

## The Families

### Chapter 5

#### Iizuka Family, Hara Family

#### A Fight to Protect Children

Yaeko Taguchi's brother, Shigeo Iizuka was facing his 21-year-old younger son at a sushi restaurant, in Ageo city, Saitama, near their house. It was the summer of 1998. There were two glasses of beer on the table. "Actually, A (a fictitious name), you are my youngest sister's son," said Shigeo. He finally confessed the truth to A.

He calmly told A everything. Everything includes the "incident."

A was the son of Shigeo's youngest sister, Yaeko Taguchi. When A was 1 year old, his mother suddenly disappeared. Shigeo, who was the eldest in the Iizuka family, has raised A ever since. Yaeko was also supposed to be 'Lee Eun-hye.' Lee Eun-hye was used to train Kim Hyon-hi, a North Korean agent, who, disguised as a Japanese, successfully planted a bomb on a Korean Air Line plane. Of course all of this occurred because North Korea had kidnapped Yaeko. These are the events he told A.

"Wow... Is it true?" said A. Then he added, "But the most surprising thing is that I didn't know anything until now. The entire family must have cared about me very much."

The families of abductees had to fight to bring back their children, or siblings. However Shigeo Iizuka also needed to fight for Yaeko's children. He had to guard them from the public.

It was a long and desperate fight. Yaeko Taguchi is the only abductee who had small children at the time of her abduction.

In June of 1978, Yaeko, 22, had disappeared after leaving her two children in a 24-hour childcare service in Takadanobaba, Tokyo. She had not returned to pick them up. She had not gone to work either. Looking back now, during June of 1978, three couples had disappeared in Japan, and in the summer of 1978, Hitomi Soga and her mother had vanished.

Prior to her abduction, Yaeko had made a tough decision to raise her children by herself. She decided to divorce her deadbeat husband who now lives somewhere else in Japan. She was so strong-minded that she would work and raise both children. But it wasn't easy.

She found a work after responding to a help-wanted ad for a cabaret, called "Hollywood" that provided childcare services for their employees. Although she used the childcare for a while, she soon started using a 24-hour childcare service where the children could stay more than a day. Since she worked until midnight, she felt it was too hard on the children if she woke them

up and walked home with them at such a late hour.

One day that month the childcare service called the cabaret and indicated that Yaeko had not picked up her children on the agreed check out day. Yaeko's manager then called Shigeo and told him. He hastened to Yaeko's apartment in Ikebukuro and observed that everything looked normal. All the furniture and kitchenware looked as if she would come home at anytime. The only thing missing from the apartment was Yaeko. It had been three months since she started working and started her new life there. When Shigeo saw that everything in the apartment was new, he thought that his youngest sister was doing the best she could.

Before Yaeko started working, she came to talk to him about her husband and her job quite often. Though Shigeo suggested that she look for a daytime job, there was no other option for her considering the pay and childcare benefit.

After he looked through her apartment, he went to the childcare service and brought the children back to his house. Since both Shigeo and his wife had jobs, they couldn't have the children at home during the week. They decided to keep them at the same childcare service Monday through Friday. Shigeo would pick them up on Saturday morning then take them back on Sunday night. Every weekend Shigeo drove and his wife held both children on her lap between Tokyo and far away Ageo, Saitama, and back again. They had been doing this for about a month; Shigeo had thought Yaeko would come home soon.

Every time when they brought the children back to the childcare, the two and half-year-old daughter cried terribly. She didn't want to go back there. In fact there was no real caretaker. It seemed the service have these children for their business and don't care very much about children. After they spent the weekend at Shigeo's home and were brought back to the childcare service, the girl always sobbed. Shigeo had been tormented by her crying which he still can't forget even now.

Shigeo already had three children: two girls, 9 years and 8 years old and the youngest, a boy who had just started school as a first grader. His wife had just started a part-time job as she had a little bit of time while the children were in school. She wanted to have some extra income to ease their life financially. Then the two babies came to them.

It was his wife who had the toughest time. Suddenly they now had five children. She had to decide whether to stay home and raise them. So she left her new job. Now Shigeo was overwhelmed by the responsibility for the family. He had worked since he was young to look after his family. After he married, he had been eager to earn his livelihood for his wife and three children. Now there were two more children for him to support.

There was debt that Yaeko had when she disappeared, which he decided to pay. As he couldn't pay it all at once, he had paid it off, little by little.

Yaeko had a loan from her boss and some rent fees needed to be paid also, which Shigeo had been charged. Honestly, it was tough for him.

First he thought it should be until Yaeko came home. Of course, no one thought about the possibility of her being abducted by North Korea at the time. They thought she would be back anytime.

Although it had been over six months, they still hadn't heard anything. All the family members had to discuss what they should do. Shigeo had six siblings. He is the eldest and Yaeko is the youngest. After their discussion, Shigeo would look after A and his next eldest sister would look after Yaeko's daughter. Their mother, Hana, made the final decision.

