

## Chapter two: Love in Utter Agony

Tradition and technology—COMPAQ, foreign-capital computer manufacturer's ad featuring Korean shamanism

### Anti-Japanese and Japanese loathing

#### Korean grudge and Japanese resignation

An emotion underlying the Korean people's thinking is a kind of hate called *han*. In her book, Ms. O Sonfa<sup>1</sup>, a commentator from Korea, explains "*han*":

"*Han* is not just hate, but it comes from a certain kind of frustration or vexation born within oneself when one cannot achieve what one wants or ought to accomplish. When one does not have a concrete target, it comes out as lamentation against oneself and when one finds a concrete target, it comes out as frustration. What matters is that it is regarded as a virtue to dissolve such frustration and then it can become beautiful." (*Sukaato no Kaze [Wind to Skirt]*. Sanko-sha.)

Professor Furuta Hiroshi at Tsukuba University traces the psycho-cultural origin of "*han*" to the historical Korean hierarchy and defines *han* as: "Following the traditional model, under the circumstances where one cannot transfer responsibility to others, *han* is the accumulated frustration of those placed at the bottom of Korean hierarchical order, and a wish to dissolve it." (*Chosen Minzoku o Yomitoku [Read the Korean People]*. Chikuma-shobo.)

During the Joseon Dynasty, the traditional classes were, from the upper stratum, the royal family, followed by the *yangban* (officials), the "upper-middle class", ordinary citizens and servants. Outside of these strata were the *Baekjeong* (untouchables). While Japan's system of *Shi--No--Ko--Sho* (Samurai—farmers—craftsmen—merchants) was strongly based on occupation, the Korean hierarchy looks a lot like the Indian caste system. Something amazing is the wide category of petty occupations. Besides *Kisaeng* (performing prostitutes) and petty performers, occupations such as physician, female officer, cook, and even priest are included in the category. Though the Korean hierarchical system was supposedly abolished in principle after the movement for Korean modernization, various forms of discrimination are still plainly visible. Even today, manufacturing and eating and drinking establishments are considered lower class jobs and they are targets of much derision.

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<sup>1</sup> O Sonfa was born in Cheju Island, Korea, in 1956. She is a commentator, scholar on Japan, and professor at Takushoku University. She is a naturalized Japanese citizen since 1991.

Also, regional discrimination, especially against those from Jeolla Province and Cheju Island, and discrimination against the handicapped are visible, which indicates that discrimination is extremely deep-rooted in Korean society. The more seeds of discrimination there are, the more diversified feelings of hate that feed into *han*. The historical fact that Korea has undergone continuous meddling from neighboring powers has certainly influenced the ferment of *han* in Korea. Above all, it is easily imagined that the shame of being ruled by Japan, which Korea regarded as inferior to Korea, resulted in the formation of a *han* “rhizome” deep within the original *han*.

Fortunately, being surrounded by seas, Japan has never experienced conquest by other states, except for the seven years of post war occupation under the Allies. However, perhaps by divine providence, and as if to make both ends meet, Japan was made a store house of natural disasters like earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, typhoons, and so on. And as is well known, during the Tokugawa period, the city of Edo experienced many large conflagrations. Edo, supposedly comprise of eight hundred and eight towns, was tightly packed with houses made of wood and paper and was the most densely populated city at that time. Edo was extremely vulnerable to fires: once a fire broke out, disastrous harm was sure to follow. How deep the sorrow was of those who lost everything, from their family to valuables and their home! They would have certainly felt like cursing Heaven. But, strangely enough, Japan has never nurtured a psycho-culture that resembled the Korean *han*. Instead, Japan nurtured *tei* or a mindset of resignation. “However hard we cry over what is lost, we can never get it back. So, let’s give it up for good.” Wipe away our tears and let’s start again from scratch. We can work hard and, someday, make up for the loss. This is the feeling of *tei* (resignation)—firmly impressed in the Japanese mind.

During the previous War, almost all major Japanese cities were rendered into ashes. In just 19 years, from scorched land, Japan hosted the Olympic Games, the first time the Olympics were held in Asia. The source of the vitality that achieved this miraculous recovery is, indeed, the very spirit of *tei*.

### **Respective virtue of Japan and Korea**

Japanese people’s feeling of resignation is closely related to Buddhist concept of impermanence. Ms. O Sonfa mentions that “*mono no aware*” (things being transitory) is a Japanese sentiment, as opposed to the Korean *han*--I would say that this is on the mark. “*Mono no Aware*” is the very concept of being transitory.

Even Japanese often mix up the two words, 無情 pronounced *mu-jo*, meaning “without feeling”, and

無常 pronounced also *mu-jo*, meaning “without constancy”, which may look the same but are completely different in meaning. The latter, as the Chinese character indicates, means “not constant,” referring to the fact that there is nothing in the world that does not change. A similar Japanese expressions can be translated into English as “Things that have forms will be eventually be reduced to nothing,” and “A rosy face in the morning, bone white in the evening.”

On the other hand, *han* is a concept deeply tinged with Confucianism. Confucianism divides people into gentleman scholars and a small-minded man and preaches how a “gentleman scholar” should live. In this sense, it is humanistic as well as religious, and the object of veneration is one’s ancestors. In principle, Confucianism does not recognize any sublime entities.

To the Japanese, natural disasters are “disasters by heaven’s providence” and there is a sense of resignation that humans cannot overcome heaven and nature, however hard humans may try to resist them.

This is the Japanese thinking, combining the Buddhist view of a transitory life and the intrinsic Japanese worship of nature.

Many of the hardships Korea experienced in its history were caused by humans such as foreign invasions and government repression. In other words, they were human disasters in a wide sense of the word. Moreover, in Confucianism, natural disasters are considered human disasters. When natural disasters such as drought and epidemics occurred one after another, people thought that this was due to the decline of the ruler’s virtue as Heaven abandoned rulers without virtue. When this occurred it was time to change kings and dynasties (“Virtuous Dynastic Revolution”). Even Korean Confucianism teaches that that someone or some person is to blame for natural disasters, without attributing cause to nature.

The merciless treatment of those who “lost” their virtue and the throne is the most remarkable characteristic of Virtuous Revolutions. The lives of former Korean Presidents tells it all. The first Korean President, Syngman Rhee, was forced to leave the country and live in exile in Hawaii, never returning home alive. The 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> President, Chun Doo-hwan, was blamed for the military crackdown of the Gwangju Uprising (the “May 18 Democratic Uprising”) and sentenced to death (the sentence was later commuted). Presidents Roh Tae-woo (the 13<sup>th</sup> President), Kim Young-sam (the 14<sup>th</sup> President) and Kim Dae-jung (the 15<sup>th</sup> President) were imprisoned on charges of either bribery or unlawful accumulation of wealth while they were in office. President Roh Moo-hyun (the 16<sup>th</sup> President) committed suicide under mysterious circumstances. President Park Chung-hee (the 5<sup>th</sup>

through 9<sup>th</sup> President), father of President Park Geun-hye, was assassinated during his presidency.

