



PROJECT MUSE®

Kidnapped Japanese in North Korea: The New Left Connection

Patricia G. Steinhoff

The Journal of Japanese Studies, Volume 30, Number 1, Winter 2004,
pp. 123-142 (Article)

Published by Society for Japanese Studies

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/jjs.2004.0035>



➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/55124>

PATRICIA G. STEINHOFF

Kidnapped Japanese in North Korea: The New Left Connection

Abstract: This article traces the connections between a Japanese New Left student group from the late 1960s, the Red Army Faction, and the kidnapping of Japanese citizens to North Korea. After hijacking a plane to Pyongyang in 1970, the “Yodogō” hijackers were converted to Kim Il Sung’s *chuch’e* philosophy. North Korean agents lured eight Japanese women to North Korea to marry the men, and several of them later helped to lure three young Japanese travelers from Europe to North Korea. The story became known because of the investigative reporting of a journalist whose career was shaped by his New Left affiliations.

North Korean Premier Kim Jong Il publicly apologized in September 2002 for the kidnapping of Japanese citizens during the 1970s and 1980s, confirming what had long been suspected. An unknown number of young Japanese had been snatched off beaches on the Sea of Japan coast or had been lured to North Korea under false pretenses and then prevented from leaving.

The official admission that 13 Japanese had been kidnapped by North Korea but only five were still alive caused a public uproar in Japan.¹ Although there was great joy at the return of the five survivors, family members believe the others may still be alive in North Korea. Many other families believe their missing members are also in North Korea, even though they have not yet been acknowledged. The issue has since been coopted to

1. The announcement was a diplomatic coup for Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi Jun'ichirō, who had agreed to make an unprecedented official trip to North Korea only if Kim Jong Il first acknowledged and apologized for the kidnappings. While the United States and other countries saw Koizumi's trip as an opening for renewed negotiations with North Korea, for the domestic Japanese audience the kidnappings were the primary focus of attention. The Japanese government subsequently negotiated a short visit to Japan for the five survivors, who then decided not to return to North Korea. Attention then shifted to trying to get their remaining family members out of North Korea. At this writing, several children and one spouse are still in North Korea.

some extent by ultraconservative groups in Japan, who have lent their organizational support to the association representing the families of the kidnap victims.² Ironically, however, the story also has a curious connection to the Japanese New Left. Tracing the New Left connection sheds light on both the political and personal levels of this strange tale.

Japan's New Left emerged in the late 1950s and developed during the 1960s as a many-faceted left movement that was explicitly independent of the "Old Left" Japan Communist Party and Japan Socialist Party. Like their counterparts in other advanced industrial countries, Japanese student activists of the 1960s gravitated to the revolutionary ideologies embodied in contemporary Third World revolutionary movements. They read the writings of revolutionary leaders such as Che Guevara, identified with their movements, and saw clear parallels to the political, social, and economic problems in their own country. For most, this awareness of revolutionary movements around the globe remained at the level of passive sympathy, but for some it became a call to action.

The story of how the revolutionary dreams of one such group led to its involvement in the North Korean kidnappings was first revealed in a book of investigative reporting published in Japan in 1998 by Takazawa Kōji, entitled *Shukumei: Yodogō bōmeisha no himitsu kōsaku* (Destiny: The secret activities of the Yodogō exiles).³ Takazawa linked several of the kidnappings to the Yodogō group of Red Army Faction (Sekigunha) members from Japan, who have been living in North Korea since 1970.

For the past 30 years there has been a small but highly talented group of independent journalists⁴ in Japan, investigating all sorts of social and po-

2. There are three organizations directly involved in the issue: the Association of the Families of Victims Kidnapped by North Korea (Kitachōsen ni yoru Ratchi Higaisha Kazoku Renraku Kai, nicknamed Kazoku Kai), which represents the families; the National Association for the Rescue of Japanese Kidnapped by North Korea (Kita Chōsen ni Ratchisareta Nihonjin o Kyūshutsu suru tame no Zenkoku Kyōgikai, nicknamed Sukuu Kai), a broader support group that has close ties to the Modern Korea Research Institute; and Assembly Members Alliance for the Speedy Rescue of Japanese Kidnapped by North Korea (Kita Chōsen ni Ratchisareta Nihonjin o Sōki ni Kyūshutsu suru tame ni Kōdō suru Giin Renmei, nicknamed Ratchi Giren, an organization of Diet members interested in the issue. An article by Takashima Nobuyoshi, "'Sukuu Kai' to 'Tsukuru Kai' o Musubu Ito" in *Kinyōbi*, January 24, 2003, points to signs of an alliance between the rescue association, the parents' group, and the Japan Society for History Textbook Reform (Atarashii Rekishi o Tsukuru Kai, nicknamed Tsukuru Kai), the ultraconservative group that produced the controversial *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* (Tokyo: Fusōsha, 2001). An English translation by John Junkerman has been posted by the online journal *Japan Focus* (<http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=17&ItemID=3110>, accessed August 14, 2003).

3. Takazawa Kōji, *Shukumei: "Yodogō" Bōmeishatachi no himitsu kōsaku* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2002). The following year the book won the prestigious Kōdansha Non-Fiction Prize.

4. Japan's major national newspapers do little investigative reporting and are frequently viewed as "lapdogs" rather than "watchdogs" because of their close ties to the centers of power. Most scholars point to the reporters' clubs as a key factor. All the major institutional "beats"

litical issues and producing work that in the United States might be published either by scholars or by journalists employed at major newspapers and news magazines. This very interesting cohort of independent journalists is in large part a by-product of the period of violent New Left student protest in Japan in the late 1960s, which marginalized many of that generation's best and brightest, rendering them unemployable by the large companies and academic institutions where they might otherwise have spent their careers. Radicalized by their experience of student conflict and pushed out of conventional employment by an unforgiving elite, members of this cohort of ex-student activists have nonetheless used their intellectual abilities and literary skills to make careers for themselves as writers and editors for sympathetic small publications and publishers.