Shigeo, with the responsibility as the eldest, had already decided to raise them. However Hana wanted to make it easier for both of her grandchildren because she knew that neither sibling was wealthy and neither wanted to have more children. She worried how Yaeko's children would be. They took legal adoption procedures at court.

Children are innocent. Shigeo and his wife discussed how to raise the boy equally with their other three children. Though they said nothing to their son, they explained it to the two older girls as they should be old enough to understand. Shigeo explained to them, "This is my sister's boy. Please be nice to him as if he was your brother. Please don't tell anyone about it." Both girls responded, "Sure." Although they promised not to say anything, Shigeo worried it would be hard for the girls to keep it a secret. Someday they might have a fight between them, and then one of them may say something like, "You are not really my brother!" But such a thing never occurred. It seemed that they must have thought they should do as their parents do and treat all four fairly. Shigeo thanked them very much. And it was his wife who had the hardest time. He is proud of her as a mother who raised all four. He really appreciated her. There have been so many things that have happened that they are not able to remember everything.

On July 4, 1978, right after Yaeko disappeared, the family reported her disappearance to the police as a missing person. Several times they received notices from the police to have meetings. When they went to the meetings, the police always asked them to let them know if they heard anything new. That is not what Shigeo was looking for. He reported her disappearance to the police because it was he who wanted to hear something. He felt that the only thing the police could do was in reference to dead bodies. Since then Shigeo never inquired with police as he had been occupied with his work and busy life. However, everyday he wanted to know what happened to his sister.

He had heard that several men visited Yaeko at her cabaret before she vanished. They could have been North Korean spies.

For the first two years after she disappeared, they sometimes received silent phone calls. He wondered if it could be Yaeko? However, if it was she,

she should have said something. What were those silent calls? It could be that the kidnappers were pretending that she was still in Japan?

On November 29, 1987, Korean Air Lines Flight 858 suddenly vanished over Myanmar. Everyone on board, 115 people had been lost. This is the beginning of the Korean Air Lines, KAL 858 incident.

A few days later, they determined that the plane was blown up in midair by a bomb. Also they made a search for two Japanese passengers who departed from the plane at Abu Dhabi. These two Japanese were arrested on December 1st, when they tried departing from Bahrain to Rome. They had Japanese passports identifying them as Shinichi Hachiya and Mayumi Hachiya, a father and a daughter. During the investigation, both of them tried committing suicide. The man successfully killed himself, but the woman survived. At first people believed that the two were Japanese terrorists. As the investigators discovered that the passports the two had were forged, more people believed the bombing of the plane was a North Korean conspiracy.

Although they couldn't ascertain the nationality or the real name of the woman, she was transported to South Korea on December 15th. She, 'Mayumi' was shown on TV, unsteadily walking down the steps, flanked on both sides by strong men escorting her. Her mouth was taped over with a mouthpiece as a precaution against further suicide attempts.

Just 1 month later, on January 15, 1988, the South Korean government held a press conference to announce what they had found during their investigation. The terrorist bombing of KAL 858 was committed by Kim Hyon-hi, an agent with the Investigation Department of the Central Committee of the North Korean Labor Party, who had taken the identity of a Japanese, "Mayumi Hachiya." She was shown at the end of the conference and confessed the crime.

During the conference, they revealed there was a Japanese trainer, called Lee Eun-hye. When Kim Hyon-hi was being trained as a spy, Lee Eun-hye lived together with her teaching her Japanese language and customs for nearly two years (from July 1981 through March 1983.) She explained that the woman was abducted and brought over from a Japanese coast.

Who is the Japanese woman, Lee Eun-hye? The Japanese government started an investigation. The three couples had vanished from Japanese coasts. It could be one of them. Both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Police Agency had inquired with Kim Hyon-hi and exchanged the information with the South Korean government. It was decided that Fukie Hamamoto was most likely Lee Eun-hye because both of their names had the same Chinese character. However, Lee Eun-hye's features were not specific to any of the three women.

Nevertheless, Shigeo had no idea if his sister might have been kidnapped from Tokyo by North Korea. He had never thought his family was related to the Korean Air Lines incident.

Then the portrait of Lee Eun-hye was made public the next month. It was drawn based on Kim Hyon-hi's memory. Also it included the announcement that Lee Eun-hye had two children, 1 year and 3 years' old when she was kidnapped. Fifteen thousand portraits were spread all over Japan.

At first glance, Shigeo thought it could be Yaeko. But he couldn't come forward. Not only was it still doubtful but also he was afraid both of her children would be involved. Yaeko's younger child was a fifth grader. Nothing came up for two years since the police started the investigation on Lee Eun-hye. However, the police discovered that Lee Eun-hye resembled Yaeko, a woman who had been missing for ten years. The police finally called Shigeo. At this time, he denied it because he was concerned for the children.

