



Japanese Survivors Against Forced Exit

My appeal to Congressman Ed Royce and her personal story of abduction

Kiyomi Miyama
February 25, 2014

Congressman Ed Royce
2185 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Royce,

Thank you so much for meeting with me. It meant a great deal to me and the victims of abduction in Japan.

I am in the United States today, because I can no longer sit passively and watch money-hungry criminal organizations continue to abduct, confine and destroy the families of thousands of my fellow Japanese women with impunity. We have suffered in silence. And we have suffered long enough.

In Japan, thousands of Japanese women have been held against their will for months and even years in private prisons in order to remove them from their chosen religion. I am here to beg the United States to help Japan see that women are more than property and that minorities have rights too. They must understand that freedom of thought, conscience and religion are not just ideas but are sacred values that need to be actively protected because they form the fabric of a civil society. Japan may seem like a modern society, but there is an ugly dark underbelly just below the surface. I know it exists because I have seen it.

I was forcibly kidnapped and confined two times. The second time, I was placed in a tiny room, physically and emotionally tortured, forced to annul my marriage and forced to renounce my faith. I came out of 3 years of confinement a broken woman with symptoms of depression and PTSD. My relationship with my now ex-husband was completely destroyed. My relationship with my parents was irrevocably damaged. My relationship with God was damaged as well. Despite this, Japan will not help me. The government, the media, the police and the courts have turned a blind eye because they do not like my religion.

In Japan, 'deprogrammers' solicit parents of minority religions like the Unification Church, such as in my case, or the Jehovah's Witnesses or other small religions. They scare these parents with half-truths, and cause them to take illegal and extreme action against their adult children. These parents would never have taken such dangerous measures on their own. These 'deprogrammers' charge tens of thousands of dollars to the parents for their 'services' and completely destroy otherwise normal families.

When asked, Japanese authorities call this a 'family matter.' Most Japanese people also think that domestic violence is a 'family matter,' and therefore justifiably beyond the police and the courts. In fact, legal protections against domestic violence were not put in place until as recently as 2001.

I can no longer sit by passively and watch this continue to happen to so many women. I have decided that I must do something about this. So I am here with my broken English, telling my story to anyone who will listen. We are mothers, we are caretakers, we are homemakers, we are women of empathy, and we are women of faith. But we are also angry. And we do not want to be victims any more. Please help me. Any little thing will help. This is my story:

I had been living in Korea when I returned to my parents' home in Japan for the holidays. Little did I know that my parents had been carefully coached by a man named Takashi Miyamura, a professional deprogrammer, on how to kidnap, confine and break my faith.

One night, after dinner, my parents started questioning me about my faith. My parents became frustrated with me and my father grabbed me by my hair and slapped my face many times. Then I was dragged out of the house to a waiting van by my family and some relatives who had been hiding elsewhere in the house.

I was taken to a small apartment that was prepared for my confinement and kept in a tiny 8 foot by 8 foot room at the back of the apartment. The front door was locked many times with chains and locks. The windows used glass that was re-enforced with wire so that it could not be broken through, as well as secured so they could not be opened, and covered with plastic so one could not see in or out.

I was shocked and angry. So in protest I did not speak a word with the 'deprogrammer' or my family for six months. Since I did not speak a word for six months, my brother got angry. He grabbed my hair and struck my head against the wall over and over again. Then he threatened me and said "You must talk with the deprogrammer." I was terrified and gave up my protest and started to talk to the deprogrammer.

Most people do not know what it feels like to be held against your will for years in what is essentially a box. I tried not to have any emotions because when I started to think about freedom, the sensation was like fingernails scraping a chalkboard very loudly in my head. I could not stop this sensation until I regained control over my emotions and tried to feel nothing again. I was in this kind of emotional state when my brother beat my head against the wall and he broke my will to fight back.

As I hadn't talked for a long time, the muscles of my mouth didn't work normally. I couldn't speak. The vowels didn't come out the way that they should have. And Mr. Miyamura, the 'deprogrammer,' did not like that I could not talk well. He grabbed my hair, took me to the kitchen, and put my head into the sink. He turned on the tap and said "Wash your mouth out!" His true deprogramming began from that day and continued for three months. He did not just break my faith, he broke me as a person. It was mental and physical torture.

One time the door was unlocked for a moment. I saw a chance to escape so I ran for my life. I was outside! I yelled, "Help me! Help me! I am being held against my will!" But my family caught me. They dragged me back inside.

Somebody must have had heard my screams and called the police because shortly thereafter, the police came to the door. I thought that I was saved. But the police never spoke to me. They never tried to see if I was OK. They only spoke to my parents.

My parents told the police that I had joined the Unification Church and that they were trying to change my mind. They told the police that this is a 'family matter.' The police said OK, and left. But behind the door, my brother had forced me onto the floor. His hand covered my mouth so I could not scream.

