

## **Strange Openings of Dangerous Channels**

### *Risky Activity Flows from Children's Decisions*

New legislation with the purpose of preventing teenagers from exploiting themselves in child prostitution via the “Deaikei site” has been approved at a plenary session of the House of Councilors. The penalty is a fine of no less than a million yen no matter what age and sex the offenders are. The purpose of this legislation is to punish girls who use such sites, but to also treat them as victims. It may be unnecessary to say that the in background of approval for this bill, there was consideration of the many new cases of child prostitution, which have accompanied the rapid development of the cell phone market.

In my opinion, this is a very strange piece of legislation. As I mentioned previously, I disagreed with this view, which depicts girls who dispatch messages promoting themselves as objects of prostitution, as victims. “Child prostitution is wrong. If you invite adults to pay you for sex, you may not be only a poor victim” is the message we must deliver to such children. However I also disagree with punishing children in this way. It should be enough to deliver admonitions and provide guidance counseling. The harsher punishment must be reserved for the adults who purchase the girls’ sexual favors, and for the girls’ parents. I think we must apply the law in a firm way especially for those parents who insist that, “our child is a victim.”

From this point of view, this legislation is unreasonable. Moreover, it might be an ineffective law. For those who understand the Internet environment, they can easily figure out the high possibility of various ways to evade legal observation such as changes in the style of verbal expression, and the use of secret language or signs. In any case, if children hear about this legislation, they won’t be so open to explanations of the reality of their activities, and essentially adults who buy children’s sex will receive the benefits of this added layer of protection.

What a terrible age we live in! We become upset and nothing else over the expanding of the media into the so-called Internet, with extension to cell phone networks, which makes possible the purchase of young girls for sex. Before, I introduced children’s opinions that, “The cell phone has lots of creative potential.” In point of fact, children have used cell phones to begin doing dangerous things that they could not have made happen before. If we call it “the cell phone’s creative potential” it is to mainly say that the dark, negative side of dangerous possibility was discovered.

Is there really any “good potential” in cell phone communication with which we may be impressed or consider an intelligent development, for the cell phones which children

now already own?

The present problem is that children do not realize or imagine the potential risks while they pursue the exploration of Internet-capable cell phones as a dangerous toy. As examples, we will quote girls who experienced child prostitution when they were middle school students, and revealed their experiences on a radio program called Teens Express.

“We had not thought about anything that could be harmful, but now when I realize it we were suddenly exposed to so many dangerous things. We were lucky because we have not gotten any venereal diseases or experienced life-threatening violence.”

In addition, they also commented that, “keeping the secret from parents” by using their cell phones for self-prostitution was a lucky thing. One of these “lucky girls” got a part-time job in the sex industry when she became a high school student. This was also a new development that we have not formerly seen in our society. Are adults no longer surprised with such changes in girls’ attitudes towards their own bodies and psyches? The sobering facts accompanying this reality are that adolescents’ contracting of AIDS and teenagers’ venereal diseases are expanding...

I wish to emphasize the girl’s comment that she felt lucky to, “be able to find a prostitution partner without my parents’ knowing anything about it.” Children using cell phones in crime now imagine they can safely manage unusual circumstances and have opened channels which enable them to embark on risky adventures without their parents becoming aware of it, and thus make into a reality such dangerous activities, informed only by their own inexperienced leap into adult levels of decision-making. Do we fulfill our adult’s duty towards them only through punishing those uninformed mistakes of the younger generation?