She was reading about our friendship and how I had helped her when those children attacked her. She wrote that she would perhaps have become rude and violent like those children if I hadn't showed my kindness. And she also said that my compassion and generosity changed her life. When she finished reading, she looked at me and gave me a grateful smile. Not until this moment did I realize its depth. And I also understood something crucial: "Never underestimate the power of kindness." Your actions can make a lot of positive changes. With one small gesture you can change a person's life, for better or for worse. The universe puts us all in each other's lives to impact one another in some way.

Whenever I think about Sophia, I remember my favourite poem written by Emily Dickinson. And I repeat these words, which I know by heart almost every day:

If I can stop one heart from breaking  
I shall not live in vain  
If I can ease one life from aching  
Or cool one pain  
Or help one fainting robin  
Into his nest again  
I shall not live in vain

This beautiful poem is about gentleness, compassion and caring. And therein lies the instinct for our survival. Everyone can make this world more peaceful place if he/she loves and supports others in a positive, healthy way. It takes effort, but the reward is enormous. Kindness is the energy that sustains who and what we are and the very essence and core of our being. Without it there is no peace and no light.

**Through the Passion of One Person**  
(Original)

*Julianne Owens*  
(Age 16, U.S.A.)  
*Coquille High School*

September 11, 2001: Two high-jacked commercial airplanes crashed into the heart of New York City. The death toll: Over 2500. An estimated 3000 children lost a parent in the attacks and over 1500 people lost a spouse. Twenty-six days later the first American bomb was dropped on Afghanistan triggering the start of the Iraq/Afghanistan war.

Nine years later, Americans harbor feelings of bitterness and fear towards not only the terrorists responsible for this tragedy, but the entire Muslim community. Muslim soldiers and terrorists are portrayed in the news as cruel, heartless, and dangerous people. This minority falsely represents all Muslims to many Americans leaving them with an erroneous perception of Muslim morals.

Several years ago I pondered these problems and realized that far more than an ocean stood between the Muslim world and America. The years of war and tension had created a wall between the two cultures. This wall blocks out the faces standing on the other side; it hides personality and character, misleading people to believe that they are completely different, lacking any reason to come together. The wall has no official name. Some call it fear; others say it is resentment, while still others label it grief. Yet the effects are identical.

I felt compelled to scale the wall, regardless of the effort required, and see for myself exactly how different—or similar—the two cultures were. Research, while helpful in learning, could not provide the understanding and love necessary to share powerfully with my community. Achieving such a passion was only possible through firsthand knowledge. To effect change, I needed to experience the Muslim culture and transform my ever-growing desire for cultural understanding into a reality.

On August 6th, 2009, at age 15, I traveled half way around the world as an exchange student to a country nestled deep in the Middle East—Oman. With a 99% Muslim population, Oman's cultural differences were enormous and visible immediately. I stepped off the plane and tried to absorb the breathtaking moment, watching as traditionally dressed Omani men and women walked by in dishdashas and abiyas, a steady conversation of Arabic flowing between them. I felt open-minded and enthusiastic, eager to learn the traditions, culture, and lifestyle of my host community as well as share with them my own culture and customs.

I knew the experience would open my eyes; I hoped it would open my heart; I was amazed at how it changed my life. I was inspired by the dedication of everyone around me, even children as young as ten, during the Muslim's holy month of Ramadan, as they fasted from sunrise to sunset each day for a month. Extended families gathered each night to celebrate the completion of another day while breaking the fast. The month that I had anticipated being a month of grumbling and weariness instead became a month of love, kind-heartedness, and family bonding. The days I fasted with them, they commended me, proud to see me striving to fully integrate into their culture. On the days I refrained, they understood, and rather than judging or ignoring me, they made every effort to keep me comfortable and content—their love and kindness not only fanned, but ignited a small flame into a burning passion to pursue my dream of cultural understanding and, ultimately, peace.

Returning to America, I felt I had accomplished all I set out to learn. Yet the real task—the most difficult part of my goal, remained before me. Sharing my experiences with those around me was a priority from the moment I returned, and while many eagerly listened, others' interest faded quickly. As I fielded questions from community leaders, church parishioners, and peers at school, I shared the little known love, generosity, and hospitality that is prevalent in the Muslim culture. My passion was alive and through it I dispelled the stereotypes held by many. I felt I had begun to chip away at a small part of the daunting wall within my home community.

A wall that has taken decades to construct does not come crashing down in a matter of weeks due to the passion of one person. But through the passion of one person one class can be inspired. The inspiration of one class is sufficient to motivate one school. The motivation of one school can drive one community to take action. The action of one community can transform one state. The transformation of one state can become the foundation of one nation devoted to pursuing peace. Through the devotion of one nation, one world can become dedicated to

breaking down walls that have separated people far too long, and begin to look beyond race, religion, or nationality, and see someone for his or her character, personality, and individual qualities.

"Through the passion of one person..."

