

NHK 大阪放送局長賞

NHK Osaka Broadcasting Station's Director's Award

ろう者たちのオリンピック

The Olympics for the Deaf

大阪市立聴覚特別支援学校三年 奥山紗代

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It was on September 7th, 2013. Japan was charged with fervent enthusiasm of joy. Tokyo was announced as a host city of the 2020 Summer Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games, and it will have been 56 years since Tokyo held the games last time. I was so proud of it because the supreme authority of the world championships will be held in the capital city of Japan, and I was simply happy about it. I will never forget the moment when “TOKYO” written in black appeared on the white card. I was brimmed with joy, so I talked about the Olympics with a friend of mine with no hearing loss, imagining the year 2020 which has not even come yet.

Then, I asked her a question which suddenly popped up in my mind.

“Do you know the Deaflympics?”

Her answer was no. It made me a little sad. I knew there are a very few people who know what it is, but I thought everyone at least heard of its name.

The Deaflympics is, in short, the Olympics for the deaf. It has been said that it is a coined word which combined Deaf and Olympics. The Deaflympics, both summer and winter disciplines, have only 25 sports compared to the Olympics, but they have some sports which the Olympics and the Paralympics do not have. I think they all are the same in terms of making people smile by sports.

I knew the Deaflympics but I have never watched it, so I felt it distant to me. But one day in 2014, a trainee teacher has come to school for the deaf I have been attending. He was a member of Japan men's national volleyball team for the Deaflympics. As I listened to what he said, it made me feel the Deaflympics much closer to me. Then, there was a question came to my mind. Why doesn't the Deaflympics get popularized?

One of the main reasons is that the media does not report or broadcast the Deaflympics. In fact, what is broadcasted on TV is limited only to the big events such as the Olympics and the Paralympics. The Deaflympics are such big and international events, but why aren't they broadcasted on TV?

I think it is because Japanese are not very interested in them. Compared with how it used to be, we have better understanding for the hearing impaired, and we can now use the sign language proudly in public. But when I am using the sign language, I feel the eyes of those who around me. I feel we need more understanding. What should we do to help others have deeper understanding for the hearing impaired and be more interested in the Deaflympics?

Ever since I got to know the Deaflympics for the first time, I have had a dream. It is to be engaged in work related to the Deaflympics. I love sports that can give hope and make people smile, so I have been strongly wishing to make the Deaflympics more famous in Japan. Then, there will be more places where the hearing impaired can be actively involved. Watching them taking a lively part in the Deaflympics, boys and girls would be more interested in sports. Moreover, there would be less people who have sufferings and sorrow of having hearing loss, and they might be able to feel proud of themselves.

The Deaflympics are not well-known yet, so what I wrote here is nothing but my dream. But please think about it: what if they get popularized and broadcasted on TV? Please imagine those who without disabilities watch the Deaflympics on TV and support the players with smiles!

There is an invisible wall between those who without and with disabilities. I think it is because we both are scared of each other somewhere in our heart. Once both Olympics get popularized, the wall will disappear and we will understand each other. How great it will be if we both can express our opinions freely!

In order to make the world meet my ideal and make my dream come true, I will tell the Deaflympics, the Olympics for the Deaf, not only to my friends and acquaintances without disabilities but also to the deaf who are unfamiliar with it.

That is my dream, and I am hoping that it will eventually help the silent disabled in Japan.