

SPRING VIEWS

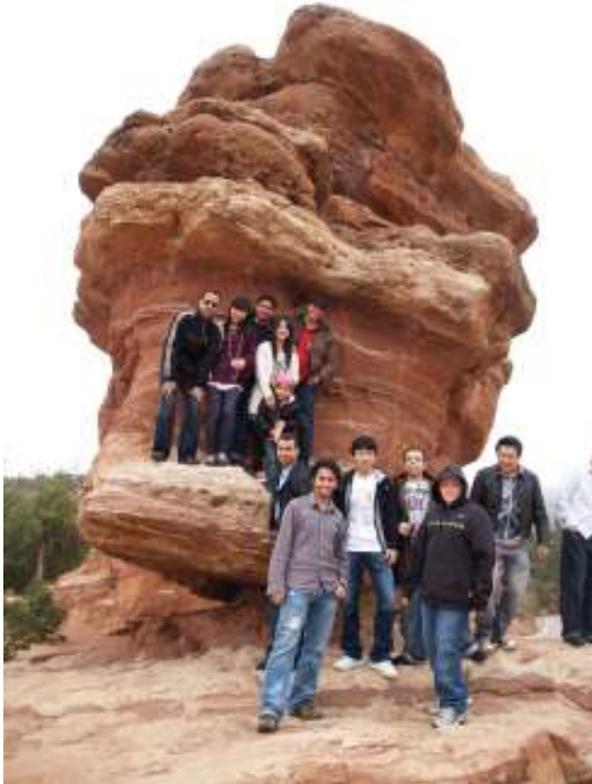
Spring International Language Center, Littleton, Colorado

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Student Writers Express Their Thoughts and Experiences

Garden of Gods Is Incredible Place

by Tarek Elfeed, Libya



Every country has special places, places that are known to all people in the world like the Seven Wonders of the World, the Great Wall of China, and the Great Pyramid in Giza, Egypt. Also there are places unknown to most people. There is a question here: "Why do we know the Seven Wonders of the World and we do not know the other places? I have a simple answer: Because these Seven Wonders were made by human beings and human beings like to say, "This thing was made by me."

In contrast, the other places are made by God, or nature, and Nature cannot speak like humans. Everyone knows the difference between these two things, and almost everyone can describe one of the Seven Wonders, but can anyone truly describe the natural places? I think not.

I visited the great pyramid in Giza, Egypt, and I can describe it. Also, I visited the Garden of the Gods in Colorado, but I cannot describe it well because it is a wonderful place. I have never seen this scenery before. It is really a beautiful, great place. When you visit it, you will see incredible rocks there. You will see the layers of the earth are put in vertical shapes rather than horizontal shapes as normal, and you will see beautiful colors for these rock layers. Moreover you will see that nature acted on these rocks and made different shapes like statues. Also when you see the rock layers, you feel you are in prehistoric times.

Finally, as I told you before, I cannot describe this amazing place, but I have advice for everyone who has never seen it. Visit the Garden of the Gods, and you will feel like I feel.

What It Means to Become an Adult

by Chutipa Phinitkitanan, Thailand

Everybody becomes an adult. Being an adult doesn't mean the same for everyone. It depends on each person. Some people want to become adults so much, but they don't exactly know what this really means.

In my country, people become adults legally when they are 18 years old. We can drink alcohol, drive cars, and vote in elections. In my opinion, it is too young to let us do those things. I think 18-year-old people are still teenagers. When you turn 18, it doesn't mean that you suddenly become an adult. Some people may become adults when they are 20 or 25.

Adults mean people who can manage themselves. They know what to do. They have responsibilities, duties for everything. Nobody has to tell them what to do. They have their own lives. They know what is right or wrong. Some people don't know whether they have become adults or not. If you feel you are a fully-grown person who is legally responsible for your actions, you are becoming an adult.

On the other hand, some people don't want to grow up. They want to always be young people. No one can remain a teenager. Sooner or later, they have to become adults. In my opinion, it really depends on your behavior. You can't grow up in one or two days. It takes your whole life.

Becoming an adult can make your life better or worse. It's your decision. You have to know yourself. You have to know what to do or not to do. When you become an adult, don't think it's the end of your life. In fact, it's just the beginning.