The TV news about the Asia Winter Games, held in Sapporo in March 1990, refreshed Kim Hyon-hi's memory because the news mentioned "Chitose" Airport. Kim Hyon-hi had heard from Lee Eun-hye that Chitose is a pretty Japanese girl's name. Chitose was Yaeko's nickname when she worked at the cabaret in Tokyo.

Police again investigated and reached the same woman, Yaeko.

Then police started questioning Shigeo and Yaeko's other siblings. Every Sunday Shigeo and his siblings were asked to go to a small hotel in Saitama. From a room in the hotel, the investigation proceeded. They were asked for detailed information on Yaeko as the police needed to see if Yaeko was Lee Eun-hye. Background, personality, what kind of food or beverages she preferred, how she put makeup on, her features, etc., over thirty items. The information would be compared to Kim Hyon-hi's confession. Shigeo was also asked about his background or if he had ever been abroad. He felt as if they were also looking for any relationship between Shigeo's family and the KAL 858 incident.

Because the police were certain that Yaeko Taguchi was Lee Eun-hye, they sent an investigator to Seoul in May 1991. He showed the photos of 15 different women to Kim Hyon-hi. One of them was Yaeko Taguchi. Kim Hyon-hi looked at all 15 photos one by one and didn't even hesitate choosing Yaeko's picture as Lee Eun-hye.

On May 15, 1991, the National Police Agency and Saitama Police Force had a press conference to announce that they had determined the identity of Lee Eun-hye. It had been three years since Kim Hyon-hi confessed her crime. The Police announced that through their investigation since February 1988, they found a woman who was most likely to be Lee Eun-hye and had subsequently identified this woman as Lee Eun-hye, based on their inquiry. Although the police revealed her real name, Yaeko Taguchi, the presses were prohibited to announce the real name to the public.

The announcement also indicated that they would investigate it as a criminal case with the possibility of abduction because Lee Eun-hye had told Kim that she was brought over to North Korea on a ship.

Right after the police announcement, Yaeko Taguchi's family attracted a great deal of attention from the mass media, especially at the home of Yaeko's parents in Kawaguchi city, where one of Yaeko's brothers still lived. The home received relentless attacks from the mass media. They knocked on the door loudly, even at midnight, parked many cars in front of the house, took video, and snooped for information from their neighbors. The reporters also were pressing the homes of other siblings and relatives. They even covered the story at the hospital and the retirement home where her mother, Hana, had stayed for treatments of a stroke a few years before. Some of the family received silent phone calls or calls saying something things such as, "Your family must be involved with the incident."

Shigeo was really concerned for his younger son, A, a junior high school student then, if he might hear something. He was at a difficult age. If he found out the truth, he may have gone bad. If he had heard this from someone else, it would be possible to be so much worse.

Shigeo's fight to protect the child was not only to conceal the identity of his real parents but also to hide him as a child of Lee Eun-hye from the inquisitive eyes of the public.

While the Iizuka family struggled against the mass media, a conference started in Beijing, China. It was the third negotiation to normalize diplomatic relations between Japan and North Korea. It was May 20th, only five days after the press conference about the identification of Lee Eun-hye. As soon as the Japanese representatives brought up the investigation on Lee Eun-hye's information, the North Korean side stormed out of the room in a rage. Since then the issue has never been discussed in any official meeting. North Korea insisted that the KAL 858 incident was fabricated by South Korea, and that Kim Hyon-hi, a North Korean agent, had never existed.

When Shigeo heard the news that North Korea suddenly terminated the negotiations at the mere mention of the Lee Eun-hye investigation, he thought, contrary to North Korea's public statement, the story that Lee Eun-hye exists must be true.

The next year, in November 1992, during a conference for the eighth negotiation, the Japanese side mentioned the Lee Eun-hye issue in a non-official level, which raised the North Korea side into a rage again. Finally the series of negotiations to normalize diplomatic relations were broken off. It took another eight years until they could resume negotiations.

Whenever Shigeo visited his mother, Hana, at the hospital, she always asked, "I wonder how Yaeko is doing?" Shigeo would reply, "We don't know yet but I am sure she will be back soon. And there is nothing to worry about as her children have been brought up well." It was all he could say to her.

About a year after Yaeko was identified as Lee Eun-hye, Hana passed away without seeing her missing daughter. Even on the day of her funeral the mass media was full of curiosity. Shigeo had argued back and forth with a

camera crews who burst into the funeral home without consideration of the family. "Today is not such a day. Please leave." Shigeo, pushing them back, strongly believed that he would not go public as Yaeko's brother. Until his younger son grew up to be old enough to understand the truth, Shigeo would desperately protect his son from the public.

In those days most of the articles about Yaeko were created mainly for entertainment. For Shigeo, they seemed to describe his sister as a conspirator of the KAL 858 bombing. It was extremely intolerable for Shigeo and his family.

