

We are all Involved - It is Not Someone Else's Problem

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Do you know how to write 'rachi', the Japanese word for abduction, in Kanji, I was unable to write the characters without looking at the textbook, but if I had been interested in the abductions issue and had believed it to be something closely related to me, I could have written the characters properly. For example, my friends can write the names of the celebrities they like in Kanji. Moreover, you can write your own name in Kanji, even if those characters are complicated. Should we think more about the abductions issue so that it becomes something close to us.

I learned more about the abductions issue through the film Megumi which we saw during our social studies class. Before watching this movie, our teacher asked us how many of us knew about the abductions issue. Out of the class of 31 people, only two raised their hands. I did not raise my hand as I did not feel confident enough to explain the issue, but I did think that I knew about it. However, after watching the movie I was forced to reflect. The movie blew away my previous vague ideas about the abductions issue as simply referring to 'someone who was unlucky enough to be taken away somewhere'. I realized that it is an important issue involving the loss of human dignity and that it is a problem that affects each individual one of us who lives in this global society.

One scene in the movie had a particular impact on me. Some people did not even look at the pamphlets that Megumi's parents had handed out on the street, even treading on them as they walked by. This must have been extremely shocking to the people who were hoping from the bottom of their hearts and continually campaigning for Megumi's return to Japan. I am sure they felt not simply that the pamphlets had been trodden on but sad and downcast as if their hearts had been trodden on too.

Back when Megumi was abducted, perhaps people did not have as much interest in the abductions issue as they do today. This made me stop and think, and I asked my family about it. This led my mother and grandmother to mention the names of Megumi Yokota and Kaoru Hasuike, and then to tell me many things. Even my younger brother, who studies at elementary school and was close by, showed an interest in the topic saying "please explain so that I can understand what you are talking about". This made me feel that it was the first step towards resolving the abductions issue that we communicated and shared what we knew within our families so that we all could know about it. That is why I think that having an interest in and knowing about the abductions issue is important. If we talk to each other about the abductions issue and spread awareness of it, then we will start to think of as something that feels closely related to us. I thought that if we do this, then we will start to feel deeply in our hearts that the abductions cannot be forgiven, and without doubt this will lead us towards a solution.

The saddest thing for anyone is when no one takes an interest in them and they feel that they are alone. The best way to remove the sadness of those who were desperately handing out those pamphlets is of course a solution to the issue but at the very least we all feel that the abductions issue is not something that relates to someone else but instead continually feel that it is something that relates to us personally, knowing in our hearts it is something that we are involved with, and then offer support to those who are feeling sadness. Then, by actively taking part in petition drives and the blue ribbon campaign, I hope I can become someone who takes those feelings of sadness and personal involvement as a starting point to spread this issue around the world, making a step towards finding a solution to the issue.