Libyans Are Proud of Omar Al-Mukhtar, Lion of the Desert

by Hamdi Houssein

Omar Al-Mukhtar is person I admire the most. He was born in 1861, and he started resisting the Italian occupation in 1911. He was a very religious Muslim, so he used to teach the Holy Quran at schools. He was a Libyan leader who fought against Italians for twenty years when they invaded Libya in the last century. I admire him because he was brave and a compatriot.

Omar al-Mukhtar is the bravest person I have ever known. He and his followers struggled against Italian forces for two decades although they did not have the same force as their enemy had, but because they had faith. They used traditional rifles and rode horses against tanks and airplanes of the Italians.

Besides being brave, Omar loved his country. He started fighting against the Italian colonists when he was fifty-three years old. Moreover, many of his relatives and close friends were killed during the war. For example, his brother and cousin were captured and executed by the occupiers.

In conclusion, Omar Mukhtar is well-known in the entire world; Anthony Quinn played Omar al-Mokhtar in the movie, "Lion of the Desert." All Libyans are proud of having a hero like him. Therefore, I admire him for these reasons.

Having Money Doesn't Necessarily Mean Success

by Salah Al-Mubaddil, Saudi Arabia

Why do most people think that only those who make lots of money are successful? Everyone in this life has his or her opportunity to be a success, with a lot of money or without. Therefore, I have several reasons for disagreeing with people who say that only those who make money are successful.

First, people who don't make lots of money can be successful. If a married person takes good care of his or her family, that is success. For example, in the past a long time ago, people lived without houses and no money. However, they had a wonderful life. All the world's leaders and real love came from times in the past. People had clean hearts and were successful.

Second, not all people who make lots of money are successful. A lot of people do not have a safe life or do not spend much time with their families. This is not a successful life if the person who makes lots of money is not there to ask his or her child about school with the excuse that he or she is too busy and doesn't have time. That is not a successful person.

As you can see, there are lots of people who are successful even though they don't have a lot of money, and some people make a lot of money but don't have a successful life. In my opinion, if the person can find a solution for his or her problems, that is success.

"A Stepmother's Face"



Proverbs Tell Us About a Country's Culture

by Chu-Sheng (Samuel) Chang, Taiwan

Once upon a time, a man loved a woman, but another man, who was a doctor, also loved the same woman. The first man didn't know how to expel his rival in love, so he started to eat an apple everyday. His friend asked him why he was eating an apple each day. He said, "Because an apple a day keeps the doctor away." Of course, this is a joke, but every country has its proverbs. Some proverbs depend on a particular culture or custom. Some proverbs are the same in the whole world. I know a Taiwanese proverb that describes the weather in Taiwan. It can also describe the weather here in

Colorado. "Spring is like a stepmother's face."

What is a stepmother's face? In the older generation and in children's stories, stepmothers usually have bad tempers. They always mistreat their stepchildren. Sometimes they are so kind because something makes them happy. You never know what to expect. Maybe today she is friendly and tomorrow she is angry.

Spring weather in Taiwan always changes. One day is sunny, another day is rainy. The weather is like a stepmother's face; it changes every day. I think the weather in Colorado is the same. Snowing, raining, sunny, I don't know what will happen today. "Spring is like a stepmother's face."

We can know a country's culture from their proverbs. Although proverbs are not always easy to understand, you can learn new things from them. Next time you hear a proverb, try to understand it. Maybe the proverb can be useful in your country.

Courtesy Is an Important Concept in Korean Culture

by Jeana Baek



Yoojean Baek and Hyoungryed In at the International Day Korean booth

Korea was influenced by Chinese culture for hundreds of years. Koreans consider the Chinese concept of courtesy as the most important thing. This is closely related to married life. There is a proverb that, translated into English, means “Blind for three years, deaf for three years, dumb for three years.” This proverb has been transmitted from mothers to daughters for a long time.

Especially in the Choseon, the last dynasty in Korea, the consciousness that a man is more important than a woman still exists. It resulted from Confucian ideas: males have “yang,” which is a force from the sky, and females have “yin,” which is a force from the earth. Therefore, men can

make better decisions than women. That means that a woman has to follow her husband’s words unconditionally. That’s why the proverb comes up. Even though he makes mistakes, she has to pretend to be blind. When he says wrong ideas, she has to act like a deaf person. She can’t suggest her own thoughts without his permission..

There is a folk tale about a young married woman. She can’t live by her own free will because she was educated by her mother not to be against her husband or her mother-in-law. However, she is curious about what they do, tries to hear their conversation, and expresses how she feels. At last, they judge she is not the appropriate wife that they want, and her parents secretly give her to a low-level man who will be her husband.

