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The empty seat on a crowded Japanese train: 10 years on, the 'gaijin seat' still grates



A 72-year-old man acquitted of rape charges after serving 3½ years of his 12-year prison term, addresses media in Osaka following Friday's court ruling. | KYODO

Man acquitted after serving 3½ years in prison for rape; victim gave false evidence

KYODO

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OSAKA - An Osaka court on Friday acquitted a 72-year-old man of rape and indecent assault in a retrial after serving 3½ years of a 12-year prison term.

Osaka District Court presiding judge Minamoto Ashitaka said he was “sorry as a judge” that the man’s “freedom was taken away for an extensive period of time for a crime (he) did not commit, and inflicted unimaginable suffering” on him.

The acquittal was finalized the same day as prosecutors gave up their right to appeal.

The retrial began in August after the girl told the man’s lawyer in June last year that she had given false testimony. Prosecutors found a hospital record denying that sexual assault had taken place, and they additionally confirmed that a purported witness had given false testimony.

Prosecutors released the man from prison last November deeming he had been falsely accused, and the district court decided in February to hold a retrial.

The prosecutors apologized to the man during the first session of the retrial in August.

Police arrested him in 2008 on suspicion of raping a teenage girl.

He denied the allegations, but the Osaka District Court found him guilty in 2009. The ruling was upheld by the Osaka High Court and finalized by the Supreme Court in April 2011.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/10/17/national/crime-legal/man-who-served-3%bd-years-in-prison-for-rape-acquitted-in-retrial/#.XT8etPJKiot>