Shigeo anonymously appealed to the media, "My sister is a victim who was abducted by North Korea. She was innocent. They took her away and forced her to be a trainer. Even if the KAL 858 incident resulted, it was because North Korea intended so. She has never been willing to assist them. We, my family will never sacrifice her on such a terrible incident."

Because all the articles were made anonymously, his co-workers and acquaintances had no idea that Shigeo was related to Yaeko Taguchi (known as Lee Eun-hye). People around Shigeo read the magazines with striking titles such as "We Discovered Lee Eun-hye's Identity!" He could not unburden himself by telling them that she was actually his sister. Most of them who liked to talk about this, expressed their negative opinions such as, "It is the woman who conspired to commit such a grave incident. Of course she divorced her husband and worked for an indecent cabaret. Perfectly outrageous!" They seemed to consider Yaeko as a part of a criminal group as they did not know the real circumstances. For Shigeo, people seemed to be saying that his sister was a criminal. In fact most of the articles reported that the Japanese woman, Lee Eun-hye, instructed and educated Kim Hyon-hi, which sounded like Yaeko had been a willing participant in the incident.

According to the memoirs, written by Kim Hyon-hi in 1991, she provided the following information regarding Lee Eun-hye:

Kim Hyon-hi and Lee Eun-hye spent time alone, isolated at a guest house No. 3 in Tongbook Ri, up in a mountain near Pyongyang, for about twenty months from July 1981 through March 1983. She mentioned how Lee Eun-hye had been and also how she was brought over to North Korea.

It was three to five years after Yaeko was abducted. A summary of her memoirs is provided below.

- Height, approx 165 cm, very slim. Beautiful Western features. Sophisticated looking.
- A Japanese woman who was abducted from Japan.
- In 1979 (Actually it was 1978) she was abducted on a Japanese coast by a North Korean ship, when her son was 3 and daughter was 1 year old. (Actually the gender of her children was opposite.)
- While she was in a ship, she was seriously ill and almost fainted away because she couldn't eat anything for many days. She didn't carry

anything except for her pocketbook.

- When she arrived at a confined guest house in North Korea, for a few days, she wept and shouted as she missed her children and country so much. Then she had given up adapting herself to the situation.
  - Whenever she had alcohol, she looked outside through a window and counted with her fingers, “I wonder how old my children are now?”
  - She often wailed. Once she heard a Japanese song, she shed tears, saying “I am crying because I want to. Please understand. May I cry? The song reminds me of my old days.”
  - I have learned a lot of Japanese songs from her, “Bride in Seto Sea,” “Winter in Tsugaru Straits,” “Erimo Promontory,” “Firefly Lights,” etc...
  - One day she taught a song, called “Donna Donna,” when they heard goats. In the song, a calf was in a cart, separated from his group and sold in a market. She must have sympathized with the song.
  - She seemed to give up all hope of life. Although they pay convertible notes, she never used it for herself such as buying new clothes or saving. Either she spent it for alcohol or cigarettes or gave it away to North Korean workers in the guest house.
  - She behaves as she pleases, which is different from most Korean women.
  - Because she is not the kind of woman who can be imprisoned in the heart of a mountain, she drowned her desperation in drink.
  - She was enchanted by looking at a 3 or 4 year old girl playing outside near the guest house and murmured “How happy I could be if I could raise such a dear girl over there.”
  - She has often been lost in thought and sighed deeply looking at the sunset.
  - She sometimes sobbed with a cocktail in the living room, listening to Japanese songs (Tokiko Kato’s songs,) and wanted dearly to go home.
  - Whenever she saw graves, she always stopped to pray. She placed a cigarette, thinking of her late father and her mother who may have passed away as she was old. She also always sang the song, “Donna Donna.”
- Kim Hyon-hi’s memoirs also read as follows.

“At the time, I, as a revolutionary thinker with lofty ideals, I didn’t understand her grief. Because Japanese are responsible for the separation of our nation, she, a Japanese woman, can be justly sacrificed to reunite our nation. I believed, as the party leader is always wise, everything must be the right thing to do.”

Then she would like to add one more thing.

“I am deeply sorry for her as I could not understand her grief at the time. No matter what I have to do, we must bring her back to Japan so that she can be back with her family.”



It had been six years since Lee Eun-hye was identified, and A had turned 20 years old, although he was a middle school student at that time. It was 1997. Shigeo had been thinking that he should tell him the truth when his son, A, had become old enough. However, Shigeo had been hesitating to talk to his son who doesn't know yet. He was almost changing his mind not to tell him. Or at least he doesn't need to hasten it. While he was irresolute, it had been over a year.