This story makes me feel horrible. I’m sure that the proverb is a portrait of our sad history. I also can’t believe it still is in existence in Korea even though Korea is a developed country. I hope this proverb will disappear someday.

Celebrations in Ben Ghazi and in Denver...by Hamdi Houssein

I enjoy living in big cities. Big cities have a lot of advantages. For instance, basic services are available, such as transportation and educational programs. Besides that, one does not feel bored because there are a lot of places for entertainment. When I was in Libya, I lived in Benghazi, and I am now living in Denver. People in Benghazi and people in Denver celebrate their festivals and conduct their activities in different ways.

People in Benghazi celebrate many days during the year. They celebrate Eid Al-Fitr, which falls on the first day of the tenth month in the Islamic Calendar. People gather and have fun with one another. Usually males get together and females get together, so everyone is happy. Besides that, Eid Al-Adha is another day to celebrate; it falls on the same day when a group of a million Muslims take the journey or pilgrimage to Mecca. I have seen many international people share our celebration on these sacred days.

However, people in Denver celebrate different days. They celebrate the independence of the United States of American on July 4. People gather and congratulate on another and hope that God blesses their country. Moreover, Americans celebrate Halloween October 31. They do a lot of nice activities on that day, so they eat together and let international people share their happiness. In fact, I took part in the last Halloween. I was invited to a party and made many friends.

In conclusion, both cities have different traditions and customs, but they have the same way of celebrating. People in Benghazi celebrate Eid al-Adha and Eid Al-Fitr, but people in Denver celebrate Thanksgiving and Halloween. Experiencing life in both cities and practicing another culture besides mine helps me to be an international person.

“Apple and Gold” Taught to Children in Viet Nam

There is a story that has lived in my country for a long time. We don't know when it was started. As I was a child, I used to be told about it, and now my nieces and nephews are continuing being told. The story has the name “Apple and Gold” and is an educational theme that we are always taught.

Once upon a time, there were two brothers, Vinh, the older, and Nam, the younger. After their parents had died, both of them got married. However, the older son gained all of the inheritance and Nam only owned a poor house and an apple tree. One day a giant bird appeared and ate a lot of apples that Nam could have sold to buy rice. Nam saw the bird and asked him why he was eating his apples. Suddenly the bird sang, “Eat an apple, give you a piece of gold, make a small bag, and go to get gold.” Nam thought this was strange, but he still obeyed the bird. The next morning, the bird came and carried him to an island on which there was only gold. Nam was happy and hurried to put gold in the bag.

After that day, Nam and his wife became rich, so Vinh felt jealous and asked Nam, “My dearest brother, how have you become rich like that?” Nam smiled and told him everything, so Vinh suggested that Nam sell his house and the apple tree to him. Nam agreed. Similarly, the bird came and took Vinh to the island, but Vinh didn't obey the bird. He had made a big bag and got as much gold as possible. There, he and his bag were too heavy for the bird to carry. By the way, the bird took him home over an ocean. He told Vinh to drop some gold down into the ocean because it was too heavy and the bird was really tired, but Vinh didn't drop the gold. As a result, the bird dropped him and his gold down into the ocean.

Through the story, we have learned that humans are never satisfied, but we should try to be like the younger brother Nam, who was happy with his small bag of gold. In my life, I always believe this theme. For me, it's hard to be satisfied since I'm still human. However, I'm learning to be satisfied through a method of thinking of other people who are poorer than me and don't have anything I have, so I feel I'm much luckier. As a result, I feel I'm so selfish, and I want to help those who are poor and share with them as much as possible.

In conclusion, it's one of many stories teaching us about life. All of them always say that living well will bring you good endings. Although they are just small stories that were started long ago and have no author, in my opinion, they have great value.—by *Linh Nguyen, Viet Nam*

My Mother's Suffering...by Adel Ankoa, Libya

A few mothers have a wonderful time and a divine life without problems with their families. However, many of them have the opposite. They have more suffering even when their children become men and women. They live with fear and cry when their children are sick or have an accident. They will do anything for them until they see they are better.

My story is a real story about a mother and her son. It was thirty years ago that it happened. This mother was the same as any mother. She was so happy because she was going to have a baby. She counted the days. She waited for her son and made clothes for him and bought many games. She was very happy when she had her first baby. She gave him all the love and kindness she had. Her son was her life, her eyes, and her breath. Her life with her son was so wonderful. They lived in a beautiful city in the mountains 170 kilometers west of Tripoli.

