

“Gaman” Club

I heard that in Fukushima Prefecture, the headmasters of the schools created a "Gaman Club". “Gaman” is a common Japanese word that means “to put up with something.” The idea is that each of us has to decide what we are going to put up with, and then we talk about it and put up with each other. In other words, it is an exercise in patience, which we lack today.

The zoologist Konrad Lorenz said that as civilisation progresses, our tolerance decreases, and since it is impossible to have the patience to quit smoking as an adult, we should train our patience from childhood.

Many years ago, there was a murder case in Nagasaki, where a sixth-grade girl was killed by a female classmate. The case reminded me of the "Gaman Club" because one of the reasons for the incident was that the killer couldn't stand the unkind language in the chat room. I thought that if the child had a little more patience, she might not have killed her classmate.

It is said that she used words such as "uze" (annoying) and "debusu" (ugly), but we cannot only blame the child, as the adult world is also flooded with strange Japanese words such as "yabai" and "ikemen" via TV. Considering that the original form of education is imitation, the best education would be for adults to use beautiful Japanese and set a good example to children. I would like to see TV stations set up a "Gaman Club" where people would not use gutter Japanese.

By the way, after the Nagasaki incident, there have been other incidents of schoolchildren being slashed, just like this one. In the wake of these many juvenile incidents, the emphasis repeatedly falls on the importance of "mental education". However, the emphasis is on the "open-throttle" approach, such as valuing life and compassion. However, education should be inextricably linked to the "apply the brakes" approach, such as teaching children the importance of not taking another's life or hurting another's feelings.

The "Gaman Club" is an example of the “apply the brakes” methods of teaching the young mind. Let's start from the idea that rather than teaching children that “it is not scary to cross on the red light when we are together,” we should teach them that “we should be patient and stop at the red crossing light together.”