

Science and Technology, and Human Life

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Today, because of the development of science and technology, our way of life has become very rich. But, at the same time, we often have to make difficult decisions that people did not need to make in the past. Prenatal diagnosis, “Shusshomae Shindan” in Japanese, is a perfect example. Prenatal diagnosis is to examine if the baby is sick or handicapped before he or she is born. A few years ago, it was troublesome and sometimes dangerous for both the mother and the baby. But now, just a little blood from the mother is enough to know whether the baby is sick or handicapped. According to a news report, if the test result shows that the baby has a high risk of having sickness or disability, many people choose not to give birth. This choice may sound reasonable to many people, because bringing up a handicapped child is very tough mentally and financially. But I cannot help wondering if it would be acceptable to kill a small life that is trying to live.

My sister, Ayumi, has Down syndrome. Down syndrome is a genetic disorder, and one out of 1,000 babies is born with Down syndrome. Down syndrome is a very heavy disability causing mental disability, short stature and weak muscle strength. Ayumi is now in the 6th grade, and she just started learning subtraction. She often acts differently from us and she needs some help from other people. So, there are some troubles about her, but she is more friendly, and more organized than me. She is also good at learning things that she is interested in. She is very kind, and she makes people around her smile. And most importantly, she makes my family tied together. So, I can't think of my family without her. I'm proud of having her as my sister.

Thanks to Ayumi, I have learned that handicapped people have rich feelings like we do. I also learn that quite a few handicapped people are talented in music and art. For example, Shoko Kanazawa has Down syndrome, but she is a famous calligrapher, who wrote the tittle lettering of NHK's Taiga

Drama “Tairano Kiyomori” in 2012. People may not understand these abilities and potentials that the handicapped people might have, unless they have the handicapped people around them. Maybe this is why people sometimes use the insulting word “gaiji” and, maybe this is why people choose not to give birth to handicapped babies. But, not giving birth means taking away all the possibilities from the handicapped baby.

So, what do you think of prenatal diagnosis? Do you think this technology really makes people happy? This question may not be easy to answer. I myself haven’t found the answer, and I’m not sure if I will take a prenatal diagnosis when I become pregnant in the future. But I hope that I can think of the preciousness of human life in taking advantage of science and technology.