

Who am I ?

同志社国際高等学校 1年 井澤 円花

“Who am I?” This is a question which I have been thinking about for quite a long time. When I was 5 years old, I moved to America due to my father’s job. That was when I started to ask the question, “Who am I?” In America, I faced several differences between myself and the other kids at school. Of course, most of the people at school were Americans who had different appearances and spoke a different language than me. People often mistook me for Chinese which made me wonder even more about myself. Searching for my identity, I think I went through several changes.

After being in America for about a year, one of my classmates told me that the “old” Madoka who had just come to school was better than the “current” Madoka. Since I didn’t think that I had changed, when I was told this, I was shocked and confused. I felt as if I was being denied who I was at the time, so I couldn’t figure out the difference between who I was then and who I was before. Looking back at my friend’s comment, I probably felt shock because I thought that there was only one answer to the question of “Who am I?” When people go through happiness, sadness, love, and other emotions, they change and act differently than before, both in a positive and negative way. However, this change is something that everyone goes through, so there is nothing abnormal about it. Over the summer, I read a Japanese book called “Myself-this mysterious existence” (じぶん・この不思議な存在) written by Kiyokazu Washida. This book gave me several hints to my question. One of the things I figured out from this book was that who I am changes from time to time. For example, I am a “student” at school, a “sister” at home, and a “speaker” now. Before reading this book, I had always thought that I could only be “one way” and had to stay the same all the time. However, after learning that everyone has several faces depending on the situation, I started to think, “Hey, it’s okay to change and there’s nothing to be ashamed of.”

I think the question, “Who am I” can be the simplest and at the same

time, the most complicated question. Yes, I am a 16-year-old girl whose name is Madoka, but how can I really say that I am the person who I think I am? Why can't I be somebody else? One's life is made up of various choices which people have chosen throughout their life. If I hadn't chosen to go to America with my father, I probably would not be as fluent in English as I am now. If I hadn't chosen to come to Doshisha International, I would have met different people and experienced different things. If there are 100 people, there are 100 different ways of living. Since all of the choices I have made have created who I am now, nobody else can become exactly the same as me. You are who you are and I am who am I. If no one can be like yourself, then why not have pride in who you are now?

I believe everyone has had or will have the experience of losing yourself. I myself have had the experience, and I have seen my friends go through it too. There are harsh times in life when you just can't hold onto yourself, and you start to question who you are and how you should be. When I experienced losing myself, my actions were being controlled by my feelings so I often became emotionally unstable. When my friend was becoming lost with who he was, he had to face several challenges at the same time which made him become stressed. Although the reason for why my friend and I questioning ourselves was different, there was one thing we both had in common. We were consumed with the thought of "having" to stay who we thought we were. When I changed my thinking 360 degrees, I felt myself being freed. I don't have to be one way. I am the one to create who I want to be in the future. Instead of spending time on thinking about who I am, I have decided to enjoy who I was, who I am, and who I can be. Who am I and who are you? There may not be an easy answer to this question. However, you can surely become whoever you wish to be.