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マレーシアの8歳による著書が大反響。旅しながら学ぶ彼女は世界に何を問うか？



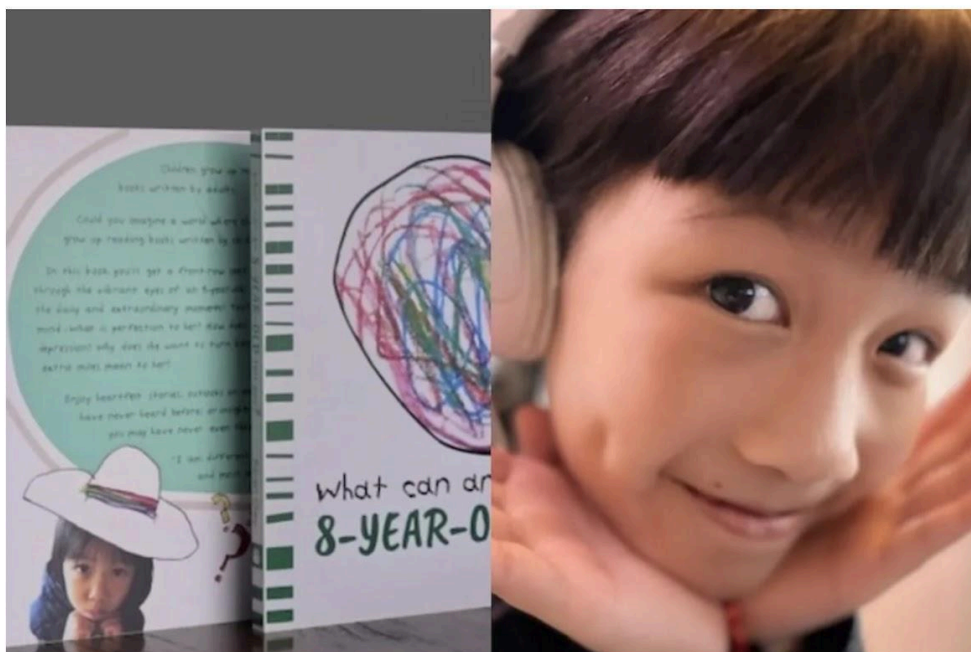
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カレン・チュー(Karen Chew)さんとその著書“What can an 8-year-old tell you?”

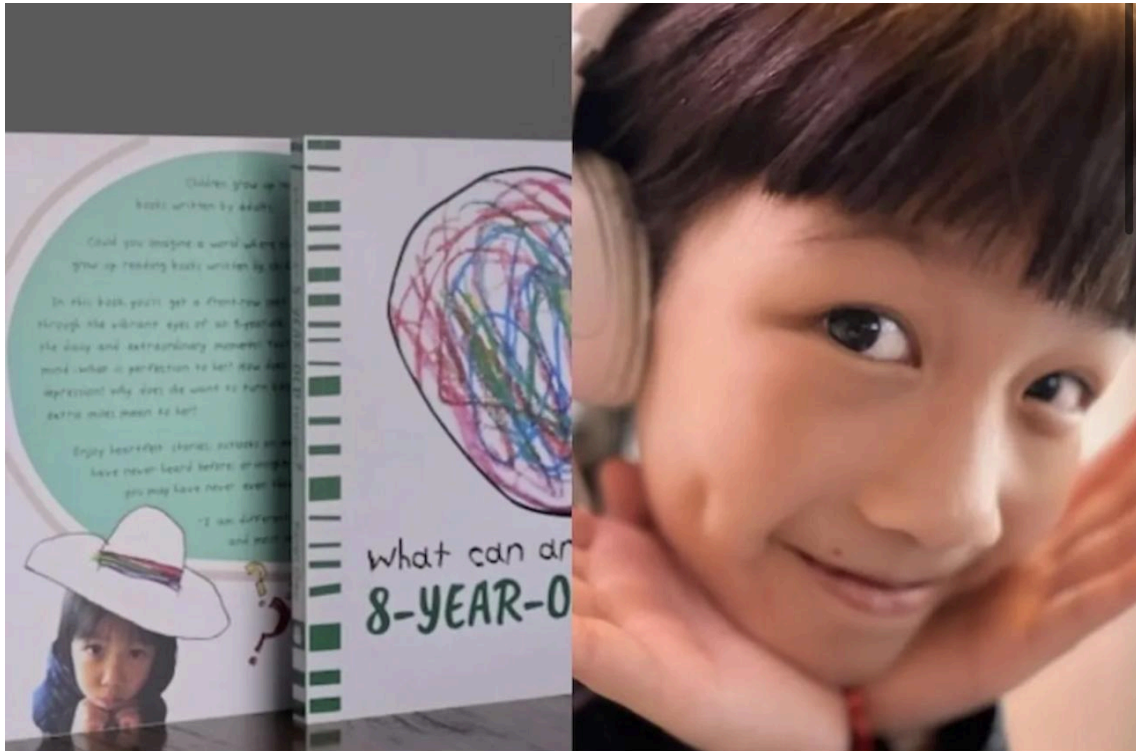
「母として正しいことをしているのか不安でしたが、この本を読んで、娘を育てる勇気をもらいました、ありがとう」（5歳児の母、英国）

A Book by an 8-Year-Old from Malaysia Gains Worldwide Attention: What Questions Does She Raise as She Learns Through International Travel?

