

Junior High School and High School

Excellent

To develop tourism

9th Grade, Onna Junior High School by Moe Gushiken

I have been living in Okinawa since my childhood. The people of Okinawa in my mind are very kind and treat everyone like as if we are a part of their family. Thus, I really like this “warm” Okinawa.

Onnason, the place where I live, is a resort in Okinawa. Many visitors come here looking for the special feeling and nature in Okinawa every year. My mother works in a hotel in Onnason. She has been working in the hotel for 23 years. I heard that it is tough working in a hotel when it comes to maintaining the number of tourists every year. I questioned why my mother continues with such a tough job. So, I asked her if it is really hard, and she answered, “It is tough, but the guests chose the hotel I work at from so many hotels. It is a kind of special encounter for me and I feel very happy to meet them.” I have also met many guests in the hotel. There are some guests who I have known since I was small. My mother and I treat these guests as our “family”.

The merits of Okinawa, in my opinion, are its warm climate, warm people and nature. During warm days, my feeling also becomes happy as well. In order to let more people know these merits and come to Okinawa, what should we do?

During a Summit held in May, the first ladies of different countries visited my school for an exchange. This was the first time for me to have such an experience, I was very nervous. These ladies were very kind to me; and we enjoyed the exchange very much. There was, however, one thing that I felt quite regretful about. That was that I do not speak English. Recently, a new postgraduate school named OIST has opened in Onnason. People from different countries gather together in the place. I think it is quite disastrous that only few people speak English Okinawa still has a strong culture of speaking in dialect. The accent is a kind of charm to people from other prefectures. I think if the dialect can be spoken at the same time, more people will visit Okinawa from other countries.

In addition, there is one thing that I am concerned with after the exchange. That is the problem of coral. The ocean in Okinawa can still maintain its beauty as
Besides, coral can also act as a natural breakwater, or be used as materials for construction of houses. Nevertheless, due to the spreading of Crown-of-thorns starfish and bleaching effect, the number of corals has been declining recently. Added to the above, we human beings have also brought a lot of problems to corals. The problems include soil, sewage and reclamation. If the situation continues, I think the beautiful ocean of Okinawa will certainly vanish.

When my grandmother was young, the sea over Onnason had plenty of fish. “ In the past, many crabs can be caught. It was very enjoyable. Nowadays, there are different kinds of environmental problems, decreasing the number of fish in the ocean.” She said.

She said to me with sadness in her eyes. I cannot go back to the time when she was born, but I am quite sure that the sea was much prettier than nowadays. At the same time, I am wishing to have the beautiful ocean back, and look at the scenery that my grandma saw in the past.

I think reducing domestic sewage and not having reclamation are more and more important. We should not damage the natural environment with any reasons. So, we should start protecting the nature step by step from what we can do.

After hearing the problem of coral in the exchange, we, together with the first ladies, planted some corals on a plate, wishing the corals growing bigger and bigger after the following decades. I really feel good as I am able to contribute to the increase in the number of corals.

Through this kind of experience, I have learned that preserving the natural environment and international exchanges are important. Also, Okinawa should not rely on military bases, but develop the tourism industry that can activate the merits of Okinawa. Don't you think we should pay more efforts together to help develop my favorite, Okinawa?