The man who writes under the pen name of Takazawa Kōji began his writing and publishing career on the fringes of the Red Army Faction,⁵ an insurgency group that split off from one of the main New Left organizations, the Communist League (Kyōsanshugisha Dōmei, or Bund), at the peak of the late 1960s protest cycle in 1969. In the language of contemporary social movement research, the Red Army Faction (Sekigunha) was a public insurgency group—part of the transition from large, public protest organizations to armed, clandestine groups that operate completely underground. It developed within a larger public protest organization at a time when street demonstrations had escalated into violent clashes with police, repression of the movement was likewise escalating rapidly, and what to do next was fiercely debated inside the protest organizations.⁶ The rhetoric of revolution and the belief that it was imminent in Japan were common in that period of

such as government ministries, police, and the Diet have formal reporters' clubs to which reporters from the major national and regional newspapers belong. The clubs have privileged access to work space and news briefing from official sources and can discipline members who violate informal codes of conduct by limiting their access. The result is a homogenization of news and a strong tendency to report only what is offered officially to the reporters' clubs. See Susan J. Pharr and Ellis S. Krauss, eds., *Media and Politics in Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996), and Laurie A. Freeman, *Closing the Shop: Information Cartels and Japan's Mass Media* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

5. The original group was called the Red Army Faction because it began as an internal faction of Bund. Over the next several years, various offshoots developed with distinct names and membership: the Yodogō group in North Korea, the United Red Army (Rengō Sekigun) which resulted from the 1971 merger of remnants of the Red Army Faction with another group, and the Japanese Red Army (Nihon Sekigun) as the group based in the Middle East came to be called. I use the generic term Red Army to refer to people affiliated with any of these groups.

6. See Gilda Zwerman, Patricia G. Steinhoff, and Donatella della Porta, "Disappearing Social Movements: Clandestinity in the Cycle of New Left Protest in the United States, Japan, Germany, and Italy," *Mobilization*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Spring 2000); Gilda Zwerman and Patricia G. Steinhoff, "When Activists Ask for Trouble: State Repression and the Mobilization of Resistance in the U.S. and Japan, 1967–2000," in Carol Mueller, Christian Davenport, and Hank Johnston, eds., *Paths to State Repression: Human Rights Violations and Contentious Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).

student conflict.⁷ While the majority of protesters chose to draw back from violence and avoid becoming targets of repression, in many organizations a minority advocated further escalation of violence and the use of Third World guerrilla tactics as the only way to proceed.

The Red Army Faction was such a group, advocating the formation of a guerrilla army (hence its name) to try to instigate a revolutionary uprising in Japan. Its members were vague about the nature of postrevolutionary Japan but viewed their program as part of a worldwide revolution that was already underway in some places. The Red Army Faction was expelled from Bund for advocating immediate guerrilla warfare and began operating on its own with a public debut on September 5, 1969. The group openly announced its intention to form a guerrilla army and gathered a surprising number of followers. In addition to campus chapters of Bund that had backed the Red Army Faction in the internal conflict within Bund, many new, younger recruits with a taste for violence eagerly joined this new organization with its romantic promise of revolution.

The Red Army Faction was led by two men: Shiomi Takaya, the inventive phrase-maker who wrote the group's ideology, was its formal head; and Tamiya Takamaro, the innovative tactician who imagined daring things for the group to do, was its operational commander. Many Japanese universities were on strike at that time, with students controlling campus buildings for months at a time. Under Tamiya's direction, many of the new Red Army Faction enlistees were sent to live in the protected campus enclaves that the group controlled. There they spent days and nights studying the virtually incomprehensible revolutionary tracts written by Shiomi. Some small cells were also put to work in the cottage industry of making small incendiary and explosive devices to be used in the guerrilla actions Tamiya was planning.⁸

Exactly two months after its public debut, the Red Army Faction suffered a major blow when plainclothes police followed some of its members to a mountainous area outside Tokyo where they were conducting a guerrilla training exercise. The police arrested over 50 members and uncovered a plot to kidnap Prime Minister Satō Eisaku and hold him hostage, in order to prevent him from leaving on a planned trip to the United States. Other groups also held major demonstrations against the prime minister's trip, during which he was to discuss Japan's cooperation in the escalating Vietnam War and plans for the return of Okinawa as part of the 1970 renewal of the Japan-U.S mutual security treaty. These issues were central themes in the public protests of the late 1960s, in which several hundred thousand demon-

7. The documents produced by the movement readily demonstrate this. The University of Hawai'i's Takazawa Collection contains a large number of these documents. Bibliographies of the collection are available on the collection's website at <http://www.takazawa.hawaii.edu>.

8. Patricia G. Steinhoff, "Hijackers, Bombers, and Bank Robbers: Managerial Style in the Japanese Red Army," *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 4 (1989), pp. 724–40.

strators participated. The Red Army Faction was simply innovating more audacious tactics to make the same point. Its tactics, however, posed a serious security threat to the government and were treated accordingly.

Neither Shiomi nor Tamiya was caught in the guerrilla training exercise arrests, but as police pressure intensified on the remaining members, they moved underground and pondered what to do next. Believing that it was no longer possible to continue their semipublic guerrilla activity in Japan, they turned instead to the possibility of sending groups to friendly revolutionary countries that might offer protection and military training.

The first problem was how to get there. Under Shiomi and Tamiya's leadership, they first planned to hijack a plane to Cuba, where they hoped to obtain guerrilla training and then return to Japan to make a revolution in the grand tradition of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara. Political airplane hijackings were relatively common in the international revolutionary scene at the time, and on several occasions planes had been hijacked from the United States to Cuba. No domestic Japanese airplane had ever been hijacked until nine Red Army Faction members led by Tamiya took over a plane en route to Fukuoka on March 30, 1970. The Japan Airlines plane was named Yodogō, and the hijackers were soon known in the media as the Yodogō group.⁹ The relatively small plane could not go as far as Cuba, however, so the hijackers chose instead to head for North Korea as the nearest country that might accept them.¹⁰

The North Korean government apparently viewed taking in the Japanese hijackers as a nice slap at Japan, with some potential for mischief down the line. North Korea announced that it had no intention of turning over the hijackers to the Japanese police. Instead, it would accept the hijackers and reeducate them in the true meaning of revolution. North Korea did just that, subjecting the little Japanese band to months of heavy indoctrination in Kim Il Sung's *chuch'e* philosophy, a combination of Marxism, anti-Japanese Korean nationalism, and traditional Korean Confucian ideas. *Chuch'e* philosophy was a key aspect of the Stalinist cult of personality that was being developed around Kim Il Sung.

The Red Army Faction members soon learned that there was only one correct answer in their *chuch'e* lessons. If they gave any other reply or tried

9. "Yodogō group" is the Japanese mass media's term for the group, and not one of the various names under which the group makes public statements, although the label is now being used by group supporters and associates in print. To avoid using the mass media label exclusively, I refer to them variously as the Yodogō group, the Yodogō hijackers, and the Red Army group in North Korea, though the latter is also a bit awkward because they have long since renounced the Red Army Faction's ideology.