Incidentally, there is a fundamental difference in meaning between virtue according in Japanese thinking and virtue according in Korean thinking. Roughly speaking, the Japanese believe that, “Virtuous people don’t tell lies,” while Koreans believe that, “Virtuous people admit to telling lies.” In the Korean way of thinking, virtue is regarded as a divinely granted right. So, virtue is to be used up like money—once it is gone, that is all there is. Of course, by acting virtuously, one may accumulate virtue like interest in the bank account. Man, in general, and especially those in power, tend to act to spend their virtue rather than to accumulate it. Once a leader statesman is judged to no longer hold any “virtue,” he is destined not only to lose all of his power and wealth, but also to immediately become a target of the people’s *han*. Korean statesmen fare as the expressions goes, “Darkness lies only a few centimeters ahead,” and “All or nothing.” As this is the way things are, those in power try to usurp and protect as much as possible while they can. That’s why relatives and aides of those in power selfishly collect as much favors as the possibly can.

#### **Questioning Presidential “virtue” when the *Sewol* sank**

The incident of the sinking of the cargo-passenger ferry *Sewol*, which claimed lives of over 300 high school students on a school excursion, was an unprecedented disaster caused by a combination of human errors. At first, the mass media mainly blamed the captain of the ferry and the company in charge of operations for the disaster. As many readers may well remember, at a certain point in time after the incident, blunder after blunder took place and the target of the mass media turned toward President Park, who was then blamed for the incident. The mass media and the public were outraged over President Park’s gaff concerning the incident. The victims’ families rewarded her with a most impolite act, of discarding the wreath presented in her name at the place of mourning. The entire nation questioned President Park’s “virtue.” President Park must have been in total fear of national public opinion saying the President lost her virtue.

At present, the issue of military comfort women for the U.S. armed forces, which have been around since the Korean War, arose and 122 former “comfort women” are planning to enter a lawsuit against the Korean Government, demanding an apology and compensation. Even if President Park manages to complete her presidential term without any trouble, she may still face this issue, which is now merely smoldering, but will become a wild fire spreading throughout parched grassland, as soon as she retires from office.

That is because it was none other than her father, ex-President Park Chung-hee, who permitted the

installation of comfort stations for the U.S. military. As things turn out, it may be very likely that President Park Geun-hye will be arrested (on whatever charges) and assets from her father's time onward will be confiscated.

In fact, Mr. Chun Doo-hwan underwent a thorough investigation over tax evasion and unlawful accumulation of wealth during his presidency, which took place 30 years ago. On that occasion, the Public Prosecutors Office searched Mr. Chun's house and his eldest son's office, even using a metal detector, and confiscated everything. Reportedly, all that was left to Mr. Chun was a *futon* (blanket) to cover him up at night. Moreover, after Mr. Chun died, a bill to prohibit his burial at the National Cemetery, where successive Presidents currently rest in peace, was moved in the Assembly. We did not hear if the bill passed. Anyway, in a Confucian state where ancestors' tombs are most highly revered, nothing is more dishonorable than this kind of treatment.

It was said that President Park Geun-hye's intention strongly influenced this matter. The investigation is said to have been a kind of grudge against Mr. Chun. After he became President, Mr. Chun ill-treated Park Geun-hye, the daughter of ex-President Park Chung-hee, to whom Mr. Chun owed much, although she served as Korea's First Lady after her mother's death.

Ms. Park Geun-hye is a person who can hold personal grudges, which was well illustrated by her thoughtless act against Mr. Kato Tatsuya, former Seoul Branch chief of the *Sankei Newspaper*. She accused Mr. Kato of defamation, who was later found innocent, claiming that he wrote a gossip-like article concerning her whereabouts on the day of the *Sewol* incident.

After President Park Geun-hye leaves office, it is very likely that *han* against her will erupt at fell swoop around the Korean Presidential Palace (the "Blue House"). The trigger will be the issue of the U.S. military comfort women.

### **Loving *ham***

There was a Korean poet named Kim Sowol (1902-1934), who lived through the period of Japan's annexation of Korea. His most famous poem is *Azaleas*. Even in present-day Korea, many Koreans can recite it by heart. He wrote the poem in 1922, only three years after the 3-1 Independence Movement.

#### *Azaleas*

*If you are leaving because you don't love me, I will see you off without a word*

*I will scatter an armful of azaleas from Mt. Yaku of Nyongbyon on the path you walk on  
Step by step, walk softly on the flowers and go  
If you are leaving because you don't love me, I will never show tears even if I were to die*

It is an extremely sad song of parting between a man and woman. However, according to Ms. O Sonfa, when Koreans read this poem, they cannot help but feel the grand *han* ensconced in the poem.

“Reflecting its historical background, this poem is interpreted as a song of *han* toward a lost homeland. In the person of a lover who is departing, the sorrow of ‘our parting homeland’ is expressed as *han*. The theme of this poem is that the homeland is about to undergo Japanese rule, abandoning the Korean people.” “This poem does not express ‘tenderness’ in the least. It is not possible in a common sense to see off with tenderness and in silence a lover who is leaving of his own accord. It is an act enabled only by extravagant *han*” (*Wasabi to Tougarashi [Japanese Horseradish and Pepper]* by O. Sonfa. Shoden-sha.)

The poem is a song of *han*, lamenting for the lost homeland in the disguise of a love song. Bearing this in mind, if we understand this poem, we will notice that the poem conveys a different message. What is interesting about it is that the *han* in this poem is meant for the disappearing homeland, and not for Japan, which annexed the Korean homeland. The poem grieves for the departing homeland, helpless, as well as the time and their fate. It helps me establish a hypothesis that Korean anti-Japanese thinking has been more fiercely provoked and aggravated in the postwar years than at the time of Japan’s annexation. Deliberately thinking, we will know that this is also the song about “a husband whose wife was stolen.”

There is a song, *Five-Hundred Years of Han*, which singer Cho Yong-pil<sup>2</sup> sang during the popular annual Japanese TV program *NHK Kohaku Utagassen* [“Red versus White Songs Battle”]<sup>3</sup>. Originally, the song is about the “*han*” nurtured by refugees of Goryeo<sup>4</sup> against Yi Seong-gye, who destroyed Goryeo and established the Joseon Dynasty. The melody borrows from a traditional folksong of Kogen Province. This song also expresses “*han*” toward the homeland in guise of a death of a man and a woman.

