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Also, many people seem to believe that democracy is simply majority rule. However, if voters are not provided with accurate and sufficient information, and if their ability to think and judge is not functioning properly, then democracy is nothing more than a hollow form. If “the majority is always right” were true, then issues like bullying should disappear—but in reality, they do not.

In short, Japan is not truly “a country of freedom and democracy,” but rather a country that merely proclaims it and dreams of it. If we are serious about pursuing that goal, then we should make sincere efforts toward it. Don’t you agree?

The Illusion of “Natural Living” and the Value of Petroleum

Perhaps you also know some adults often mocked as “pretentious types,” who call themselves naturalists, saying things like, “I don’t wear synthetic fibers,” or “Solar and wind are better than oil and coal.” The list of such claims is endless—and the people who voice them often look rather self-satisfied.

But petroleum is truly remarkable.

At present, gasoline costs about 170 yen per liter. Even at that price, it’s still cheaper than a 500ml bottle of water.

A modern compact car can travel about 20 km on a single liter of gasoline. That car weighs about one ton.

Imagine this: ten rickshaws hitched together, each carrying an adult passenger, with a total load of around one ton. If you managed to pull it all by yourself, and your only reward was an energy drink worth 170 yen—would you do it?

Back in my forties, when I was still fit enough to pedal long distances, I once rode my bicycle from my home near Kamakura all the way to the Ise Grand Shrine in a single day. To cover such a distance, I had to frequently replenish nutrients, calories, and water. The cost of that replenishment exceeded the price of gasoline needed to drive the same distance by car. In today’s world, where enormous amounts of petroleum are consumed in producing and transporting food, can we really say that bicycles are more environmentally friendly than cars?

Nature Education and Free Thinking

When you hear this kind of story, do you feel uncomfortable? Or do you find yourself persuaded, reconsidering your assumptions a little?

In most cases, such arguments are not welcomed. As I mentioned at the beginning, this too is an example of how our society cannot really be called “free.” What’s more, under the banner of “nature education,” children are often denied accurate facts, while commercial programs masquerading as nature experiences are marketed to them. This creates a beautiful narrative to manipulate reality. I see this as a kind of “layered sin.” What do you think?

Of course, it is perfectly fine for someone to say, “Cycling feels better than driving,” or “Food tastes better outdoors,” or “Cotton and silk clothes feel nicer.” Personal impressions are free to express. But instilling those subjective values into children through education is problematic, isn’t it? And then those same adults cast votes in elections. That seems likely to darken the future.

At the ZIKUU Makerspace, we value free imagination and thinking unshackled by prejudice or preconception. Don’t you want to know the truth, rather than be swayed by manufactured stories? Don’t you want to live brightly, without constantly being told “This is bad” or “That is forbidden”?

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Author

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