

## Be Extraordinary

同志社女子高等学校 1年 金谷彩希

“Rather than being in a crowd without a reason, become isolated with a reason.” “Rather than to say what’s right but to do what’s right.” “Rather than be ordinary, be extraordinary.” These lines, which I heard in a television commercial, moved me deeply. As I considered these lines, I began to wonder, “Why are people afraid of stepping outside of normalcy?” Perhaps it is because being seen as a “normal” person by conforming to those around them makes people feel secure that they are free from attack. Actually, I too am the kind of person that feels a sense of security in being the same as others. For example, when the season changes and it starts to look chilly, I worry about when to start wearing a coat. And ultimately, I only start wearing a coat after I see others start wearing one. I get the feeling that many others are like me as well. People like us feel a sense of security in being normal, and I realized that it requires courage for us to even be ourselves.

I do not feel that it is easy to convey one’s opinions to others in society today. A major topic of discussion in Japan this year was a series of celebrities who committed suicide over being slandered. But this is not only an issue for celebrities. Even normal people like us, when our opinions differ from those around us, often either conform to the majority or think deeply about how to convey our opinions. Now, social media is becoming the center of society, and we live in an age in which we are monitored by the masses and showered in opinions. So, for us living in an age like this, it is necessary to have courage even to just be ourselves as we live. Right now, we need the “courage to be ourselves,” but what specifically does this mean? It means not erasing our opinions and instead holding onto and conveying them to others. It also means actually taking action. However, as we are now, conforming to those around us and being seen as a “normal person” provides us with a sense of security, so it is difficult for us to convey our thoughts and intentions and to actually take action. We need to change this. What is gained

by conforming to the opinions of others? Does it help us progress? Progress is attained through the “courage to be ourselves.” For example, through discussions, we are able to share and consider numerous opinions, which leads to the best results. In this way, the “courage to be ourselves” enables us to finally start making gradual changes. Courage is contagious. In modern society, some people criticize those whose opinions are in the minority, so it is scary to hold tightly to one’s ideas and take action. However, doing so will also undoubtedly provide others with courage. As an example, Indian people were in a situation like this a long time ago. In protest against British rule, Gandhi launched a movement of non-violence and non-cooperation. This gave courage to numerous Indian people, who then also joined the movement. Gandhi infected the people of India with the “courage to be themselves.” Right now, it is difficult for us to hold onto our ideas and take action. However, I feel that we should first change ourselves under the belief that being personally courageous will provide others with courage. Because doing so is the first step toward creating a society in which we can freely express our ideas and have discussions.

It is now clear that we need courage to be ourselves. As such, shouldn’t we proactively express our ideas and take action? By taking action, we will be providing others with courage. And some of those who receive courage from us will in turn take action. This courage will infect countless others, and the world will continue to progress. Through our courage and our actions, let us give strength to children whose future options would otherwise be limited. Let us give strength to those who suffer for being different than others. And let us give everyone in the world the “courage to be themselves.” “Rather than being in a crowd without a reason, become isolated with a reason.” “Rather than to say what’s right but to do what’s right.” “Rather than be ordinary, be extraordinary.”