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<sup>2</sup> Cho Yong-pil was born in 1950 in Korea. He is a South Korean pop singer who is considered one of the most influential figures in Korea popular music.

<sup>3</sup> This popular program was first broadcast on the radio in 1951 and from 1953 onward, has also been aired on TV. This year-end program is aired from seven in the evening to just before midnight on December 31, with female singers (red team) and male singers (white team) competing with songs.

<sup>4</sup> Goryeo was a Korean kingdom established in 918 by King Taejo. It unified with the Later Three Kingdoms in 936 and ruled most of the Korean Peninsula until it was conquered by the founder of the Joseon, Yi Seong-gye, in 1392.

*Five Hundred Years of Han*

*This world filled with han, how coldhearted you are*

*You leave me your heart, and only your body is gone*

*Oh, five hundred years of han, I try so hard to live, but no satisfaction*

*Enshrine the Seven-Star altar in the white, sandy, field and I pray for your resurrection*

*Oh, five hundred years of han, I try so hard to live, but no satisfaction*

When I was a child, a couple of popular performers divorced and alimony, two hundred million yen, which was an extraordinary amount at that time, was much discussed. It was joked whether the husband received either love or hate worth two hundred million yen. If the song *Five Hundred Years of Han* is to be interpreted as such, then: The lover who swore to love her for five hundred years died, leaving her behind. Then, will it take her five hundred years to melt the *han*? *Han* is love changed in the kiln. However dearly she loved and cared, her love and care would never be rewarded. Then his (or her) love becomes *han* and flares up.

**Love in utter agony**

An acquaintance of mine, a magazine editor, has had private relationships with several Korean bar hostesses. Many times he mentioned how bold the Korean women's way of expressing their love is and how deep their love is. For example, during meals, he doesn't have to hold chopsticks himself. He just opens his mouth and the Korean woman will feed him using her chopsticks. This seems to be a common practice among all Korean women he had associated with. This practice probably follows from table manners performed by *Kiaseng* (Korean professional prostitutes). In a sense, Korea is a male paradise.

On the other hand, as a common inclination among those Korean women, they display a most demanding jealousy. Working as a magazine editor, just before the magazine print run, he is obliged to stay at his office overnight for several nights in a row. On such occasions, a Korean woman will call him up every hour and to ask where he is. Around dawn, a woman called and told him to meet her at a coffee shop. Very sleepy after staying up all night, he went to the appointed around-the-clock coffee shop and found her with her hair a mess, without make-up and eyes swollen from crying. She told him how miserably she was all night without him. The editor told me this story with an embarrassed smile.

Anyway, this Korean woman obviously displayed to her lover, "I cried my heart out for you," or "I went through such agony because of you." This is the Korean way of expressing one's love. The

Koreans think all human feelings—joy, sorrow, anger and, of course, love—should be conveyed to other(s) first visually and verbally. That is why Koreans wail in an “agonizing” manner at funerals.

“Oh, father, oh, my father, why are you gone, leaving us behind! Pack me in your bag and take me to Heaven with you! AAAAAA!”

This is an actual scene, which an acquaintance of mine saw and heard at a funeral, the bereaved family wailing and clinging to the coffin. He honestly thought how it is possible for a person in sorrow to be so verbose. We cannot say, for sure, that it was kind of a performance. We can say this much: the way of expressing emotions is different from country to country. In a sense, the Korean way is very passionate. We Japanese find a sense of beauty in tears and tenderness silently spilling out from subdued feelings. Our spiritual culture is quite opposite to the Korean people’s.

When there was a Korean-style boom, it was much announced that “Korean males are very passionate.” In other words, “Korean men will agonize for you.” Comparing Japanese men who are poor in showing “dramatic” love, Korean men, who can agonize right in front of women may look far more passionate and straight-minded, at first glance. Imagine a child wailing for a toy, swinging his or her arms and legs in a toy store. This is, in a childish manner, passion.

When so-called former comfort women reproach Japan, they are in fact “dramatizing.” The visual impact of their act is tremendous. Japanese people, who do not have culture of “dramatizing,” are overwhelmed at the mere sight of women who are “agonizing”. Since these old women cry so hard, one cannot help but think that the Japanese military must have committed atrocities. Many Japanese have been led to this line of thinking. In recent years, with the aim of spreading their anti-Japanese propaganda, Korean people are busy sending women who appear to be in utter agony to third-party areas such as America and Europe. As of now, Japan has no countermeasures against dramatics, which is a matter of great concern.

As to “dramatization”, the shamanist culture and artistic tradition in the Korea Peninsula must have something to do with it. Please refer to Chapter Three of this book regarding Korean shamanist culture.

“Not just a feeling of holding a grudge” would be the description of *han*. When we think about what kind of emotion “*han*” is, which is violent agonizing, we reach the conclusion that it is an emotion directed not to total strangers but to ones close to us like a lover and family members. It is an emotion called “love and hate.”



## Cain complex and “Mirror, mirror” syndrome

In my opinion, Korean anti-Japanese thinking will never cease, not because of the anti-Japanese thinking, but because of *han* directed against Japan. The feeling of *han* Korea holds against Japan can be said to be a proof that Korea recognizes Japan as kin. To Korea, Japan is an unruly brother at one time and an adulterous wife at another, or a neighbor aiming to take “his wife” (Takeshima Island). Japan is close relation, remaining always within reach of Korea.

The Korean view of the world is embodied in the “Minor China” way of thinking. According to this line of thinking, Korea regards China as a cultural father, itself as an older brother and Japan as a younger brother. The myth that all Japanese culture was inherited from older brother Korea (*Chosun*) is the foundation of their national pride. It is reasonable that nothing is more dishonorable than the fact that Korea was ruled for 36 years by younger brother Japan. Even after liberation, Japan has always outpaced Korea. In international credibility, Korea is far behind Japan. To Korea, younger brother Japan is a pain in the neck.

Let us call Korea’s psychological condition a “Cain complex,” following the story of Cain and Abel in *Genesis* of the *Old Testament*. Cain (older brother) and Abel (younger brother) are two children borne by Adam and Eve, who were expelled from Eden. They both grew up to be manly. One day, they presented sacrifices to God. God favored Abel’s gift, and God did not give a second look at Cain’s. Cain, lost himself in jealousy, took Abel out to a field and killed him. In the *Old Testament*, this incident is recorded as the first murder in human history.

