

Japan man granted retrial after 46 years on death row



A man who has been on death row for more than four decades has been granted a retrial by a Japanese court.

←Hideko Hakamada has been campaigning on behalf of her brother for decades

- 1) Iwao Hakamada was sentenced to death in 1968 for killing his boss, the man's wife and their two children.
 - 2) Hakamada, now 78, confessed after 20 days of interrogation during which he says he was beaten. He later retracted the confession in court.
 - 3) Japan's police traditionally rely on confessions to prosecute but critics say they are often obtained by force.
 - 4) In a statement, Amnesty International said Hakamada was believed to be the world's longest-serving death row inmate.
 - 5) "If ever there was a case that merits a retrial, this is it. Hakamada was convicted on the basis of a forced confession and there remain unanswered questions over recent DNA evidence," said Roseann Rife, East Asia research director at Amnesty International.
- 'Possibility of innocence'**
- 6) The former professional boxer was accused of killing his employer and his family at a soybean processing factory in Shizuoka in 1966. They were found stabbed to death after a fire.
 - 7) The court ruling came after defence lawyers showed that DNA from blood stains found on clothing alleged to have been worn by the killer did not match Hakamada, Kyodo news agency reported.
 - 8) Presiding Judge Hiroaki Murayama said: "The clothes were not those of the defendant."
 - 9) The judge also ordered his release, saying: "It is unjust to detain the defendant further, as the possibility of his innocence has become clear to a respectable degree."
 - 10) One of the three judges who heard his original case has also spoken out in public - defying common practice - to say he believed he was innocent.
 - 11) Hakamada's sister Hideko, 81, has fought for a retrial for many years.
 - 12) "This happened thanks to all of you who helped us. I am just so happy," AFP news agency quoted her telling supporters and media outside the court.
 - 13) Japan's justice system relies largely on confessions from suspects. Rights groups have cited long hours of interrogation, lack of access to lawyers and physical mistreatment as reasons why suspects end up confessing to crimes they did not commit.
 - 14) The retrial was announced as Amnesty International said a sharp rise in the number of people put to death in Iraq and Iran had caused a global spike in executions in 2013.
 - 15) However a report by the UK-based human rights group said there had been a steady decline over the past 20 years.
 - 16) "The long-term trend is clear - the death penalty is becoming a thing of the past," Amnesty International Secretary General Salil Shetty said. 【03/27/2014/BBC】

on death row : 死刑囚監房に入っている decade : 10年 grant : 認める、与える retrial : 再審 on behalf of : ~の代理で confess : 告白する interrogation : 尋問 retract : 撤回する confession : 告白 prosecute : 起訴する obtain : 得る by force : 力づくで inmate : 囚人 merit : ~に値する convict : 有罪にする on the basis of : ~に基づいて remain : ~のままである innocence : 無実 soybean processing factory : 大豆加工工場 stab : 刺す defence lawyer : 被告側弁護士 blood stain : 血痕 presiding judge : 裁判長 unjust : 不当である detain : 拘留する respectable degree : 相当程度 defy : 無視する

★Ice breaker for active discussion★

1. What urged Mr. Hakamada to confess the things that he didn't commit?
2. Why do you think police officers relied on the suspect's confession and not on the material evidence?
3. What do you know about "Amnesty International"?
4. Do you think Japan should keep death penalty or abolish it?
5. What will you do if the same situation happens to you or your family member?
6. Make sentences using the following words; death row, retrial, confess, Interrogation, prosecute, convict, innocence, unjust and defy.

世界で最も長く収監された死刑囚の釈放として、袴田氏の再審決定が世界でも大きく報じられました。アムネスティは、昨年 8 人の死刑が執行 (execution) された日本では、死刑囚の家族に事前に通知されないなど、死刑の執行が「秘密主義のベールで覆われている」と指摘をしています。何十年にもわたる独房での監禁で精神疾患を発症した袴田氏ですが、5月19日東京都文京区の後楽園ホールで、世界ボクシング評議会(WBC)から贈呈された「名誉チャンピオンベルト」を受け取り、ファイティングポーズを見せてくれました。