



## Key Excerpts from Conversations with the Japan Wildlife Research Center

September 2015

Environmental Investigation Agency

### The First Call

S : From about how many years ago did you have these pieces, say from the Showa era (1926-1989)?

I : ... about 15 years ago, my father celebrated his special 70<sup>th</sup> birthday and it was from then that I think she started seeing the tusks but...

S : If it was Showa era, like 1985 or 1988 that is ok. If you just can say that it was before that time, then it would be when the African Elephants were not yet protected by the trade bans so anytime during the Showa era then there would be absolutely no question about the time period.

S : In that case, you'll need to confirm the background, and if the story starts from the Showa era, say 1985, for example when your father already had these in his possession, then there would be no question about it...Giving that it was in the Showa era, for say, example "In Showa 60 (1985), I saw my father Mr. XX holding the two tusks". Then we can start talking from as long as it was in the Showa era.

S : ... just have her write the history of the tusks and saying that "My father had the ivory since the Showa "whatever" year...

S : ... We would need you to have just one person, possibly a third party, who can write a statement that the ivory was in your father's ownership from the Showa era and he can say it was at your father's place during that time and he saw it there.

S : ... if you just can't find anyone else who saw the ivory, in that case then even a relative is ok. For example you as the witness as long as you say the piece in Showa era it would pass.

I : So, that witness can be me then? It will be difficult to find a person who will remember seeing the ivory.

S : ... most important [point] to mention what year in the Showa era, and for example, "In about Showa 60 (1985), I saw the two pieces of tusks that registrations are being applied for." In the second line, it's the most important to include the time period "about 1985 year" so please be sure not to leave this part out.



## **The Second Call**

S : ... Well, then it will be subject to registration because the overall shape of the tusk remains even with the carvings...the law prescribes tusks with the “whole shape” are subject to registration.

S : ... For example, when you go to sell it, you won't be able to sell it without a registration card, if that's the kind of store with a discipline that it does not buy in those types of tusks without registration cards.

S : ... the tusks with a “whole shape” are technically subject to registration. So, when you explain that you don't think this piece is whole because it has been carved into, it's possible the other party will agree with you as not in “whole shape” and still buy the tusk without a registration.

S : ...Because tusks with “whole shape” are officially subject to registration, when, just as an example, you sold in an auction online, even if someone makes a complaint that it is strange because this tusk doesn't have a registration card, you are to state flatly that “I didn't think this was in its ‘whole shape’ so I didn't feel it was required to be registered”.

I : ... would you have an official statement or something to say “That piece is exempt” or “That's ok” or something?

S : ...We can tell you the piece is in a “non-whole shape” if there is only 10cm left of the tip, but in your case, I think it is more like 5-60cm or even 1 m, right?

S : ... so you'll just have to say that it has the carvings on it so you have not registered it when you sell it online or try to sell it otherwise without the registration card. It is highly probable that someone were to ask you “Don't you have a registration card?” because there are all kinds of people searching the related information... it's up to your judgement, to decide to register it for avoiding risk being called out for not having a registration, if not, stick to your argument. If you decide you don't get it, then you can just state flatly that the tusk is not in “whole shape.” No matter who, like buyers on internet or even police...

I : Just be strong?

S : Just stand your ground. Just say “It is so carved up and it hasn't retained its “whole shape” and for this reason it doesn't need a registration and is there a problem with that?”

I : So I just stick with that story, even with the police, then I can get out of trouble?

S : Actually, there is more to it than just that because there are so many other factors. Within the police, there might be those who say this is a tusk with its “whole shape,” and they will scrutinize the law, then whether this is so or not will be a matter of judgement. But if they investigate it seriously, then it is possible they will determine that your tusk is “whole shape.”

S : The law prescribes tusks in “whole shape” are subject to registration.

I : Or, I can just stick with the story (that the tusk is not in “whole shape”), then?

S : If that's your method, then you need to stay with your story. No matter what they may say to you, you just don't change your story