The Discount Japan campaign (aimed to denigrate Japan’s international standing), a global policy conducted by the Korean government, is nothing less than the murder Abel by Cain—in the name of Korea. They think unless they “lower” Japan’s value, Korea’s international standing will not be able to “rise.” Anyhow, Korea regards Japan as its kin.

Not a day passes without the word of “*Il bon*” (Hangul for Japan) appearing in the Korean mass media. For the Korean mass media, the day starts with Japan and the day ends with Japan. That’s how the Korean mass media operates. Once it was said that when America sneezes, Japan catches cold. Japan was very closely dependent on America. But even then, in Japan, Japanese TV did not report on America from morning till night. Plainly, Korea is too conscious of Japan.

Korea can be compared to the evil stepmother in *Snow White*.

“Mirror, mirror, on the wall, which country is the most developed in East Asia?”

“Mirror, mirror, on the wall, which country is the most advanced in technology in East Asia?”

“Mirror, mirror, on the wall, which country makes the most international contributions in East Asia?”

“Mirror, mirror, on the wall, which country has produced the most Nobel Laureates in East Asia?”

Mirror, mirror, on the wall—the one speaking to the mirror is Korea. The answer from the mirror is, unflinchingly, “Japan is...”

In the fairy tale, the evil stepmother thinks that, “Without Snow White, I am the fairest one of all.” The stepmother, as a witch, sets out to kill Snow White, revealing her ugly nature. I can imagine a witch selling poisoned apples, or “abuse”, all over the world. I would name this Korean psychological pathology as “mirror, mirror” syndrome, meaning that Korea is always overly conscious of Japan and swings from joy to sorrow, according to results of making comparison between Korean and Japan.

### ***Han* turning into insolvent liabilities**

Now, readers may see that Korean *han* is quite different from all other national sentiments, such as, anti-Israeli feelings by Palestinians or anti-Indian sentiment by Pakistanis. Korea considers Japan as its kin and out of this close relationship comes a feeling of jealousy, or *han*.

In the end, whatever may happen to the relationship between Japan and Korea from here on out, I don't think it is likely that Korea will let go of Japan. Aside from issues concerning the national economy and security, the situation will remain the same. However closely the Park administration approaches China, Korea will never intend to become “a stranger” to Japan. I can assert this much.

No other country on earth will listen to Korea so intently as Japan does. Japan is the most convenient partner, to which Korea can spill out its “*han*” at any time and as much as it likes.

Ms. O Sonfa explains that “*han* comes from a certain kind of frustration or vexation born within oneself when one cannot achieve what one wants or ought to accomplish.” Following her explanation, Japan will remain an eternally target of Korean “*han*.” This is because Japan holds a status which Korea will never ever “accomplish”. The difference between Japan and Korea will not be narrowed in either fifty years or a hundred years.

Since Imperial Japan officially annexed Korea in 1910, Japan's Korean Governor-General's Office ruled Korea for 36 years. This is an undeniable fact. I can understand the shame of a people who were ruled by another people, and in this respect, the feeling of “*han*” is equally understandable. However, Japan cannot afford to accept “*han*” for which Japan cannot be held responsible.

Korean school textbooks describe land surveys conducted by the Korean Governor-General's Office as an act of "Japanese authorities going up to the top of a hill, looking around and pointing to land here and there, and claiming all the good land." This is totally wrong. The land which was newly designated as public following the land survey conducted by the Korean Governor-General's Office was only 3 % of the total area of land fit for cultivation. Far more important and especially noteworthy is the fact that 1.7 million farmers were permitted to own their land, and that with the land registration thus completed, as many as 1.7 million independent farmers came into being for the first time in Korean history.

So is it also not true that good Korean people held "*han*" after authorities pointed to their land and claimed all the good land? No, that is partly true. In a book titled *History of the Korean Catholic Church* written by French missionary Claude Charles Dallet (1829-1878) in 1874, there appears a similar depiction of land robbery at the end of the Joseon Dynasty. However, the perpetrators of the land robbery were not the "Japanese" but the "*yangban* (Korean officials) who belonged to the class lording over Korean society at that time. The Korean *yangban* was the most powerful and most arrogant class in the world. When they 'buy' land and houses from farmers, they do without paying money—they seized what they wanted. What is worse, the local governor could not prevent their act of robbery." (Dallet, translated by Kim yone, *Chosen jijo [History of the Korean Catholic Church]*, Heibon-sha, Toyo-bunko [East Asia Books]).

The *han* against land robbery (supposedly committed by Imperial Japan) should have been directed toward *yangban* (Korean officials) instead, but the fact is that Japan was held responsible for it.

Scenes of torture using mannequins and alleged scenes of "cruel torture inflicted upon independence fighters during the Imperial Japan's rule" in the Historical Museum of Seodaemun Prison in Seoul, utilized implements that were not used in Japan—the implements were in fact typically used during the Joseon Dynasty in Korea. Likewise, regarding the so-called comfort women, it has been made clear during the recent lawsuit concerning the U.S. military comfort women in Korea that there may have been some confusion between the memory of comfort women for the Japanese military and the memory of comfort women for the U.S. military.

Mr. Toyota Aritune<sup>5</sup> gives a description from the chronicle of King Chungnyeol of Goryeo<sup>6</sup> in his book *Kankoku e Ikari to Kanashimi [To Korea, with anger and sorrow]* (NESCO BOOKS):

"To select girls of well-descended families, aged 14 to 15, officials searched homes or went into

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<sup>5</sup> Toyota Aritune was born in 1938 in Chiba Prefecture. He is an author of science fiction and suspense novels, translator, script writer and commentator.

<sup>6</sup> Chungnyeol (1236-1308) was the king of Korea, during the Mongol Invasion of Japan, who aiding the Mongols.

bedrooms at night, tied up servants and questioned them. Families without girls were appalled and upset nonetheless. Cries of lamentation filled the town.”

The Yuan dynasty (or the Mongol dynasty, 1271-1368), which held hegemony over Goryeo, had a system called “selection of beautiful women.” It was a system to select beauties and to send them to the Emperor’s harem. When the Mongolian army subjugated other peoples, the wife and daughters of the local chief were first raped and then sent to harem. This was a widespread practice of the Yuan dynasty. Seeing their queen raped, officers and soldiers alike totally lost the will to resist. The psychological impact is somewhat akin to “having one’s wife stolen.” Moreover, according to Mr. Ko Bunyu, also during the time of King Chungnyeol, the government of Goryeo set up an office called “selection of widows and virgins,” which chose virgins from among women and girls belonging to the upper class and sent them to Yuan as tribute. The system of sending beautiful women was passed on to the Joseon Dynasty, which continued to send beautiful Korean women to both the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1912) dynasties.