Though A became 21 years old then, Shigeo was still waiting for the right moment. Nothing had changed. Then, one day, Shigeo asked his son to eat out. He didn't make a plan for the day but he just decided so. Although he was going to ask his wife first, he decided not to. It is probably better for just father and son. Before going out, Shigeo just told his wife "I will talk to him about it."

"Actually, A, you, are my ...." His son calmly listened to Shigeo's story. Although it must have shocked A, he maintained his composure.

A only said, "What I was most surprised about was I didn't notice anything for twenty years. I can only say that I am still your son."

It was much later that Shigeo felt rewarded and also relieved with A's response. At that time he was only thinking he would tell the truth honestly.

He also explained the abductions with the circumstances of North Korea, which is in no condition for them to bring his mother back soon.

Shigeo told A as he showed A a picture of his mother, "Some day she will come home. Please be patient now." He had always carried it with him since Yaeko vanished, as it could be a lead in the search.

His son told Shigeo that he recently felt he doesn't look like his siblings. "Is she my sister then?" On the day, A also found that one of his cousins was actually his sister. When his sister was adopted by Shigeo's sister's family, she was already 3 years old. Although it seemed she had known A was her brother, she had never told A anything, neither had Shigeo's children. A had never known the truth until that day.

After Shigeo and his son came home, he told his wife. She just said, "Good..." which contained all of their thoughts. They both intended to raise A, so he wouldn't think that he was treated differently than siblings or was any less happy with his life when he found out he was adopted. Since it was destiny for A to join Shigeo's family, Shigeo made up his mind to bring him up as his own child. And Shigeo and his wife had really done so. When Yaeko comes home, she could be proud of her son. If not, they would be ashamed of themselves. Though, Shigeo's decision made his wife's life tough...

That day, Shigeo and his wife were relieved, reliving that it wasn't easy but was worth everything to have A.

They both thought back over the past – driving every weekend to the childcare. They also thought about both children (A and his sister) who had been separated from their mother. Who caused them to be separated? How cruel the abduction was. Yaeko just wanted to live happily with her children. It is North Korea that abducted Yaeko, changed her life, and changed her children's

lives. They suffered by the acts of the cold-blooded North Korean authorities.

A grew up well, being a good student during his school days. Now he is a busy businessman at a computer software company, going on overseas business trips sometimes. When Shigeo revealed himself as Yaeko's brother to the public after the Japanese Prime Minister visited North Korea in September 2002, A was out of Japan, but called Shigeo asking him if he was alright and whether he should go public as well.

Shigeo told him to wait for a while. He also told A, "Whatever we decide to do should support resolving this issue. That is the most important. If you go public as Yaeko's son, it may cause great excitement, which may not help anything. And you will be made much of by people. You have your own future. I don't want you to shoulder the burden. Not now at least. If I need you, I will ask you. Then we will exert every possible effort together."

Since the fall of 2002, Shigeo Iizuka's life has fluctuated. On September 17th, Prime Minister, Junichiro Koizumi visited North Korea and received information that Yaeko Taguchi had died. Shigeo found out through TV news at his office. He had been a little resigned to this because Yaeko had been lost for such a long time. However he could not completely give up on her. Although he watched the news at his work, no one there had known that he was her brother.

The next day Shigeo visited the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and introduced himself as the brother of Yaeko Taguchi. On the 19th he received a letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to tell him that Yaeko died on July 30, 1986. It was before the Korean Airline incident. It meant she died in her early 30's. He could not believe her death.

He made up his mind to come forward and join the rescue group, the Abductee Family Association. Before he took action, he discussed it with his family many times. Although some of his family members didn't agree, he believed it was the right time. Shigeo had been watching through TV news how the rescue group had been active. The group had been demonstrating for the release of all the abductees, including the people who were not active. Shigeo felt guilty as if he was hiding himself and relying on the other people in the association. Since Yaeko's children were both grown now, he thought it was time for them to publicly acknowledge their sister. They decided only the brothers would go public while their two sisters remained silent.

When Shigeo contacted the Abductee Family Association he found there would be a press conference on September 26th at the Diet Building. Shigeo was the only member of his family who attended the conference. He started his speech, "I have to be brave enough to come here today. Now I am ready to move forward with you." He thought about the difficult days when he had been pursued by the pushy and inquisitive mass media, treated as if he was responsible instead of being a victim himself, and along he had only been desperately protecting Yaeko's children. He concluded his speech, "I have never

believed my sister died, just like all of you. I would like to exert all my efforts with you.”

All the members of the association welcomed Shigeo. The next day, Shigeo and his two brothers (Susumu Iizuka and Masaru Honma) attended the meeting with the Association and the Prime Minister.

After the meeting with the association, Shigeo and his family received a lot of phone calls from people who were surprised to see Shigeo on the TV news. The immediate family had never told anyone, not even relatives or their own spouses' families, that they were related to Yaeko Taguchi, so the surprised relatives and businesses encouraged them by wishing them good luck. Again the mass media flocked to Shigeo and his family. After a while he was so busy that he couldn't go to work but once a week.