10. They hoped the North Koreans would help them get to Cuba, with which it had good relations. See Shiomi Takaya, *Sekigunha Shimatsuki—gengichō ga kataru 40-nen* (Tokyo: Sairyūsha, 2003), pp. 208–9.

to discuss the issue with their instructors, the lesson was simply repeated over and over, until they could produce the correct answer without hesitation. During this time they were kept in comfortable quarters, in complete isolation except for the North Korean agents who directed their reeducation. The specific techniques their handlers used were refined during the early 1950s and used widely in China and North Korea for thought reform of both prisoners of war and their own people, with a fairly high success rate.¹¹ Keeping people in isolation for an extended period and repeating a single point of view incessantly causes disorientation and eventual capitulation unless one has a very strong will and internal focus.

If we look more closely at the content of the indoctrination, the vulnerability of the Yodogō hijackers to such pressure becomes clearer. They were young postwar Japanese with grand ideas of making revolution around the world, but very little comprehension of how the North Koreans viewed Japan and the Japanese as their former colonial overlords. Once in North Korea, the Yodogō hijackers were confronted with their own status as Japanese exiles. It was clear that they could not “become” Korean, given the ethnonationalism shared by Japan and North Korea; consequently, they had to come to terms with being Japanese and bearers of their country’s colonial legacy—which was presented to them in particularly graphic form through dramatic North Korean films that they viewed repeatedly.

Within a year, the hijackers announced that they had seen the light and now embraced the true revolutionary ideology of Kim Il Sung. After that, nothing much was heard from them for the next 15 years. Every few years some journalists or politicians would go to North Korea, meet some members of the group, and report back that they were still there. It appeared that the nine Red Army Faction members were living quietly in North Korea.

Meanwhile, Takazawa Kōji kept busy in Japan after the Yodogō hijacking, helping to produce the Red Army Faction’s tiny newspaper, magazine, and pamphlets as the organization faced more and more severe repression. When Red Army member Shigenobu Fusako went to Beirut in 1971 and opened a route for Japanese to get guerrilla training in the Middle East through the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and help the Palestinian cause, Takazawa helped publish the materials she and other members of her group sent back to Japan.

He also was a key member of the Red Army’s support organization, which provided support for the growing number of Red Army members who had been arrested in Japan and were undergoing the lengthy Japanese trial process in the 1970s and early 1980s. Trials in Japan are not continuous, so anyone who contests the prosecution’s charges and chooses to mount a defense faces a trial that meets once or twice a month and may continue for

11. Robert Jay Lifton, *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism: A Study of “Brainwashing” in China* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1963).

years. In these political cases, the defendants remained in solitary confinement in unconvicted detention during the long years of the trial and appeals. Under his real name, Takazawa did “straight” editing for some of Japan’s many small publishers. As Takazawa Kōji, he gradually developed a reputation as an expert on the Red Army and the New Left in general. He and his associates produced a number of now-standard reference works on the Japanese New Left.¹²

I met Takazawa in 1982, when I was in Japan studying how the Red Army Faction and its successor groups had developed out of the protests of the late 1960s. He was reticent about his own background but quickly became a valued source of research materials and background information, and he also introduced me to many people. We became friends and then collaborators on various projects. I was closely following the trials of people connected with the Red Army, and whenever I was in Japan I attended trial sessions and meetings of support groups, and interviewed defendants in the Tokyo House of Detention. Most of the cases still pending during the mid-1980s were appeals stemming from very serious events of the early 1970s, including Shiomi Takaya’s trial and the appeals of the United Red Army (Rengō Sekigun) case.¹³ In the late 1980s, new cases involving the return of Red Army exiles who had been overseas since the very early 1970s precipitated renewed contact between the Yodogō hijackers in North Korea and the Red Army supporters in Japan. One of the first of these cases was the discovery and arrest of Shibata Yasuhiro in Japan, in May 1988. Shibata was the youngest of the nine Yodogō hijackers; because he was a minor at the time of the hijacking, his picture had not been published and he was not as readily identifiable as the other eight hijackers.

Prior to his arrest, Shibata had been using the name and identity of a Korean with Japanese citizenship who had gone to North Korea many years earlier, leaving an open family record (*koseki*) that Shibata had used to apply for a Japanese passport. He was charged with passport violations, but prosecutors were unable to bring serious charges against him for the hijack-

12. See Takazawa Kōji and Takagi Masayuki, *Shinsayoku nijūnenshi* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1981); Takazawa Kōji and Kurata Kazunari, eds., *Shinsayoku riron zenshi, 1957–1975* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1984); and Takazawa Kōji, Sanaga Shiro, and Matsumura Yoichi, eds., *Sengo kakumei undō jiten* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1985).

13. The United Red Army (Rengō Sekigun) was an ill-starred 1971 merger of remnants of the Red Army Faction with another group with a quite different ideology. Members of the merged group retreated to the mountains, where internal conditions deteriorated into a deadly purge in which 14 members were tortured and murdered by the group. As police closed in on them, five of the survivors escaped to a mountain lodge in the resort town of Karuizawa named Asama Sansō. They took the caretaker’s wife hostage and held off over a thousand police in a ten-day siege before being captured unharmed, along with their hostage. See Patricia G. Steinhoff, “Death by Defeatism and Other Fables: The Social Dynamics of the Rengo Sekigun Purge,” in Takie Sugiyama Lebra, ed., *Japanese Social Organization* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1992), pp. 195–224.

ing because Japan had no hijacking law until after the Yodogō incident. He was also charged with offenses related to the 1969 guerrilla training incident in the mountains, when he had escaped arrest only because he had been sent off on an errand before the police closed in on the group.

Although he was never deeply involved in Shibata's trial, Takazawa was close to Shibata's lawyer. He also worked closely with the Kyūen Renraku Sentā (Relief Contact Center), a clearinghouse organization that provides initial support for arrested New Left activists and helps volunteers to form individual trial support groups for each case.¹⁴ When the lawyer and a Kyūen Renraku Sentā support administrator traveled to North Korea in 1989 to discuss trial strategy with the Yodogō group, Takazawa went along as a member of the delegation.