Shuji Honjo | Official Columnist, Managing Director, Honjo International

PHOTO

Karen Chew and her book *“What Can an 8-Year-Old Tell You?”*



カレン・チュー(Karen Chew)さんとその著書“*What can an 8-year-old tell you?*”

"Sometimes I doubt I am doing the right thing. After reading your book, I have more courage to grow with my daughter. Thank you." (Mother of a 5-year-old, UK)

"I read the book together with my son. It sparked conversations between us and I discovered a lot about my son." (Parent of a 7-year-old, Singapore)

"I am so inspired, I want to start to write like Karen too." (7-year-old, country unknown)

Karen Chew, a student at Malaysia's first entrepreneur-focused international school, Dwi Emas International School, authored a book in English titled *“What Can an 8-Year-Old Tell You?”* The book has been read internationally, receiving positive responses from readers around the world.

Karen, who began journaling around age four, had a chance to meet a publishing company owner, sparking the idea of *“Children grew up reading books written by adults, could you imagine a world where children grew up*

reading books written by children?" This led to the book's publication in October 2023. Written when Karen was eight and edited at age ten, the book was published just before her 11th birthday.

Through this book, Karen became recognized as the “youngest author in Malaysia” and also achieved the Youth Achievement Award as the “youngest non-fiction author in Malaysia.”

I encountered this book at a gathering of Endeavor, a global entrepreneur support organization. I had a great conversation with Stuart Patton, Global CEO of Malaysia's ACE AdVenture, an education-focused company, and was gifted a copy. This experience reminded me of the importance of international connections.

An 8-Year-Old Learns as a “Worldschooler”

Karen was raised in Hong Kong, attends an international school in Malaysia, and learns in various countries as a “Worldschooler” (a learning approach where parents and children travel together, supported by a growing community).

PHOTO

With her family



A British doctor described the book as *"I can really feel Karen throughout the whole book. The words, sentences she used - are very genuine and exactly what she would say in real person."* It's childlike yet doesn't fit the adult concept of "childlike" at all. It's a voice from the heart, filled with thoughts and topics children might not normally share with adults, along with questions aimed at grown-ups.

The book starts with the story of Worldscooling, covering twenty chapters and eighteen stories, with a preface and an epilogue. It offers a glimpse into how an 8-year-old feels while learning through global travel.

The chapters range from familiar topics like *“My average school day,”* *“What is school to me?”* and *“My Parent-Teacher’s day,”* to upbeat titles like *“Why do I wake up earlier than anyone else in my house?”* and *“Going the extra miles”* that showcase a child’s energy. Other chapters reflect a deeper side, tackling fears and challenges in *“My greatest fear”* and *“The hardest thing I have ever done,”* all expressed in her own words.

PHOTO

An event at a bookstore, with recognition as “youngest author in Malaysia” and “youngest non-fiction author in Malaysia”



書店イベントにて、マレーシアでの「最も若い著者」記録とユース・アチーブメント認定「マレーシアで最も若いノンフィクション著者」の賞状とともに

On themes like *“I have a dream”* and *“Ocean in danger,”* she shares a strong resolve about her own and society’s future. She even takes on tough topics like *“Addiction,”* *“Depression,”* *“Decision,”* and *“What is perfect?”* in a unique way.

In *“The mystery of daily tasks,”* Karen wonders:

“Let’s take bed-making as an example. Every day, we’re supposed to carefully arrange our pillows and fold the blankets. But think about it. We’ll just mess it up again. What’s the point of this? Instead of bed-making, why not wake up early to do something genuinely fun? Honestly, there are so many things we do every day that don’t need to be done.”

As a parent of a six-year-old, I want to parent in a way where we can talk things over like this, rather than simply saying, “because I said so.”

The eighteen stories—episodes from before she turned eight—feature live accounts in Karen’s own words, on such as treasures she brought home (just junk for adults) and the experience she could not climb down from a tree.

“I Promise Myself to Never Forget the Heart of a Child”

Karen’s mother shared that her daughter wrote about depression, fear, and addiction because *“She met with people who are struggling with depression & form her own thinking that the world could do more; she experienced fear at different stages of her life & found ways to cope with it and then realised even adults have fear; she saw how addiction could make life miserable but people do not talk about it.”*

The book conveys Karen’s growth through the experiences she gains from meeting people and traveling as a Worldschooler.

Karen, who loves books and programming, actively expresses herself as a blogger, raise her voice on environmental issues under the name “Justice Bunny”, and started her own handmade teddy bear business (as a testament to overcoming her fears), showing an impressive, free-spirited energy.



寒い国を含む十数カ国を訪れたワールドスクーラー、カレン

Special Comment from Karen for Forbes JAPAN Web Readers

“Looking back, I realise that I found wonder in so many normal, everyday things, and now I understand why adults find it so easy to brush off things that children find surprising. But even now, I can still find wonder in the little things, and I promise myself: I will never forget what it is like to be a child.”

カレンからForbes JAPAN読者のみなさんへ

振り返ると、たくさんの当たり前の日々のことについて驚きを見出していました。今は、なぜ大人が子どもが驚くようなことについて、やり過ごすのか分かりました。でも、今でも、小さなことにも驚きを見つけ、“子どもの心を決して忘れない”と自分自身に約束しています。

Incidentally, in my previous research, I discovered that entrepreneurial spirit tends to decrease with age. Since then, I've adopted the motto of “keeping a child’s heart,” which makes me feel a strong sense of connection with Karen.

If a Japanese version were available, it would surely offer a fresh, positive influence on readers in Japan. Interested publishers, please reach out.