## **Of Peace and Spears** (Original)

*Violet Bangilan Lucasi*  
(Age 24, The Philippines)

*"We need to favor an education that... fosters a complex understanding of the world and its people, that educates and refines the capacity for sympathy. In short, an education that cultivates human beings rather than producing useful machines. If we do not insist on the crucial importance of the humanities and the arts, they will drop away. They don't make money. But they do something far more precious: they make a world worth living in."*

*- Martha Nussbaum*

### **A Different Kind of War**

Tornos.

That is how my people call the peace between two tribes after a war. I am of an indigenous tribe from the Northern Mountains of the Philippines. Our breathtaking terraces and virgin forests served as backdrop to centuries of animism and head-hunting. Our culture is rooted in a history of vengeful tribal wars. Both young and old were trained to sharpen their spears and prepare for battles. Peace, for us was more than a word. It was life for a life, blood for blood and land for land.

Today, my people are enjoying the harmony achieved by peace-pacts which our forefathers honored through the years. We have put our spears to rest and took advantage of the guaranteed safe travels beyond our territories. We have welcomed modernism and embraced formal education as hope for a better life.

However, a different kind of war is raging in the hearts of tribal youths today—the war of growing insecurities and diminishing self-worth brought about by the strong ethnic bias in the Philippines. Growing up, I have been desensitized by the derogatory treatments of us. I endured years of humiliating "mountain-people" jokes. Our dances, native attires and

"strange" rituals are mere amusements for others. Furthermore, we are given least priority by the government mainly because roads do not reach us. In the end, we remain detached and isolated, nursing our wounds of pity.

### **The Tribal Youth**

My parents settled in the lowlands to mentor tribal students coming down to study in college. Our house became a home to youths who dreamt of academic degrees and good-paying jobs. Sadly, I have witnessed stories of shattered dreams just because the ethnic youth does not have what it takes to compete with the outside world.

While parents toil hard in their rice fields to provide school fees, the children try hard to fit in to the lowland lifestyle—hip clothes, fluent English, proficient computer skills and exceptional grades. What does one expect from them who grew up in rice paddies and lamp oils?

The saddest stories are of those who graduate, get married and go back home to the mountains hoping that their children live a better life.

### **The Arts as Resolution**

These stories gave me a burden to help. Being a Creative Writing (Drama) student, I formed a theatre group comprised of tribal youth who long to break their bondages of insecurities. There is perhaps no more powerful tool than drama and the arts to teach the youth the attitude and values needed to face this harsh changing world. Thus, the birth of THREADS team.

I spent months building a safe environment for them to express themselves without fear of rejection or being branded uncivilized. I taught them things I knew—dances, mimes and drama. In pretending to be someone else, they discovered a little more of themselves. What I learn in school I passed on to them, challenging them to explore their creativity and discover their worth. Through tears and cheers, I learned with them. In the circle of fellow natives, we found strength.

For almost 5 years now, we have gone from tribe to tribe inspiring fellow youth to rise above mediocrity and make a difference in their societies. We went from one city to another to show



the outside world that we are more than the people they see in post cards and tourist manuals.

### **The battle to fight**

Indeed, the constant pressures and demands of society results to a depressing unrest in the hearts of the youth. A psychological war is being fought each day as one seeks to answer the deepest question of his heart—Do I have what it takes?

A harmonious world is a world of people at peace with themselves. The youth's role in this generation is not to change the world but to change one's heart. Eventually, a person who has conquered his war of self-worth will not rest until he helps others achieve such peace too.

Warriors don't fight battles alone. They survive because they have someone to fight with them and watch their backs. Together, let us re-sharpen our spears and fight this war to restore our dignities. Start with what you know, with what you have and in where you are right now.

That is tornos, today.



*Tribe to Tribe*

*City to City*

## **For a Peaceful, Harmonious World**

(Original in Japanese)

*Momoi Kikuchi*

*(Age 9, Japan)*

*Shishiori Elementary School, Kesenuma, Miyagi*

I think that the nature of human beings is not to be concerned about others. If we don't like someone, we immediately criticize them and exclude them from our group. On the other hand, when we are feeling good about ourselves, we brag a lot, and we make fun of others without considering their feelings.

In my third term of grade 3, my friends started to ignore me. We were supposed to prepare each other's tooth-brushing cups, but everyday, my cup alone was left on the rack.

"Not again..." I would think, holding back my sadness. There was nothing I could do, so I would go get water by myself and be late. But one day, when I couldn't bear it anymore, I went crying to my mother.

I discussed it with her, and decided to ask my good friend Hiyori why I was being treated that way. At first, Hiyori was silent, but then, slowly, she said:

"Momo, you stare meanly at people. And you're always telling people off with harsh words. You should be a little nicer."

My tears would not stop. I had hurt everyone. I was really sorry.

Starting the next day, I decided to try my best to do three things: I would not stare at my friends, I would say I was sorry, and I would be kind to others without wanting anything in return.

I had a strong ally in Hiyori. On top of telling me the truth, she would pull my sleeve in class whenever I had a bad attitude. Therefore, I was able to do my best.