Takazawa had known Yodogō leader Tamiya and one or two other members of the group from his early Red Army Faction days. As a result of this trip, Takazawa became involved in editing and publishing the writings of the group in North Korea.¹⁵ He encouraged them to write about their earlier experiences as student activists in Japan and how their thinking had changed after they went to North Korea. Tamiya wrote about his deep longing to return to Japan, which he expressed with an old-fashioned nationalistic term "sokoku-ai" or "love of the motherland," that sounded strangely out of tune in Japan for a supposed New Left revolutionary.¹⁶ Group members also wrote a letter to the Japanese government, apologizing for their misguided hijacking and asking that they be allowed to return to Japan without being prosecuted. At about this time they also began publishing a magazine in Japanese for circulation in Japan. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, the small group in Japan that was providing trial support for Shibata viewed the Yodogō group as very isolated individuals who were essentially trapped in North Korea, under the direct control of North Korean agents and unable to speak freely to the Japanese who visited them.

14. See Patricia G. Steinhoff, "Doing the Defendant's Laundry: Support Groups as Social Movement Organizations in Contemporary Japan," *Japanstudien: Jahrbuch des Deutschen Instituts für Japanstudien*, Vol. 11 (1999).

15. See Tamiya Takamaro et al., eds., *Hisho 20-nen: "Yodogō" de Choson e* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1990); Tamiya Takamaro and Takazawa Kōji, *Sokoku to minzoku o kataru* (Tokyo: Hihiyōsha, 1996). Other writings by the group in North Korea were published during the same period through other editors and publishers as well. See Tamiya Takamaro, *Wagashisō no kakumei* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1988), and *Shakaishugi kuni de shakaishugi o kangaeru* (Tokyo: "Nihon no Jishu to Danketsu no Tame ni" no Kai, 1990).

16. The North Korean *chuch'e* ideology is heavily ethnonationalistic, much like conservative and traditional Japanese nationalist thought (see, e.g., <http://countrystudies.us/north-korea/60.htm>). Since the Yodogō hijackers were not ethnically Korean, they had to translate those ideas into a Japanese ethnonationalist equivalent. See Shiomi, *Sekigunha Shimatsuki*, pp. 204–30. Even Tamiya's wife reports that when she first met her husband in North Korea she thought he was a rightist because of his emotional nationalism. See Mori Yoriko, *Itsu made mo Tamiya Takamaro to tomo ni* (Tokyo: Rokusaisha, 2003), p. 10.

In 1992, Kim Il Sung commented to a visiting delegation of Japanese journalists that the Yodogō members' feelings had changed over the years, they now had wives and children, and maybe they could be found not guilty if they returned to Japan. The journalists did not comprehend the significance of the statement and few people noticed the comment in their stories. But when it turned out that the newly revealed wives were Japanese, everyone suddenly took notice. Since their revered leader Kim Il Sung had said they had wives and children, the Yodogō group could not deny it. Moreover, some of the wives were women who had been reported missing by their families.¹⁷

By this time, Takazawa had made several trips to North Korea. After the existence of the Yodogō wives had been made public, Takazawa was given an opportunity to interview six of the wives in North Korea. They told him romantic stories of how they had met their husbands in Europe, fallen in love, and then secretly made their way to North Korea to be with them. He published a small book of these interviews in 1995 but soon came to mistrust what the wives had told him.¹⁸ His close friend Tamiya died suddenly that same year, under suspicious circumstances. This was the turning point in Takazawa's relations with the Red Army group in North Korea. After several years of working with the group and editing what they wrote, he had become increasingly aware of strange discrepancies in their stories. Two of the original Yodogō hijackers were no longer with the group, but the accounts of what had happened to them did not ring true, and many dates given by group members and their wives did not match up with other facts. Takazawa then quietly began researching what had really transpired.

The families of Arimoto Keiko, who had disappeared in Europe in 1983, and Ishioka Tōru, who had disappeared from Spain in 1980, had contacted him a few years earlier. The families had received letters indicating that their children were in North Korea and asked Takazawa to take a return letter to North Korea. He delivered the letter to Tamiya, who reacted strangely but denied that he knew where they were. He found more information in Japanese government records that no one had looked at very closely. The wives of the Yodogō hijackers had all left Japan on legal passports in 1976 and early 1977 with various travel destinations, and in some cases had later come in and out of Japan or had renewed their passports overseas. Surveillance pictures of them taken by Western intelligence agencies documented their association with North Korean embassy personnel in Europe, and this had been brought to the attention of the Japanese authorities.

17. See Takazawa, *Shukumei*, pp. 127–28.

18. Takazawa Kōji, *Onmatachi no Pyongyang: "Yodogō" gurupu no tsumatachi* (Tokyo: San'ichi Shobō, 1995). Knowing that I would want to use the book as a research resource, he warned me not to. He said the book was an accurate account of what the wives had told him, but he did not think they were telling the truth (field notes, meeting with Takazawa Kōji, International House, Tokyo, June 14, 1996).

During the preparations for the 1988 Olympic Games in South Korea, when many foreign athletes would also be training in Japan, the Japanese government became very concerned about possible terrorist actions by North Korea and began investigating Japanese who were thought to have ties to North Korea.¹⁹ In 1988, the government ordered five of the women to turn in their passports on the suspicion that they were North Korean agents who might harm the interests of Japan. The women were out of the country at the time and did not comply with the order.²⁰ Although the Japanese government suspected that they had close ties to North Korea, prior to Kim Il Sung's 1992 announcement that the Yodogō members had Japanese wives and children living in North Korea, the Japanese government did not know the extent of the women's involvement in North Korea and did not realize they were linked to the Yodogō group. In 1993, after their marriages to the Yodogō hijackers had been revealed, arrest warrants were issued and the wives were put on wanted lists for passport violations.

Based on what he had learned from various sources, Takazawa visited the places in Europe that both the Yodogō hijackers and their wives had frequented. He was able to find more documentation about their activities in hotel registers and the files of Western governments. The story he was able to piece together, which has now been confirmed in virtually every detail either by the North Korean government or by other evidence, involves two groups of Japanese kidnap victims who ended up in North Korea. Both are separate from a third group of Japanese who were apparently snatched off beaches on the Sea of Japan coast and carried off on waiting North Korean boats. The Yodogō group had nothing to do with the direct kidnappings on the Sea of Japan coast, but many aspects of what happened to those victims after they reached North Korea are similar.

The Yodogō group cases are somewhat more ambiguous than the beach kidnappings as to whether they were true kidnappings, but some of the victims were included in the list of Japanese citizens the North Korean government has admitted to kidnapping. The Yodogō-related cases all involve young Japanese who were lured to North Korea under false pretenses and then forced to undergo ideological indoctrination and not allowed to leave.

