

STATEMENT – 16 March 2012

I am asking the court to help me protect my daughter.

I am not concerned with my rights as a father or with Shijima's rights as a mother. I am concerned with the well being of my daughter. I believe that my estranged wife is an unfit mother, that my daughter is living in a bad environment, and that if I do not at least supervise my daughter's upbringing, she might be harmed.

I beg the court to help me ensure a normal life for my daughter where she won't be subjected unprotected to my wife's fits of violence and aggression.

In many ways it would be better for me to just walk away. I'd have a more comfortable life, I could save money and spend it on nice things for myself. But I can't leave my daughter in a dysfunctional family.

I am not perfect and I never claimed to be. But at my worst I raise my voice or slam a door. I am not violent, unlike Shijima, unlike her father, and unlike her previous boyfriend. I handle stress better than my wife does. I had an episode of severe depression two years ago. This was an understandable consequence of being unemployed for some time. When things got too difficult for me to handle alone, no one had to tell me to get professional help. I did and I am all the better for it.

My wife contends that her problem is alcohol. She says she is undergoing therapy. This is good, but I have no way of knowing if she is dealing only with the surface problem or if she is dealing with her more important deeper problems.

My wife's real problems, in my layman's opinion, are the many traumas of her past. Alcohol simply lets her reaction to these traumas come out and she becomes irrational and aggressive, often to the point of violence. Any new stress also makes this happen, as I witnessed on several occasions. After the March 11th earthquake obviously, but also when she rides a subway, or when we have arguments. She will say it's because of the stress of living with me. I certainly agree it's because of stress but I do not believe I can be the cause of this stress.

I believe that Shijima, has serious psychological problems and they are affecting her judgement. Shijima has revealed the following to me.

- Her father, Mr. Haruki Hirasawa, habitually beat his wife and children. On at least one occasion he beat Shijima with a bar of soap in a sock while she was in middle or high school. I understand this violence continued until Shijima was nearly 30 years old.
- Mr. Hirasawa subjected his family to a long term extra-marital affair many years ago.
- Shijima's mother drinks. On one occasion in 2010, she was found on the street and brought home by a passer-by.
- At 19, Shijima was raped. Her boyfriend drugged her, raped her while she was unconscious, and invited his friend to rape her too.
- At 25, Shijima tried to kill herself.

- When Shijima was married to her first husband, they got into terrible physical fights, much worse than any fights she and I have ever had. He did not abuse her.
- Her last boyfriend, an American, beat her to the point of leaving bruises.
- Last year while Shijima was helping her older sister move into a new apartment, Shijima told me she slapped our nephew. At the time he was less than two years old.

My friends were worried about about me and wanted to know why my wife left. I told them the above. Shijima claims that this caused her feelings towards me to change and that this caused her to file for divorce. Again, I disagree but it isn't about the disagreements between my wife and me, it's about my wife's lack of judgement and how this affects her fitness as a parent.

Her true desire was always to return home to her parents. My wife is not mature enough to live on her own. She doesn't understand that in the Heisei Era a mother should live with the father of her child, not with her parents. I believe Shijima married me only to avoid the taint of illegitimacy for her child. Once Emilie was born, she realized she did not want a husband.

I, on the other hand, have lived on my own with no support in a foreign country for 23 years. I believe I was a good husband and an excellent father, far better than average. I have my faults, but I do not believe they justify a separation.

Taking care of a baby is easy. There's no trick to changing diapers, feeding, and giving baths. That's why mothers and fathers look back to the baby years as their most pleasant time as parents. My wife is also very good at filling out forms and seeing to medical checks and vaccines. But these are just administrative tasks.

The real challenge begins with when a child starts walking and talking. As long as Emilie giggles and smiles or even when she cries and needs to be held, things are simple. But what will happen when Emilie starts saying "Dame!" or "Yaritakunai!"? How will my wife react when Emilie strays away for a minute or two? What will happen to my daughter over the next twenty years? What will happen when Emilie comes home late from a date, when she spills a glass of milk on a floor that has just been cleaned?

A baby doesn't give a parent rights, it gives a parent duties. I believe my wife is psychologically unfit to meet those duties, at least not without being supervised. A mother should trust her husband; I do not believe my wife is capable of trust. I was an excellent father but Shijima does not trust me. I did not shirk any parental task, quite the contrary. I enjoyed them, even the dirty ones. But if Emilie cried even a little, Shijima would yank her out of my arms. Is it rational to be unable to trust a father who's proven himself?

My wife has already shown this twice. I asked twice to have Emilie stay with me overnight and Shijima has already refused twice. She thinks she is caring for Emilie, but in fact she is depriving Emilie of her father and she has destroyed her daughter's family. Instead, she is substituting for me a drunk grandmother and a grandfather who stopped beating his family just because he was getting old. These people are the shame of Japan.

I am capable of trust. On two occasions Shijima allowed brief visits. On each occasion I could simply have kept Emilie. I decided to trust due process. I decided that I would not do to Emilie what my wife did to her, namely to forcibly deprive her of a parent. I would not do to my wife what my wife did to me: to kidnap her daughter from her.

I beg you to see my wife for what she really is for the good of my daughter Emilie. My wife is a tragically disturbed woman who suffered traumas that have scarred her. She is using her daughter to heal herself.

However, our daughter is not a medical treatment. She is a human being who deserves to be treated better than how she is being treated now.