

Prime Minister's Award

Protect Both Oneself and Others

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"You mean that your mother is not your real mother?" This is generally the first reaction when I tell my friends about myself, and each time, such reaction makes me grow cold.

Many people may have heard the term, "adoption." Adoption means to create a legal parent-child relationship between persons without a blood relationship. You must have heard the term, "adopted son-in-law." I was adopted by the current parents immediately after birth under the special adoption system, not under the regular adoption system. Under the special adoption system, a child's legal relationship with their biological parents is terminated and a legal parent-child relationship between the child and new parents is created and is registered in a family register.

My biological mother was physically fragile and had me as a single mother. She was unable to raise me under such circumstances even if she wished. I heard this from my foster mother when I was still very young. In those days, I innocently thought that I had two mothers.

It was when I was in the third grade of elementary school, I think. For the first time, I told that fact to my friends. Then, one of them said, "Do you mean that your current mother is not your real mother?" I remember that I could not respond appropriately with my mind totally in panic. Another friend said that I was abandoned by my biological mother. I was shocked by this remark. Now, I understand that she meant no offense but just spoke without thought, but at that time, I seriously worried about myself, wondering why I was given up for adoption and thinking that I might have been an unwanted child. I felt sad and distressed.

Several days later, I asked my mother about the special adoption system, and I understood for the first time that giving me up for adoption was the utmost act of love by my biological mother. She strongly wished that I would grow up in a happy environment. Knowing that fact, I felt relieved and I came to think differently.

I have my current mother and another mother who gave birth to me. Both are my real mothers who care about me and are very important.

Now, I have told the truth to my friends from my elementary school days. They all understand me and are my good companions with whom I learn and spend enjoyable time. On the other hand, I have kept it secret to my new friends at the junior high school. Once I tried to tell the truth, that new friend said, "Your mother is not your real mother." I could not make a response immediately.

In such occasions, the phrase that supports me is "do not need to force myself." I do not need to tell everything now. I have a choice not to tell as a means to protect myself so that I will not get hurt. I can choose the right timing to tell the truth, instead of forcing myself, and may try to make myself understood gradually even if I cannot convey my feelings as I wish.

Since my childhood, I have thought about the special adoption system. I have two mothers. My current mother and another mother who gave birth to me are both my real mothers who love me. I used to be seriously worried about the fact that I was adopted under the special adoption system. However, at present, I am proud of this fact because I have two mothers who care about me.

To protect human rights not only means to protect the human rights of others, but also means to protect the human rights of oneself. To know others, see them from various aspects and think about how to understand them. I think that such attitude leads to protecting the human rights of all surrounding people. At the same time, to tell about oneself and endeavor to make oneself understood while waiting for the right timing, instead of forcing oneself to tell everything, will lead to protecting one's own human rights.

I would like to be a person who can protect both others and myself. People are not flat but are three-dimensional. Whether they become a sphere, cube, pyramid, cylinder, octahedron or others depends on individuals. Arbitrarily deciding a form of a person or seeing a person one-dimensionally merely from a single aspect may lead to hurting that person. Therefore, in order to protect others, we need to see people from various aspects to ascertain their individual forms and to try to understand them accurately. On the other hand, understanding the form of oneself and devising means to make oneself understood by others will lead to protecting oneself.

I took a step in order to protect others and myself. I believe that my first step will lead to someone else taking the first step.