Thanks to her help, my classmates started to include me, and now I am enjoying my school life.

This has made me realize something. It is possible for people to live with concern for others. Learning from Hiyori's thoughtfulness, I was able to be thoughtful myself.

As I have changed, I have noticed when people around me are treated unfairly, like when my friend is teased for something about her physical appearance or something she is not good at. When we think we are better, we put others down. When my friends are teased, they all look down without saying anything.

Recently, I saw a terrible article in the newspaper. It was an article about a boy in grade 9 who committed suicide. What surprised me was the reason he did it—he couldn't help his friend who was being bullied.

What a kind person he must have been. He valued his friends more than himself. How terrible for a person like that to commit suicide, I thought.

If this boy had had an ally like I did, who gave him even a little strength, he might not have taken his life.

For me, a 'peaceful, harmonious world' is a world without bullying and discrimination, where everyone shows concern for others. To create this kind of world, I would like to become an ally for someone else. I want to find someone who needs help and softly call out to them.

Now, I am only getting help from my friends. There are many things I am not very good at, so I get a hand from my kind friends. But, I cannot help them in return.

My mother told me, "You can help them with things that you are good at." Hmm... I like reading aloud and writing essays, so I could help them with those things.

Starting tomorrow, I will do my best! I will return all the favors they have done for me. But I mustn't forget: smile, be kind, and be polite.

## **Knocking on the Door to the Heart**

(Original in Japanese)

*Yumiko Miyashita*

*(Age 13, Japan)*

*Doshisha Junior High School, Kyoto*

"Please help us raise money for refugees affected by conflicts and famine."

When I was in elementary school, I participated in YMCA fundraising activities. During that time, I listened to a talk by a doctor who was volunteering in Afghanistan. He told us that the children in Afghanistan were happy to use the pencils that we would have thrown away because they were too small and hard to use. With the money that we use to buy drinks from vending machines, they could buy vaccines to save many people's lives, and new pencils and notebooks for children who wanted to study. I was shocked to hear that small amounts of money and things that meant little to us were so valuable in Afghanistan, which is part of the same Asian continent. In Japan, we can get what we want, we can study, and we can freely pursue our interests and our chosen professions. I realized that such a peaceful way of life is not a matter of course. In Afghanistan, not only because of poverty, but also due to terrorism, land mines, and war, there are children who cannot receive an education or live the life that they wish for.

What is needed? Is there anything we can do? One idea is to ask people who live there, or people who are working and volunteering there. However, some of the people who have gone to help out in Afghanistan are getting killed—a young Japanese person working in agricultural development was kidnapped and his remains were later found, and another person working as a doctor was killed in a suicide bombing. Also, people without jobs or education are getting involved in suicide bombings and kidnappings in order to make money.

It is important to provide money and supplies for education and medical care in countries like Afghanistan. However, money and supplies alone cannot restore a heart that has lost the will to make one's dreams come true.

In our fundraising campaign, a lot of people passed us by, but some people helped out by putting in a thousand-yen note [similar to a ten-dollar bill], and some foreign tourists donated, too. As a result, we collected nearly 300,000 yen [about \$3,000] in one day. If we had asked wealthy people, we might have collected this much money very quickly. But, by taking the trouble to ask strangers on a main street, we were raising awareness among people who are living in peace and abundance—and therefore are normally indifferent—that they, too, could do something.

In junior high school, I took part in a program called 'The World's Biggest Lesson.' On the same day, students in various countries around the world all took a lesson on the subject of poverty. Children in poor countries who have taken this class have learned that there are people who understand their situation. This gave them emotional support, and some of them have stood up to take action on their own.

Wealthy, peaceful countries and poor, unsafe countries—the two seem far apart. But through exchanges like the World's Biggest Lesson, we shine a light of hope and help to bring them closer together. As each of us takes action to become aware of the realities, we can spread this feeling to open the hearts of people in both rich countries and poor countries. If we start by knocking on the door of each person's heart, I believe we will come closer to a peaceful world. And, I think it is important for us and people who are directly involved in aid activities to put our feelings into action in a way that will be understood and accepted by people with different ways of thinking.

It may not turn out as we intend right away. But, we cannot give up. Relating to the situations in poor, unsafe countries and taking action means reflecting on our own wastefulness, taking a second look at ourselves and thinking about what we can do on our part.

## **Knowing the State of the World**

(Original in Japanese)

*Rina Yamamoto*

*(Age 13, Japan)*

*Fuji Sacred Heart Junior High School, Shizuoka*

The photograph showed a small boy, all skin and bones with his ribs showing, his eyes open wide, and a sad expression on his face. In my grade 3 class, many students were not eating all of their school lunch, so our homeroom teacher talked to us about how many children in the world are suffering from hunger. At the time, I didn't know much about the state of the world, but from the day I saw the photograph, I tried to finish all of my school lunch, treating every last grain of rice as precious. Now, I am in junior high school, and we have one 'economy lunch' day each month, where we give up our side dishes to raise money for countries that are less fortunate. Also, I am in a group called the Warm Heart Committee. We learn about the conditions in poor countries and places that have suffered damage from tsunamis and earthquakes, and we do things like planning fundraisers and sending supplies. For my integrated learning project at school, the topic that I chose and researched was "The World's Children." Through these activities, my attention has become more focused on the outside world, and I have been eager to know more and learn more about the state of the world.