On October 2, 2002, the Japanese government investigation team came back from a 4-day research trip in North Korea with a report. Shigeo received the report in which North Korea denied the existence of any Japanese woman named Lee Eun-hye. If they admitted that she, Lee Eun-hye, existed, they would end up having to admit to the conspiracy of KAL 858. The North Korean comments were totally in conflict with the facts that the Japanese Police investigated.

Shigeo could not believe the reason for Yaeko's disappearance that North Korea had provided. They brought her over there because she told them at Aoshima Beach in Miyazaki that she would like to go to North Korea for a few days sightseeing. How could anyone believe such an obviously false explanation since she had to leave her two children behind? Also it is very odd that she would have been in Miyazaki to begin with. The North Korea side also explained that in 1984, Yaeko married Tadaaki Hara, an abductee himself, who was nineteen years older than Yaeko. The report continued that in 1986, Yaeko was killed in a car accident after her husband, Hara, had died from an illness.

Her death certificate is a piece of paper only. The official Seal looked exactly the same as that of the other Japanese abductees that North Korea reported as deceased as if they made copies for all of them at the same time. The marriage certificate shows that both her nationality and birthplace were Pyongyang, North Korea. It looked so ridiculous to him because Yaeko was born in Kawaguchi city in Japan.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs didn't explain any details in the report but handed it to him with their “deepest sympathy...” Reading through the artificial report even encouraged Shigeo to have hope that Yaeko could still be alive.

Shigeo wished he could see her and show her her grown children. He also hoped to call her by the Iizuka family name instead of Taguchi. Taguchi was the family name of her husband, who drove her into the circumstances in which she was abducted. As Yaeko had made her decision to leave him for her new life, he wished he could call her Yaeko Iizuka. However he could not

proceed with the official divorce without her coming back.

What about the circumstances of Tadaaki Hara? As read on the explanation by North Korea, he married Yaeko Taguchi in 1984 and passed away from cirrhosis of the liver in 1986.

Needless to say, only the North Korea side has revealed that they were married and also died without any real proof. They never knew each other before they disappeared. It seems that North Korea may have conveniently matched them together as both Yaeko and Tadaaki were two on a list of thirteen people the Japanese Government inquired about.

Shigeo commented that Yaeko was unlikely to choose a man who was nineteen years older than her for her husband. He believed that she would mind the difference between their ages as she always stressed good looks in choosing a boyfriend.

In the memoirs of Kim Hyon-hi, she mentions a couple of things about Lee Eun-hye; first she was a fan of Kenji Sawada (a Japanese Rock and Roll Singer, known as “Julie”) and second, she ran away from a date that a matchmaker arranged.

This arranged date happened about two years after she was abducted from Japan. Someone was going to introduce a prospective husband to her if she was interested. At the meeting, she had a chance to view the man before she was seated. As soon as she saw him, she ran away. Lee Eun-hye told Kim Hyon-hi that that time she had decided not to think about marriage but live by herself.

Enough of the alleged marriage as Hara’s abduction is much more important. Hara’s case is different from the other cases as it was discovered who kidnapped him.

The name of the kidnapper is Shin Kwang-soo, an important North Korean agent. He was arrested by South Korea authorities on charges of spying. As he admitted being a spy, he was sentenced to death.

Shin took Hara’s identity to pose as a Japanese after he abducted Hara and sent him to North Korea. Shin was arrested with Hara’s passport when he had been spying in South Korea. In the trial, South Korean authorities prosecuted Shin with detailed information on Hara’s abduction. He was sentenced to death, which was later commuted to life imprisonment. However, he was paroled in December, 1999, and sent back to the North after being given amnesty, based on an agreement between North & South Korea Red Cross Meeting.

Shin Kwang-soo is an obvious criminal who played a central role in the abduction of Japanese. Although during the Japan-North Korea top meeting, Kim Jung-il apologized to Prime Minister Koizumi on TV for the abduction and explained that he had penalized all who were responsible; Shin had been recognized as a VIP in North Korea.

“I wished that the Japanese government could have arrested Shin when

he was in the South Korean prison. What a shame...” said Koichi Hara, the brother of Tadaaki Hara. If they could have investigated the details when Shin was arrested, it could have been possible that his brother might have been rescued. It was about twenty years ago when Shin was arrested in Korea.

Tadaaki Hara was brought to Aoshima Beach in Miyazaki and taken away when he was working at a Chinese restaurant Hokairo in Osaka, in June 1980. He was tricked into traveling to Miyazaki. He was 43 years old and single.

