

Contribution Sees No One



Gabriella Novianty Soedjarwo

Dosen D3 Sekretari Universitas Tarakanita

Anime entitled *Saiunkoku Monogatari* was inspired by the old Chinese Monarchy. The story centres Kou Shurei, the only daughter of the noble family in Saiunkoku Kingdom. Kou family was used to be rich; however, they used their wealth to help the people during famine period. The story told that even their tangerine tree was not able to bear fruit since they had given all the fruit to the people. They still live in their shabby big house since they did not have money to renovate the house. To fulfil their daily needs, she took menial work such as playing an erhu in the teahouse and being an accountant in the prestigious pleasure house.

She was an energetic and brilliant young woman. Her brilliance amazed the kingdom elders, that they asked Shurei to help the young emperor, Shi Ryuki, to rule the kingdom. As the acting king's concubine, she did her best to support the kings while made use of her chance to enter the palace to study. She often visited a library and studied together with Li Kouyu and Ran Shuei. Kouyu was the best graduate in imperial academy and Shuei was a prominent war general. Under their guidance, Shurei learnt about how to manage the palace and politics. She sometimes asked a critical question related to Imperial's policy.

At first, Ryuki was so distant with Shurei's existence in the palace. He deliberately avoided meeting her even when she asked to have an audience with him. Until one day when they accidentally met under the *sakura* tree and had a chat, Ryuki was moved by her story and the reason why she entered the palace. Since then, Ryuki was willing to meet and learnt together with Shurei. As the six-month contract ended, Shurei needed to go back to her house, but her desire to serve the country remained.

As her curiosity and knowledge grew, her determination to help the people in the kingdom grew as well. She determined to take the civil imperial test, so they can serve closely at the palace. However, at that time, woman was not allowed to take the test.

As the elder and the kings were impressed with her will. She even disguised herself as a man in order to be able to enter the palace once again during summer when palace usually hired commoner to help their administrative tasks. People in the palace were impressed by her hard work. She was known to be meticulous when deal with budget report. She even could point out the budget embellishment through their monetary report.

Looking at how a woman could be so determined to serve the country, the king proposed the idea of allowing woman to take the Imperial National Examination. Although most of the ministers opposed the idea, the king approached some of the prominent ministers to support his idea. As the idea had finally been approved, Shurei got the invitation to take the examination. Per usual practice, everyone would get the position based on their rank on the examination. The king was impressed that Shurei could get second position. Although it was hard to send her into a difficult situation, the king sent her to be the governor in Brown Province; the province which was well-known to be barren and unsafe due to its high criminal rate. Despite the difficult task, Shurei managed to be a respectful governor and started a new era.

As people were jealous of her achievement, she faced many obstacles. At some point, she was reported to decide without king's permission. This action resulted in her being demoted as civil servant. Even during her demotion, she was not discouraged to prove that she can still do something. Along with other officers who were demoted, she looked for the departments allowing them to work. She herself found a place in the imperial inspection department. She performed so well in revealing the case of counterfeit money and forgery painting. For her contribution in solving the case, she gained her title back as imperial civil servant.

Many people tend to view contribution as something that must be extraordinary or life-changing in order to be meaningful. As a result, we often overlook the importance of small actions that positively affect the lives of others. In reality, the value of a contribution is not determined by its size or scale, but by its ability to create improvement, no matter how modest. A simple act of kindness, offering help to someone in need, or sharing useful knowledge can make a significant difference in a person's life or in the community. Therefore, every positive effort matters because meaningful change is often built through many small contributions made consistently over time.

A better society is not built solely by wealthy people, government leaders, or famous individuals. While these groups may have significant resources and influence, they are not the only ones capable of creating positive change.

Every member of society possesses unique abilities, experiences, and opportunities to contribute in meaningful ways. Regardless of social status, educational background, or occupation, individuals can make a difference through their actions and attitudes. For this reason, building a better society should be viewed as a shared responsibility rather than the task of a select few.

Even small actions can create meaningful changes when they are carried out consistently over time. Simple behaviors such as helping a neighbor, respecting others, following community rules, or volunteering for local initiatives can strengthen social bonds and improve the quality of life for everyone.

A student who supports classmates, a worker who performs duties responsibly, or a citizen who cares for the environment is already contributing to the common good. Although these actions may seem minor on their own, their collective impact can be substantial when practiced by many people. Therefore, everyone has a role to play in improving the community and helping to create a more caring, inclusive, and prosperous society.

One of the most effective ways individuals can contribute to society is by demonstrating kindness and respect in their everyday interactions. Small gestures, such as assisting a neighbor, supporting someone facing difficulties, or simply treating others with politeness and dignity, can have a positive impact on the community. These actions help build trust and strengthen the connections among people from different backgrounds. When individuals practice empathy and show genuine concern for others, they foster a sense of belonging and mutual support. As a result, society becomes more harmonious, compassionate, and resilient, benefiting everyone who is part of it.

Another meaningful way that individuals can contribute to society is by actively participating in community-based activities. People can become involved in various initiatives, such as volunteering at local events, taking part in neighborhood clean-up campaigns, donating useful items like books and clothing, or supporting charitable programs that benefit those in need. These forms of contribution are accessible to almost everyone because they do not depend on wealth, status, or professional influence. What matters most is a genuine willingness to help and a commitment to improving the well-being of others. Through active community engagement, individuals can strengthen social bonds, address local challenges, and contribute to creating a more supportive and connected society.

Education and knowledge sharing are among the most valuable contributions that individuals can offer to society. People can make a positive impact by teaching practical skills, guiding younger generations, or providing information that helps others learn and develop. For instance, students may assist their peers with academic subjects, professionals can mentor those who are beginning their careers, and community members can raise awareness about social, environmental, or public health issues. Such efforts empower others by expanding their knowledge, confidence, and opportunities for personal growth. As knowledge is passed from one person to another, it not only benefits individuals but also contributes to the overall society's progress and development.

In conclusion, everyone can contribute to society regardless of their social status or the size of their contribution. Acts of kindness, community involvement, and knowledge sharing are examples of meaningful actions that anyone can undertake. When many people make small positive contributions, the collective impact can be significant. Building a better society is a shared responsibility, and every contribution matters. /WW