19. This was also shortly after the crash of a Korean Airlines plane that turned out to be an act of sabotage carried out by a North Korean operative who confessed that she had been trained in North Korea by a Japanese woman. The trainer was apparently a woman who had been kidnapped to North Korea years earlier when she was a child of 13. She is one of the kidnap victims acknowledged by North Korea, but reported to be deceased. Her husband and child survive in North Korea.

20. The wife of Tamiya Takamaro reports that the wives were aware their passports had been recalled. Up to that time, they had traveled freely between Japan and other countries, but after the announcement they remained in North Korea and kept out of public view so that their relation to the Yodogō hijackers would not be revealed. See Mori, *Itsu made mo*, p. 130.

The first group of these victims became wives of the Yodogō hijackers themselves, but it is unclear how many of the wives can actually be considered kidnap victims. Only one is thought to have gone to North Korea explicitly to be with her boyfriend. All of the other cases involve some degree of deception and coercion, but also some element of voluntarism.

In 1975, Konishi Takahiro's girlfriend Fukui Takako made her way to North Korea to be with him. Her presence apparently caused some tensions among the other young men in the group, and a deliberate campaign was begun to find wives for the rest of the members. According to Takazawa's account, Tamiya brought to the North Koreans in charge of their group a plan to have the Yodogō men go to Europe and search for wives among the many young Japanese women traveling there. Instead, their handlers simply brought women to North Korea to marry the Yodogō men.²¹

North Korean agents in Japan were able to lure seven women to North Korea under various pretexts. The first women were recruited from *chuch'e* study groups in Japan and although they did not know they were going to be married to Yodogō men, they were already fairly well indoctrinated in the ideology and did not require extensive reeducation. Later, women were selected with a bit more desperation because the marriage campaign had a timetable established in advance at the highest levels of the North Korean state.

The campaign was carried out over the relatively short period of a year. Yao Megumi and Fukudome Kimiko were the last to be married, following the others by just a few days. Yao reports that she agreed to go to North Korea for what she thought was a short study tour. Once there, she was kept in isolation for a month and a half of intensive indoctrination, during which she came to realize that she could not leave and would have to cooperate with her captors. Only then was the plan to marry her to a Yodogō member revealed and she reluctantly consented, believing she had no choice.²²

Fukudome was offered the realization of her dream of going to Mongolia, but was instead taken to North Korea for forced indoctrination and forced marriage. Yao reports that Fukudome was still resistant on the day of her wedding, complaining that she had intended to go to Mongolia and didn't understand how she ended up in North Korea.²³ All the weddings took

21. In Takazawa's view, the romantic story told by Tamiya and the Yodogō wives reflects what they wished had happened, what ought to have happened, even if it departs markedly from what really occurred. Takazawa, *Shukumei*, p. 162.

22. Yao Megumi, *Shazai shimasu* (Tokyo: Bungei Shunjū, 2002). Yao Megumi was arrested briefly in Japan in 1988 in connection with the investigation of Shibata Yasuhiro, but she denied any connection to North Korea. In 1992 it was revealed that she was Shibata's wife and had previously lived in North Korea. She has remained in Japan since 1988 and is now estranged from both Shibata and the Yodogō group. This book is her account of involvement with the Yodogō group and her life in North Korea.

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 115–17.

place in the first week of May 1977, followed a week later by a much-prized visit from Kim Il Sung himself to sanctify them.²⁴ One obvious result of this deliberate and rapid campaign is that the first-born children of all the Yodogō members are the same age except for Konishi and Fukui's eldest daughter, who is a year or so older than the others.

By the time the women were brought to the Yodogō compound and married to the Yodogō men, they were already resigned to the fact that there was no way out, and had more or less converted to the *chuch'e* ideology. Each new family was given a rather large and well-furnished apartment in a new building in the Yodogō compound, which was an extensive fenced and guarded area outside Pyongyang, staffed with a number of North Korean operatives. Daily necessities were delivered to the compound regularly. Whenever they needed to go shopping at the foreigners' store in Pyongyang or to a hospital for the birth of a child, they were taken in a Mercedes Benz staffed with a North Korean driver, one of a fleet of cars and drivers permanently assigned to the group. They even made up a nursery song for the children about going places in the Benz.²⁵ The atmosphere within the Yodogō compound, combined with the protected, elite life they lived there and their busy round of daily activities, further deepened the indoctrination until the wives were apparently functioning as loyal members of the group.

Once they were trusted, the wives were sent to Europe and Asia on various assignments. Their small children remained in North Korea in the care of other group members and Korean nursemaids. The men also traveled to Europe, usually on separate missions that occasionally intersected with those of the wives. On these assignments, the women traveled on false Korean diplomatic passports as far as Eastern Europe or other portals to the West, and then with the help of North Korean consular officials they switched to their own legal Japanese passports, which they could use to travel freely in Europe and elsewhere.

The main assignment for the wives on these trips was to make friends with other young Japanese traveling in Europe, in the hope of luring them to North Korea. The purpose, as they understood it, was to expand the Yodogō group, which was to become the vanguard for a North Korean-style revolution in Japan. They used false names and pretended to be young, single Japanese traveling around Europe just like their intended victims.

Yao Megumi has described the process of selection and recruitment in considerable detail. The women were taught how to elicit information and given clear guidelines about what sorts of people they should try to recruit.

24. The marriages were carried out with considerable ceremony. However, under the circumstances they could not be made official by entering the women's names into their new husbands' family registers in Japan. See Mori, *Itsu made mo*, pp. 13–14.

25. Yao, *Shazai shimasu*, p. 142.

The criteria included checking that the potential recruits were not currently in a relationship with someone and did not have close ties to their families, that they did not have firm plans either to remain in Europe or to return to Japan in the near future, that they had no relatives in the police, and that they were ideologically naïve and not particularly interested in politics. The aim was to recruit persons who were less likely to resist the forced stay and indoctrination in North Korea, and whose absence was less likely to attract attention.²⁶ Once they had passed muster, the targeted individuals were offered the opportunity to visit North Korea on some pretext. If they agreed and passed further screening by male Yodogō members and North Korean agents, travel arrangements were made through the nearest North Korean embassy and the victims were spirited off to North Korea.

