



## INDEPENDENCE AS A NEVER-ENDING STRUGGLE

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We all love it when people call us independent. Young people most especially find pleasure in being called an 'independent spirit'. Who wouldn't be? Independence connotes freedom. It establishes an image of being unhampered in any way. Independence suggests the ability to proceed with life while being devoid of cares dictated by other elements. It also connotes having achieved a certain degree of maturity and self-awareness, things that have been proposed by various Oriental schools of thought (think Zen) and esoteric teachings (as in enlightenment and self-remembering).

Many are fortunate to have achieved independence. These lucky ones roam the earth as they please, doing things they like aside from being accountable only to themselves for their actions. Although many have achieved independence, there are still more out there grappling to get to it.

My country has had a historic past. Many of our ancestors have fought and died while locked in battles for independence. The reason why my country's history has been so filled with heroes from all walks of life and from virtually every discipline is the simple fact that my race has probably fought an unending battle for independence, a battle that until now has remained unwon, even seemingly lost. Mercifully, many among my brethren have created their own dents in history, such as the nation's national hero and many others in his time. Numerous of our ancestors bravely faced odds and braced themselves for bloodshed, all to show invaders that the nation's spirit was very much alive in every drop of blood that was spilt on native soil.

Independence has always been an elusive nymph, one that seems to flutter between impossible and attainable, but staying desirable just the same. We may not have completely won the fight till now, beholden as we are to the foreign relations that we treasure and the sanctity of global citizenry that we aim to have. My race may have even been mocked many times as being a "nation of slaves" by excited football fans rooting for their home team. But one thing remains unchanged: my country has independence-loving people. We are people who consider everyone as our neighbor, and as our partner in growth. Many in my country prefer not to look at color, creed or race as hindrances to growth, because we are also of a colored race, the brown one. This is a country of humble and peace-loving people, people who can enforce their own laws and respect the rights that others enjoy.

We may not be privileged enough to enjoy full independence from our very powerful allies, but we enjoy what little it is of independence we have now. Hopefully, many others in the world can see how we in my country try to break free from our bonds and become better people, one way or another.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Define independence. What are the elements of independence, in your own opinion?
2. Why does the battle of independence often connote violence and bloodshed?
3. Which hero or extraordinary individual is your personal icon of independence? Be able to talk about this individual in class.
4. Do you believe you're truly and honestly independent? Justify your answer.
5. Why is it important to be independent, in your opinion?