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For the Good of Our Children

Lately, many outstanding art museums have been built in Japan. When I say “outstanding”, I am referring to the building of these museums. The reason I don’t mention the content of the Japanese museums is because there is a very distinct difference between art museums in Japan and the ones in America. The difference is the presence of children in the museum.

In Louvre Museum in Paris or even in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, it is very natural to see the presence of children. However, it is very rare to see children at art museums in Japan. When you go to any art museums in the world, you will spot a group of students, lead by a teacher, gathered around a piece of art and listening intently to their teacher’s explanation. In fact, other viewers enjoy the art alongside these students, but in a courteous manner, so that they don’t interrupt their learning.

Such a sight can be seen in most art museums around the world, yet it is a rare sight in Japan. Why is that? From what I hear, when a museum admits a group of children, the adult viewers complain that they are disruptive. Some adults complain that the children are not getting their money’s worth if there are children everywhere.

Being able to appreciate art is nourishment to our souls. However, it is unfortunate that some adults can’t see the benefit that it gives to young souls. But what’s even more surprising is that these art museums don’t even try to convince these adults that understanding that such precious pieces of art should be viewed and taught to the younger generation. Not letting children in because of these complaints is such a discouraging thing to hear. Children develop their ability to distinguish good from bad as they see and hear wide range of things. Art museums play a significant role in helping students see what is truly good and meaningful. Since children mirror our image, when we as adults broaden our hearts and begin to show courtesy, they will learn from us and begin to act the same towards others. Hopefully, it won’t be too long until we see more children at art museums in Japan.

As the parents see the famous pieces of artwork, I hope that they will pass on the merit of studying art to their children.