When her son was six years old, he fell into a fire pit. His mother was washing clothes when this happened. When she heard him crying, she ran fast to him and took him out of the fire. She didn't know what to do. Everyone in the family was crying so loudly the neighbors came to see what had happened. They all took the boy to the doctor who said, “This boy won't live more than a week.”

The family said, “We will take him to a doctor in another country.” “You can take him anywhere you want, but you should take him home and stay with him because he doesn't have more than a week,” the doctor said.

The family didn't know what to do and was so sad. They returned home. The mother didn't eat. She was thinking about her son and what the doctor said.

“My son will die. Oh, my son...my son!”

The countdown for life of this boy began. Every day he was nearer to the end of his life. Someone who knew herbal medicine told the family, “You can use herbs to help him.” The grandmother mixed some of the herbs and put them on his head. They prayed for God's help. At the end of the week, his mother and the family were sitting around the boy waiting for him to die. The boy began to move and tried to open his eyes. His mother didn't believe what she was seeing. Her little boy was crying. Her son was getting well. She thanked God that she could keep her son. When she took him to the doctor, he didn't believe what he saw.

“This is that boy? I can't believe that,” he said.

“My God can do any thing,” the mother said, and the doctor agreed.

After that, the mother and her son lived a happy life together. She took him to school, and gave him all that he needed. She didn't think about herself, but she was thankful that her son had a good life.

Now her son is studying in the U.S.A. at Spring International, level 3. He calls her every week. She always asks him, “How are you? Do you eat well? Are you sick?” As you now know, this mother is my mother. I love her more than myself. The sound of her voice makes me happy. I always think about her and what she is doing. I miss her and hope to see her soon. I ask my God to protect her for me. She is the best gift from God and one of many mothers who suffer for their children. This story is my attempt to show some of the concerns of mothers and the troubles with their children. All mothers deserve our love and respect.

Level Two Students Choose Their Best Writing

Our Favorite Places

MY FAVORITE PLACE IS BENGHAZI because it's peaceful and beautiful. Benghazi is a big city. The weather is nice, so it's cold in the winter and sunny in the summer. It has lots of archaeology; therefore, it's a tourism city. Moreover, it has many beaches. Most of Benghazi is modern buildings, but the old city is good, too. It's especially crowded on Friday when people fill the streets for shopping. All people of Benghazi are friendly and lovely. I like my city because it's beautiful and quiet. I miss Benghazi, which is my city. -- *Basma Amer, Libya*

MY FAVORITE PLACE IS AL-WAKRA, a city in Qatar. I like this city because I was born here. Al-Wakra is a big city. Al-Wakra is in the south of Qatar. It has a beach that is beautiful. In Al-Wakra, we have a mall and many stores for everything. We have a big hospital and we have a big and beautiful garden. I love Al-Wakra because if I want anything I can find it there. --*Yousuf Al-Jabar, Qatar*

Actually in my country, Libya, there are many places I visited, but **MY FAVORITE PLACE IS AL-MIKA** in North Libya. This is the most beautiful area of tourism in Libya. In fact, I can't describe this place and the severity of the beauty of this region. There is a good sea with calm waves. There are also high mountains and very tall trees. By the way, the sea is always quiet, and we hunt for fresh fish. We always visit with friends because it is the most beautiful place in Libya. When I go back to my country, I will visit the most beautiful place I have in my country.--*Khaled Elrggas, Libya*

MY FAVORITE PLACE IS SEELINE in Qatar. Seeline is located in southeast Qatar. It is a good place for camping and for trips. There are sands on the beach. You can swim, play volleyball, play soccer, ride motorbikes, and drive on the sand. It is a fantastic place. I like this place because I can relax and refresh there. It is a tourist place, and there are many tourists who come to this place for enjoyment. Every winter my family and I like camping there every week. I invite everybody to visit Seeline. Finally, I like Seeline and this is my favorite place.--*Mohamed Al-Marzouqi, Qatar*

Stories from Our Lives

MY ACCIDENT. When I was 16 years old, my father gave me the key for his car. He told me to go to the supermarket to buy something. It was the first time for me to drive. My father told me, "Don't take anybody with you." I was very excited, so I took my brother with me. We were very happy and excited. We went to the supermarket and bought what we wanted. While we were coming back home, I was driving very fast. My brother was afraid, and was saying, "Stop! You are crazy!" but I was laughing at him.