The abovementioned quote can re-read as: Mongolian officials searched houses, and at night they charged into bedrooms, tied up servants and kidnapped girls. Wailing filled the streets.

Doesn’t this story sound familiar? Yes, with an addition of one or two details, the “forced abduction of military comfort women” story is complete.

After all, many feelings of *han* Korea insistently presents to Japan are essentially directed against the Joseon Dynasty imperial family, the *yangban* (Korean officials), the postwar military dictatorship or Chinese Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties. Korea, having no concept of *tei* (resignation), *han* will never cease to exist, being passed on from one generation to the next, well into the future. However, these targets of Korean *han* no longer exist today. They are bankrupt, so to speak. The *han* toward them has become insolvent liabilities. Usually, it is about time to give up or one should decide to give up. However, quite miraculously, a very good-natured neighbor suggested that if only someone could claim to be an heir to the liabilities (astoundingly, just a claim will do), compensation for insolvency would be considered. Not surprisingly, that good-natured neighbor is Japan. Thus, bills which essentially have nothing to do with Japan are being sent to Japan.

### ***Han* is a motive power to the Korean people**

To Korea, “the 36 years of the Imperial Japan” is nothing more than playing the joker, the legendary small hammer of fortune and DORAEMON’s<sup>7</sup> pocket. All kinds of troubles and a sense of inferiority

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<sup>7</sup> Doraemon is a robot cat comic-book character created by Fujiko F. Fujio and has long been loved by all, children and grown-ups alike. Doraemon’s pocket produces everything.

will be paid for with the words “the 36 years of the Imperial Japan.” And the *han* against the words will continue to exist, without melting, forever. In other words, the adrenaline of anger and hatred is endlessly secreted within Korean brains. By now, it seems that the *han* against Japan is all that Korea needs to keep it moving. For Korea to make total peace with Japan and abandon *han* toward Japan means to lose its national goal for the future. This means the total loss of will in all productive activities. Therefore, Korea will never forgive Japan.

Thus, in conclusion, it does no good apologizing. Quite the contrary, if Japan tries to apologize, all Korea will do is to complain about everything. For example, Korea will say, “Japan does not bow its head low enough,” “Japan’s angle of bowing is not right,” “Japan’s voice is not sincere enough,” and so on. How about putting an end to such fruitless endeavors? This is one of the purposes of this book.

## **Strong Korea and chicken Korea—split Korean images**

### **Korean-style boom started as comparative advertisement between Japan and Korea**

All aspects of Japanese media—NHK<sup>8</sup>, commercial TV stations, major magazines and newspapers featuring sports—took part in supporting the Korean-style boom. The boom was co-produced by a Korean national promotion organ, National Brand Committee and a Japanese major advertising agent, which was said to produce everything from the Olympic Games to elections. This is now a known fact and it was so rumored even at the zenith of the boom. The fact that the Korean-style boom was not a spontaneous, social phenomenon, but an artificially produced one was easily induced based on the stereo-typed tone of argument of the mass media. For example, “Compared to monotonous Japanese dramas, Korean dramas are passionate and romantic,” or “J-POP idols look childish, but K-POP songs and dancing are refined and highly accomplished,” or “Kim Yuna’s skating performance is simply gorgeous while Asada Mao’s leaves much to be desired.”

The line of logic in common with these remarks is that in always comparing Japan and Korea, the conclusion is invariably that Korea is the winner. This is the logic of comparative advertising. This promotional campaign, using comparative advertising, was likely part of the conditions in the contract presented to the Japanese advertising agency by the Korean brand committee. That is because this reflects Korean culture, which is particularly sensitive to relationship such as superior vs. inferior and senior vs. junior. Since the Japanese do not follow this line of thinking, it made Korean intentions more conspicuous.

Above all, a masterly phrase is “Korean men under conscription are manlier and more robust than

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<sup>8</sup> NHK (*Nippon Hoso Kyokai* [Japan Broadcasting Corporation]) is a corporation in charge of Japan’s public broadcasting, whose budget requires the approval of the Diet.

grass-eaters like Japanese men,” which we heard too often in the middle of the Korean boom. Aside from the natural question of how are Korean men are manly, I cannot help but wonder why Japanese feminist women, who usually hate expressions such as “womanly”, “manly” and “machismo”, or those who believe in “flower-garden” Article 9 and get covered all over with rashes just hearing the word “military”, do not respond in the least to this kind of remark. Why is it that protestors who disagree with the right to cooperative defense do not oppose the dangerous Korean-style boom, which clearly instigated people to turn to the Right?

### **Korean-style business cutting off Imperial Japan**

Aside from this, the only aspect that I find fresh in the series of Korean-style business is that there is not the slightest shadow of the “Imperial Japan.”

Before the recent Korean-style boom started in Japan, there were some occasions when Korean movies and popular songs were introduced to Japan and attracted Japanese attention to a certain extent. But many of them were related to negative images, such as Imperial Japan, colonial rule and discrimination. Their sales point was to appeal to the sense of atonement on the part of the Japanese people.

Take Cho Yong-pil’s *Go Back to Pusan*, which was a great hit in Japan and has now become a standard song sung at Karaoke bars. The song was explained thusly: “Though the Japanese version is a song about lovers far apart, the original song is about the forced abduction of Koreans by the Japanese military.” Also, Cho’s *Five Hundred Years of Han* has a different meaning. To hear the title of the song, many Japanese may think of the military expeditions to *Chosun* (Korea) led by Toyotomi Hideyoshi.<sup>9</sup> In fact, some discussed the song in the light of it. To be precise, as I mentioned before, the words of the title come from a Korean historical event: when Yi Seong-gye, a general of Goryeo, established the Joseon dynasty through a coup d’etat, the rest of the Goryeo people who fled to Kogen province voiced words filled with *han* against Yi Seong-gye. This resembles the way the expression “*Gashin shotan*” [“Lie on firewood and taste liver.”] was created. In ancient China, King Fu Chai (495-473 BC) of Wu (11<sup>th</sup> century BC-473BC), to remember the grudge of having his father killed by the kingdom of Yue (?-334BC), slept on firewood and tasted bitter liver, swearing revenge. “X years of *han*” has probably become an idiom in Korea.

