Lesson 3

Hatching the Egg of Hope

For Miyazaki Kensuke, art is a way to share happiness with people all over the world. He sees life as a journey to discover an answer to the question: Who am I as a person and as an artist?

1

I’ve always loved painting. When I was a high school student, I visited Belgium for two weeks during spring break. I painted on the streets. People came and looked at my paintings. I couldn’t understand what they were saying. But they seemed to like my work. I understood the power of art then. I understood that art can connect people.

In college, I had a dream. I wanted to be a great artist and become famous all over the world. After graduating from college, I went to London to become famous.

In London, I lived in a guest house. I worked part-time. I didn’t have much money. No gallery was interested in my paintings.

My street artist friends and I drew angry paintings. We thought it was cool to look angry. My friends were drawing to express their anger at inequality in society. Their anger was real. But I was from an ordinary family. My life was ordinary. I wasn’t angry at all.

I was in London for two years. But I couldn’t become famous. I decided to find a different way of expressing myself.

2

While I was living in London, I watched a TV program about a school in Nairobi, Kenya. The school was for children whose parents were dead and street children. The children did not look happy. I suddenly wanted to go there and paint something for the children.

Going there was not easy. Finally in 2006, I arrived in Kenya. I found the school and painted for the children. I painted an angry dragon. I thought it was a good painting, but one of the teachers did not think so. The teacher said, “The children are afraid of the dragon. Some children don’t want to come to school because of the scary dragon.” To the children, the dragon was a big snake. They did not know that dragons are not real.

I asked the children, “What would *you* like me to paint?”

The children answered, “Lions! Baobabs!”

I asked the children to help me, and we enjoyed painting together. The teachers said that the children became more active than before. That experience changed me. I found that I enjoy creating happiness through painting. I also found that I enjoy painting with others. I decided to do a painting project like this every year. I decided to do the project in different parts of the world.

3

In 2011, the Great East Japan Earthquake occurred. I went to Sendai and joined a volunteer group. At that time, schools were closed, and children had nothing to do. They looked bored. I thought my painting project would make them happy. I started to paint with these children. We painted the walls of a school.

A barber in Ofunato, Iwate, asked me to paint a sign for his shop. I painted the sign and also painted his whole shop in bright colors!

I did not know if my art project was useful or not, but I did not want to think it was useless during a disaster. Of course, the donation of money and goods can help people. But painting together and enjoying creating art can also help. People can laugh and smile even during the worst times.

In 2017, I went to Mariupol, Ukraine. There was a war there. It was a very dangerous place. cPeople were dying every day. I saw lots of shell holes in many places. Many buildings were destroyed by bombs.

4

Mariupol was a dangerous place for an art project. But when I started painting, children came out to paint with me. I was surprised.

We painted a big mitten. The idea of painting a mitten came from a popular Ukrainian story, *The Magic Mitten*. In the story, one snowy night, an old man drops his mitten. A mouse, a frog, a rabbit, a fox, a wolf, and many other animals go into the mitten. They want to be warm.

In our painting, people from all over the world are in a huge mitten. They enjoy the warmth of the huge mitten together. The mitten is decorated with Easter eggs. We painted Easter eggs to express life and hope. Our painting shows that people’s warm hearts will bring hope and a peaceful life all over the world.

I still do not know who I am as a person and as an artist. But I have discovered one thing. My art can make people “super happy.”