

大阪府人権擁護委員連合会長賞

Osaka Prefectural Association of Human Rights Volunteers' Director's Award

以心伝心

Without Words

高槻市立芝谷中学校三年 圓谷竜司

Ryuji Tsuburaya

3rd grader, Takatsuki City Shibatani Junior High School

This is what I have experienced. When I was taking a bus, there was an elderly woman getting in. She had a walking stick with her and looked like she was panting. I had a guess that she hurried herself not to miss the bus in spite of her weak legs. Unfortunately, the bus was fully packed. Most of the seated passengers were touching their smart phones, and they did not even notice that she was there. The priority seats were full of elderly people. There was no seat left for her, no one who noticed her. She walked to take hold of a handrail attached to the seats.

At that moment, a young man sitting there looked up and took a look at her. I thought, "The seated passenger finally noticed her. She can have a seat there now." However, his eyes went back to his smart phone, and he started playing with it.

I had always tried to offer my seat to elderly people. It is because I have always believed that it is the manner we should observe as a human being. What I saw was against my belief, and it made me angry. But there was no way I could speak up. I knew I should have told it to him. Yet the more I thought of speaking up, the more rambling thoughts kept running. The thoughts of worrying what I was going to do if he started getting mad at me, the thoughts of worrying maybe there was only me who was thinking so. I only took to protecting myself.

At that moment, I heard a voice.

"You know she has been standing there. Don't you think you had better offer your seat to her?"

It was a voice of a young woman. She was standing near me. She had been concerned about the woman as I had been. Then, he said in a sharp tone, "Why me? There are a lot of people sitting besides me. I am so sure I am not the only one who knows she has been standing." It sounded throughout the bus. Seated passengers lowered their eyes, feeling awkward. There was still no one who was willing to offer the seat. Unable to stand by, the bus driver announced, "Please kindly offer your seat to the elderly." The man offered his seat reluctantly. The elderly woman looked so sorry.

The bus arrived at the bus stop where she was getting off. "I appreciate what you have done for me. You made my day," she said to the young woman and left the bus. She was smiling then.

I felt ashamed of myself having taken to defending myself above all. And I thought that the young woman is so magnificent that I want to be like her. I was deeply impressed that she had courage to speak up for the elderly woman and that she made the elderly woman smile.

On that day, I learned two things. First, there are people who feel the same way as I did. Next is that we all know what is right but it is not easy to speak up. Without waiting for someone like her, I have to be the one who stands up to speak up for it. It will move others and there will be someone who is willing to take action. Our hearts speak to others. I believe that the man who reluctantly offered the seat that day might actively do offer it under the influence of others in the future.