

## MY COLOR-CHANGING PLANT

It was a small plant, only half a foot high with diameter not much bigger than that of a compact disc. Long, thin leaves grew out of a slim trunk, slightly twisting in the cold of the winter. The plant looked like a big yellow mushroom, dotted regularly with some green that still lingers at the top of each leaf. Hadn't I known that it was a color-changing plant, I might have thought that it was dying. Yet I was sure someday green would take turn to dominate every leaf, while yellow gradually retreated.

Although its leaves changed to green or yellow frequently, the plant never wore only one color. Even on its greenest days, it still had a small yet obvious part painted with yellow. Sometimes I thought if I had been a plant, I would have also been a color-changing one for I hated monotony. However, unlike my plant, I would have taken only one color at a certain time, totally green or totally yellow. It was because I had a habit of paying full attention to only one important thing and neglecting everything else. With this lifestyle I had achieved almost all of my goals. I therefore thought that it was the best way of living, but my plant has taught me that it was not.

My lesson began when I knew of the VATC Writing Contest only several days before its deadline. Even though producing a well-written essay in such a short time seemed impossible to me, I had no intention to give up. For three days I was immersed in mulling over, writing and polishing my essay. Only after submitting it could my mind be free to think

of anything else. I had missed on of my friends' birthday, but I could give her the present with my apology later. My room was now a horrible mess, but I could clean it up in just thirty minutes. But my plant...I had forgotten to water my plant for three days.

When I first looked at it, I feared that it was going to die. The soil was too dry that it turned white. All the leaves darkened and drooped with cold and lack of water. I warmed, watered and fertilized my plant, still keeping hopes though understanding that only magic could revive it. Meanwhile, my heart was heavy with gloom when I saw the fault in my way of living. I was wrong to ignore the fulfillment of my life. Looking in retrospect, I realized that I had been so preoccupied with the immediate success that I had not cared enough about my physical, emotional and social life. It was hurtful to admit but all my achievements so far had been paid by much more valuable things, many of them irretrievable.

I deeply understood that I must have adopted a better lifestyle or I would receive not only a dying tree but also an impoverished soul, damaged health and broken relationships. I tried to think beyond my short-term goals, planning to allocate a reasonable part of my time for my family, friends, interests and physical exercises. Doing these was at first difficult for my ambitious nature kept luring me to dedicate all my attention to my aims. However, watching my small plant fighting bravely against death, I was determined to make radical changes to my way of living, no matter hard it would be.

Today, with the magical survival of the plant and my much better organized lifestyle, I know my efforts have been well paid off. Eventually, I find myself resemble my plant. I can focus

on different things at different times, but I will never break the balance of my life. Similarly, the plant can change its color, but always has both green and yellow.