I live in Fiji, which is in the South Pacific. Last year in May, there was a coup d’etat due to fights between different ethnic groups in the capital. Besides Fijians, many other peoples live here, such as Indians, Australians and Chinese.

At my school, there are children from all these different countries. Whereas Fijians nibble on whole carrots, Indians eat curry, even as a snack. People also gave my onigiri rice-balls a strange look at first. Sometimes, children from the same ethnic group gang up and pick on others. Sometimes, they even get in a fight.

I have a heart problem, and so I usually can’t participate in gym class. But once, I took part in a ball relay race on sports day, when this happened: It was my turn. It was hot, I felt dizzy and I was breathing hard. Because of me, my team was in a pinch. Right at that moment, someone shouted my name “Momoko~, Momoko~!” And then, in the same rhythm, all my classmates started chanting “Momoko~, Momoko~!” Encouraged by their voices, I was able to make a goal, and suddenly realized that our team had taken the lead. Once again, I heard voices, as if from far away, cheering “Momoko~!” Then, I noticed my classmates jumping up and down and clapping their hands. Thanks to them, I was able to run all the way to the end. “Thank you all!” was what I shouted in my heart.

We all eat different food and speak different languages. We are not the same, but when we are connected by the same goal, our hearts become one. If we can feel other peoples’ joy and happiness as well as their sorrow and pain as our own, we should be able to prevent hatred and violence. I believe that this is true because I experience it every day at school with my classmates.

In its attempt to become a peaceful country, Fiji will be organizing elections in August. The day will come when people no longer fight with brute force, but talk things over with each other and let their hearts become one.