

## 4th Column (2016. 7. 15)

### 「My personal opinion regarding Gun control」

In my last column, I mentioned that I will be talking about some of the common stereotypes that exist overseas about Japan. However, I would like to instead write about gun control in light of the recent tragedy in Orlando.

In Australia, we abolished our rights to bear arms following a horrifying gun massacre that took place 20 years ago in Port Arthur, Tasmania. 35 people were shot dead and 23 wounded by a single shooter. The government swiftly introduced strict gun control and formulated the National Firearms Programme Implementation Act 1996. This restricted the ownership of shotguns and semi-automatic rifles. As a result, over 640,000 firearms were collected and destroyed, with lower homicide rate, and most significantly, we've had no mass shootings since.

On July 12th, a gunman killed 50 people and injured 53 others in an LGBT nightclub in Orlando, Florida. This is the deadliest mass shooting in the history of America, yet it is unlikely that this horrific event will have any effect on gun control reforms. Ironically, gun sales will most likely increase in the following days.

I recently entered an argument with a gun enthusiast regarding the Orlando Shooting, their argument being that restricting the private ownership of semi-automatic guns, (in particular, the AR-15 that has been used in multiple mass shootings) is not a viable solution, as guns itself are not the problem – it is the person who wields the gun that must be dealt with. "Blame the person, not the gun" seems to be the most popular response when there is a slight hint of the idea of gun control surfaces. Sure, I agree. If everyone was a law abiding citizen, then this wouldn't have happened. Unfortunately, the reality is far from ideal.

The problem is, no one can tell the "crazies and criminals" apart from the good law abiding citizens until the damage is done. This has been demonstrated too many times, in fact over a thousand times since Sandy Hook. This is why a preemptive measure like a nationwide gun control policy is needed. It's proven to be effective in many countries, and I'm confused as to how some people are drawing the opposite conclusion.

At the very least, I don't see how minimal regulation is preferable. It's essentially a free-for-all/battle royale type scenario, which is why so many people only feel safe when they're carrying a gun. Also, let's not use euphemisms. A gun is not just a "tool", it is a dangerous weapon that is specifically designed to kill.

I guess what I'm trying to say here is that gun control isn't about blaming guns. It's about not being so careless and naive as to let a psychopath easily get their hands on weapons that can kill 50 people and injure another 50 in a single shooting spree.