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## Another Danger of “Mrs. Sakie is the Only Parent Generation Left”

By ARAKI Kazuhiro

The expression, “Mrs. Sakie Yokota is now the only one left of the parent generation of abductees,” disregards the families of the specific abductees, and we request that you refrain from using it under any circumstances. The abductees recognized by the government form only the tip of the iceberg of the total number of abductees, and families of the other abductees, even if they are not their parents, feel that they have been neglected.

On March 5, 2025, the Japanese government’s Headquarters for the Abduction Issue contributed an opinion article to The Washington Post. The article was good; however, its subheading was, “Only one parent generation left.” Although the text included a qualifier—“of the 12 abductees who are identified by the Government of Japan and still have not returned to Japan”—I believe that not many people will read the headline and think that far ahead.

Please bear in mind that not only the NHK but also other media outlets use such expressions. “Only one parent generation left” is an expression that poses further profound dangers because it implies that, “if the last one passes away, the abduction issue will be over.” Even when Shigeru Yokota and Mr. and Mrs. Arimoto were still alive, some people thought, “The abduction issue will blow over if they die,” not only in Pyongyang but also in Nagatacho and Kasumigaseki. From their perspective, it almost seems to have been a countdown.

Hopefully, Mrs. Sakie will remain healthy so that she can reunite with Megumi. However, the abduction issue is not only about this or about the parent generation. The issue will not simply disappear if the abductees’ family members are gone; it is an injury inflicted upon the people of Japan, and it must be borne by us to the end. If we do not do so, people without families will have no one to support them. Different opinions exist within Japan; however, despite the inconsistency within the country, it was the North Korean authorities under the Kim administration who abducted these people. It is North Korea that is at fault, and that responsibility will not change. Therefore, we request that you be cautious when using expressions such as “last person” so that this issue does not become an issue only for the victims and their families.

(This is an English translation of the article written by ARAKI Kazuhiro, Representative of Investigation Commission on Missing Japanese Probably Related to North Korea, which originally appeared on the e-forum "Hyakka-Somei (Hundred Ducks in Full Voice)" of CEAC on March 22, 2025.)