

Hara Yoshikazu
Director "Singing in the Dark:
Erasing the Disabled of Okinawa"

December 15th, 2021

Dear Shunichi Tokura, Commissioner of the Agency for Cultural Affairs

The Agency for Cultural Affairs has cancelled the celebration screening of the film "Singing in the Dark: Erasing the Disabled of Okinawa" they awarded last month. I believe that this is a serious matter that undermines people's right to know and freedom of expression, and it leads to the cover-up of history.

I have planned a "independent screening and discussion forum" on the 19th this month from 13:00 in the same hall where the celebration screening was planned (Space FS Shiodome).

I am hoping you participate this screening and think again what the cancellation of screening causes, and what kind of problem it develops into.

The Agency for Cultural Affairs' decision, not to have a screening unless the deceased's family consents and reach agreement, has a major problem. Because the family aims at canceling the screening, it would be better for them not to come to agreement. So it is natural for the deceased's family not to hope positively for the discussion, and that is what is happening actually.

Regardless of the intentions of the Agency for Cultural Affairs, the decision to cancel the screening is 100 percent in favor of the deceased's family. On the other hand, it is unfair that I, a filmmaker, lose the opportunity to express myself. I think it is necessary for the Agency to set standards for what cases are human rights violations, so that they can fulfill their responsibility to promote film culture. I believe that the Agency is irresponsible to deprive people's opportunities to express, resulting other municipalities' cancelations of screenings, based on the simply abstract "possibility."

There are no factual errors in the film, as alleged by deceased's family. "He cannot go back even if he wants to" in the interview means "where the heart belongs is taken away, he cannot go back there, It must be hard." This expresses the sentiment of the oldest son of the victim of *Shitaku Kanchi*.

The house where the oldest son lived was demolished shortly after the victim of *Shitaku Kanchi* passed away. For the family, their house to return to exist no-longer on the island. "To return" means to go to the island temporarily, but it also means to go back and live there again. To lose the house meant that the oldest son had no will to return to the island, also it could mean that it became difficult for him to go back to the island. "He cannot go back even if he wants to" in my interview guessing the oldest son's mind is an important fact I captured.

It is not possible to identify the deceased's family just by watching the film. It is also not that the film shows false descriptions about the deceased. Therefore, there is no legal issue in the content of this film, and no possibility of abuse of human rights.

I still do not understand what the Agency for Cultural Affairs particularly means by “an irredeemable human rights violation.” If the word “possibility” is used, it is possible to represent any reason, and they can justify the suspension and cancelation of screening. It is similar to do preventive home confinement of mentally defective people because “there is a ‘possibility’ that he may do an illegal act from now on.” This must not be accepted on the basis of human rights.

Shitaku Kanchi, or home confinement, was a national institution to isolate mentally defective people. This means that the state was the party concerned. The cancelation of screening would represent that the state disguises its historical guilt. The decision of the state would blemish its history.

I would like to request the followings:

1. To schedule a celebration screening of the film “Singing in the Dark: Erasing the Disabled of Okinawa” at once
2. To start researching and verification of home confinement and apology to the victims
3. To participate the “screening and discussion forum” on the 19th this month, from 13:00 at Space FS Shiodome

Cordially,

Hara Yoshikazu