

Black Lives Matter

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Black Lives Matter. This is one of the slogans used at demonstrations to protest discrimination against Black people and started when a Black man named George Floyd was killed by white police officers in May last year. Honestly, when I heard it for the first time, I had no idea why they use “BLACK LIVES” as the subject instead of “ALL LIVES.” However, the following Instagram post totally changed my view and solved the mystery for me.

“YOU ARE PRIVILEGED WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT. SOCIETY GIVES YOU PRIVILEGE JUST FOR BEING WHITE.”

This argument was mainly sent to people who insisted that expressing Black Lives Matter was wrong and All Lives Matter was proper. The statement was posted by Billie Eilish. I felt her point was accurate, and I was deeply moved. Although she was 18 and only 3 years older than me, she had decided in her heart to post her thoughts on social media after thinking sincerely about discrimination against Black people and expressing it in a burst of emotion, knowing well that she would be criticized later. I felt miserable. I had thought that discrimination due to the innate color of one's skin didn't make sense, but when I was thinking about why white people and I, a Japanese person, weren't discriminated against, I realized that Black people are in a weaker position in society. Actually, I had never thought about how much more privileged white people are in every aspect than Black people are. In addition, I was convinced that discrimination had nothing to do with me because I live in Japan. In Japan, there are lots of people who still don't know much about Black Lives Matter. It's because we turn away from such problems with the excuse that we aren't Black or white. Unfortunately, this is Japan's present reality. It clearly shows how poorly aware we Japanese people are about discrimination. We post criticisms on social media about

demonstrations and things like that even though we don't know enough about them. Although social media is a good way to influence people, as Billie did when she shared her post with the rest of the world, Japanese people often use it for blaming and abusing others. I was speechless at the reactions from some Japanese people when Naomi Osaka tweeted about her decision to boycott the tennis match for the purpose of making time for us to think about discrimination. There were many slanderous comments, such as "It's an abuse of office power" and "Black people kill white people too." Few Japanese people understand "Black Lives Matter" and praise Naomi Osaka.

Meanwhile, the coronavirus that has been spreading since last year has brought about changes in the way we think about discrimination. I found that Japanese people are indifferent to discrimination in other countries like this because we had never felt that we were being discriminated against. Ever since the coronavirus started to spread around the world, Japanese people have been experiencing discrimination against Asians from some people who selfishly think that "Asians equal the virus."

While it is a sad occurrence, we now have an opportunity to turn our attention to the numerous cases of discrimination occurring in other countries, don't we? Now, people - especially teenagers like us - can use social media effectively to post things or share the posts of others. And doing so will enable us to properly understand and share opinions with people around the world. I believe we will be able to become driving forces, in the same way that I was moved by Billie's post. So, let's communicate to those who are indifferent to discrimination.