Takazawa documented three cases of such abductions from Europe involving the Yodogō group, all of which have been acknowledged as kidnappings by North Korean Premier Kim Jong Il. The first to be taken were two young men traveling in Spain, Ishioka Tōru and Matsuki Kaoru. Two Yodogō wives befriended them and then invited them to go on a short trip to North Korea as an adventure. Once there, they were kept in isolation and the two women initially participated in their indoctrination. Yao reports having heard that the indoctrination was not going well because Matsuki had a crush on one of the women who had brought him to North Korea. When he discovered she was part of the plot, he angrily attacked her.²⁷ Takazawa reports strong indications that other young Japanese men went missing in Spain around that time and were lured to North Korea by the Yodogō wives, but he was unable to confirm other specific cases. At least one young man also joined the group voluntarily and remains with them, married to the sister of one of the Yodogō hijackers.²⁸

Yao Megumi herself has now confessed publicly that she was personally involved in luring Arimoto Keiko to North Korea. Yao was sent to London to find a woman to marry one of the two men that other Yodogō wives had previously met in Spain and lured to North Korea. Once Arimoto was en route to North Korea, Yao was ordered to find another woman to become the wife of the second man, but she was sent off to a different assignment before she could recruit a second woman.²⁹

Several years after these abductions, the family of Ishioka Tōru received a letter from their son that had apparently been taken out of North Korea by another person and then mailed to Japan from Poland. It named Matsuki Kaoru and Arimoto Keiko, and contained pictures of Ishioka, Arimoto, and

26. Ibid., pp. 217, 220–21.

27. Ibid., pp. 224–25.

28. Takazawa, *Shukumei*, p. 213.

29. Yao, *Shazai shimasu*, pp. 256, 262–86.

a baby. The letter indicated that Ishioka and Arimoto were married and that all of them were living in North Korea. Arimoto's health insurance card from the United Kingdom was enclosed as verification. From the details and omissions, Takazawa deduced that Matsuki was no longer with the others.³⁰

The North Korean government reports that all three—Arimoto, Ishioka, and Matsuki—are now dead.³¹ In addition, three of the Yodogō men and one of the wives, Fukudome Kimiko, who wanted to go to Mongolia and instead found herself in North Korea, are also reported to be dead. Takazawa learned something of the circumstances of the deaths of two of the men and Fukudome from Tamiya, who was himself the third Yodogō hijacker to die. The information came out only in bits and pieces, and only after Takazawa had done extensive reevaluation of what the group had said and written, when he was actively probing for the truth beneath the stories he was being told. The Yodogō members have told different stories about these deaths, first denying them completely, then reporting false stories and dates, and only later reporting something that may resemble the truth. These stories are similar to the strange accounts given by the North Korean authorities for the deaths of other kidnap victims, and probably all stem from the same source.

The first death of a Yodogō hijacker, Yoshida Kintarō, was announced by the group in 1985 as having just occurred after a serious illness. Yoshida's family was notified in 1985 that he was terminally ill, and family members were invited to come to North Korea to see him. Then just a few days later they were informed of his death and instead invited to come to North Korea to retrieve his ashes. After the ashes were brought back to Japan, Takazawa and many former Red Army Faction members gathered in Kyoto for a memorial service and reunion. In his book, Takazawa quotes the flowery eulogy written by Tamiya and a poignant description of Yoshida's last days with the group clustering at his bedside.³²

But when he went to North Korea, Takazawa found that the subject of Yoshida Kintarō was taboo within the group and Tamiya abruptly told him they did not want to discuss it. After meeting the wives, he noticed more oddities. None of the wives mentioned Yoshida or seemed to have met him, which they would certainly have done if he had actually died in 1985. It also appeared that Yoshida had left no wife and children, despite Tamiya's claim that wives had been found for all of the members within the one-year campaign period. Searching through the books he had edited for the group, he

30. Takazawa, *Shukumei*, pp. 214–20, 231–33.

31. In 2002 the North Korean government sent what were supposed to be Matsuki's remains to his family in Japan. The family promptly had the bones analyzed. They were found to belong to an elderly woman and not to Matsuki. This has increased the anger of the families and fueled their hopes that those who were reported to be dead may still be alive in North Korea.

32. Takazawa, *Shukumei*, pp. 486–89.

also noted a singular lack of natural references to Yoshida. Moreover, he could only verify that Yoshida had been seen with the group for a year or two after its arrival in North Korea.

He gradually came to suspect that Yoshida had died much earlier and the melodramatic story of his death from illness in 1985 was fiction.³³ In private conversations with Tamiya as well as through careful analysis of previously unnoticed comments, Takazawa came to understand that fairly early in the group's stay in North Korea, Yoshida had become the group's scapegoat because of his resistance to the conversion to Kim Il Sung's philosophy.³⁴

Something similar seems to have happened in the case of hijacker Okamoto Takeshi and his wife Fukudome Kimiko. When Takazawa and others first went to North Korea, they were told that Okamoto had married a Korean woman and had left the group to live with her. Only much later was it revealed that he, too, had a Japanese wife from the marriage campaign and had left the group because of ideological differences. Even then, Okamoto and his wife were first reported to have been killed in an industrial accident. Much later, a different story leaked out that they were killed trying to escape from North Korea by boat.³⁵ Their two children have remained in the care of the Yodogō group, much as Yao Megumi and Shibata Yasuhiro's daughters have.

It is possible in these cases that the Yodogō group members do not know what happened to a troublesome member after that person was removed from the group, and that they simply believed the disingenuous stories they were told by North Korean agents or clung to them in denial. It is equally possible that they do know what happened and are simply lying. They live in an environment in which they make up their own ideological interpretations of events, with little opportunity to test them against external evidence to the contrary. That same ideological isolation creates a sense of being embattled and needing to protect the group and its revolutionary goals at all costs. Truth is the first thing to be sacrificed in such a situation, and denial is the primary line of defense.³⁶

From the time Takazawa's 1998 book came out right up to the present, the Yodogō members still in North Korea have adamantly denied that they had anything to do with the kidnappings and have maintained a vicious cam-

33. Ibid., pp. 491–505.

34. Ibid., pp. 514–20.

35. See Takazawa, *Shukumei*, chapters 23–26. Mori Yoriko recounts the first story, that they were killed in an industrial accident. See Mori, *Itsu made mo*, pp. 123–28.