I was looking at the speedometer. I was not paying attention to the road. Suddenly I heard my brother say, "No! No! Look out." I subconsciously closed my eyes and put my foot on the brake. At that moment, my brother was ranting. Then we hit another car that was passing us on the road. It struck my side of the car. I smelled a bad smell. It was the tires' smell. We had cooking oil on the back seat, so the bottle of oil exploded. Our clothes became soaked with oil. After that I wanted to turn off the engine, but I (cont. p. 7) was not able to raise my arm. I didn't believe this, so I thought I was paralyzed. Finally, the ambulance took me to the hospital. The doctor discovered that my arm was broke. I spent about three weeks in the hospital. This story was very painful for me and my family.--*Saleh Sughayir, Saudi Arabia*

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE SWIMMING POOL. I think I have had a lot of things in my life that made happy or scared. When I was ten years old, I had something I'll never forget because I was a hero for my friends. My friend and I took lessons with a swimming coach. I like to swim, so I wanted to learn swimming skills. We took lessons with the coach about 3 months. (cont. p.6)

SWIMMING POOL (Cont. from p. 5)

On the last day, there was a final race in the swimming pool. Also there were many prizes to the winners. In that day, the weather was sunny and very hot. My health wasn't good that day, so I was nervous about that. While I was thinking about the race, my brother came to me and asked, "What happened? Are you nervous?" I said, "Yes, I have a race in half an hour and my health isn't good." After that, he said to me, "You can do it if you want." Then the coach called very boy for the race.

Before the race started, I closed my eyes and thought about the last 3 months and my brother's words. After that, I forgot my health, so I was ready for the race. The race was starting when I heard my brother and friends' sounds. These sounds made me a warrior in the swimming pool. After the race finished, my brother jumped in the pool and hugged me because I was the winner. This day made me happy and I will never forget that day.—*Kahalid Alluhayd, Saudi Arabia*

BAD ACCIDENT. Everyone has bad days in his or her life. My story is a scary story. In 2002, I had a bad accident in my country. I had a Lexus at that time. I didn't fasten the seat belt when I was driving faster than normal speed, so I couldn't control the car. I was driving too fast. In fact, I was racing with a bunch of friends. Also, I like to be crazy while I am driving. When I was driving, my left tire went flat. It sounded like a bump. Even though I had the accident, my body was intact, but my car was destroyed, so my father didn't believe I had an accident. Because of that, he didn't buy another car for me. He said, "I won't buy another car." So I believe the most risk in life is when you drive too fast.—*Saleh Mana Alkamsan, Saudi Arabia*

IT WAS SCARY FOR ME. My father has a farm in my city. It is very big and has many trees and animals. For example, it has orange trees, tomatoes, and dates. In addition, it has sheep and horses. On Friday, my family went to the farm because it has good air and beautiful nature. In the farm, we went to the house because we wanted to relax. My younger brother is stubborn. His name is Yousef and he is three years old. While we were relaxing, he ran between the trees outside. We ran out of the house because we heard him crying. He saw him with a small snake. He was happy because he didn't know what it was.

I said, "Throw it away!" He didn't understand. I was afraid of the snake, but I went to Yousef. I caught the snake and put it on the ground and killed it because I didn't want the snake to kill another person. My family was happy, but Yousef was crying because he didn't understand. He thought it was a game. I won't forget that day. This story was scary because I don't like snakes, but I love my brother. This story was three years ago. I don't like adventures, but I do like that day.—*Ahmed Magbool, Saudi Arabia*

Level Two

PEOPLE, PLANS, PURCHASING AND PLAYSTATION

I WANT TO TALK ABOUT A PERSON WHO IS IMPORTANT FOR MANY PEOPLE, Abdullah Al-Rabia. He was born in 1954 in Riyadh. He is a doctor for the separation of conjoined twins. He obtained his degree as the first graduate of the College of Medicine in King Saud University in Riyadh in 1979. Then he was the best doctor in surgery at the University of Alberta in Canada in 1989. He was awarded the Order of King Abulaziz, first degree, in November 2002. He has done 22 successful separations of conjoined twins. Now he is the Minister of Health.