I went through mental and bodily attacks for nine months. Finally they broke me. I had truly given up my faith, and said goodbye to God. I told Him, if He needed me, He would have to come back and get me. I could no longer keep Him in my heart.

I believed they would now let me go. But even after I had given up my faith, they would not release me because I was married to a Korean man. They did not like that he was Korean and they did not like that he was also a Unification Church member. They required me to annul my marriage as a condition of my release. They would not even accept a divorce. During the annulment, I was not allowed to see my husband or to speak to my husband. I was just given papers to sign. They handled the rest. When my marriage annulment was complete, I was finally released after 2 years and 7 months of confinement.

The aftereffects of my confinement and torture were severe. While I was never professionally diagnosed, I believe I had PTSD. I was depressed. Half of my hair turned white. I didn't know why I was alive. I looked at food and didn't know why I needed to eat. I could not sleep. I could no longer live in Japan. So I escaped to Korea where I received counseling and became able to talk about myself like this. I do not want to live in Japan because I do not trust the government to protect me. Even now, because I am speaking out like this, I am afraid the deprogrammers may harm me when I return to Japan. And if that should happen, the government will pretend it did not happen, neither the police nor the courts will help, and I will disappear.

The aftereffects for my parents were severe as well. They had used all of their savings, plus borrowed money from relatives to pay Mr. Miyamura his fees. Someone estimated this for me at about 40,000 Euros. My father died shortly thereafter of cancer. My mother's hair turned completely white, and she had a brain hemorrhage due to diabetes which was made more severe due to stress. She is now brain-dead and laying in the hospital.

The following are examples of how women's pleas are ignored and perpetrators continue their criminal acts with impunity. I took some of this information from the Human Rights Without Frontiers research report coauthored by Mr. Willy Fautre and Dr. Aaron Rhodes, the former Executive Director of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights. Together we are working to stop this crime against women. But we are few, and this is only because it is difficult for many women to stand up for their rights and be vocal about the problem. Our voices have been silenced for so long.

I know many Japanese women living in Korea with Korean husbands who are afraid to return to Japan, lest they go missing. They already know that the Japanese police and courts will not help. If they disappear, their husbands will become single fathers, and their children will be motherless. In the Human Rights Without Frontiers report, you'll find the stories of Ms. Rie Imari, Ms. Emiko Motoki, Ms. Kozue Terada, and Ms. Hiroko Tomizawa, my personal hero. These are my friends. I know them by name. All of them have been abducted and confined for prolonged periods, sometimes on more than one occasion. They all pursued criminal justice, and had their cases dismissed.

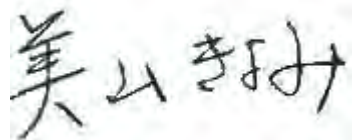
I also know many survivors living in the United States. One in particular, Ms. Mitsuko Antal, was a newlywed of 5 months when she was abducted. Her American husband went crazy looking for her. She finally escaped by jumping from a 2nd floor balcony breaking her vertebra but getting help from a passing car. She and her husband sued her parents and the 'deprogrammer' and took the case all the way to the Japanese Supreme Court because they were afraid she would be abducted again. The courts admitted that she was held against her will, but they dismissed all claims saying this was a 'family matter.' They even refused to enjoin the minister and family from abducting her again. This American family was wronged by the Japanese courts. I would like to see them receive justice.

I am now a witness for Toru Goto's civil trial because after I had renounced my faith, my 'deprogrammer,' Mr. Miyamura, brought me to Mr. Goto's room to help break his spirit. Mr. Goto had been held in the same building as I, and as a 'goodfaith' gesture, I was required to visit the rooms of believers who had not lost faith. My fight to save the women of my small community extends to helping Mr. Toru Goto because if Japan will allow a man to be held in a private prison for 12 years with impunity, then there is no hope for us women. The Jehovah's Witnesses had the same abduction and confinement problem until they won a big court case. I believe if we can win Mr. Toru Goto's case, these heinous crimes may stop.

Mr. Goto had been held for over 12 years. He had been thrown out of confinement in February 2008 when they finally gave up on breaking him. The doctor who saw him immediately admitted him and reported his condition to the police, as he was skeletal. But the police did not come. In June of 2008, Mr. Goto regained his strength and filed a criminal complaint against his deprogrammers and his family. On 9 December 2009, the prosecutor's office decided to waive indictment on the grounds of insufficient evidence. Mr. Goto is currently in the middle of his civil trial. Please watch this trial and see if justice can be had in Japan.

Please help us. Your voice can change this horrific situation.

Thank you for your concern,



Ms. Kiyomi Miyama
Japanese Survivors Against Forced Exit (Japanese S.A.F.E.)
Founder and President



**Toru Goto after his release
from 12 years' confinement**
Photo by Kazuhiro Yonemoto