

High School Category

Second Prize

Yuuka Yamazaki

“What I Can Do to Keep Concern of the Abduction Issue”

I wonder where Megumi Yokota and other victims of North Korean abductions are, and what they are thinking today.

When Megumi was kidnapped at the age of 13, I was not even born yet. All I knew was that a person called Megumi Yokota was abducted, without fully understanding or even trying to learn what “abduction” meant. Watching the animation “Megumi” has opened my eyes to the current situation and cruel facts about the North Korean abductions of Japanese nationals.

Forty years have passed since Megumi’s abduction. One of the harshest facts in this case is the amount of suffering the abductee and her family must be feeling for not being able to see each other. Yet, what must be worse is their anxiety about seeing the rest of society forgetting the issue and concerns that full resolution to this issue is going further and further away. We must never forget the fact that some Japanese people were abducted by North Korea, and are still seeking help there. Above all else, we must educate ourselves more about this issue.

The first step toward resolving the abductions issue is to keep the concern of this issue alive. To this end, it is necessary to let more people know about it. Yet, it is human nature to forget things as time lapses. Media attention also shifts to other incidents that emerge one after another. That is why the government and mass media must work together in maintaining exposure about issues that should never be forgotten. The government is sensitive about public opinions. We must tell the government that us Japanese citizens are interested in the abductions issue and want to see it fully resolved. There are frequent media coverages on the Northern Territories dispute because of strong public interest.

Just as I only learned about the details of the abductions issue after watching the anime, today’s senior high school students have only heard of the issue but do not know many details. I want more and more people to watch this animation, “Megumi,” to deepen their understanding. It should be incorporated into elementary, junior high and senior high school education across the nation to inform all students about the situation.

I am also committed to spreading information about it to as many people as possible. My SNS post about having watched “Megumi” on SNS met with a response saying, “What is that?” The government should consider using YouTube and SNS to reach a greater number of people.

There is a limit to what an individual person could achieve. What I can do is to never forget about this issue, and spread words about it. I owe it to this competition to have learned about the issue. I sincerely hope to see more and more initiatives like this to continue.