Just the other day, I watched a television program about life in a village in Uganda, a developing country. In this village, there is no running water, or even well water. Because of this, the children start their day early in the morning, traveling over an hour each way to fetch water. They have to go three times every day. However, this water that they travel an hour each way to get is what we would consider 'mud'—it is so dirty that we would never think of using it for drinking. But for the people of that village, it is valuable drinking water that they use for drinking, cooking, washing dishes, and bathing. They treat every drop of the water as precious. It was hard to believe such a sight. I could never have imagined that conditions for water could be so bad. If you asked me to drink that water, there is no way I could do it. I had the urge to send the tap water that we use every day to these children in Uganda. The program described how a professional well digger from Japan was teaching the young people

in this village how to dig wells, step by step, in order to improve their lives. Both the well digger and the village youth looked very earnest. After several days of digging together, water came splashing up out of the well, and I felt joy along with them. I was truly happy.

After that, a professional oven maker arrived from Japan. Among the children who go to school, many of them cannot afford to bring lunch with them. At the request of the school teachers, who wanted to make school lunch for everyone, a professional oven maker came from Japan to build an oven where they could cook in large pots to make school lunch. Using materials from the land, he made bricks and showed the young people the way to make an oven, conveying to them the techniques and pride in his work that he had developed over many years. When the oven was finished, the mothers of the school children contributed ingredients and cooked a school lunch. Watching the expressions of the children as they ate it, I myself learned many things.

Up until then, I had been thinking that raising money and sending supplies was a way to provide aid. However, such temporary support does not solve the problem. I learned this from the TV program. And, I felt proud of those Japanese craftsmen. It is really wonderful, I think, to use your area of expertise for the good of the world. I was deeply moved by the way the craftsmen not only taught their skills, but wholeheartedly conveyed the detailed knowledge they had gained through many years of experience.

Money and supplies alone are just temporary measures. I was reminded that the kind of support people need is in learning the skills to produce their own food and make their own goods, so that they can live by their own means. With a broader perspective, I am starting to see things that I had not been able to see before. I strongly felt that I, too, would like to become skilled in a particular field and be able to help someone in the future. For this reason, I want to try all kinds of things and search for what I am good at.



## **My Role in Creating a Peaceful World**

(Original)

*Abir Khalid Afeef Shadeed*

*(Age 14, Autonomous Palestinian Territories)*

*Zanoubia Girls School, West Bank*

It's hard to say what my role in creating a peaceful world should be. The main reason is that I am only one person. However, looking at the history of the world, a single person can make a difference. Many great events in history had a kind of hero behind them—and eventually save the day. I am now going to show what I am able to achieve as an individual or rather what I could.

I tend to agree with the saying: "If you ain't got it, you can't give it." I think this is true in many respect, especially when one talks about contribution to world peace. It all starts from the peace one has within before being able to influence others whether individuals or groups.

Therefore, I made my first objective to create and establish inner-peace for myself. I know if I have the power to manage difficult situations, I should be able to resolve them instead of allowing them to affect me or others in a negative way.

I firmly believe that being positive is quite important in creating tranquillity and peace for many people. Positivity makes everyone happy. What I mean is that if I am positive, then it will rub off on everyone around me in some way, especially on my family, relatives and close friends.

Many relatives understand each other—even in conflicts. Mine do. Sometimes, my older sister picks a fight with me. However, I normally react by staying calm and respond with a smile. It seems to work in a magical way. I do feel so peaceful afterwards as I find that my positive reaction saved the day. Not only that, but when I see my sister calming down, I feel even happier and closer to her. I think such action contributes to create a peaceful little world

around my family. By the way, I sometimes accept the fight and fight back, I guess, at that point, she wins.

When I first joined my current school, I did not know anyone there. It is hard to explain how vulnerable I felt. It was not easy, but eventually I made friends within two weeks. One of my new friends was extra special; she was my English teacher. Thereafter my relationship with my friends at school grew and we became best friends. Truly, good friends can make life much peaceful.

Life at school can be challenging, but it could also be enjoyable and rewarding. It is up to us how we deal with these challenges though. Our actions sometimes have far reaching consequences on our lives and that of the people around.

One of the biggest challenges I discovered in my school was the sad discovery of the problem of bullying. I knew that I had to do something about it as I had suffered from bullying in my previous school. I realized that, in order to be effective, I need my friends (yes, that includes my English teacher too) to share me in the effort. As a team, we set out a plan to deal with and reduce bullying in our school and/or rid our school completely from it, thus create a peaceful environment we all aspire to.

