

## Never be taken in by 'common sense'!

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When I was in my 1st year at Tsuyama Kosen, I studied this proverb in Japanese class.

"The superior man is affable, but not adulatory."

This proverb is from the Analects of Confucius, and means, "A good person values harmony with others but never simply follows others." In other words, the latter part says that we should have our own philosophy.

Recently I've come to appreciate the importance of the latter part very much. So today, I'm going to tell you about my experiences with the words 'common sense'.

In the past, I often used the words like 'normal' or 'common sense'. For example,

- "It's the normal thing to do."

or

- "Thinking based on common sense..."

But now I've come to think of these more deeply and to use them more carefully.

Well, why? I will explain.

About a year ago, I became closer to a friend of mine. He is apparently seen as a strange and unusual man. But the longer I talked with him, the more I understood him. I came to understand that he has a clear philosophy of his own. He always gives me a new way of thinking.

My friend had repeated a year at school. So one day I told him "You shouldn't repeat a year again." Then he asked me, "Why do you think so? Because it's common sense?" I replied "Yes." Then he asked, "Is it really right?" I hadn't ever thought about it so deeply, and couldn't say why I believe it. Therefore, I came to think more about the words 'normal' and 'common sense'.

Here is my opinion about these words.

We often view many things as 'normal' or 'common sense', but I feel many of us believe them unconsciously and seldom think deeply about issues. I had often thought, "It's just the normal thing to do!", and didn't think any further. However, why on earth is it 'normal'?

Some people might say, "Everybody does it, so it's natural to do it." But this could be very dangerous in some cases. For example, many people rush to buy brand-new types of televisions these days. Could this be just because "they're in" or "Everybody else does it"? But what will happen if we tease a classmate in the same way? The majority does not always show the truth. So we could be misled by such 'common sense'. Therefore, I have come to believe that we should think deeper whether or not it's true and why we think so.

Let me give some examples.

First, why do we say, "Be kind to others"? Is it common sense? Perhaps yes. But we'd better not stop thinking up to here. What is your own answer? In my opinion, we're kind to others because it's not only for them but for ourselves.

Second, once when shopping with my friend, I asked him, "What clothes do you think suit me?" He said, "I have no idea. I'm not interested in fashion. Why do you care about it?" I came up with several answers, like "It's to make me look better to others" or "It's fun to wear different clothes", but finally I realised that it was simply for my self-satisfaction.

The last one is more difficult. My friend likes to think about philosophical matters, and sometimes takes up questions of 'life' and 'death'. Once he asked me, "Why do many people value 'life' and fear 'death'?" I haven't found a good answer yet. Do you have any answers? If not, you, too, should review this matter.

As a result of thinking more about 'common sense', we may conclude that some of 'common sense' are not true. I believe that common sense often hides the truths and deludes us. So we have to review them by ourselves. We shouldn't lean on surrounding circumstances. And we'd better have our own philosophy about 'common sense'.

Like Confucius, I've come to think that we should be "affable, but not adulatory."