

Violence of the Majority

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Have you ever seen the movie or play called "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest"? It's a story which occurred in a mental hospital in America. Last year, as one of the E.S.S. activities, Keio Production 1986 performed that play and I had the part of Chief Bromden. A huge Indian who was one of the patients there. Although we were able to win the Grand Prize, at first I was afraid I couldn't play that role. I thought if he was totally different from me, it would be too difficult to understand his feelings and to act his part. However, it turned out to be not so difficult as I thought because I found lots of common things between him and myself. I even thought, "Is he really crazy?" The same thing could be said of other patients. I felt all of them were mostly very normal, not so different from me. It might sound rather strange to you that those crazy people are not so different from me, but it is true. If I tried to find the difference between those patients and ourselves who are considered sane, it will be that those patients are more sensitive than normal people. That is the vital one.

Because of their sensitiveness they feel everything much stronger than we do. What's not so important to us can be very important to them. What's not painful to us at all can be very painful to them. That's why they are in a mental institution being unable to adjust themselves to our society. In this sense I don't think they are crazy at all. I mean the way they feel is different from the way we feel, but I think we should also respect their opinions as well. They are not something that should be called crazy. Then why are they called crazy and have to be closed out of our society? Because they are a MINORITY. We shut them out of our society calling them crazy or insane as if they were something wrong, something horrible, just because they were different from us. We think about our benefit, but we don't think about their benefit because we are the majority and they are the minority. Don't you think it is a very egoistic aspect of us? I believe it is. Acting in the Cuckoo's Nest got me into thinking like that.

At the time when I was possessed with that kind of idea, I happen to see a very shocking T.V. program about AIDS. What shocked me was not the threat of AIDS but what one of the gay people said. He said "I didn't want to be a gay. When I noticed. I was a gay. There was no choice. I just realized that I was a homosexual." Now ladies and gentlemen, what do you think of his remark? You might laugh or pay no attention because you are not gay, and it's hard for you to understand his feelings. But if you saw that program and saw his face, I think you could hardly laugh. He was very serious. I was really shocked by his remark because I found that it is not himself who he blames for being a gay. He didn't even have a choice, he couldn't do anything.

As you know gay people are not socially approved. Most people think they are sexually perverse. I was also possessed with such opinion and I really hated them. Thinking about their existence really disgusted me. However his remark my way of thinking and made me think I was wrong because now I know the reason for people of being a gay is not something they wanted to be, but something they just couldn't deny. But what has been our attitude towards them like? We thought they were crazy and disgusting

because of a very selfish reason that they are different from us. We didn't even try to understand their feelings because they are a minority.

As a result, in our present society, it is very hard for those gay people to be honest and to tell their friends that they are gay. They have to keep lying all the time. They must have had a lot of difficulties in interpersonal relationship. They must have had a very hard time feeling small, feeling lonely.

In the Cuckoo's Nest, the doctor says to the patients, "Since the society decides who is sane and who isn't, you must measure up." In some way, I think this is very true. Certainly a society where everybody is the same is more streamlined, with no accident to be expected. But I wonder if uniformity is such an important thing that could make us deny a person's opinion, a person's individuality like concluding that minority's opinions are worse than majority's opinions.

How about those people who just can't measure up even though they want to? Obviously, it was just impossible for that gay to stop being a gay.

Now ladies and gentleman, I want all of you to ask yourselves. "Didn't we force the minority to do what we feel is normal without trying to understand them very much? Didn't we try to change them the way we want them to be because of a benefit of the majority?" We should stop making a foolish mistake of thinking that we are right simply because most people do the same as we do.