The first thing we did is to meet with the head teacher and senior staff in the school to ensure we get their support. Secondly, we had to agree a plan of action that includes: awareness and publicity phase, implementation phase, and finally assessment phase where the plan is evaluated.

The result: After nearly a year of work, our school now enjoys an advanced position in the school table for academic achievement. It also became very popular. Most important is that our students are becoming much happier.

Our best success story came from a girl in year 8 called Amina. Before our Anti-bullying project, Amina was taken to hospital for swallowing an overdose because of bullying. She told us she had no one to turn to then.

Amina is now the star of our Anti-bullying project—not only in our school—but in our city and county. She gave many talks to children about bullying and how to deal with it. By the way, Amina's name was also given to this project since it means literally 'peace and tranquil.'

In conclusion, I think contribution to peace in the world is within reach for all of us if we truly have the desire to take part. After achieving inner peace, the circle of one's contribution to world peace then grows larger and spreads much easier. It is also important to deal with the many challenges within our little worlds. It is not easy, but with commitment, patience and love, we can create peace for ourselves, within our families, schools, neighbourhood and even cities.

## **My Role in Creating a Peaceful World**

(Original)

*Meghana Shukla*

*(Age 14, India <Living in U.K.>)*

When this essay is read, a new force in humanity will be born. We will not only see the definition of peace, but feel a depth in the very pits of our hearts—not for the country, not for the race or religion, but for this planet with land and sea which we call Earth. A new generation of life—the youth of today, has the full potential to see this vision of a peaceful world and implement it to begin this Cultural Revolution.

I live a life in an environment where violence is rare, intimidation is scarce, and racial tension is low. This is my small bubble of life—my school, my house, and my seldom trips to the high street. Yet, I am informed by the media of the extreme violence elsewhere—wars, crime and corruption—although the question of why is not within my understanding. I am often asked to take it as a way of life; some are born to be in that situation and others are not. But if this is the natural justice in the world, then this is not my world.

I see peace as a safe place which many have been left out of. Whether it is because of political issues or the high school social system, it does not matter. Before we try to practice peace at a global scale, we must first begin with the thing within us, our minds. If we see a world in my vision, we will have a chance to experience a global dream. I see the world as matter. And we know matter is made of atoms. However, if all atoms vibrate at the same frequency, the face of the matter can change entirely. If humans were these atoms which vibrate together to form not a physical, but a psychological world, we do not know yet what we can achieve. Many may call this a phenomenon or a God, but I call it peace.

All of us, you, me and your family are atoms. Although different, we build the same compound world. We were born into this compound world at some point and we will inevitably leave it. It is what we do during our life, or rather, at what frequency we think which can change our world. If for instance we greet our neighbours every morning, exchange short conversations

followed by a 'thank you' with the ticket man we see in the train, talk or listen to someone from work or school who you don't usually acknowledge, it can make the difference. It is a gift of relations and kindness which we must practise in our everyday lives. We can try to meet a senior citizen and a child every month and bring warmth to their lives. In our spare time, we can do charity work instead of going shopping. The list can go on.

We are mostly in risk of danger by a person we see every day. If everybody in the world knew their neighbours, the people they see every day well, there would be no crime, wars or negativity in the world. It is a psychological phenomenon that these few conversations can create friendliness. Soon, with such interactions, we can understand why some people think in a different way and soon we will be able to infiltrate an angry individual's mind and fill it with happiness. Diversity in thinking is important; however it is even more important to understand diversity than to just see it.

Peace has now been portrayed as an idealistic cliché. However, if it is not realised soon, these seemingly quiet times will resemble the quiet before a storm. We have seen wars in the past, and now that the world is starting to settle down, it is the time for the peaceful movement. Soon, we will need no government as the body of the people will govern themselves. Soon poverty will not exist as this body of people will suffer from unimaginable guilt if it does. Soon this world will be peaceful and we will be a part of it.

This exciting new era is upon us now, and the young generation of today will change the face of the world tomorrow.

**To Connect**  
(Original in Japanese)

*Ayano Dohi*  
(Age 15, Japan)

*Kagoshima Gyokuryu Senior High School, Kagoshima*

When I was in my third year of junior high school [age 14 for most students], I went to Miami, USA, through a municipal program called the Youth Wing. Of course, I wanted to improve my English and to see how native English is used in daily life, but I also had a larger aim: to make friends around the world. I went to Miami to meet friends who were brought up in another culture.

In Miami, I stayed at the home of a girl named Melissa. At first, we were nervous around each other, but soon we felt more relaxed and talked about all kinds of things. To help each other learn, I spoke English and Melissa spoke Japanese. A few days later, I went with Melissa to her high school. I was very confused by the different school customs in the United States, and felt very nervous. Because of this, when Melissa introduced me to her friends, I could barely even say my own name, let alone communicate with them.