According to the Korean view of history, during the period of Japan’s Annexation of Korea, Japan was not satisfied just to exploit the Korean people and Japan went as far as robbing the Koreans of their culture and language and forced them to use Japanese names. Besides, Japanese atrocities were

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<sup>9</sup> Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537-1598) rose from a farmer to the top of military leadership after Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582) was assassinated at Honnoji-temple. Hideyoshi sent troops to Korea (then Chosun) twice, during the Bunroku campaign in 1592-96, and Keicho campaign in 1597-98.

countless, such as forced labor and comfort women, to mention a few.

Following such a history, at the time of grandfathers and great-grandfathers of Yon Sama (Bae Yong Joon)<sup>10</sup>, as enthusiastic Japanese female fans fondly call him, the Koreans were made to change their names to Japanese ones. (Actually, 75% of the entire Korean households at that time changed their names to Japanese ones, while the remaining 25% continued to use their Korean names.) There is also a slight possibility that relatives of Sonyeo Sidae [Girls' Generation]<sup>11</sup> were made comfort women for the Japanese military. Surely, there were two hundred thousand comfort women at that time. (The population of Korea, at the time when the war ended, was approximately twenty million.) Moreover, the granduncle of Jang Keun-Suk<sup>12</sup> may have been taken to Japan by the Japanese military police and made to work as a coalminer at some place around the Chikuho<sup>13</sup> area until he died. The duo of Dong Bang Shin Ki [Rising God in the East]<sup>14</sup> might have independence fighters in their lineage who were tortured to death by the Japanese special higher police. KARA's<sup>15</sup> ancestors had their land robbed by the atrocious Imperial Japan and lived a miserable life, shedding bitter tears and wailing, AAAAAA! AAAAAA!

However, such "facts" were nowhere to be found in any feature articles of Korean magazines. Looking at the Web sites of Korea-boom fans, I have never seen excitement shared about such subjects. It is difficult to imagine any relationship between pop stars and the cruel past. We can hardly imagine that a grandfather of a member of the group Dong Bang Shin Ki called himself Kaneda (Kanemoto, Yasuda, or whatever). Instead, take Cho Yong-pil or Kye Eun Sook,<sup>16</sup> and imagine the past in that way may not be so unrealistic.

That is, Imperial Japan and Korea-boom are not connected at all. The fiction of "Korean-style stars who fascinate Japanese women endlessly" and the fiction of "Koreans who were exploited and treated like slaves by the Imperial Japan" do not coincide at all, of which the advertising agency, which produced the Korean-style boom, and their client, the Korean national brand committee, were very much aware at the time of the presentation of the project. To make it realistic, Korean-style stars must

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<sup>10</sup> Bae Yong Joon was born in Seoul in 1972. He is an actor and businessman. He became very popular in Japan, appearing in the Korean TV drama *Winter Sonata*.

<sup>11</sup> Girls' Generation was a Korean music group of eight girls, who perform not only in Korea, but also in some Asian countries, Japan, Europe and America.

<sup>12</sup> Jang Keun-Suk was born in Korea in 1987. He is an actor, singer, model, and has been active as Seoul's PR Ambassador since January 2010.

<sup>13</sup> Chikuho is a region of Fukuoka Prefecture in Kyushu, where coal mining industry used to be very prosperous, attracting lots of workers.

<sup>14</sup> Dong Bang Shin Ki consists of two Korean males (one born in 1986 and the other in 1988). They are active in Korea and Japan.

<sup>15</sup> KARA is a Korean music group of five girls. They made their debut in March 2007, triggering the K-POP boom in Japan. They appeared in NHK's *Kohaku Utagassen*, Japan's highest rated TV program, but disbanded in 2016.

<sup>16</sup> Kye Eun Sook was born in Seoul in 1961. She is very popular in Japan, singing her many hit songs in Japanese with her signature husky voice.

appear suddenly one day out of the blue. In this sense, Korea-book stars may be called fatherless children.

### **Strong Korea and chicken Korea**

Thus, the two totally different views of “Koreans who endlessly fascinate Japanese women,” and “Koreans who were exploited and treated like slaves by Imperial Japan” came to stand side by side. There is no continuity between the two and they are split in terms of characters.

In this book, let me call the former “strong Korea” (SK), meaning a well-respected, superb, strong and proud Korea, and the latter “chicken Korea” (CK), meaning an unhappy, trod-under-foot, miserable and grudging Korea.

Now, imagine two bags labelled SK and CK, respectively.

For example, “the period of the Three Kingdoms of Korea<sup>17</sup>, which introduced excellent, advanced culture and goods to the Japanese state of Wakoku<sup>18</sup> is a case showing the superiority of Korea to Japan, and therefore it is SK. “The period of Japan’s Annexation of Korea during which Korea was invaded and robbed of its culture completely” is SK beyond question. The image of weak Koreans, who tacitly approved of having two hundred thousand of their women made sex slaves and were engaged in forced labor without protesting”, goes into the CK bag. The image of the strong Koreans “who thoroughly resisted against the oppression by the Imperial Japan, holding a determined spirit to realize national independence with unbending determination” goes into the SK bag. “Chosun was stomped down without any means of fighting back by Hideyoshi’s troops,” goes in the CK bag. On the other hand, Admiral Yi Sun-sin (1545-1598)<sup>19</sup>, who led the navy and defeated Hideyoshi’s navy, goes into SK bag.

This method of classification can be applied to Korean residents in Japan. Belligerent Korean high school boys who make delinquent Japanese high school boys afraid, as described in the film *Break Through! Pacchigi!* (2005)<sup>20</sup>, are SK. On the other hand, every time the issues of the abduction of Japanese citizens by North Korea or threat of missiles are discussed, Korean high school girls are scared to death, having their school uniform, the traditional Korean *hanbok*, torn by strangers, or by

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<sup>17</sup> Three Kingdoms of Korea refers to Sila (57BC - 935AD), Baekje (18BC - 660AD) and Goguryeo (37BC – 668AD).

<sup>18</sup> Wakoku is an appellation used by ancient Chinese dynasties and adjacent states, referring to the political power and state that existed in the Japanese Archipelagoes at that time. Late in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the name was changed to “Japan”.

<sup>19</sup> Admiral Yi Sun-sin (1545-1598) was a Korean naval commander famed for his victories against the Japanese navy during the Imjin war in the Joseon Dynasty, who became an exemplar of conduct to both the Koreans and Japanese.

<sup>20</sup> *Break Through! (Pacchigi!)* was a 2005 Japanese film directed by Izutsu Kazuyuki and won the 48<sup>th</sup> Blue Ribbon Awards for Best Film.



anti-Korean harassers. They are unfortunately CK.

Thus, filling the two bags to capacity, we will find two completely different characters.