Initially, Hara’s boss, the restaurant owner, lured him with a better job. Then, he introduced Hara to three “executives” of a trading company at a first-class Japanese restaurant in Osaka. One of the three executives was actually Shin Kwang-soo. It was a fabricated job interview, in which Hara received a job offer immediately. They asked Hara to go to Aoshima Beach where the president of the trading company owned a cottage. The following is quoted from Shin’s trial:

“Although Hara had already drunk himself into a stupor, Shin asked him to go for a walk on the beach as it was too early to go to bed. Shin and his accomplices took Hara...(omitted details)...and they arrived at a spot on the northern side of the beach, where they were to meet four North Korean agents who had already stolen ashore. Shin told Hara, “Don’t worry. They managed to bring our ship here for us.” When Hara felt something was wrong and tried to run away, those agents caught him. They gagged and threw him into a bag. Then they took Hara to their ship, which brought them to Nanpo Harbor, North Korea, in four days.”

The three “executives” are Koreans living in Japan, introduced as Supporters for abductions in the decision of the trial. One of them was arrested in South Korea at the same time as Shin Kwang-soo. According to Kenji Ishidaka, a reporter for Asahi TV, one of them was forced to support the abductions because they took his family hostage when they had returned to North Korea.

As North Korea have previously reported, they were supposed to have “taken” Yaeko on the same beach. Based on this fact, one can assume their simple scenario that they were planning to make the two a couple.

Five months after Shin took Hara to North Korea he secretly returned to Japan. He impersonated Hara and moved Hara’s certificate of residence to Tokyo. He also gained Hara’s driver’s license, passport, and health insurance. He successfully posed himself as Hara. He then used the passport to travel to Europe and Asia, seven countries in all from March 1982, through February 1985. He did this because he had to secure footholds for his spy activities. In 1985, the first time he went to South Korea to spy, he was arrested by a South Korean National Security Agency. There were several North Korean agents

whom they had their eyes on. They caught Shin after he made contact with those agents.

Koichi, Hara's older brother recalls "I was shocked to hear the name of Ta-bo, Tadaaki on the TV news. I had believed he was in Osaka working as a chef, though we had not talked to each other for a very long time."

Koichi's younger brother, Tadaaki, left his hometown for Osaka when he was 17 years old. "As Tadaaki told me he would like to be a chef in the future, I suggested he go to meet my sister and brother-in-law who have worked in a restaurant in Osaka. My sister-in-law managed the restaurant and my brother-in-law was a chef." Tadaaki had gone to Osaka. Although Koichi had not heard from him, he believed 'no news was good news.'

Once, Tadaaki had suddenly come back to see Koichi. It was about three year before Tadaaki was taken away. He had asked Koichi if he could support him while he started his own restaurant in Osaka. Koichi told Tadaaki that he would give some monetary support for his business if Tadaaki found a good place for a restaurant and wished him luck. Tadaaki returned to Osaka; it was the last time they met. Although Koichi had never known his brother had been kidnapped, he heard his brother's name on the TV news one day. It was the news to announce the abduction of Tadaaki Hara right after Shin was arrested. Koichi has hardly lived a normal life since then as the mass media descended upon his life.

Koichi had no idea how to bring his brother back from North Korea. The only thing he could think of was to write letters to politicians. "As soon as I heard about Tadaaki, I sent a letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs to ask for help for my brother and I, but I received no reply. At the time, Ms. Takako Doi of the Socialist Party, had spoken in public that North Korea was a very fair country. Back then, it was only natural. But now I trust our government. They are doing their best."

In March 1988, three years after Shin was arrested, the Tadaaki Hara abduction incident was discussed over a session of the Japanese Diet. Atsushi Hashimoto from the Communist Party, a member of the House of Councilors, posed a question about it during the Budget Committee Session. Seiroku Kajiyama, the National Public Safety Commissioner, answered that North Korea was suspected to be behind the abduction. Hiromitsu Shirouchi, the Chief of the National Police, had subsequently verified that it was called the Shin Kwang-soo incident. He indicated that they were in complete control through Interpol.

It meant that our government had already known about Shin Kwang-soo and the process of Tadaaki Hara's abduction in 1988. As mentioned before, Shin testified in detail of the process that he deceived Hara in order to abduct him.

How did North Korea respond to the Japanese government investigation team which was sent after Prime Minister Koizumi's visit on September 17th, 2002? According to the report, Hara wished to go abroad for money and also for

dental treatment. “Hara’s Japanese residential certificate was traded by Hara for 1 million yen plus his immigration to North Korea.”

This is completely contrary to Shin’s testimony at his trial. Shin testified that Hara was fraudulently brought over to Aoshima Beach and abducted. The restaurant owner asked Hara to present his resume and residential certificate as he would introduce Hara for a better job. He even fabricated the job interview to trick Hara. This obvious difference could open the way for leading the on-going investigation.

The Chief of Police Shirouchi had also responded about Shin’s accomplices as follows:

“We have known that in 1978, the agent, Kim Kil-wook was ordered by his boss to bring one single Japanese man, age 45 to 50 years old and one single Japanese woman in her 20’s to North Korea.”