A little while after that, I attended Melissa's Japanese class. A lot of the students in the class were interested in Japan and other countries. In the classroom, there was a daruma doll, a paper lantern, a Japanese flag, and various other things. For that day's class, we translated various English sentences into Japanese, and also into Kagoshima dialect. In the beginning, I was still nervous, but when the students started asking, "How do you say this?" and telling me, "Kagoshima dialect is interesting," I felt happy, and told them many things about myself and Japanese culture, and especially about Kagoshima. Even if I didn't know a certain word, I didn't look it up in the dictionary right away. With an attitude of "I want to speak," I tried my best, and I was able to communicate. Even if I made grammatical mistakes, as long as I had this attitude, I was able to say what I wanted to say and to ask what I wanted to ask.

These days, many countries are involved in wars merely because of religious issues and cultural differences. Japan, the country where I live, is presently at peace. Therefore, I honestly cannot understand the situations in countries that are always at war. However, I would like to know more about these countries. And, I hope that they will learn more about each other. I believe that our desire to listen to what others have to say turns into the desire to learn, and the desire to learn turns into the desire to understand and appreciate. Then, we will no longer do to others the things we do not want done to us.

I realized something in Miami. Even if we come from different countries and cultures, people are all the same. We may have different skin colors or eye colors, but we all laugh in the same way, and we all possess kindness. I was also reminded of something I had learned before. That is, regardless of whether someone is male or female, we should respect him or her as an individual.

World peace will not be realized if we are concerned only about ourselves and our own country. Our skin color is different, our eye color is different, our religion is different, our customs are different... The world is filled with things that are different. And yet, it is also true that this world is made possible because of such differences. If all people in the world spoke the same language and had the same religion and culture, then there might not be any conflicts. But, if the world were like that, we could not learn from each other. We could not grow as individuals. The world is filled with things that are different. But at the same time, it is our differences and our diversity that sustain our growth. To be different from someone, I think, is part of this diversity.

Therefore, I hope to always have the big-heartedness to learn, understand, and appreciate others. I think that when we greet the world in this spirit, the 'circle of peace' is sure to grow.

## **The Power of Youth for Bringing Peace to the World**

(Original)

*Haydn Hsin*

*(Age 16, Taiwan of China)*

*Taipei European High School*

I remember my first ever birthday gift came when I was five years old. It was a gift from my mother, a kaleidoscope. I looked through the scope with wonder; it all seemed like a fantasy world to me where objects could duplicate themselves nine times and stand upside down. Those days were the very first time that I saw the small world around me in a contrasting view.

It was when I turned fifteen years old that I entered my current international school in a mountain on the edge of Taipei and developed my other passions and viewed the world in a much more different and unique aspect. I got in contact with one of my extracurricular activities, the film club. There I found this gift from my school, a Panasonic 1080 Full HD video camera. It was a very different challenge comparing to my previous experience in photography, when the art transforms from stills to fast motions. Nonetheless, I learned to proceed ahead with the scenes and acts on stage as I mature and progress with this developing world. Whilst filming has slowly grown to be a part of the routine in life, my involvement in the Model United Nations kept me preoccupied. It is the conference simulation of the modern-day organization that represents peace and prosperity. In these conferences, delegates from around the world transform from normal high school students to young politicians who aim to bring greater peace to this world. It was also the time that I perceived the potential we hold as global citizens of the future and the possible changes we could bring. Generating resolutions and simulating debates while representing a foreign nation has taught me to view our society under a totally different approach than through the lens of the cameras, and to appreciate the diverse culture and varying stances of different nations in the world I live in.



Yet it was not until an occasion on a service project trip to a local organization called the 'Harmony Home' that I finally realized how much difference I could truly make. The organization provides shelter and care for young children who inherited HIV/AIDS. On our visit, I carried out my accustomed job of capturing the children's activities in the shelter using the camera. After returning to school, I started the editing process for a short video reviewing of our trip. It was five minutes long and was played in front of the whole school at the end of a final assembly. The CEO put his glasses back on; teachers halted their conversations and noisy chatters amongst the middle school students that continued for most part of the assembly died away as the video started. Standing in front of the whole school, I abruptly noticed that I actually represented India in the Human Rights Council in a previous MUN conference and chose to tackle the issue of 'raising global awareness towards HIV/AIDS in developing countries', and realizing that I was actually sitting there, utilizing my specialty in filming to fulfill what I wrote on my resolution and putting it into action through the camera and the mass media. Afterwards, the video was broadcasted in several corporations in Taipei as part of our fundraising plan. The fifty-two of us who carried out the project raised four hundred thousand dollars for Harmony Home and helped it become a foundation that would ensure the wellbeing of many more who suffered from HIV/AIDS.

From the five-minute session during the assembly, I finally understood what kind of changes young people like me could make to promote peace and extinguish conflicts in our world. After the assembly, I realized that it is my role and responsibility to make full use of my camera and its related technology to alter the misconception, fear and unease people had with HIV/AIDS. Additionally, through MUN, I learned to appreciate the diverse cultures and humanities of other nations in our world and recognized that it provides me with a tolerant attitude towards disagreements and a compassionate heart towards feared subjects like HIV/AIDS. I see that every young person in the world has specialties; for me it is filming. But it is not possible for every young person to participate in the Model United Nations. With the power of youth, I see the hope and fulfillment for the establishment of an innovative global platform of dialogue and conversation to engage more youths like myself into working together towards resolving misunderstanding, distrust and conflicts in our world by making full use of the specialties we have in common. I see it happening, and with the guidance from elder generations, youths around the world would join together to ensure the peace and prosperity of the world we live in, and the descendents of ours, for it is us who shape the world that we know and it is our responsibility to bring peacefulness.