36. Another possibility is that one or more members know the truth but the others do not. Tamiya's leadership style involved giving private instructions to individual members when they were sent off on missions, and he alone controlled relations with the North Korean agents in charge of their group. Much information about what really happened may have been permanently lost after Tamiya's death in 1995.

paign of character assassination against Takazawa. They reject his evidence as inconclusive or false, and then question his motives.³⁷ To some extent, Takazawa has invited this response by the way he wrote the book. Although he did an enormous amount of investigation and reached his conclusions on the basis of the best factual evidence he could put together, he chose to write the book in a novelistic fashion in order to ensure that it would have a wide audience. His receipt of the Kōdansha Non-Fiction Prize is evidence that he succeeded in writing a powerful and persuasive book. However, from an academic perspective, he has not provided the sort of scholarly apparatus we would ordinarily use to make a case.

Most of Takazawa's friends were close to the Yodogō group and regarded him as a disloyal sell-out for having written the book, even though many privately admitted that they knew what he said was true. Those who had been to North Korea and understood the political constraints surrounding the Yodogō group were reluctant to do or say anything that might worsen their situation. Under the barrage of criticism, Takazawa stopped going to all of his usual haunts—in part because his friends were so angry and in part because he feared retaliation from North Korean agents in Japan. Yet a part of him enjoyed the conflict, which he likened to the old “uchigeba” or internal faction fights within the student movement.

Around the same time that his book *Shukumei* came out, Takazawa became involved in a new support group that was helping Yao Megumi bring a civil suit against the Yodogō group in a desperate attempt to get her two daughters out of North Korea. Both Yao and Takazawa had worked for several years during the 1990s with the head of the Kyūen Renraku Sentā and with the remaining Yodogō members in North Korea to bring the wives and children back to Japan. Yao was able to talk to her children by phone once a month, but arrangements to bring them to Japan were proceeding very slowly. The group in Pyongyang kept delaying by adding new conditions and insisting on their own sequence for the return of all the children. They demanded that Yao return to North Korea for a “visit” before her children would be released, which she was understandably afraid to do. They also insisted that the children be entered in Shibata's family record and returned to him, when she had already entered them in her family record and prepared the documents for their return.

The lawsuit reflected Takazawa and Yao's belief that working with the Yodogō group was futile. Along with the lawsuit, they published a three-part magazine article that revealed Yao's forced indoctrination and unhappy marriage to Shibata.³⁸ The lawsuit caused another huge rift among the Yo-

37. Kari no Kai, *Takazawa Shukumei ni taisuru wareware no kenkai* (Tokyo: Kari no Kai, 1999).

38. Yao Megumi, “Pyongyang ni iru futari no musume o kaeshite!” *Shūkan gendai*, Vol. 40 (1998), pp. 40–44; “Watashi wa Kita Chōsen de shisō to sei no dorei ni saretā,” *Shūkan gendai*,

dogō supporters in Japan, and the innocent lawyer who had agreed to file the suit withdrew after receiving threats.³⁹ The case quickly collapsed, but not before Yao's daughters had sent an angry open letter to the court saying that they no longer considered Yao to be their mother and that she should have shown more respect and gratitude toward their true mothers—the Yodogō women who had raised them after she left North Korea.⁴⁰

On May 19, 2001, after many empty announcements and delays, the first three Yodogō children arrived in Japan. They were followed some months later by Kaneko Emiko, the wife of hijacker Akagi Shiro, who was immediately arrested for passport violations. In March 2002, Yao Megumi caused another sensation by testifying in Kaneko's trial about her own role in Arimoto Keiko's abduction. Five more children did return in September 2002 along with Konishi's wife Fukui Takako, but Yao's children were not among them.

The North Korean admission of responsibility for the kidnappings has tapped into the deep divide between left and right in Japan, creating awkward political moments. Many in Japan who support North Korea, including the most loyal followers of the Yodogō hijackers, have responded to the North Korean government's acknowledgment of the kidnappings—and by implication the Yodogō group's involvement—by pointing out that Japan committed far more heinous offenses against the Korean people during the war, including kidnapping thousands for forced labor and service as “comfort women” for Japanese troops.⁴¹ The hijackers themselves point to the North Korean government's admission that it was responsible for the kidnappings as evidence that they were not involved.⁴²

Vol. 40 (1998), pp. 206–10; and “Futari no musume ni wa watashi to onaji jinsei o ayumase-takunai!” *Shūkan gendai*, Vol. 40 (1998), pp. 188–92.

39. Field notes, meeting with Takazawa Kōji, Higashi Matsubara, Tokyo, May 2, 1999.

40. Field notes, opening session of Yao Megumi's civil suit in Tokyo District Court, November 18, 1998, followed by the Yao press conference (she was not present and was represented by her lawyer) and Yodogō press conference (with Yamanaka Yukio and Shibata Yasuhiro) in Bengoshi Kaikan, and an informal gathering at Matsumotorō, Hibiya Park, Tokyo (with Shibata Yasuhiro, Suzuki Kunio, and several others. The letter was a handout at the Yodogō group's press conference and was later discussed at the Matsumoto meeting.

41. However, Shiomi Takaya, who has been so close to the Yodogō group that many thought he, too, had become a convert to Kim Il Sung's *chuch'e* ideology, has publicly pressed the Yodogō group to stop its denials and acknowledge its involvement in taking the three kidnap victims to North Korea, based on earlier comments members had made to him and the credibility of Yao's testimony. Shiomi Takaya, “Yodogō Gurūpu yo, Ratchi Mondai no shinjitsu o katara!” *Tsukuru*, Vol. 32 (2002), pp. 14–21. He expanded on his position and provided additional background in a November 27, 2002, speech that was subsequently reprinted in Shiomi, *Sekigunha Shimatsuki*.

42. In the summer of 2002 they announced a new “campaign” to have everyone connected to their group (wives, children, and the men themselves) return to Japan. In their subsequent denials of any involvement in the kidnappings, they claim that the charges about them are a plot

Yet beneath all the political rhetoric on both sides, there is the tangible evidence of the people whose lives have been caught up in this strange set of events. One of the most puzzling parts of the story is the fact that some of the young wives who had been lured to North Korea did not use the opportunity to escape and return to Japan when they were later sent out of the country. The Yodogō members offer this as proof that their wives were not coerced.⁴³ However, their behavior is consistent with the well-documented "Stockholm Syndrome"⁴⁴ and with the types of coercive control the women experienced.