Korea has used SK and CK, as heads and tails of the same coin, sometimes as the means of tacit pressure against Japan and sometimes to raise nationalism domestically. My candid opinion is that Korea has endeavored to maintain its national identity, using SK to emphasize Korea's alleged dominance over Japan and CK as victims of Japan's atrocious, barbarous backwardness, thus showing the real Korea, both domestically and globally.

The statues and monuments of comfort women Korea plans to install at various places in America are nothing but extreme examples of CK. Korea does not consider it shame upon shame, which is uniquely Korean. Against Japan, CK can be strong weapons.

As I mentioned previously, both Cho Yong-pil and Kye Eun Sook sell “*han*” and in this sense, they can be called CK artists. Not only songs, but also, films and plays are invariably based on CK, so long as they deal with things related to history between Japan and Korea. Even in works created by Japan, once Korean characters enter, CK such as the colonial rule, forced abduction, discrimination and division of their homeland are depicted with one-hundred percent certainty, naturally imprinting a sense of atonement and sympathy on the mind of the audience (or the readers).

### **Disruption and unification**

In July 2014, a first-run film was shown in Korea and within a month it proved a great hit--with a record audience of 1.6 million people. The film's title was *Myonryan*. The film is a grand spectacle, depicting the naval battle between the Korean navy led by Admiral Yi Sun-sin and Toyotomi Hideyoshi's troops. The bravery of Admiral Yi Sun-sin seems to be the fittest theme in encouraging Korean nationalism against Japan and films were made featuring him over and over in the past. The first of the kind was a TV epic drama, *Imujin Weran*, aired in 1986. *Imujin Weran* refers to Hideyoshi's Bunroku campaign from 1592 to 1596. This TV drama cost several times more than regular TV dramas in Korea at that time (in Korea, it was not until the eighties that Korean TV commonly broadcast in color). The drama reproduced perfectly the battle of *Myonran* between Admiral Yi Sun-sin and Hideyoshi's troops, using the latest special-effects technique, and it was much talked about among the Koreans.

According to Mr. Kuroda Katsuhiko, former Seoul Branch chief of the *Sankei Newspaper*, one of the biggest factors of the drama's popularity is that, thus far, although the invasion of Hideyoshi had been depicted only from the standpoint of victims, this drama made it a gallant story in which the Korean side militarily defeated the invading enemy. At that time, with the Seoul Olympics two years ahead,

Korean society was undergoing economic development, full of energy and confidence. This self-confidence may have played a great role in changing a national tragedy (CK) into a cathartic drama (SK). Incidentally, the shooting of the climatic special-effected scenes was directed by Japanese Yajima Nobuo and his staff, of the Japanese Toei Film Company, who are experts in shooting special effects and famous for creating a series of battleship fleets. I wonder how many, of all enthusiastic Koreans, knew the fact that it was a Japanese team who shot the most exciting scenes.

In 2003, the Korean drama *Winter Sonata* was aired and the Korea-boom started. It was less than 20 years since the epoch-making drama, *Imjin Weran*, which means that Korea finally secured a strong position to sell SK in Japan. However, the more the boom emphasized SK and the more Korea boasted of “powerful Korea,” the more clearly the Koreans saw a dilemma, realizing that the Koreans can no longer use the almighty CK card which they have used against Japan, just like Mito Komon’s medicine case is as almighty as one imagines. The image of “Korean-style stars who charm Japanese women so much” and that of “Koreans who were exploited and treated like slaves by the Imperial Japan” are extremes isolated from one another.

In the postwar years, Korea, in creating its history (in Korean terms, to restore history) has not tried to unify the two separate “images of itself,” namely, strong Korea and chicken Korea, which now presents as a tragic comedy.

Both SK and CK are nothing but self-portraits seen through a mirror called “Japan.” There is only one mirror, but two faces are reflected in it. By the way, “Japan” mentioned here is Japan as perceived solely by Korea and therefore it is parenthesized “Japan.”

## **Killer victim—Korea**

### **The meaning of the remark of one-thousand years’ *han***

“The respective standpoints of the perpetrators and victims will never change for a thousand years.”

These words are from the address of President Park Geun-hye given at the memorial ceremony of the 3-1 Incident. This remark can be interpreted as meaning that Korea will not forgive Japan no matter how many years may pass.

Though it is true that the Koreans are very insistent, one would be too naïve to take President Park’s words at face value. In Korean terminology, there is very cunning wording used in the words of the victim and the perpetrator, reflecting the Confucian relationship between superior and inferior, or between senior and junior. It is their tacit assertion that “perpetrator” Japan is morally ranked below “victim” Korea. Moreover, victims are “absolutely good” while perpetrators are “absolutely evil”.

President Park's abovementioned words of a thousand years' *han* is a declaration that Korea will maintain this relationship of victim versus perpetrator forever.

From now on, however sincerely Japan apologizes to Korea or how much compensation Japan pays to Korea, now that the Korean President herself stated that reconstruction of the relationship between Japan and Korea is impossible, Japan may feel somewhat relieved. If so, Japanese must have thought that now we can "abandon the undue sense of atonement."

Quite interestingly, "victims" in the general sense of the word appear weak, but "victims" in Korean sense are strong, holding absolute justice against "perpetrators" and are privileged in certain ways. A good example is the bereaved families of those high school students on a school trip who died aboard the sunken cargo-passenger ferry *Sewol* in April 2014 and their supporters. Of course, they are "victims" and we cannot help but feel deep sympathy for having lost their dear sons and daughters without any fault at all on their part. Some families threw angry words, "How come only your sons and daughters were saved and are alive?", at the parents whose children were rescued. Some participated in hunger strikes, demanding a special law be legislated, which included outrageous requests such allowing not only the second-year student survivors, but also third-year student survivors to enter universities through special procedures. Some appealed to third-party countries (U.S. and U.K.), resorting to newspaper ads and demonstrations. All of these Korean responses are utterly beyond the comprehension of the Japanese and many Japanese must have been flabbergasted at their audacity.

Above all, being "victims" against Japan means that Korea stands overwhelmingly dominant and strong. Here again, CK (chicken Korea) and SK (strong Korea) mingle in a very delicate manner. By emphasizing the position of weak victims (CK), they tacitly scare the opponent (SK), and justify their demands, which can be regarded as their deliberate strategy.

A sign-board saying "victims" is like professional wrestlers' nicknames, such as "Human Electric Power Generator" or "Chef from Hell": Great Victim, Killer Victim or Abdullah the Victim.