## **Our First Step to Creating World Peace**

(Original in Japanese)

*Aoi Hirata*

*(Age 16, Japan)*

*Toyo Eiwa Jogakuin Senior High School*

With each passing year, there are fewer Japanese people who know the terror, the tragedy, and the meaninglessness of war. I imagine that the number of young people in Japan who know this reality is extremely small. Perhaps this is because Japan is not involved in a war at present. Perhaps they think that wars do not break out very easily. I think the reason why Japanese people today do not feel concerned about an impending war is that they are only interested in political battles and their own disputes over money. They have no time to turn their attention to the outside world. No matter how much the world's nations may try to build a peaceful world, it is meaningless if the representatives from Japan are not able to listen to what they have to say. Then, what can young people do? The answer is that we need to convey to as many people as possible what war is really like. As I stated earlier, today's youth do not know the terror of war. Actually, just two weeks ago, I myself did not know, either. I thought of war as something from the past, and had only a vague sense of how terrible it is. But recently, on a school trip to Nagasaki, I came to know the reality of war.

Nagasaki was the site of an atomic bomb explosion. In Nagasaki, we listened to the stories of people who were victims of the bomb. And along with the stories, we were shown photographs. The photographs taken just after the bomb fell were so brutal, I instinctively covered my face with my hands. It gave me the opportunity to know firsthand the terror of the atomic bomb. And I keenly felt: war is my concern, too.

Among the many monuments in Nagasaki's Peace Park, the one that left the greatest impression on me was a stone monument in which part of a girl's diary is engraved. On it is written something like this: There was something oily floating on river's surface, but I was so desperately thirsty, I drank it just as it was. I was shocked—that a girl not far off in age from

us could have such an experience, and that war could cause such hardship even for a young girl.

My experiences in Nagasaki made me think about how to achieve world peace. And now, I hope that as many as possible of the young people who bear responsibility for the future will think about whether or not war is needed. What I would like them to know, first of all, is the meaninglessness of war. War takes away our homes. It takes away the people we love. Negotiations can be held again and again, but we cannot restore the lives that were lost and give them life again. And, those who survive must also experience day after day of pain and suffering. How can people be allowed to make other people unhappy? Because everyone has different ways of thinking, we cannot keep conflicts from breaking out. However, people do not have the right to kill other people. If we know the consequences of war, we will have all the more reason not to wage war. For those of us who have awakened to the meaninglessness of war, it is our duty to let even one more person know that there are people who treat even the smallest life as precious.

It is the same with other matters, too. In this vast universe, there is only one planet Earth. Even if we live in different countries, we are all inhabitants of this Earth, and therefore, we all have an equal right to live in peace. The question of how to bring peace to a world that is not entirely peaceful is now in the hands of us young people.

On my visit to Nagasaki, I learned about the realities of war. And, I realized something—that knowing the realities of war is the first step to creating peace in the world. If many people take even this small step forward, it will lead to great progress. And, if we all join hands, we can form a large circle. In order to create this large circle as soon as possible, we must each resolve to take a step forward.

## **My Role in Creating a Peaceful World**

(Original)

*Khusankhuzha Akramkhuzhaev*

*(Age 18, Uzbekistan <Living in Kyrgyzstan>)*

*Saidulla Akbarov #16*

Having finished my freshman year in AUCA (American University of Central Asia) this summer, on May 26th I came to US with Work and Travel Program. It is a dreamland people say sometimes and that fire of dream has also flashed in my heart all the way on the plane till I came to New York City. These dreams of having a better future by earning enough money for my study have become a key for me to open a door. Opening that door I have found only five letters—P E A C E—each of which has bolstered my will to struggle for a peaceful live.

I am ethnically Uzbek but live in Kyrgyzstan where millions of Uzbeks are still suffering from the recent killing and burning of the people who are ethnically Kyrgyz people in military clothes. As I study at the AUCA I need to pay around \$2500 yearly so I decided to come to US this summer and earn money for my next year tuition. It is a big money in Central Asia especially in the situation of my family. My family live in the village of the city called Jalal-abat in Kyrgyzstan and run a small business which feeds my whole family consisting of seven people. But as I learned English on my own at home and entered the university with my own strength, my family decided and somehow managed to pay for the 1st year of my study.

Recently, there was a flood in my village which caused the only source of my family's finance to stop. My family had to close the candy shop due to the destruction brought by flood. But I had not known about it until I come to my village to see my family before going to US. That was the other reason for me to come to US and work hard.