As Shin was 51 years old at that time, they needed to have a man close to his age to be able to use his Japanese identity. Shin Kwang-soo was born in 1929 in Shizuoka, Japan. After Japan lost World War II, he went back to North Korea. Afterwards, he secretly re-entered Japan as a spy when he was in his 40s.

On the other hand, Tadaaki Hara was born on August 10th, 1936. He was 43 years old and single. North Korea indicated that Hara was born in Miyazaki, which is not true. They seemed to have made up his birthplace as they abducted him from Miyazaki.

Actually he was born in Nagasaki. Hara’s family originated in Matsue city in Shimane Prefecture and moved to Omura city in Nagasaki in 1927. They started a store in Nagasaki to sell groceries. Four years later there was the Manchurian Incident, and a year after that there were the Shanghai Incident, and the 5.15 Incident. At that time military power was on the rise. Hara’s family moved again in 1935 to Nagasaki City and the next year Tadaaki was born as the third son of Michihisa and Kamenno Hara. Their second son, Hiromi passed away when he was young.

Koichi said, “Ta-bo (Tadaaki) had been a quiet boy. We had been very friendly and never fought as I am ten years older than he. I sometimes needed to advise him about his poor table manners. But Tadaaki is now in his mid 60’s. How come our government couldn’t do anything sooner? They did nothing after Shin had been arrested in Seoul. Our police took no action when he was released and sent back to North Korea in December 1999, during the presidency of Kim Dae-jung. It was much later, August 2002, that our police requested his arrest. I wished they would have done something much earlier....”

One day Koichi received a letter in the spring of 1997. The letter was sent by Shigeru Yokota to notify him that the Abductee Family Association would be formed. Although Koichi joined right away as he felt he finally had allies, he could not attend the first meeting, held on March 25, 1997. He has

never had a chance to attend meetings because he has been ill and it is too much for him to go to Tokyo where the meetings are usually held.

Since January of 2000, the Abductee Family Association has requested the investigation on Shin Kwang-soo to the National Police Agency many times after Shin was released. Though they also requested it to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it has never been done. Koichi said, "I have often received letters from Mr. Yokota to inform me of their activities. He also calls me sometime to ask me how I am. I really appreciate it. I wish I could attend the meetings every time. But my doctor stops me from traveling." Koichi also expressed his wishes for the other families, "I am also hoping all of the members will resolve their problems as soon as possible. There are five people who could come back to Japan. But their children would still remain in North Korea. I hope they can come to Japan as their parents are now back to Japan. We should think about these people and their futures as they have lots of family and relatives waiting for them....but for Tadaaki ..." He laughed at himself by talking about his brother half seriously and half jokingly, "Our parents have already passed away and no one is waiting for him except for me. Even if he comes back to Japan, it only means that there is one more old man who will be ready to join our family grave."

It has been 23 years since Hara was abducted. It has also been too long a time for the 43-year-old abductee and his family.

In April 2003, five members of the Abductee Family Association visited Switzerland and brought an accusation against the abductions to the High Commissioner for Human Rights at the UN (Working group for forced disappearance). It was Shigeo Iizuka, brother of Yaeko Taniguchi, who led the group.

Their presentation was done in front of the five committee members. Shigeo started by summarizing the abduction issues and their activities. He appealed to the international society to support them to resolve the abductions – infringement upon human rights. He also explained his sister's case.

Shigeo could not believe that he, an ordinary person, could lead a group and present the statement to UN. He had never imagined so before. Although he felt anxious at first, he calmed down and achieved successful results by accomplishing the presentation. He knew that it was not only for him but also for everyone in the Abductee Family Association, who supported him.

Then Fumiko Hirano, the sister of Rumiko Masumoto, Sakie Yokota, Kayoko Arimoto, and Takuya Yokota presented their cases with each abductee picture. All of the committees told them they were really surprised to know the detailed truth. Though they have been reading the reports and letters of abductions, having the complaints directly lodged made them realize how significant the problem is. They responded that they could not forgive the abductions.

The Brazilian High Commissioner whom they met the day before



sincerely listened to their complaints. He sympathized with them, explaining that he couldn't rest for worry if his children were abducted.

These people's wishes encouraged Shigeo to make up his mind. No matter what, he must get all abductees back from Kim Jung-il and North Korea as soon as possible. He wishes that all of the victims could enjoy ordinary and peaceful lives which most average Japanese people have.

Shigeo is now at Geneva, Switzerland, wondering to himself, "Why am I here? Is it some kind of dream?"

It has been 50 years since he started working at Nissan Diesel. He has been a hard worker and will retire in June (2003). Twenty-five years ago, in June, his sister, Yaeko was abducted.

Everything that has happened to him within the last six months since the Prime Minister's North Korea visit, and also the memories of the past 25 years rushed through his mind.