He is an important person in the lives of many people in the world because of his humanitarian work. Also now he is one of the best doctors in the world. Finally, I admire him for that reason because he raises the reputation of Saudi Arabia in the medical field. I hope to do a great job in my life just as Abdullah Al-Rabia has done and hope that people will remember me after I die.—*Haman Al-Zamanan, Saudi Arabia*

I WILL MAKE A GOOD PLAN THIS SUMMER FOR MY WIFE AND ME. First, we will go to Hawaii to enjoy it because I have heard from my brother-in-law that this state is very nice. He said, "It is very beautiful nature there." I'm excited about going there. Then we will go to Hawaii because we have vacation in this season and want to discover something different. Hawaii has many volcanoes that we will visit. After that, we will make many activities because it has wonderful activities like swimming near clear beaches, sky-diving, and watching a comedy show on Waikiki beach. After we leave Hawaii, we are going to go to Las Vegas. We will stay in Vegas three days to enjoy and watch shows like in Hawaii. Then we will go back to Colorado to study at Spring International. Finally, we will enjoy Hawaii and Las Vegas in the summer season.—*Fahad Alomair, Saudi Arabia*

THERE ARE A SEVERAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SHOPPING FOR FOOD IN Libya and shopping for food in the U.S. First, there are many small shops around my city, so shopping is walking distance from my home. Second, in my country people usually go shopping for food on the weekend. Thirdly, people go shopping and use cash only and don't use a credit card. Finally, people in my country buy only fresh food for the week, so people in my country do not use frozen food.

Shopping for food in the U.S. is more difficult than back home in Libya. First of all, I need a car because the supermarkets are far away from where I live. The supermarkets are very large with a lot of choices. Secondly, most people go shopping for food on Saturday and Sunday because they work during the week. The price of food in the U.S. is very expensive compared to my country. Thirdly, American people buy a lot of frozen food that they can keep for several weeks or months. There are a lot of people who use cash or a credit card to buy frozen food, and they use frozen food four days a week. Finally, the people in the U.S. use frozen food too much and don't worry about their health.

My shopping is different in many ways between my country and the U.S. First, I want to go shopping around my city rather than far away from my house. In my country, I go shopping any time and any day. Secondly, in my country, I bought my food only with cash, but I prefer cash and credit card, too. I want choices of good food and fresh food. Thirdly, the food in Libya is cheaper than in the U.S. I can buy good food and fresh food at the same time. Finally, shopping in my country is easier than in the U.S. because I don't use my car very much when I go shopping.—*Masoud Amer, Libya*

MY FAVORITE TECHNOLOGICAL TOOL. My favorite technological tool is Playstation 3 for many reasons. First, I can play it alone or with my friends. Second, I can watch movies with Playstation 3 if these movies are DVD or Blu-Ray. Third, I can surf the Internet with it. Fourth, I can download music and listen. Fifth, with Playstation 3 I like to see photos on TV. Sixth, I can play with any player in the world by Internet. Seventh, I chat with Playstation's users. Finally, the most important reason is I learn English language by reading and listening in games or writing and speaking when I chat with other players.—*Omar AlSaiari, Saudi Arabia.*

Vocabulary Class Uses Its Skills

EARTH DAY. The earth is our big home. We must do some good things for it. We must keep it healthy for life. There are many things we can do for this. For example, we can grow trees. We can clean the gardens and beaches. When I was in school, I always went to the beach with my friends and cleaned it. There are more things we can do to help the earth. --by *Jehad Al-Luhayd, Saudi Arabia*

HOW CAN I HELP THE EARTH? In Japan, we separate all our garbage. There are six categories: combustible garbage, non-combustible garbage, plastic, newspapers, plastic bottles, and cans. Combustible garbage is used for thermal power generation, for example: paper, tissue and food. Non-combustible garbage

is not used for thermal power generation. Other categories, like can recycling, have become a new item. In recent years, the environmental problem has become more serious. It is important that we separate all our garbage and reuse it.—*by Yusei Mitsui, Japan*

THE STRANGE MAN. This man was strange and rich. His name was Tom. He loved a woman. The woman was beautiful. Her name was Vantina. She also loved him because she needed money, and Tom was rich. Vantina wanted to take his money without his knowing. He thought that she loved him. One day, they went to a restaurant. She thought about killing Tom and taking his money. When they arrived, they found a friend there. They ate dinner together. After dinner, Tom and Vantina walked to Tom's home. On the way to his home they met some men. They had guns and Tom didn't have a gun. They killed him. Finally, they took his money and left. Vantina lied when she was saying, "I love you."-- *by Ali Hamad Al Marri, Qatar*

MOMOTARO: A JAPANESE TALE. Once upon a time, an old man and an old woman lived near the river. One day she found a big peach on the river when she was washing. She brought the peach to the old man and told him about this thing. They cut the peach. Then a baby boy came out from inside the peach. They were very amazed. They named the baby "Momotaro." He grew up quickly.

At this time, Ogres were troubling people. Momotaro decided to go to exterminate the ogres. An old woman made a millet dumpling for him to take along. He went to the island of Ogres. Then, he met a dog on his way. The dog said, "Momotaro, where are you going?" Momotaro said, "I am going to exterminate Ogres." "I will go along with you, if you give me a millet dumpling," said the dog. Momotaro gave the dog the millet dumpling. And then, he met a monkey along the way. The monkey said, "Momotaro, where are you going?" He said, "I'm going to exterminate Ogres." "I will go along with you, if you give me a millet dumpling," said the monkey. Momotaro gave him a millet dumpling. Then he met a pheasant. The pheasant said, "Where are you going, Momotaro?" Momotaro said, "I am going to exterminate Ogres." "I will go along with you, if you give me a millet dumpling," said the pheasant. Momotaro gave the pheasant a millet dumpling. This way, the dog, the monkey, and the pheasant became his friends.

The Ogres were eating when Momotaro and his friends arrived on the island. The dog bit the Ogres' hips and the monkey scratched the Ogres' back, and the pheasant poked the Ogres' eyes with his beak. At the end, Momotaro exterminated the Ogres with his sword. They were able to go home safely. So, the old man and the old woman were very glad. They lived fortunately. --*by Yusei Mitsui, Japan*

THE CAMEL. The camel is very important in Arabic culture. I'll tell you five things about the camel. All Arabs love the camel. The camel can live without water for a long time. Some people think it stores water in its hump. This is not true. The food a camel eats is turned into fat. Then the fat is stored in the hump. The camel lives in the desert. It doesn't want to be warm during the day. The Arabian camel has one hump. The Bactria camel of Central Asia has two humps. It also has long, thick hair because the winters are cold in Central Asia. Arabic has about 150 words to describe a camel.—*by Mohammed Magbool, Saudi Arabia*

RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS...by Jing Yuan, China

Rhythmic gymnastics is a very beautiful sport. It's from Bulgaria. It's a form of gymnastics in which dancelike movements are combined with the manipulation of a hand apparatus such as a rope, loop, ball, ribbon, or club. I started practicing rhythmic gymnastics when I was 9 years old. I started because I thought it was fun when I played with the apparatus. I didn't know that rhythmic gymnastics was so hard-won and needed much sacrifice. We were chosen by coaches. They measured us, so we needed to have the right body proportions and the shape of the body usually looks like a stick.

In rhythmic gymnastics, you must start very young because young children are very flexible. I still remember how much it hurt when they forced us to become flexible. I also remember the screaming and crying at the gymnasium when the coaches sat on our hips forcing our legs to become parallel to the floor.

When I became qualified for competition, I could compete in the semi-annual competition. In rhythmic gymnastics, you can compete as a team or an individual. There are five girls performing together in the team competition. Their performance and coordinated music must be tacit. In a competition, if you drop the apparatus, the judges will deduct points from your score. There are compulsory moves and the moves we create to perform. When we won the semi-annual national competition, we could represent China in international competitions. As we got older, it was hard to control our weight; every day the coaches controlled what we ate. For example, we weren't allowed to eat rice or other starches before an international competition. We had a dietitian weigh our food to control our intake. If you did not meet the coaches required weight, you were punished, if it was over a kilogram. We needed to run 8000 meters for each kilogram and they deducted our monthly salary. I always felt hungry.

It's so funny, when someone asked me what is your biggest wish, my answer was that I hoped to eat a bowl of rice. I still remember having dreams of food, but I was not able to eat. I suffered many injuries when I practiced. Sometimes it still hurts from my past injuries, but I still think rhythmic gymnastics was a very important part of my life. It taught me to know what is indomitable. It gave me a different experience when I was young. Although I left the team a long time ago, when the rhythmic gymnastics team of China got the Silver Medal in the Olympics, I was very happy, and when I saw the national flag raised, I felt excited and cried. I will never forget the feeling of seeing my country's flag while I was standing on the podium.