

Junior High School Category

Second Prize

Kenshin Sasaki

“Safeguarding Happy Life”

Humans are born to live in search for happiness. I want to attain happiness through doing what I enjoy and fulfilling various responsibilities.

Needless to say, living a happy life is a right granted equally to all people. There is absolutely nothing that would justify criminal acts that deprive people of this right to happiness. North Korean abductions of Japanese nationals are an example of such crime. Abduction issue is, indeed, an act of human rights violation.

There are different forms of human rights violation in our world. Yet, the North Korean abductions have completely deprived abductees of their precious dreams and life they had hoped to lead in a single act of cruelty. It is something that must never be forgiven, and something we must continue to work on for full resolution.

My dream is to become a teacher. If, in the process of working toward my dream, I became snatched away abruptly, substantially distorting my vision for life, I think I would consider taking my own life. Considering the fact that there are still some Japanese people abducted and living a difficult life in North Korea, all of us who live in Japan must unite and take action. The first step we can take would be to watch the animated short film, “Megumi.” One of the victims, Megumi Yokota, was abducted when she was just 13. She was an energetic and earnest girl leading a normal life until the unfathomable act of North Korean abduction destroyed everything. Her parents fought for her return for 40 long years. The abductions also destroyed the lives of the rest of the family members. It is a crime of serious gravity.

I am 14 years old now, a year older than when Megumi was kidnapped. I cannot even imagine what it would be like to be snatched away like that at an age younger than me. Yet, watching the anime made me really realize it was something that actually happened. It evoked anger about the abduction, and a sense of urgency that something must be done to bring all the victims back to Japan.

That made me think what I can do about this issue. Firstly, I will talk to my family and friends about the North Korean abductions. Some of them might show little interest, but deepening their understanding, even by a small amount, should contribute to

bringing about changes. U.S. President Donald Trump referred to this issue at the UN General Assembly. This is an international issue. In order to help other people develop a greater interest, I will become involved in various activities and enhance my understanding of current situations. I might not be able change anything by myself, but I would like to live in a way that contributes to resolving this issue.

The North Korean abductions issue is, by no means, the only human rights issue in the world. Yet, having learned about this issue has made me want to strongly build a world where everyone can live a happy life with a smile on their face.