

## Growing A Real Relationship and Global Citizenship

### 1. Kanamori-Sensei's Belief

According to what he said, **what he valued most was that children acquire the power to change society for their own happiness.** To that end, **he asked children and, by extension, us, to connect and make the network.**

### 2. Stand in Someone Else's shoes.

**Kanamori-sensei was very sensitive to human grief.** His heart was always open to human sorrow, and he listened to every child's voice. And **he always requested children to use their imagination in order to stand in someone else's shoes.**

A practice in 2001 school year

Mifuyu confessed her decision to Kanamori-sensei that she tried to tell her classmates about her father's death during the third grade, but she couldn't. Because she didn't want to be pitied by her friends.

She was promoted to fourth grade without a class change. On April 26<sup>th</sup>, Ren told the classmates that he had lost his grandmother. At first, Taiki wept and responded by talking about his experience of losing his grandfather. Next, Rena also wept and she told about her grandfather's death. The classmates started talking one after another, and Mifuyu was the tenth person (unexpectedly for Kanamori-sensei). She suddenly started to speak with weeping that her own father actually died when she was very young and was very sad at the time.

On September 11<sup>th</sup>, **Mifuyu wrote in a notebook that her mother taught her how to cook in case her mother got sick. Mifuyu asked her classmates "Have you ever cooked? What kind of food can you cook?". The main response was to introduce the dishes that the classmates could make and help, and Kanamori-sensei shouted "Mifuyu! Tell them, 'You all are wrong!'" Kanamori-sensei pointed out that there was a big difference between Mifuyu's situation and the other children's situations.**

Kanamori-sensei requested children to imagine other people's situations again and again. Gradually, children could ask Mifuyu many things in order to stand in Mifuyu's shoes.

It was another practice in 2000 school year.

In the 4th grade, Fuyuko told classmates about her painful feelings that her parents compared her to her older sister and that she was verbally abused by a stranger in the park because of her atopic dermatitis\*. After the time for responses, Kanamori-sensei asked the children to write the response letters, and then their experiences of sorrow and suffering were shared in the class.

One day, Kanamori-sensei tried to invite a visually impaired person, Ms Magata, to the classroom. Kanamori-sensei considered that the person should be a woman who had experience of giving birth and raising a child, and who could talk about her whole life. This condition was necessary for children to learn the strength to survive the experience of being discriminated against as a disabled person and a woman. In other words, Kanamori-sensei looked for a person who can talk about the experience standing at 'intersectionality'. The children's impressions included not only the hardships, surprises, and ingenuity of her child-rearing, but also the loneliness of living in a dormitory at a school for the blind without family and friends. Many of children imagined that they would be very disappointed if they could not go to the local elementary school, and if they had to give up their dreams of becoming nursery teachers because of their visual impairment. One boy wrote his impression, "I felt like only we have advantages." Kanamori-sensei responded to him in the classroom, "Ms. Magata has lived and is living her life to the fullest. In turn, we are the ones who work hard for her, aren't we?" Later in the class, the children wrote letters how they wanted society to be improved.

\*red and itchy skin

The children created a relationship of acceptance with each other and Ms. Magata, and came to envision a new society. Kanamori-sensei thought that social justice can only be realized through a real relationship that accepts each other's sadness and pain. I agree with him and think that it's important to grow global citizenship.

### 3. Our relationship can make children happier

In Japan some teachers and researchers say that no one can do practice like his. However, I disagree. In the network of teachers called the Nisseiren Kanazawa Circle, we examine each practice with the aim of making the children happy. I hope that the relationship between you and us leads our children to be more happiness.