

## **Communication and Internet Culture**

### **HONG Mi Ok (South Korea)**

Recently, I confiscated a mobile phone from my daughter, a third-grade student at a junior high school, because her academic performance at school was awful. Even before I confiscated it, I had been worried that she was always using the mobile phone to talk with her friends. Although it is certainly important to communicate with one's friends, engaging not in face-to-face communication but conversation via the phone may cause misunderstandings in various forms, especially for children of my daughter's generation. I do not think that it is absolutely necessary for young students, who are not mature enough, to have a mobile phone.

Thanks to the widespread use of the Internet, means of communication have developed very rapidly. Now let me think about the negative aspects entailed by such a development.

My daughter always carried her mobile phone – while eating, riding in the car, walking, and even right before falling asleep. She seemed uneasy without the phone. After she got quite bad marks on a test, I decided to confiscate the mobile phone from her. This type of situation is found not only in my family but also in almost all other homes in Korea too.

Mobile phones, which can be used anywhere and anytime, can be a cause of traffic accidents. Also, in recent years, smartphones have become available on the market, with communication charges increasing to at least 60,000 won per month. The total communication charges for all members in a household occupy a considerable part of their living expenses, forcing the household to pay a lot for communication. Moreover, there is a concern that communication via mobile phone and e-mail may result in a rapid decrease in communication between family members, unnecessary misunderstandings, game addiction, poor eyesight, and injuries inflicted on others, such as traffic accidents caused while using a mobile phone. Furthermore, there is a concern that irresponsible escapes from reality; fewer opportunities to think about things deeply; and lack of communication with other people may deprive mobile phone users of contact with and interest in other people.

Actually, I am not an exceptional case. One day, I realized on my way to work that I forgot to carry my mobile phone, which made me uneasy for no apparent reason. I thought, "What would I do if some emergency occurs?"

It seems to me that the rapid development of the Internet is disrupting true communication. The Internet cannot truly convey the feelings of human beings. In

modern society, it is necessary to think about how to ensure communication in which the feelings of human beings can be conveyed.

Today, few public telephones are seen in our living environment. One day I was going to meet my son, an elementary school student. I was busy that day and I knew that I would be late. Although I tried to contact him, my mobile phone battery was dead. I still remember that I rushed around here and there to find a public phone.

As my experience indicates, there are many examples showing how much people today depend on mobile phones. It is needless to say that the convenience of mobile phones has contributed greatly to modern society.

However, there is a phrase that goes: The world has certainly becomes more convenient, but it does not mean that society become better. I totally agree with this idea. I think it is necessary to rethink what the role of a mobile phone really is. Also it is important to exercise self-restraint about its utilization, while using a mobile only when it is needed.



△ Young people use the mobile phone in the train