The first element of control is that members of the group were under surveillance and operational control by North Korean agents while they were abroad. Some apparently traveled in and out of Japan during this time, but always under surveillance by North Korean agents. The second factor is that the wives who were sent on missions outside of North Korea left their children behind as hostages. It is clear that no wives were sent out of the country until they had children, but they were sent out when the children were still very young, and usually when there were two small children left behind. The third element is of course the women's belief in the revolutionary cause for which they were performing duties when they were outside North Korea. Whether they originally came to North Korea out of a desire to promote the North Korean cause or were indoctrinated into those beliefs after they were taken there, they were loyal converts by the time they were allowed to leave the country.⁴⁵

by the Japanese and U.S. governments to prevent them from returning to Japan. See Wakabayashi Moriaki, "Genkai Nada: 'Ratchi Yōgi' de Abe ni Taihōjō," *Kyūen*, No. 402 (October 10, 2002), p. 7; Wakabayashi Moriaki, "Genkai Nada: Zen'in Kikoku no Shin'i," *Kyūen*, No. 400 (August 10, 2002), p. 7; and Yamanaka Yukio, "'Kari no Kai' zen'in kikoku to Koizumi Hōchō o kangaeru," *Kyūen*, No. 401 (September 10, 2002), p. 1. Kari no Kai is the name the group currently uses to refer to all its members in North Korea, including wives and children. It may also encompass their supporters. "Genkai Nada" is a monthly column in *Kyūen* written by various members of the group on behalf of Kari no Kai.

43. Kari no Kai, *Takazawa Shukumei*, p. 71.

44. Persons who are held captive for an extended period often come to identify with their captors and the captors' cause. Hostages may cooperate with their captors even when it appears they are not under immediate physical coercion. After their release, they may become advocates for their former captors. The phenomenon was first reported after a bank robbery in Stockholm, Sweden, in which the released hostages were sympathetic to their captors. It has since been noted in many political hostage-taking incidents. In the famous Patty Hearst kidnapping in the United States, the victim participated in a bank robbery with her captors. See Joel O. Powell, "Notes on the Stockholm Syndrome," *Studies in Symbolic Interaction*, Vol. 7B (1986), pp. 353–65, and Irka Kuleshnyk, "The Stockholm Syndrome: Toward an Understanding," *Social Action and the Law*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (1984), pp. 37–42.

45. One of the wives had a nervous breakdown in Paris and tried to commit suicide, apparently because she thought she had failed to do her duty properly. She was sent home to Japan by Japanese consular authorities, but two months later she left home again and went back to North Korea. See Takazawa, *Shukumei*, and Yao, *Shazai shimasu*.

Although she is not a deep or analytical person, Yao's 2002 book on her experiences in North Korea reflects the perspective of a lapsed convert who can now explain to some extent how she thought about things when she was a fully indoctrinated believer in Kim Il Sung's philosophy. The social processes involved in such political conversions and the mental processes of the converted are not very different from the social and mental processes of a religious convert. When all aspects of daily life are referred to a central set of beliefs for direct guidance, the believer concentrates on doing what is right according to those beliefs and actively tries to suppress any contrary thoughts that stray into consciousness. Under these conditions, ends easily justify means and all value judgments are transformed to the new standard.

The motivations and behavior of the Yodogō wives become understandable in the context of their own experiences in North Korea. Yet the larger question remains of why the North Korean government went to such lengths to bring the wives and other kidnap victims to North Korea. In most circumstances, these were deliberate and well-planned campaigns that involved considerable expense and long-term commitments to house, feed, and indoctrinate the victims. The answer most often advanced is that they were kidnapped in order to provide language training for North Korean spies.

According to Yao, the Yodogō hijackers and their wives did not participate in Japanese language training on a regular basis in a school setting, as some other kidnap victims apparently did. However, they did occasionally provide intensive, specialized training for individuals who were brought to their compound for that purpose. They also spent much of their time translating materials between Japanese and Korean.

The Yodogō hijackers went to North Korea voluntarily with their own dreams of returning to Japan soon to carry out their own revolution. Shibata Yasuhiro told me that at first they saw no reason to learn Korean, because they expected to return to Japan in a few months.⁴⁶ Instead, they were soon coopted into North Korea's own revolutionary plans. They still imagined that they were preparing to lead a revolution in Japan, but now it would be a North Korean-style revolution based on the *chuch'e* philosophy of Kim Il Sung. And just as some Japanese New Left leaders of the 1960s persuaded women members that they could only be liberated if they first helped in the men's revolutionary plans, the Yodogō hijackers came to understand that Japan could only be liberated after North Korea had liberated the South.

However much their original ideas were transformed through their indoctrination into Kim Il Sung's *chuch'e* philosophy, they held fast to the Japanese New Left vision of participating in a wider world of revolutionary possibilities. It is characteristic of that New Left vision, and particularly the variant developed by the Red Army Faction, to believe that Japanese stu-

46. Field notes, interview with Shibata Yasuhiro at Tokyo House of Detention, October 11, 1990.

dents could play leading roles on the world revolutionary stage. In their own strange way, they actually did it.

This tiny handful of would-be revolutionaries managed to thrust themselves directly into international affairs by the 1970 hijacking, which required diplomatic negotiations between the Japanese, South Korean, and North Korean governments before it was finally resolved with the hijackers given asylum in North Korea and the plane and all its hostages returned safely to Japan. Subsequently, the kidnappings and their other activities have taken them all over the world in pursuit of revolutionary aims. And although the Yodogō hijackers were not mentioned directly in the North Korean government's announcement, the official acknowledgment of the kidnappings in which they had participated came about through diplomatic negotiations between the Japanese and North Korean heads of state after the Japanese prime minister had issued an ultimatum demanding that the North Koreans own up to the kidnappings.

The story of the New Left connection to the North Korean kidnappings is thus a tale of unintended consequences and distorted dreams, played out by a handful of individuals whose actions have had far-reaching consequences. Moreover, it is a story we would never have known about except for another unintended consequence of the New Left: the creation of investigative journalists such as Takazawa Kōji, whose careers were deflected by their involvement in the New Left protests of the late 1960s.

As more research is done on this fascinating and understudied period, many more unintended consequences and unexpected traces of Japan's New Left will be discovered. The New Left protests of the late 1960s encompassed a broad range of issues and touched a whole generation of high school and college students, whether they participated actively or merely watched from the sidelines. While the revolutionary dreams of the New Left did not materialize, the influence of their ideas can be found throughout Japanese society today in new forms of participatory social organization and in the biographies of ex-activists who are now in their fifties. Further shadows of the New Left can also be found in the many unintended consequences that arose as a backlash against it. The link between the Yodogō hijackers and the North Korean kidnapping may seem to be an accident, a one-of-a-kind aberration, but by following it we are led back to a much broader stream of thought and activity from the 1960s that has left its historical mark on contemporary Japanese society.

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII