

To the villagers of the village of 100 people,

Hello. How are you? My name is Maho Watanabe. I'm a high school student writing to you from Japan.

When I first read about your village it was hard for me to imagine a village with such a diversity of people. However, the truth was that when I looked beyond Japan and took a glance at the world that I live in, it is just like your village, only larger. The fact that I found it difficult to imagine your village made me realize that I had never actually thought of our world as one.

During my summer holiday this year, I visited Singapore for two weeks. As soon as I arrived, I found out that Singapore is made up of different cultures and people from various countries and backgrounds. Because I wasn't used to an environment like that, at first I was always trying to figure out where a person was from. However, soon I learnt that this just makes me judge people from the outside. I saw that it was only after communicating with them and learning about their experiences or their ways of thinking that I saw them as individuals. By the time I returned to Japan, I knew better than to judge people from their language or by their looks. I saw that nationalities are only a small part of us.

The book about your village mentions the number of people who are of a certain nationality, religion, or level of wealth. This makes me think, again, that these are only a small part of our identity. In this world which is a home to so many individuals, it is funny to think that we have split the world into pieces for reasons that are manmade, such as nationalities, religion, culture and wealth, because these are each only a small part of us. However, in our history classes we learn about countries that have split into two because of different religions, cultures, or ethics, and that there are still many places fighting for similar reasons.

In the book about your village, it says, "Love the fact that you, and others, live here". Though there are many people who are so different, there is only one planet that we live in. There is only one planet that supplies our food, land, water and shelter. For all of us to have sufficient amount of these, it is crucial for each one of us to share. To share, we have to respect the innumerable individuals that we live with. We must make sure that each one of us not only knows the fact that we are different but also makes an effort to understand and accept other people's identity. You and your village helped me notice that if we can all do this, we would stop trying to split this world into so many pieces, and instead look at this world as one single planet.

Thank you so much for helping me to understand more about where we live. I'm sure that you and your village will continue to become known to more people all around the world and that your messages will spread and leave something in everyone's heart, just as it did with mine.

Sincerely,
Maho Watanabe