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Making a Colorful World

I have always wanted to wear pants at a young age, never a skirt. I was warned many times how to talk and sit. "Act like a girl," they always said. But I didn't do it. I didn't want to, because I am a boy. In junior high school, uniforms and rules clearly separated boys and girls. It became more difficult for me. I wanted to wear the clothes I liked and behave as I wanted, but I couldn't. I hated my body and it was hard to accept it was changing. "I can't go to school." "I can't see anyone." These thoughts began to fill my mind.

One morning, a teacher said, "You are not energetic lately. What's wrong?" I was surprised but also relieved. On that day, I spoke about all the pain that I kept inside. She listened quietly and kindly. I felt I was accepted. In my school, we started to learn more about myself and the LGBT community together. My classmates also understood my situation better. I couldn't wait to go to school. My life that felt hopeless and black was repainted with color.

One recent survey says that, about 8% of Japanese adults belong to the sexual minority. It means one person for every thirteen people. It can be said there are several in one classroom. Sexual minorities are people who are not traditionally male or female. Some people may say, "There are no such people in my group," but sometimes it's not true. People just don't notice that someone is hiding their pain.

I want to create a society where everyone can live the way they want. A society not bound by gender, habit, or the way of thinking "this is how it should be." I think there are two things we can do to achieve this.

First, we should have the right knowledge about LGBT issues. Little by little, the situation is being understood and society is making an effort to change things. For example, there are more toilets that can be used by everyone. Companies are also removing gender questions from surveys. Some local Japanese governments have also certified same gender partnerships. However, I think that people's understanding of the LGBT community is still not enough. Wrong ideas and beliefs can cause misunderstanding and hurt people. We need to increase opportunities to learn in schools and companies so people can make better decisions.

Second, we all have to do our best to respect and accept each other. Even though some people love the same gender or someone with a different eye color that is their choice. No one has the right to deny others. To do this, we should recognize that we live in a world with many different people. I have a better life because people around me accepted me even if I was different. I believe that we can all live in peace with more understanding.

Now, I am standing here before you, it's my first step to help change the world. What I am doing may seem very small but it's the most important. My dream is to be an interpreter. Through encounters with many people across nations, races and genders, I hope to be able to communicate various ideas and ways of life. I want to act as a bridge that can lead others to a more colorful world. I will continue walking towards my ideal world.