

# What Is a Human Being?

同志社高等学校 2年 田中友渚

What is a human being? By definition, a human being is any member of the genus *Homo sapiens* that is distinguished from other animals by having superior intelligence and articulate speech. Most importantly, our rational intelligence enables us to have free will. To be able to decide everything for ourselves is what makes us unique from other animals.

Humans can form societies based on our interpersonal relationships. But what makes a human being human? It is our humanity or compassion, which is on full display in a society. When you look around, you will be reminded that we help and respect each other. For example, if you see an old lady standing when you are sitting on the train, what do you do? You stand up and give the seat to her. You assist your grandparents when they have difficulties in walking. You lend a pen to your friend if she forgot to bring one. From these examples, you can tell that the human society is formed from respect and helping others and this makes us human-beings. The expression “no man is an island” is very applicable to describe humans and humanity. This means that people need people and you can’t live by yourself. This is a very important human characteristic.

A human being is human because of compassion. I choose my words when I speak to others so that I will not say things that may offend them. A lot of countries helped and donated money to Japan when a huge earth-quake struck Tohoku. People from many countries also contributed money and relief goods when a strong typhoon hit the Philippines. And now, a lot of doctors and volunteers from all over the world are going to Africa to help treat the Ebola epidemic. Doing this, they might lose their lives but they still carry on. All these things show that human beings have compassion and I think that this is how humans should be.

So the sad truth is that these days, humans are not acting like human beings. Unfortunately, having superior intelligence and complex emotions has a

negative side. Humans become greedy and they always want to be on top. For example, some steal things, as petty as an eraser, for money. There are many senseless shootings in the United States and other country in Colorado and Mexico. Many people use drugs to feel better even though they know that it is not good for their health. Terrorism is a very big problem in the world. And lastly, we still have so many wars like the ones in Iraq, Sudan, Syria, Palestine, Afghanistan, Libya, and the list goes on.

I think human beings should act like human beings. Sometimes, even if we try to deny it, we know that good resides in our hearts. Even when you do bad things, deep inside you know what is good or bad. This means that humans are naturally good, and this is what we should be. To be human is to realize the consequences of your actions and try to do the right thing. For me, this is what a human being is.