However, after hearing the ethnic killings of Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan, all of my energies and will to work have gone. All of my thoughts were occupied with the worries of my family. I could see nothing then—no future, no peace. Everything seemed to happen only with power and violence. My heart was full of revenge.

I thought by being angry at people would change something in my life. Even when I searched jobs I was hopeless to find any so none of the places I entered offered me any positions. I got fed up of living like that. I remembered everything that I had done through the years and the dreams of studying my favorite field. Thus I could not just give up everything no matter what would happen in my life.

I set a goal which can be explained with five letters. It is "Positive Energy Always Creates Elevation." These letters together make one complete word—"Peace". Yes, anything can happen and I do not know what the next day would bring for me. Even the ethnic violence of Uzbeks would not take away my positive energy from me.

I would like to work hard and earn enough money to continue my study and become an ambassador in future. By studying this field I would try to set a peace not only between Kyrgyzstan and other countries, but at first peace inside the country between the ethnic groups. It may not be easy for me as I am ethnically Uzbek, but I can communicate with one person and having observed my positive attitude that person would teach the other person and that way the chain would go on. Step by step, these two ethnic groups would also start living together peacefully. There is no other way for that; no violence or revenge can make a peace or bond between these ethnic groups.

A week ago, I found not one but two jobs a day at two different hotels. I had to choose one of them as they offered me the same shifts. Now I am working at one of them. I am again confident and positive about my future plans of becoming a diplomat and lead the nation of my country to peace. This is my vision of a peaceful life. It should be young people to begin setting peaceful relations between each other even though they are from different ethnic groups. For that I think youth must get an education to occupy their favorite careers in future. It would prevent young generation from wasting their time with drugs or alcohol which only ruins their life. We are the future of our nation, so no matter from what ethnicity we are, we should try to live as one family. And, to my mind, it is positive attitude that helps us to make close bonds between each other and live in peace all together.

## **Emotional Security, Key to Rehumanising Human Beings**

(Original)

*Silvi Syah Putri Lubis*

*(Age 24, Indonesia <Living in Singapore>)*

*"Thousands of candles can be lit from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared."*

*- Buddha*

I still remember a conversation I had with my father one night in his house in Medan, Indonesia. It was one beautiful conversation among lots that we had every night since I was 12. It was beautiful for it was natural and involved a person I always looked up to in my life, my grandmother. Papa told me that grandma was once a very poor woman with 7 children. But she had more than that amount depended on her. She had many relatives who stayed in her tiny house. And for this poor family, it meant they had to share the little amount of food that they had with the "guests." Papa told me that he and his siblings often ended up eating the hard burnt rice silently in the kitchen for the rice that their mother cooked for them was served to the guests. "But we did it happily," he told me, once he saw me staring blankly at him in a few seconds. "Because we felt secured. When you feel secured, you feel contented with what you have, you are fearless, and you feel free," he explained. And now, when I am 24, staying alone in a country I do not belong to, and being asked about my vision of a peaceful world, I keep thinking about what my father once shared with me, the story from my grandmother, a story about emotional security.

Why one need to be secured emotionally? Isn't to empathise with others more important? It is true that we have heard a lot about empathy, the capability to share another being's emotions and feelings. But one cannot empathise with others, unless he, as an individual, feels emotionally secured. Feeling secured emotionally makes one feel contented about one's self and this content feeling may lead to the feeling of freedom, that in the end will lead to the peaceful and life-in-abundance feeling, the utmost feeling in which one thinks that he is grateful for what he has and that resources the nature has offered to us are not limited. With

this feeling, we will not feel jealous towards others, no more envy as we are contented for what we have.

How can one achieve emotional security? Emotional security comes as a result of one's gratitude for all he has. It comes as one completely accepts whatever comes to him, whether the things are pleasing or displeasing, with no resistance. By accepting things just the way they are, it will enable a person to accept the responsibility for whatever that may happen to his life. It is the gratitude that he feels which will make him feel thankful for what he has and try to adjust things that displease him to make it in line with what he wants. I believe when we are grateful for the things we have, then we can see the world in a clearer picture. And by having this clearer picture about ourselves and what we have, we then feel emotionally secured.

When one believes that he is secured, he tends to think that life is abundant of great things and resources that are available for every single person on earth to use. By thinking that life is abundant, one will not think twice or thrice to share something that he has or the capability that he owns with the rest of people who need it. And by feeling secured, one country might not use up all its budget to fund a war against another just because of its fears that the country is running out of oil. And there might be lots of souls that might have been able to be saved from the cruelty of wars.

If everybody in the world feels emotionally secured about themselves, how beautiful the world can be. If I can use what I have to help the people around me lift up their dreams, if only everybody knows that we all can achieve our dreams together without feeling afraid that the resources in achieving those dreams are scarce in amount, we may know that it is not our modern weapons that make us feel secured and we may be willing to give up even the last dollar that we have to somebody who needs it more. So, if I am being asked, what is my role in creating a peaceful world? My answer will be by being emotionally secured, by being grateful and contented for what I have. Because it is only then we can fully feel that we are rehumanised as human beings.