



**ACTIVITY:** Diving

**CASE:** [GSAF 1996.07.23.b](#)

**DATE:** Tuesday July 23, 1996

**LOCATION:** The attack took place near Painagama Beach at Hirara City, Miyako Island, Okinawa.

**NAME:** Moriyoshi Takehara

**DESCRIPTION:** The diver, a 52-year-old male, was from Irabu Village.



## **BACKGROUND**

**MOON PHASE:** Waxing Crescent, 44% of the Moon was illuminated.

**ENVIRONMENT:** The Miyako Island group, consisting of eight islands, is part of Japan's Okinawa Prefecture. It is situated south of Okinawa's main island and north of Yaeyama archipelago, close to Taiwan. The five major islands are Miyako, Irabu, Kurima, Ikema and Tarama. Miyako Island is flat; the highest elevation are the cliffs in the south, and the island has a circumference of about 80 kilometres. Hirara is the largest city on the island.

**NARRATIVE:** Takehara was participating in a coral survey for a marina construction project in Hirara City. Overseeing divers from his boat, he entered the water to help with the survey. Five minutes later the captain of another boat saw Takehara thrashing the water with his arms and legs and he pulled the diver from the sea.

**INJURY:** A large portion of the diver's right chest and abdomen was bitten by the shark.

**TREATMENT:** Takehara was taken to a hospital in Hirara City but died shortly after arrival.

**SPECIES INVOLVED:** Shark's teeth were recovered from the man's body. Mr. Minoru

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Toda, a specialist in fishes at the aquarium in Okinawa Expo Memorial Park, concluded that a white shark, *Carcharodon carcharias*, about five metres in length was involved in the attack.

Hirara City put up a warning sign and closed the beach until the area could be declared safe. The Hirara City Fishing Cooperative set longlines and nets in the area in an attempt to catch sharks after this incident.

Until two years ago, the Hirara City Fishing Cooperative caught and killed sharks with funding from the OPG and the city. Fishermen used to kill about one hundred sharks during a twenty-day period. The Hirara branch of the Maritime Safety Agency invited representatives of the fishing cooperative, city hall, the prefectural government, diving associations, and the tourism industry to discuss the prevention of such incidents. The group concluded that sharks should be killed.

**SOURCE:** Okinawa Times, Vol.7, No.26, Monday July 29, 1996, Evening Edition  
<http://www.okinawatimes.co.jp/eng/19960729.html>