# Ordeal from page A1

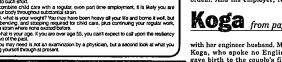
treated," said Kathie O'Donohue, a Farmington Hills mother of five who founded a support group for sufferers of postpartum depression. "Women need to rec-

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completing tasks while feeling depressed after the birth of her fourth child.

fourth child.

"I'm relieved with this verdict (that Koga return to Japan after seven months of therapy),"
O'Donohue said. "I hope that what may come out of this is the publicity about this problem so that he (baby Koga) will not be a silent victim."

The case of Mrs. Koga, who drowned her infant, set off a discussion of postpartum depression and the American legal system's ability to deal with it.

In England, for instance, a 1939 law would have not allowed Koga to be prosecuted for murder, as she had first been in this

But her attorney, Neil Fink, did not minimize her actions or

the nor minimate their impact.

"This isn't something that would be OK in Japan," he said.
"I don't even think now that she realizes what has happened."

Itsumi Koga's husband Akihiro, who pulled his son's lifees body from the murky pond behind the couple's apartment building, held his wife's hand and stood by her throughout her ordeal. And his employer, Nis-



san, had provided the family with legal, financial and emo-tional support throughout.

Hills Police Chief Bill Dwyer said he and the officers working on the case had agreed with the

"The prosecutor's office asked us about the (sentence) recom-mendation and we felt it was appropriate under these very dif-ficult circumstances."

Detective Sandra Rochford, an

18-year veteran who has worked on many sensitive cases involv-ing abused children, said this one was still an emotional roller

coaster.

You have sympathy for the victim but compassion for the perpetrator," said Rochford, who is a parent as well. This was not a routine case. Having a baby and being at home alone can be a difficult time of alienation even if you are an American."

That feoling was shared by many Japanese people who live in Farmington Hills, New York City and Japan.

"I'm glad for her," said Mike

City and Japan.
"I'm glad for her," said Mike
Yamada, a Farmington Hills resident and Southfield businessman. "She doean't need to spend
time in jail. I think people at
Nissan (where her husband Akihiro works) are pleased with this
sentence."

Yamada said there had been concern about the case going to trial, especially in light of recent

events.

"In the O.J. Simpson case, it seemed like the jury system did not work," he said, adding that in Japan, juries do not decide cases. "To be honest, I feel better knowing it didn't go to trial."

O'Donohue said this was not ke the case where a South Carlike the case where a South Car-olina woman deliberately drowned her two sons.

"This is not going to be a case where someone is going to fool all these (psychiatrists) experts into thinking they are mentally ill," she said.

Sumiko Miyamoto of Asabi TV, a company based in New York City that distributes U.S. news of interest back to Japan, said the case had received more publicity among Japanese people in New York than in Tokyo.

"There are a lot of expatriate Japanese in Westchester and Scaradale who have paid attention to this case," she said, adding that a local Japanese-language weekly has followed the case without using Koga's name.

al moment for his client and her family when she prayed and wept before a shrine to her dead son that included his pictures and toys.

"She will no doubt suffer for the rest of her life," he said.

## Koga from page A1

with her engineer husband, Mrs. Koga, who spoke no English, gave birth to the couple's first child, but suffered from depres-sion, which has since been diagnosed as postpartum depression.



Even with the help of her older sister Midori Taganaki, who was visiting from Japan, Itaumi Koga could apparently not cope with her colicky baby. She and her family enjoyed a seemingly nor-mal evening before the grim

Mrs. Koga had first been arrested and detained in the Oakland County Jail, then transferred to Beaumont Hospital's psychiatric unit in Royal Oak, and then transferred to the University of Michigan Medical Center in Ann Arbor. She was put on an electronic tether at her Citation Club apartment in March while continuing treatment.

ment.
Two of the three psychiatrists who examined Mrs. Koga determined that she was mentally ill

throughout the period of the drowning and beyond. The third determined that she was mentally ill at the time.

"If buby Koga has a legacy, it is the publicity attached to this case." Koga's attorney Noil Fink said. "More people know about this dreaded disease (postpartum depression."

Fink said he hoped the publicity would lead women in a similar situation to seek help and for families and doctors to intervene.

Assistant Prosecutor Paul Walton feared another legacy.

"All the elements of firstdegree murder were proven, he said, adding that he worried that the case might set a bad precedent. "Only time will tell." Judge Cooper said the so-called "insunity defense" is a dif-ficult standard, but one Koga met. And yet, the judge herself did not seem satisfied on all

counts.
"There is no one to speak for this baby — this born all the healthy, precious baby that no longer exists," she said. "Usually the family of the victim would speak at the sentencing. But that is not the case here."

Kora's ettermays proposed that

Koga's attorneys proposed that a psychosis from the depression had caused her to act irrational-

ly.

As her husband comforted her,
the couple was led from the
courtroom where they both shed
tears of relief.

"This is what we'd hoped for
and what we'd worked for," Fink
said of the sentence.

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