### **Is *Hotaru no Haka* [*The Grave of the Fireflies*] an ultra-Rightist film?**

STUDIO GHIBLI's animated film, *Hotaru no Haka* [*The Grave of the Fireflies*], directed by Takahata Isao (released in 1988, based on the novel of the same title written by Nosaka Akiyuki), is a very popular film, depicting a brother and his little sister desperately trying to survive after their parents were killed by bombing in of Kobe near the end of World War II. The film depicts the misery of the war and pitilessness of people in wartime. It became a great hit among animated film fans not only in Japan, but also all over the world.

In Great Britain, a decision was made to make a live action film based on the story. *The Grave of the*

*Fireflies* was loved by all, regardless of nationality, religion, or ideology. Among democratic states, it took as long as twenty years to show the film to the public in one country—none other than Korea.

“The Japanese animated film *Hotaru no Haka*, which has had a very hard time clearing many requirements before being shown to the public, is finally cleared to be officially show in Korea this coming June 19. [omitted.] *Hotaru no Haka* is an animated film depicting the end of World War II, with a boy named Seita, aged 14, and his four-year old sister Setsuko, who lost their parents and home by an air raid, desperately struggling for survival on their own. It is a story about a young boy and his little sister who were victimized amid the cruelty of war and the mass-egotism of grown-ups. The film described citizens of Japan, which provoked the war in the first place, as victims. Consequently, controversy arose, arguing that the film is ultra-Rightist. Seeing the film, the audience in Korea pointed out that the film described perpetrator Japan as victim, against which director Takahata responded, in an interview with a certain Korean news medium, ‘I made the film solely from an objective point of view, and I had no intention to justify Japan in the film. We cannot protest against war, unless we look further into the very cause of the war.’ The director emphasized that the film is meant to be anti-war.”  
(*Joy News* 24 of May 15, 2014)

I don’t know under what circumstances the Korean public saw the film, but I can definitely say that no one but the Koreans can judge *Hotaru no Haka* as being an “ultra-Rightist” film.

The musical, *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg* (1964), starring Catherine Deneuve, is a sad love story depicting young lovers who are torn apart by war. The conflict in this film was the Algerian civil war in, fought for Algerian independence. From the Korean standpoint, naturally, colonized Algeria is in the right, whereas imperialist France is evil. Otherwise would not make sense to Koreans. In this line of logic, *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg* which depicts France as the victim, is an “ultra-Rightist” film. The Joseon Dynasty was a strict hierarchical society, and this is clearly understood, if you compare victims and perpetrators to classes, according to Korean accounts. Perpetrators who ranked morally lower than victims pretend to be a higher class of victims or demanded the same rights. Koreans were angry, saying “How lawless they are!” Among what is called the “flower garden,” meaning imaginative pacifists, many are very sympathetic toward Korea. However, they should be fully aware by now that concepts and idealism which those people hold are not congruous with Korean assertions at a fundamental basis. When I was a junior high school student, a flower-garden believer said to me, “There are no winners or losers, no perpetrators or victims in a war. War makes everyone unhappy. That’s what war is.”

In a way, this makes sense. But Korean belief totally refutes this. From a Korean perspective, the world is made of perpetrators and victims. The assertion that “perpetrators and victims are the same” is a dangerous, revolutionary thought, a denial of hierarchy. In the Korean way of thinking, only evil Japan

can think up of such a shameless idea.

### **The idea that “one can become a victim”**

The remark of Ms. Shin Su-gok, an ethnic Korean resident in Japan, is a good reference in understanding the Korean view of “perpetrator versus victim”:

“According to my opinion, the reason why many Japanese people politically jumped at the issue of the forced abduction of Japanese citizens by North Korea is that the Japanese are fed up with having been accused for so long of being a perpetrator as one with the state of Japan. It was at that exact moment when Japanese people were ‘able to become victims’, fairly and squarely, for the first time. And through feeling empathy with the victims, Japanese seemed to keep emotionally balanced.” (*The Tokyo Shimbun* [Newspaper], dated September 20, 2009)

What does Ms. Shin mean by “politically jumped at”? If the abduction issue had been meant to be used politically, the Japanese Government would have used it much earlier. In the first place, the very idea of “being able to become a victim” is fresh and unique.

Far from solving the abduction issue, attempts to spread the issue worldwide has been stifled by domestic and overseas Korean forces who claim that only Koreans can victims. At the time when the issue of the forced abduction was treated as a spurious matter, it was self-styled abductees to Japan, such as the killer Victims and Abdullah the Victims, belonging to the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan or the Korean Residents Union in Japan as well as Japanese pro-Korean sympathizers like the former Socialist Party of Japan that interrupted the steady, effortful activities on the part of the Families of the Abductees or the Society to Save the Abductees, loudly calling the issue “racist” and a “fabrication by right-wingers,” and forced the mass media, trying to cover the issue, shrink away.

Ms. Shin’s remark continues: “If this stance was used to solve the two issues, of the North Korean abductees and the forced abduction issue at the same time, there would have been a great, historical step forward.”

Here, the “forced abduction” issue refers to the what is called comfort women issue. As is well known, not one piece of evidence has been found which proves that the Japanese Army forcibly abducted comfort women. All there is to this is the statements of former comfort women themselves. But statements should be backed up by concrete evidence before such statements becomes fact. So long as there is no proof, we cannot say that the witness statements are true, at present moment.

On the other hand, regarding to the issue of the abduction of Japanese citizens, ‘perpetrator’ North

Korea demands that the 'victim', Japan, pay money for investigation of the abductees, which is more like an act of *yakuza* (Japanese gangsters) blackmailing. This is what's going on now. Their act is nothing more than profiteering from kidnapping.

**“A mother’s affection” that moved a North Korean agent**

Readers may remember a person named An Myon-jin, who was an ex-North Korean agent and is an exile in South Korea. After he was arrested for possessing stimulants, he disappeared from the Japanese media. However, it is an undeniable fact that he made many statements regarding Japanese citizens kidnapped by North Korea. In March 1997, he met Mr. and Mrs. Yokota of the Families of the Abductees for the first time. In fact, he was very reluctant to meet them and only agreed at the last minute. He was very much conflicted, thinking how dare he, one of the perpetrators, could meet with them, the family of an abductee. During the interview, Mrs. Yokota Sakie said to him, “You, too, must be very sad, leaving your family behind in North Korea.” Hearing this, Mr. An burst into tears. And he firmly swore that he would cooperate with them in every possible way to solve the issue of the kidnapping of Japanese citizens by North Korea.

Mrs. Yokota’s words gave not a hint of the crass thought that victims are superior to perpetrators, let alone the idea of “being able to become a victim.” All there was to it was affection of a mother. And I believe that all the Japanese people share the same feeling, hoping for the solution of the North Korean abduction issue as soon as possible.